A Strange Body of Work: The Cinematic Zombie

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**Declaration**

While registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in the thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Signed…………………… Date…………..
Abstract

A Strange Body of Work: The Cinematic Zombie

This thesis investigates the changing cinematic representations of a particular figure in horror culture: the Zombie. Current critical perspectives on the figure of the Zombie have yet to establish literary and cultural antecedents to the cinematic portrayal of the Zombie, preferring to position it as a mere product of American horror films of the 1930s. This study critiques this standpoint, arguing that global uses of the Zombie in differing media indicate a symbolic figure attuned to changing cultural contexts. The thesis therefore combines cultural and historical analysis with close textual readings of visual and written sources, paying close attention to the changing contexts of global film production and distribution.

In order to present the cinematic Zombie as a product of historical, geographical and cultural shifts in horror film production, the thesis begins by critiquing existing accounts of Zombie film, drawing attention to the notion of generic canons of film as determined by both popular and academic film critics and draws attention to the fractured nature of genre as a method of positioning and critiquing film texts. In this, an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on the methods of cultural-historical and psycho-analytical critiques of horror film, is appraised and then applied to the texts under discussion. The first chapter positions a working thematic and visual deconstruction of the Zombie as an embodiment of the abject, positioning it as a result of changing cultural discussions in fiction on the nature of death and burial. This establishes a thematic framework to apply throughout the following chapters, noting alterations to representations. The second chapter offers a historicised account of appearances of the fictional Zombie before American cinematic productions of the 1930s, critiquing claims that this is the only original production context for the Zombie. The third chapter charts the changing production contexts of American Zombie film until the mid 1960s, to introduce the critiques of authorial importance placed upon the works of George A. Romero, which are discussed in Chapter 4. This critique in turn questions established notions of generic canon and international influence, which are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. These chapters question the idea of American filmic product dominance in national contexts, charting the discussions of the Zombie body found in differing national cinemas. It is shown that dialogues of representation can be both nationally specific and meant for global audiences, brought about by the changing production and exhibition markets of the 1970s onwards. This in turn challenges the idea that the American model is the dominant representation in the contemporary Zombie film, discussed in Chapter 7.

The thesis therefore charts three separate areas for discussion, that of historical, cultural and production contexts that can be held accountable for changing cinematic representations. Particular attention is placed on the thematic and visual use of the Zombie within differing media and firmly position cinematic representations as indicative of wider changes in popular media and their intended audiences. The thesis therefore offers a detailed historical and cultural
taxonomy of Zombie film, furthering previous studies, but also presents a more
detailed exploration of cultural contexts than previous critics have attempted.

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Introduction

This thesis has its roots in a lifelong, passionate interest in horror in books, comics, television and most importantly, film. My chance encounter with a late night television showing of Night of the Living Dead (George Romero, 1968) in 1995 began an enthusiastic consideration of an ignored figure within horror genre studies: the Zombie. The early to mid 1990s was a period of re-interpretation of the Zombie in popular culture: the last ten years have seen a gradual increase in Zombie films with large scale releases by major studios in America, the revival of George Romero’s career as a Zombie film maker, and an explosion in global texts made and consumed by fans both on DVD and the Internet. Zombies are now as enshrined in popular culture as ‘traditional’ horror monsters, in the shape of Frankenstein’s Monster and the figure of the Vampire. The rise in its cinematic exposure has been matched – though slowly – by a rise in critical interest. At the beginning of research for this study in 2004, the topic of the cinematic Zombie was beginning to appear in academic journals and papers. Indeed, the current popularity for discussing the Zombie in academic works is notable for its similarities to what could be termed ‘popular’ criticism. Key filmic texts are placed within a ‘canon’, that relates to established historical timelines of the development of the cinematic Zombie, while other film texts are ignored for not fitting a preconceived notion of what a Zombie film is. This occurs even though the use of the Zombie in film narratives changes drastically from a “Voodoo” Zombie, to the current flesh-eating construct in modern films. It is also a common argument that Zombies have no literary antecedents: commentators seem curiously unwilling to consider thematic creatures that pre-date cinematic Zombies.

This study will challenge these widely held views by placing the visualisations of the Zombie within historical, cultural and industrial contexts both cinematic and social. Unlike other studies, I will question the assumed American ‘birthplace’ of the fictional Zombie, showing that differing national contexts instigate an evolving embodiment of fear. My study is a timely attempt to assess some key aspects of the evolution and presentation of the cinematic Zombie, from its beginnings in literature and mythology to the present day. This is to
question some of the prevalent assumptions made about Zombie film as a discrete modern sub-genre of horror, a viewpoint rarely criticised by either fans or critics of Zombie film.

I shall locate this study within three research contexts that allow for the widest discussion of the fictional Zombie, to fill gaps in knowledge that current studies have not yet discussed. My first objective is to discuss how fear is structured within cultures, positioning the Zombie as an embodiment of the abject and ‘other’, placing the creature as both an extension and a development of previous horror narratives. Importantly, while commentators such as Leslie Halliwell consider the Zombie as an adjunct to more established horror icons (a view repeated by Gregory Waller) other critics view the Zombie as a purely contemporary cinematic creature. Both views are partially correct, but their adherence to unfixed definitions leaves a large space for debate as to how, and if, there is such a construct as the Zombie sub-genre within horror film.

This leads to my second aim; to question the tendency to place the Zombie as a purely American cinematic figure, by noting the differing production and cultural context of Zombie film in global terms. Stephen Crofts argues, “national cinemas are in dialectical tension with Hollywood”. If this is so, the repetitions and deviations in Zombie film narratives outside American film production offer an entry into discussing changing global patterns of film production and distribution.

Both of these objectives must take place within an overarching dialogue – that of using the debates around film genre to problematise previous discussions of a Zombie film genre. I will broaden the approaches normally used by commentators to include references to Zombies and Zombie-like figures in popular culture, questioning the assumed status of the Zombie film as a discrete genre. As Lincoln Geraghty and Mark Jancovich argue in their introduction to *The Shifting Definitions of Genre* (2008), using genre as a fixed critical category is problematic, given that the historical context of film production and reception is sometimes ignored when claiming canonical status for ‘genre’ films. So in discussing the Zombie film historically, I will contextualise the films within the popularity of the horror genre (among others) when discrete periods
of production occur. Cyclical patterns of narrative and production are found throughout this study, but differences occur in narrative and visual representation which should be considered carefully. This will position the figure of the cinematic Zombie as fluid rather than fixed in terms of generic representation. This is bearing in mind Geraghty and Jancovich’s critique that many film genre studies:

> have tended to ignore the increasing inter-relationship between film and other media…In order to understand contemporary film genres, it is therefore important to recognize that they are often intimately connected with developments in other media.  

By considering the use of the Zombie in other popular cultural texts, this study will seek to establish whether there are definable characteristics that mark these texts, extending the concept of genre beyond film into a consideration of cultural artefacts. Attention should also be paid to those texts considered seminal by viewers (who construct notions of genre in their responses). These fan evaluations argue for a specific historical development of the Zombie film, compared to contemporary narratives, while contemporary evaluations themselves are notable in the inclusions and omissions of film texts, and in the ways in which the writer positions the worth and meaning of the Zombie genre overall. Therefore my first task in this study is to conduct a literature review of both popular and academic evaluations of Zombie film. This will highlight where the gaps are in established knowledge.

**Literature Review: Popular Criticism**

Given the current popularity of Zombie film, the breadth of popular criticism made available to and provided by fans and critics in mainstream cultural products is large, both in print and electronic media. This is ranged against the relative paucity of academic criticism focusing on Zombie films, the exception being critiques on George Romero. This availability of popular criticism should raise speculation as to why the horror genre, and in particular the Zombie film, attracts such devotion. Andrew Tudor notes the problematic nature of such speculations, arguing that many commentators seek to universalise the nature of horror, indulging in the “fallacy of generic concreteness”.  

To counter this we
should note that the popularity of the Zombie film with viewers seems based on a conjunction of differing cultural factors: the changing acceptability of portraying gory imagery, the rise in fan-based publications in print and electronic media, and perhaps most importantly, the growing understanding (through discussing how ‘cult’ as a film term has emerged from academic critiques) that audiences directly engage with film texts to proclaim their own sense of cultural capital, in conjunction with or against hierarchical notions of taste. The breadth of popular criticism available on Zombie film supports both these dialogues: the texts engage in re-evaluations of certain films and directors constantly, promoting and declaring a canon of film, dependant on the individual’s conception of the sub-genre. It assumes an intense knowledge on the part of the reader that indicates the consumers of Zombie film deem the shifts in the development of the genre important. These dialogues should be noted, to appreciate how fan agency consolidates a perceived hierarchy of texts. This approach is echoed in academic critiques of the Zombie film, indicating that the two areas of criticism depend upon an implicitly agreed historical context that my study will question.

Reviewing the popular criticism available will help critique the established lineage of Zombie films. The discussion of what are considered seminal texts by fans also allows a survey of what constitutes the key visual and thematic signifiers found in Zombie film. This approach is not without its drawbacks: while the texts can refer to elements of cultural history and certain aspects of genre theory within their discussions, they are ultimately presentations of lists and images for the dedicated fan. For example Rose London, in *Zombie: The Living Dead* (1976), ignores a chronological approach, preferring to discuss undead films from the 1920s to the mid 70s. No rationale is offered for the selection of texts, no differentiation is made between the Mummy, Vampires and Zombies. Her text could best be described as a thematic descriptive essay, relying on the images presented to the reader. Of more note is Peter Dendle’s *The Zombie Movie Encyclopedia*, (2001) an attempt to list the main Zombie films produced from 1932 to 1998. This text focuses on reviews and a history of Zombie film and was useful for my purpose in researching films. A more
A typical example of popular criticism of Zombie films is found within books such as John McCarty’s texts, both of which rely on the authors’ selection and discussion of specific films. While McCarty does not provide an extended focus on Zombie films, his description of plot and brief cultural contexts place him within the same approach as other writers, notably the Dark Side publication Zombie! (2000) that locates Zombie films within particular national film movements, re-iterating value judgements on ‘classic’ Zombie films and directors, and providing reviews for Zombie film fans. Again, the book relies on excessive images to create visual interest and narrative coherence. This appears as a key consideration of popular criticism: the visual importance of Zombie film is placed over any narrative considerations and is very briefly used as critical concept in the texts below.

The Dead Walk (2000) by Andy Black offers chapters on the varying incarnations of the Zombie, with recountation of plot detail as the main consideration of the text. In comparison, Jamie Russell’s Book of the Dead (2005) provides an almost exhaustive reference guide. Structured as a historical progression piece, the book theorises links between socio-political concerns and the ‘messages’ apparent in selected films. However, this is overshadowed by implicit value judgements and a reluctance to look at the differing production contexts of the European and Asian Zombie film. The book’s eventual descent into reviews of film ‘quality’, is also responding to established patterns of Zombie film criticism enacted in two other areas, fansites on the Internet and published Horror/Cult film magazines.

In relation to the Zombie fansites, at the last search (June 10, 2008) using Google as a search engine, 899,000 sites were found under Zombie movies: 2,090,000 under George Romero, and 589,000 for Lucio Fulci. Discounting the links to online shops, this still leaves a huge online resource that is mainly used by fans to record their preferences. Robert Hood’s article Nights of the Celluloid Dead is an interesting example of this involvement with the Zombie film genre. Like Russell’s book, he argues that the Zombie genre is worthy of study, discussing various aspects of the genre in terms of content. The text is aimed at a cinematically literate audience (in terms of Zombie film), and is interesting in
the omissions from the range of films studied as important or representational of the overall genre. This generally evaluative tone seems endemic in fan sites. Some are ‘official’ sites, in that various film directors or film companies approve their content, and these are valuable resources in the discussions held and interviews published online that are aimed at a dedicated audience. A good example of a recognised site is www.georgeromero.com, where George Romero posts responses to questions and occasionally maintains an online log of his activities. Unfortunately there is not space within this discussion to list the quantity and quality of the surveyed websites, but the websites created and maintained are valuable in the level of fan involvement indicated. Many websites encourage active participation in the construction of this particular film genre, which leads to fans producing their own texts, images and films to add to the Zombie sub-genre. This again refers back to cult arguments surrounding how a filmic ‘canons’ are constructed, placing the participation of fans and viewers as key. While the scope of this study precludes a concerted discussion of fansites and their importance in placing the Zombie genre at this point in time, the variety and continuing popularity of Zombie films indicate the genre's contemporary status within horror film and its changing production and reception contexts: an important indicator of the timely nature of this study.

The generally evaluative tone in both the published books and websites above is also present in horror/cult film magazines, notably Outré, Fangoria, Video Watchdog and The Dark Side. The scion of many of these publications’ style is the magazine Famous Monsters of Filmland; first published in 1958. The content relied upon short articles, bad puns and stills from horror films. It also encouraged fan participation – in the form of letters and stories – that influenced later film directors and writers, notably Stephen King and Joe Dante. The focus on participatory enjoyment, alongside the tacit understanding that the films were worthy of attention, is the keynote of most horror film magazines that followed, and again highlights how canon is constructed through participatory dialogues.

The importance of the visual aspects of the horror magazine should also be noted in terms of the magazines that followed. Fangoria (started in 1979)
arguably consolidated the popularity of *Famous Monsters* through its dedication to discussing contemporary special effects; Tom Savini’s work for Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* featuring in the first issue. The focus on imagery is also present in the British publication *The Dark Side*. Editor Allan Bryce notes the influence of the publications *The House of Hammer* and *Famous Monsters, The Dark Side* following the same patterns of fan interaction, reviews and interviews alongside detailed pictorial illustration. This focus on the physicality of horror is not only interesting in terms of the perceived interest of the readers, but also in the context of film and video censorship, a topic returned to by many of the horror/cult film publications such as *Psychotronic Video* (1980-2006) and *Video Watchdog* (1990+). Horror magazines’ concerns with censorship are understandable, especially given that both *Fangoria* and *The Dark Side* have DVD/Video subsidiaries. This has led to a conspiratorial tone to many of the publications, in which the viewers are constructed as connoisseurs of horror, against repressive social constructs that seek to demonise their tastes. In this, the importance of fan interaction is again highlighted, leading to a style of writing and reviewing which places both the publishers and readers as part of a group opposed to mainstream hegemonies of taste.

In terms of popular criticism, the Zombie film is ever-present. While these texts provide little detailed analysis of the contexts of production, they do offer interesting points to consider, in the continuous justification of the Zombie film as an important horror sub-genre. The availability of these texts also indicates that there is a strong fan base to sustain and enrich these justifications. The reliance on pictures and stills of Zombies reinforces the importance of the image within these films: the physical presence of the Zombie is valued over the sub-texts or intended meanings in the film’s storyline. Therefore the Zombie as a creature is the focus and arguably the most important consideration for these commentators.

Finally, there is a marked tendency to interpret changes in content and style and to link this with a clear appreciation of previous alterations. As I will argue throughout Chapters 3 to 7, there are established canons of Zombie films and established ‘auteurs’. These are reinforced throughout not only popular
criticism, but also academic texts discussing the horror genre. Fan critiques and dialogues centred on Zombie films are particularly well-versed in genre expectations and innovation, and are willing to define quality judgements dependant on standard ‘quality’ Zombie films. Of the sources listed above, the *Book of the Dead* has proved useful in establishing a reliable timeline of Zombie film production for this study, and the critical comments of Russell have indicated areas of research on changing production and reception contexts. This is more thoroughly presented in publications such as *Outré* and *Cinéfantastique*. *Cinéfantastique* indicates a problematic area for the researcher on Zombie film, that of the seepage between popular and academic dialogues on film genres. By explicitly placing science fiction and horror films as distinct genres worthy of critique, at first glance *Cinéfantastique* occupies a similar position to the texts discussed above. Similarly, it is a noted contributor to the discussion – and elevation – of cult films, of which Zombie films are included among certain viewers of horror. Therefore its approach indicates similarities to the partisan popular critiques. However, the discussions of technical and practical aspects of filmmaking, with less reliance on simplistic narrative discussion than is apparent in previous popular horror film magazines, indicate its serious approach to cult film discussion, placing the text within academic critiques of film. Steve Biodrowski makes this aim clear when he argues that the editor/publisher Frederick S. Clarke emulated the critical discussions found in ‘serious’ film journals such as *Cahier du Cinema* and *Film Comment*. This is expressed in the detailed articles that chart the production and exhibition contexts of specific Zombie films, beyond simplistic narrative and gore discussions. When *Cinéfantastique* focuses on particular Zombie films or filmmakers, the context of discussion is briefly placed within genre innovation and progression alongside the status of the creative personnel and technical aspects of filmmaking. For example, the September/October 1982 issue devotes 18 pages to the production of *Creepshow* (George Romero, 1982) discussing the technical aspects of special effects within the film, alongside extensive interviews. The majority of the text however, is on the production context of the film. This detailed contextual approach offers a clear discussion of visual and thematic progression within Zombie film and the production context of the films under
discussion, making Cinéfantastique a useful source of primary information. Given that the approach of Cinéfantastique can be contextualised within the rising prominence of film criticism during the 1970s, a case can be argued for the publication as a crossover between popular and academic criticism, that hold similarities in the selection of film texts for discussion. The same period of time that saw the beginning of Cinéfantastique also marks the beginning of academic criticism on the Zombie film

**Literature Survey: Academic Criticism**

During the 1970s, film genre criticism became an accepted approach for discussing and analysing specific film texts. Within this were different schools of thought, notably approaching horror texts from a psychoanalytic, feminist or post-colonial method of discussion. Criticisms of the validity of these approaches also instigated responses focused around the socio-historical context of film production and reception. These differing approaches would continue throughout the 1980s, along with a widening appreciation of the role of the individual viewers’ interpretation and cultural use of Zombie films. However, historically speaking, academic writing on the figure of the cinematic Zombie has been mostly limited to individual chapters in books, and dedicated journal articles on specific films or periods of Zombie film production. This has recently started to alter, with Shawn McIntosh and Marc Leverettes’ 2008 edited collection of essays indicating varying approaches to Zombie texts, whether historical or psychoanalytical: of the three chapters on Italian Zombie film, one discuses production contexts, another how the construct of the apocalypse is approached, and thirdly how the Zombie body expresses excess for the audience.21 Further examples of brief historical taxonomies of the Zombie film include Meghan Sutherland’s “Rigor/Mortis: The Industrial Life of Style in American Zombie Cinema” (2007) and Kyle Bishop’s article “Raising The Dead” (2006), both of which argue that the Zombie is a particularly cinematic figure of fear.22 Bishop’s article makes note of the adaptability of the Zombie, yet fails to note examples of the Zombie in popular literature, which would question his assertion that American filmic portrayals are the key
progenitor of the modern cinematic Zombie. These specific overviews of the Zombie genre are relatively rare. The vast majority of critical discussions of Zombie film appear within texts dealing with the horror film generally, or in articles dealing with specific case studies. One author whose work encompasses both of these approaches is Tanya Krzywinska, who contributes to the emerging discussions on portrayals of Zombies within gaming cultures in McIntosh and Leverettes collection, and also discusses Zombies in the context of Voodooism in her 2000 book.23 Detailed considerations of the cinematic Zombie are also to be found in works concerned with discussing particular directors. Kim Paffenroth’s *Gospel of the Living Dead* (2006) is a case in point, as it discusses the films of George Romero in the context of the way in which biblical imagery is used within his films. While this is a fascinating approach, the comparisons with Dante’s *Inferno* seem stretched. Little account is taken of the Zombie in popular culture before Romero, which as I discuss, influenced his body of work.24

The focus on the figure of Romero is important, given that fan and academic considerations of his work place him at the forefront of Zombie cinema. Therefore many of the texts on Zombies are, explicitly or implicitly, also about Romero. The former is evidenced in both Paul R. Gagnes’ book *The Zombies That Ate Pittsburgh: The Films of George A. Romero* (1987) and Tony Williams’ *Knight of the Living Dead: The Cinema of George Romero* (2003), alongside other articles that consider Romero’s Zombie films.25 Jane Caputti’s “Films of the Nuclear Age” (1988) utilises *Night of the Living Dead* to discuss the implicit threat of nuclear warfare within American Horror films, while Barry Keith Grants “Taking Back The Night of the Living Dead” (1990), argues Romero’s prominence as a feminist filmmaker in his later Dead films.26 Richard Dyer’s chapter “White Death” in his text *The Matter of Images* (1993) exemplifies Romero’s Zombie films’ political allegory and positive representations of black men, a deconstruction also found in Robert K. Lightning’s article “Interracial Tensions in Night of The Living Dead” (2000).27 In contrast, Steven Beard’s “No Particular Place to Go” (1993) discusses the shifting representations of figures of fear after *Night*, also commented upon in
Richard Porton’s “Blue Collar Monsters” (2002), discussing the views on class structure apparent in Zombie films.  

Stephen Harper’s 2002, 2003 and 2005 articles on George Romero’s Zombie films act as retrospective analyses of Romero’s work alongside the application of key critical debates, notably in a discussion of Romero’s critique of capitalist consumption in the later article.  

This is also representative of Megan Spencer’s “George Romero and the Horror of Identity” (2006), which also allows for a re-appraisal of his earlier works after Land of The Dead (2005).  

These texts operate from the standpoint that the single Zombie film or body of work provides enough continuing thematic concerns, including racial and gender representation and socio-historical concerns, to support such concerted interest. The use of individual films and directors in this way is present throughout many academic writings, including pieces on White Zombie, often considered the first Zombie film. The approach is also extended to other directors associated with the Zombie sub-genre, including Lucio Fulci, though the quantity of texts is small compared to the amount written on Romero.

Many of these critiques are written as retrospective discussions of certain films importance. My study will engage critically with these arguments, charting the development of the Zombie film as a whole within changing contexts of film production and distribution. I will illustrate the changing nature of the horror film, notably the Zombie film, within differing national and thematic contexts. This will be in contrast to previous writings, which give little consideration of the ways in which the generic contexts they attribute to the Zombie sub-genre are formed. My study will be broader, in its historical, national and thematic discussions of the Zombie film. This is unlike discussions that offer a socio-historical perspective of the horror genre as a whole. Individual Zombie films are selected for these texts, such as James Twitchell’s Dreadful Pleasures (1985), which uses an evaluative historical perspective to discuss the idea of cinematic threat.  

Gregory Waller provides another such historical perspective, in The Living and Undead (1989), defining the Zombie with and against the Vampire as emblematic of fears of invasion and infection, exemplifying certain
aspects of psychoanalytic theory. This positions the Zombie, in his view, with traditional generic characters of fear and threat.

My study will take these isolated case studies and question their assumptions on genre progression, by challenging the existing definitions on what constitutes a Zombie film. As we have seen, while there are individual texts that discuss the Zombie film, there are very few that deal with the Zombie genre as a body of work in its own right. This is partially because defining sub-genres in the horror film is a problematic practice. Intertextuality and the melding of genre characteristics is such a noted feature in horror film history that to specify certain film texts as distinct from others can be an unrewarding and potentially blinkered approach, without considering clearly how aspects change over time. In order to overcome this, two distinct methodological approaches are needed; to both situate the Zombie as a symbolic construct and to place this against changing cultural and cinematic contexts. Both cultural historical and psychoanalytic approaches to film form the core of most contemporary approaches to discussing how the horror genre is constructed and received. It should also be noted that these texts also occasionally discuss the presence of individual Zombie films and the thematic use of the creature. As such, their use in this study forms the basis for my methodology in discussing Zombie film, and should be discussed separately.

**Approaching Genre**

The first approach is that of the cultural historical perspective, in which the development of the horror genre is linked to social and audience perspective of films, determined by analysis of thematic elements over a determined space of time. A clear example of this is Andrew Tudor’s text *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (1989). Basing his observations partially on data such as film content, patterns of release and narrative characteristics, Tudor aims to explore the historical progression of the horror film within definable themes and content. He examples the changes in the explicit ‘threat’ characterised by horror creatures or themes present in films, basing his explanation on the premise that horror films not only influence each
other, but are also influenced by history, society and the audience. This critical perspective allows a wide-ranging survey of thematic developments and influences. However, while Tudor acknowledges the variety of the texts under discussion, his survey is bounded by both a particular historical period and an approach that does not always allow an appreciation for individual innovation in film texts. Therefore to counter these deficiencies in approach, my study must extend its research throughout an extended discussion of historical contexts, bearing in mind that alternative narrative uses of the Zombie may challenge established notions of genre progression. Tudor’s concepts of how the articulation of social threat may be expressed within horror films is also present in Siegbert Prawers’ *Caligari’s Children: The Film as Tale of Terror* (1980), Joseph Grixti’s *Terrors of Uncertainty: The Cultural Contexts of Horror Fiction* (1989) and Stephen Kings’ *Danse Macabre* (1992) (an interesting perspective from a practitioner within horror literature). David J. Skal’s *The Monster Show*, (1993) which could broadly be defined as an aesthetic cultural history in its selection of horror texts is also useful for this study, in its charting of cross-media influences within American horror culture. This is furthered in Kevin Heffernan’s detailed study of the changing production and reception contexts of American horror films in his 2004 work *Ghouls, Gimmicks, and Gold: Horror Films and the American Movie Business 1953-1968*. His consideration of industrial concerns offers a lucid discussion of the varying economic and cultural factors that shaped particular sub-genres of horror film. These texts all focus on charting historical progression, including the shift from literature to film in horror fiction. This indicates a useful starting point for this study, in that while taxonomies of Zombie film are available, none have considered a pre-history of Zombie film. My approach will also clarify when shifts in narrative occur within cinematic history and speculate as to the socio-cultural impetus behind changing representations. Heffernan’s detailed survey of production and exhibition contexts grounds his study within a firm understanding of industrial contexts, an approach needed in this study to question the assumed “B-Movie” status of the Zombie, within international production histories.
To assist this understanding, focused discussions of national horror film movements are needed. These specifically chart the production contexts of horror films within particular historical and geographical locations. Texts such as Tohill and Tombs’ *Immoral Tales* (1994) discuss European sex and horror films between 1956 and 1984, offering a survey of the key texts and filmmakers.39 A. Boots’ *Fragments of Fear: A History of British Horror Films* (1996) S. Chibnall and J. Petleys’ edited collection *British Horror Cinema*. (2002) and Peter Hutchings’ *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film* (1993) are more focused in their exploration of genre and thematic changes within one country, noting the changing production contexts and interchanges with American film production.40 A similar approach is evident in Schneider’s *Fear without Frontiers* (2002), which discusses characteristics of worldwide horror genres and their exhibition/production.41 These texts all provide useful social and historical references to support their discussion of changing horror genre narratives, against an appreciation of changing production contexts. It should be noted that not all national horror films are as well documented as the American and European productions. The recent increase in texts discussing Asian horror films is testament to their contemporary popularity, while there is still relatively little written on Indian horror films, for example. My study aims to redress this lack when discussing Zombie film, by offering overviews of the national horror film industries that form a backdrop to their production. As such I aim not only to provide an accurate taxonomy of historical production, but a discussion of innovation and derivation within the Zombie film genre as a global part of film culture. In this theoretical approach, the importance of contextual production information forms the basis for discussion, allowing a survey of Zombie film production. From this, a discussion of changing visual representations can be achieved, when compared to shifts in horror film narratives of the same historical period.

For this to occur, we need to broaden debates into how representations of fear and the other are constructed. For such an analysis the second methodological approach will be applicable, in utilising socio-psychoanalytic readings of the horror film and its creatures. This allows a discussion of the cultural relevance
of representations of fear within horror cinema: any changing patterns of representation in Zombie film will offer an indication of changing national and cultural contexts. This particular approach is problematic in that a reliance on psychoanalytic theory if improperly used can do two things. Firstly it can slur over the differences in film texts that may question a concrete symbolic construct, as defined by the critic. Secondly, it can also ignore changing representations, analysing film monsters/genres that fit the particular writer’s adherence to certain schools of psychoanalytic thought. I shall avoid these problematic omissions by placing my analysis firmly within changing historical and production contexts, taking account of all cultural products defined as a Zombie text.

Criticisms of psychoanalytic readings of horror film are also present in contemporary horror film criticism, as Michael Levine in his 2001 article notes. Levine argues that criticisms of psychoanalytic readings are themselves faulty and based on incomplete understandings of the basic tenets of theory. However he concedes that horror is a genre predicated on individual responses and tastes, and he does not define any psychoanalytic approaches to the horror genre. This is addressed by Robin Wood, reflecting on his contribution to the collection of essays published under the title American Nightmare (1979). In his essay “What Lies Beneath” (2001), he argues that his intent behind utilising psychoanalytic theory in the original text had been to accord with the highly politicised and socially conscious re-workings of established theory apparent at the time. Angela Connolly supports this broader approach, proposing that psychoanalytic theories of culture are unsatisfactory because they take the individual out of history and culture. In “Psychoanalytic Theory in Times of Terror” (2003), she addresses these limitations in certain tenets of psychoanalytic thought, then utilises approaches that allow multiple factors to be taken into consideration, redressing these omissions. This is illustrated by her analysis of Night of The Living Dead as an exemplar of both socio-political comment and aspects of psychoanalytic theory regarding the ‘other’ in horror films. Varying psychoanalytic approaches are also present in James B. Twitchell’s text Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror (1985) and Charles Derry’s Dark Dreams: A Psychological History of the Modern Horror Film (1997).
Approaches that utilise psychoanalytic theory in support of providing gendered readings of horror include Carol Glover’s *Men, Women and Chainsaws* (1992) and R. Berenstein’s *Attack of the Leading Ladies: Gender, Sexuality and Spectatorship* (1995) among many others.47 The majority reference Zombies at least in passing, either as confirmations of or exceptions to particular theories and readings of the horror text. Therefore their omission, as well as their inclusion is informative as to the limits of psychoanalytic readings of horror films. In this approach, the film text becomes the key signifier of meaning, when placed in a social context. From this, changes to representations can be placed in a wider cultural context. This is particularly relevant to this study, as without some consideration of *what* the Zombie is and what these representations may indicate, it is worthless to then consider how and why it changes.

**Methodology**

Those academic texts that combine aspects of the two main critical approaches to readings of horror films – socio-historical and psychoanalytic – seem to allow for a diversity of readings, production context and filmic intent, that is not supplied by any one theoretical approach. Within my study, I will mindfully select critical approaches from both to supply gaps in the current knowledge surrounding Zombie film. Following Kristeva’s utilisation of Mary Douglas’s text *Purity and Danger* (1966) I will place the Zombie as a product of socio-historical fears of the undead body, an approach not applied specifically to the Zombie in any text surveyed for this study.48 This will combine a psychoanalytical reading of symbolic significance within a discussion of historical constructs. This approach will be grounded within three key areas of discussion: that of the historical, cultural and industrial contexts of the Zombie films under discussion. Thus the fallacy of applying changeless criteria to an evolving cultural product will be avoided. My study will also provide a more concerted discussion of Zombie film than is currently present in all cultural-historical surveys (either of Horror film or of the Zombie) by problematising the current placement of the Zombie as a purely cinematic creature. Allied to this
ongoing historical survey is a consideration of how the concept of a Zombie genre has been constructed and disseminated throughout global cinema. The industrial context of how cinematic products are constructed will also be charted. This will position Zombie film as both a cultural and national construct, questioning how notions of genre are constructed within an industry now noted for its interchanges with other media. This combination of theoretical standpoints is important to fully embrace the varying aspects needed to define and discuss this sub-genre from all aspects, creating a study that is not only aware of the defining characteristics of Zombie films, but also of its noted ability to change and innovate over time.

To achieve this, the study offers a historical taxonomy of Zombie film, based on a wide range of researched material. Portrayals of the Zombie in differing media are included, to indicate periods of cultural iconic saturation of this horror figure. The nature of these texts include films, online film material, television programmes, video games, cartoons, television texts, literature and comic books. It should be noted that a comprehensive survey of all Zombie texts is currently impossible. Some early film texts are not available for viewing, while some foreign films are not readily available beyond a limited home market, as is the case for much African horror film. The rise of digital filmmaking and Internet exhibition also makes a full survey impossible, given the numbers of film texts involved.

In my analysis, brief narrative descriptions are appended where necessary, while the focus of analysis rests on the visual and thematic deployment of the figure of the Zombie. Within the audio-visual sources listed above I have been attentive to discussing the visual discourses the texts engage with, notably in terms of the visualisation of the Zombie body and the *mise-en-scène*. Within the literary sources, the verbal discourses surrounding the presentation of the Zombie body have been accorded precedence. In the case of comics, a combination of both forms of analysis is necessary, given the image and text based nature of the form. The films selected for discussion were chosen according to several criteria. At the most basic, Internet research and popular critical texts indicated specific film directors and film texts to research, while the use of terms such as
Zombie were researched in publications such as *Variety* and the *Monthly Film Bulletin* to balance a popular description of what constitutes a Zombie film, against the industrial definitions used by those two publications in order to inform exhibitors. Instead, the films discussed in this study are included to example both the number of texts historically that indicate periods of production popularity, but also the thematic significance of the texts. Individual case studies are discussed in relation to their conceived status as seminal works, offset by discussions of texts that offer alternative visualisations of the cinematic Zombie, to question established taxonomies.

This will be achieved by appraising both popular and academic criticism of the Zombie genre in particular and the horror genre overall. As I have noted, the seepage between popular and academic discourses is marked, particularly in the selection of key texts and producers for analysis. I will counter this by questioning these assumed hierarchies through my discussion of historical and thematic contexts. The research materials used are eclectic: biographies, autobiographies, fan reviews, fanzines and film magazines, documentaries, online articles and interviews are used alongside articles in academic journals, selected chapters from books and industrial publications – such as *Variety* and the *Monthly Film Bulletin* mentioned above – as well as promotional material to provide both industrial and contextual information. All of this material will be used mindfully and critically, particularly when assessing the analysis proffered by Internet sources. The majority of genre studies of horror are utilised to offer an overview of changing production contexts, alongside detailed information on particular practitioners. This is also true of the specific studies on Zombie film, whose omissions and inclusions have been considered to offer a detailed consideration of the evolution of Zombie film.

Sourcing these materials occurred within two specific areas, the archives offered by the British Film Institute’s library in London, the library of the University of Portsmouth and my own personal collection of material. The latter includes the majority of the fictional Zombie texts referred to in this study, my own collection of books on the horror genre, whether based on academic or popular criticism, and a collection of both fanzines and film magazines dating from the
early 1980s onwards (notably *The Dark Side* and related publications). The BFI and University of Portsmouth supplied collections of film journals and trade materials, notably successive issues of *Cinéfantastique*, *Variety* and *Sight and Sound*. Access to out of print books, magazines and journals were supplied by the BFI.

*Chapter Breakdown*

The aims of this study are structured around three main areas of discussion. The first is to define the symbolic status of the Zombie, thereby contextualising the thematic and visual importance of this cinematic figure, at once part of and separate to established horror narratives. The first chapter addresses debates on the social treatment of the dead body, allied with a discussion of the embodiment of the abject, both theoretically and in historical discussions of death and burial. This is used as the basis for the second chapter, a consideration of the thematic characteristics of the Zombie as distinct from other fictional creatures. This is alongside a discussion of the origins of the fictional Zombie in literature and film before the visualisations in American horror film of the 1930s onwards. The changing nature of what the Zombie body signifies can then be explored through the remaining chapters on differing filmic portrayals.

The second area of discussion follows from this, in opening a debate on whether the Zombie is purely an American figure of fear as many commentators suggest. Chapters 2 to 7 chart the historical development of Zombie film, beginning with American Zombie films until the mid 1960s in Chapter 3. This is followed by a discussion on the status of George Romero as a Zombie auteur, to question the concept of innovation, ascribed to his films by critics. The following chapters then delineate the differing national cinemas that have produced Zombie films, starting with western Europe, then South America, Asia and Australasian texts. By placing these films within a strong contextual understanding of differing national film productions and social concerns, we can trace shifting patterns of global film production and distribution that in turn problematise the concept of American filmic dominance over portrayals of figures of fear. This will supply a detailed discussion of historical and national contexts lacking in most discussions of Zombie film.
The third area of discussion overarches the entire work, by questioning how concepts of genre classification and development can be problematic, given shifting definitions of the horrific within popular culture. By examining the development of a type of film – in this case the Zombie film – we can question the concrete definitions utilised by other commentators, while offering an analysis of how fluid cinematic genres are over a given historical period. This takes place against an investigation of contextual production concerns, which both shaped and responded to cultural concerns. This may indicate how the cinematic Zombie gained its current popularity in all aspects of global popular culture.

It must be noted that while this study makes use of popular criticism, itself defined partially as an exercise in expressing fanship; there is little discussion of the fans of Zombie film itself. This is partially due to the historical bias of this study, but is also due to the serious attention that Zombie film fanship requires as an object of study in its own right. I offer some historical contexts for the rise of this particular area of fanship and production, in the hope that it provides a foundation for further research.

The topic of censorship should also be briefly raised here, as while this study occasionally touches upon dialogues of Zombie films notoriety through censorship debates, the historical context of horror film censorship has been covered extensively in other studies, notably in the edited collection *Movie Censorship and American Culture* (2006); Kate Egan’s *Trash or Treasure? Censorship and the Changing Meanings of the Video Nasties*, Tom Johnson’s *Censored Screens: The British Ban on Hollywood Horror in the Thirties*, and the partisan *Seduction of the Gullible: The Truth Behind the Video Nasty Scandal* by John Martin. The debates surrounding Zombie film censorship are part of larger discussions on the horror genre, which this study hopes to contribute to. Where censorship is an important factor in the production or exhibition of Zombie film/s I have indicated particular examples, but to extend these would distort the overall discussion of Zombie film as a whole, which is as subject to censorship as any other type of horror film.
But can we differentiate the Zombie film from other horror film narratives? In order to begin this study, we must first determine whether there is a standard definition of the Zombie, and in turn, what the creature embodies. By discussing what the Zombie is, and its importance as a historical cultural construct, we may then attempt to chart the evolution (if such a term can be used) of the cinematic Zombie, in an often strange and certainly shifting, body of work.
**Embodiments of Fear: The Concept of the Zombie**

In only two things is he the same. He is the dead-and-alive, the walking corpse. And he follows the will of another, for he has none of his own.1

Rose London’s discussion of what the Zombie *is* as a creature of terror offers a simple historical perspective on a creature displayed in many different types of horror film. However contemporary commentators question this summary. If, as Bryce, Dendle and Russell argue, the Zombie genre is a distinct entity within horror film, then it follows that the figure of the Zombie can be interpreted as holding meaning that differentiates it from other horror creatures.2 Therefore a clear understanding of the essential visual and thematic constructions of the Zombie is needed. Commentators on Zombie film note characteristics that we can utilise for a definition. Leslie Halliwell notes the shifting definition of the term to mean “any kind of mindless slave”, though he specifies the original context is “dead people who are revived, more or less intact, to serve the purposes of the living”.3 James B. Twitchell also uses this definition, arguing that the Zombie, like the Mummy, is an “automaton”, dismissing it as “an utter cretin, a vampire with a lobotomy”.4 Other commentators, notably those who treat the Zombie as a figure of fear in its own right instead focus on the changing nature of the Zombie: Jamie Russell simply places the Zombie as representative of the fear of death.5 Peter Dendle clarifies this by placing the changing representation of the Zombie into distinct time periods, arguing that the early cinematic Zombie are “robotic” with no “passions or drives”, while the Zombie films of the 1950s and 1960s are animated bodies that are also depersonalised, removed from family relations.6 Zombie films of the late 60s onwards changed this representation, into “gluttonous organisms demanding representation in the food chain”.7 Therefore the narrative use of the Zombie changes, in turn altering concepts of what the Zombie is. However, we can define key areas that are present in all descriptions and discussions of the Zombie, regardless of the historical context. This in turn can explain its ongoing use in culture, based on the significance of the dead body and the livings’ reaction to it.

*The Zombie Body: Attitudes to the Dead.*
The Zombie is primarily an undead body resurrected. The manner of resurrection and the intent behind it alter in narratives, but the same starting point is required for the Zombie – it must be dead. The depiction of the Zombie indicates this status in various signifiers on the body. This begins with the movement of the Zombie in a slowly shuffling gait, with an overt rigidity to its stance and posture. The head is either fully raised to stare ahead, or lowered to indicate a servile status. This leads to the Zombie gaze, typified by authors and filmmakers as blank and depersonalised, represented by staring, occasionally bulging eyes. As the personality of the Zombie is null, identification of a once held-individuality is present only in clothes. These are ripped, stained, covered in dust and can be the clothes worn when alive, or the clothes the Zombies were buried in. The Zombie can also be covered in dust or cobwebs, to indicate the dirt associated with burying, the final separation from the living. This separation in burial informs much of horror fiction, in popular literature and film history. As Walter Kendrick argues, we have separated ourselves from death physically but; “Even as we deny that our flesh must decay, however, we surround ourselves with fictional images of the very fate we strive to hear nothing about”. As such, the cultural separation from the dead body seems to indicate a need to consider the status and potential threat of the unburied body, which may indicate the significance of the fictional undead.

Historically, the separation from the dead in western burial practices occurred as a matter of urgency. The dead were separated quickly from the living, as a hygienic matter and also as a religiously motivated action. Catharine Arnold historicizes these two conflicting dialogues within burial practices: one spiritual in its treatment of the dead, one practical, considering the high historical mortality within a populous city geography in her book *Necropolis: London and Its Dead*. Arnold graphically charts the changing treatment of the dead body, and the cultural impetus to treat the dead body as revered and feared. Perhaps the most graphic example is in the medieval concept of the *Danse Macabre* - the Dance of Death. The actuality of death and its egalitarian nature – Death comes to us all – was depicted in various European churches to elicit both a sense of repentance and spiritual awareness. As Paul Binski in *Medieval Death* notes,
this occurred at a particular point in Western European art history when burial art:

Became thematized in the fifteenth century in a visual order of the grotesque, the bizarre and the morbid. The macabre is, in its treatment of the body, precisely about extremes, the moments of passage from intactness to decay, and from decay to annihilation.⁹

In these images death is a partially decomposed corpse, indicating a fascination with the physicality of decay. Death was an everyday visitor, and dead bodies were treated accordingly. As Arnold phrases it,

> Londoners were born, baptized, married and buried in the Church … Corpses *per se* were not regarded as objects of fear … the significant thing was to be buried in or near the church. What happened after that was immaterial.¹⁰

However, a change in the manner of death instigated a newer form of disposal. This was when the Black Death appeared in Britain in 1348. The virulent disease meant that burial space had to be created quickly, to accommodate the victims. The nature of the plague was considered to be assisted by the dead bodies so quick disposal became key, away from crowded church burial sites. Here we can trace the beginnings of a shift in burial and religious practices, as the destruction of the plague weakened the working economy of the country.¹¹

More importantly, the dead body began to be considered harmful in itself. This bears tremendous importance when discussing the later appearances of the fictional Zombie. Repulsion towards the dead, and especially death caused by infectious diseases remained, but religious practices still held dominance over the treatment of dead bodies.

Walter Kendrick specifically questions how the strength of these ideas were challenged when a shift in religious beliefs occurred during the Age of Enlightenment, linked with a rise in the middle classes. Undertaking became a business; graveyards were extended, along with lasting memorials that had previously been reserved for the upper classes.¹² Cultural changes in how the body and spirit were viewed began, resonating much longer afterwards in western culture:

> By 1872, the idea that the flesh will rot seemed as horrifying as ever, to mad and sane alike. The idea, however, had long since lost its religious
usefulness: though it could still frighten, it no longer admonished … the Victorians exhibited a thoroughly modern squeamishness in regard to the symptoms of being dead. They continued a development that began at the end of the seventeenth century and has not ceased-hiding deadness away, cosmeticizing corpses, denying ever more strenuously that anything nasty happens to the body after death.\textsuperscript{13}

There are obvious parallels here with the modern mortician/undertaker and their business, and with the concept of the ‘beautiful’ dead. Following death, dressing and making up a corpse are accepted practices, all to preserve an image of life-likeness that the corpse no longer holds. All this is linked with the concealment of corpses until their internment. The practices of cosmeticizing the dead, and the social impetus to remove the body as potentially harmful, is therefore both an indicator of how treatment of the dead body has become intrinsically connected with a negation of death, allied with a view of the body as harmful, leading to its removal from spaces inhabited by the living. Dead bodies as waste and as potential carriers of disease informs many practices such as burial and cremation, and more potently, the separation of the dead and dying in hospitals. These practices, linked to hygiene, are unremarkable and commonplace to contemporary society, but are a concept that again draws a distinction between the living, the feeling and the thinking, and the dead. Here another aspect of the symbolism held in the Zombie body is apparent – that of the breaking of socially constructed borders and spaces, in the form of areas designated as inhabited by the living and those of the dead.

W. Lloyd Warner’s 1959 book \textit{The Living and the Dead: A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans} explores this separation, particularly in the chapter “The City of the Dead”. His text offers some interesting arguments for the social meaning and need for cemeteries, themselves a development on traditional graveyards that were marked by their proximity to churches.

The fundamental \textit{sacred} problem of the graveyard is to provide suitable symbols to refer to and express man’s hope of immortality through … Christianity, and to reduce his anxiety and fear about death as marking the obliteration of his personality. The fundamental \textit{secular} problem the graveyard solves is to rid the living of the decaying corpse … the nauseous smells of corruption … Another social function of the graveyard is to provide a firm and fixed social space.\textsuperscript{14}
This concept of a defined social space is telling, especially considering Warner’s observation that modern cemeteries imitate “the gardenlike dwelling area of a better-class suburb”, a comment that inexorably defines the living’s movement from living space to dead space as the “‘conveyor belt’ of social time redefines his changing place in the community and moves him onward until finally, at death, it ceremonially dumps him”. The use of the word “dump” is interesting, as it undercuts the supposedly reverential nature of burial. Therefore we can argue that modern burial practices at once mimic social structures and divisions both in geographic and class based spaces (the “better-class suburb”) while removing and disposing a body from a social space it no longer contributes to. An anthropological reading of this treatment positions this concealment, linked to the concept of waste, dirt and mess being disposed of, as part of society’s structure of behaviour. The anthropologist Mary Douglas explores this preoccupation with separation in her seminal text *Purity and Danger* (1966). Douglas discusses the concepts of taboo and boundary, notably through the ideas of pollution and cleanliness. In her text, she propounds the argument that the revulsion of dirt is inextricably linked to a need for individual and societal order. Dirt, either as an actual object or as a concept transgresses order and is a threat: “The initial recognition of anomaly leads to anxiety and from there to suppression or avoidance”, which bears obvious parallels with narrative forms of fictional horror. She continues:

> If we (*contemporary Europeans*) can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place … Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system … This idea of dirt takes us straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity.

This bears interesting resonances when we consider how many theoretical disciplines require the notion of boundaries to explain social changes and practices. One particular text offers an interpretative model from which to examine the significance of the Zombie in particular. Julia Kristeva explores the concept of disgust and separation from a psychoanalytical perspective in her text *Powers of Horror*, (1980) which bears close similarities to Mary Douglas’s findings. For Kristeva, the abject (the loss of the familiar that is negotiated and
resolved through a conservative resurrection of boundaries) is “What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite”. Here is a starting point with which we can begin to discuss the Zombie body in an overall historical, social and thematic context. The Zombie is, by definition, ‘matter’ (a body) out of place, a creature existing in defiance of the separation between life and death. As Kristeva continues:

The corpse (or cadaver: cadere, to fall), that which has irredeemably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death … the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything … The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject.

It can be argued that the Zombie body as corpse is an inherent threat to societal order, an emblem of dirt and decay. As Noël Carroll summarises for all horror creatures, they are;

Impure and unclean. They are putrid or mouldering things, or they hail from oozing places, or they are made of dead and rotting flesh, or chemical waste, or are associated with vermin, disease, or crawling things. They are not only quite dangerous but they also make one’s skin creep.

This finds its fullest expression in the symbolism present in horror films, as they specifically challenge and/or reinstate societal and physical boundaries accepted by the viewing audience. As Andrew Tudor postulates, they are “one aspect of the social construction of the fearful in our society”. Therefore the Zombie defies the physical and social limitations placed on the dead body: it is a mockery of the concept of eternal life and resting in peace, religious concepts that sanctify the dead body. By its appearance outside of socially sanctified spaces (the graveyard), it is also rejecting the physical boundaries constructed by the living.

At its most visceral level, the presentation of the fictional Zombie should be considered, as the implied putrescence not only indicates a fascination with bodily decay. Gaping wounds, gore and the depiction of infective stages of decomposition may vary in Zombie films, but their presence evidences changing attitudes to the dead body. This proves vital in discussing the later portrayals of
the Zombie body: the gory physicality of the later Zombie films indicates a fascination with biological hazards and mutilations in both the monsters and the victims. The concept of infection from the unclean also indicates to us the unchanging nature of the fear of contagion. Like the *Danse Macabre* images, the Zombie body is also a warning of plague, sudden death and decomposition: factors that still frighten us today. In conclusion, the physical portrayal of the cinematic Zombie causes disgust both symbolically and biologically in its presentation and existence. It refuses to acknowledge the borders placed by society to separate the dead and living, and as such militates against the concept of a ‘final’ ending and structures of cleanliness and dirt. However, this is not the only meaning that can be embodied in the figure of the Zombie, and is not the only border that can be broken.

The Zombie Brain: The Death of Individuality?

As the decaying body of the Zombie poses a threat to notions of separation and cleanliness, so the Zombie brain challenges concepts of individuality and the brain as seat of emotion, rationality and personality. The early fictional depictions of the Zombie rested as much on their lack of individuality and reasoning ability as they did on the actual un/dead body. Returned from the dead, the Zombie obeys orders, without displaying any emotion, reasoning ability or memories of their past life. Used primarily for physical work, they cannot revolt against their controller until the person dies or is incapacitated, or in early fictions, is fed salt which ‘awakens’ them to their undead status, necessitating a return to the grave and/or revenge upon their creator. As such the concept of the unthinking mind in the dead body should be discussed. Alongside the modern psychosocial separation of the process of death and dying, the concept of the brain as an indicator of life has gained more credence. As Sara Knox postulates, this in itself is an indicator of changing social conditions, notably the rise of ‘modern individualism’ linked to high modernity. Commenting on Locks text *Twice dead: Organ transplants and the reinvention of death* on the modern definition of death, Knox propounds the
following summary of how both society and science have centred on the head as an indicator of life:

What this concentration on the head/mind/brain reflects is a convergence between the cultural conceptualisation of death with the biomedical definition of the biological end of life. In America, as in much of Europe, brain death (or, more specifically, the cessation of the higher brain functions) is the end of life. In modernity, “the core of individuality [once associated with that ‘sovereign organ,’ the heart] has been displaced upward, and when this core is irreversibly damaged, death occurs.” (Lock, 2002, p.199)

Therefore the seat of individuality is placed within the section of the body that is reasoning, rational. In applying this concept to the Zombie, it is therefore twice dead, both physically and mentally. Yet they still move, and in the case of later Zombie films, can make attempts at reasoning. It is not therefore just a lack of reasoning power that defines the Zombie, but also the complete negation of consciousness and through this, individuality, that may help define how the Zombie breaks symbolic borders of otherness.

The term Zombie is also employed outside fiction, within a philosophical context to discuss the nature of consciousness. This concept of the “p-zombie” is generally considered to begin within Campbell’s term “imitation man”, furthered by Robert Kirk’s explicit use of the term zombies. While the ongoing debate over the viability of using “p-zombies” to discuss human consciousness is ongoing, there are several interesting dialogues that may indicate another level of symbolic “otherness” we see in the cinematic Zombie. In essence, the zombie (not the cinematic Zombie) does not experience qualia. Kirk defines qualia as “those properties of experiences or of whole persons by which we are able to classify experiences according to ‘what they are like’”. The p-zombie cannot experience qualia in the same manner, and as such this defines its non-human state. In applying this to the cinematic Zombie, we can further this concept by noting that the separation from emotion and intelligence is as much a definition of the Zombie as the concept of the undead body – a Zombie cannot experience, merely act on orders or instinct that are removed from a conscious decision. Leaving aside the question of a soul, the Zombie presents an emotional tabula rasa, incapable of self – determined actions and experience. This lack clearly positions it as other, the Zombie as incapable of
learning and experiencing because it is removed from life. While this is a problematic definition given later presentations of the fictional Zombie, the essential divide between reasoning and calculated behaviour both damns and exonerates the Zombie as a figure of fear – on one level, the lack of experience marks it as unreasoning and relentless, on another, the Zombie becomes a pathetic figure because it cannot emote or indeed understand beyond the repetition of orders and primal instinct.

The emergence of the “p-zombie” concept also reflects the changing perception of the Zombie in cultural contexts. While ideas on automatons and “imitation men” were and have been current since Descartes, the use of the term “p-zombie” arguably refers to a rising interest (since the 1970s) in the contradictions inherent in the fictional Zombie, in themselves potent metaphors for death and consciousness. This rising interest in the metaphor of the Zombie is explored throughout this work, but importantly, the use of the term within dialogues on experience and self seem clearly traceable to this particular historical moment. This shift can also be seen in the dialogues surrounding the concept of the body as a social and personal “work”, defined and improved by experience and self-awareness. As Chris Shilling in his text *The Body and Social Theory* argues, the changing nature of body perception has linked an increased knowledge of bodily change and scientific advancement to the concept of the “body as constitutive of the self”. As such, to be an individual is to be aware of your body and to construct self-image in a manner that potentially demonstrates this to others. Death finishes this self-aware construction and therefore ends the process of defining individuality.

In the figure of the Zombie, both the body and the brain are held under the control of another and cannot allow for individual expression beyond that which is determined by another (either a person or function). Therefore the Zombie negates the borders of our concept of the self and the corpses’ perceived lack of self. The Zombie is not truly an individual, but one of a number of automatons. This is supported by the physical depiction of the Zombie. The corpse, unable to speak, emote or think, falls outside of the concept of self or personality, as their body has been taken outside of society’s normal parameters of the living. The
Zombie reiterates this, but also challenges our concepts of personality in that it functions but does not think. It is a controlled body and brain, and in this the final function of the Zombie in a symbolic manner becomes clear: the Zombie as a dark mirror for the concept of the social body.

The Zombie as Social body

If the body and the brain in the presentation of the Zombie are inextricably linked, then it is no surprise that the final category for discussion is also a part of the dialogues discussed above. As Knox expresses: “Social meanings of death have, since the nineteenth century, been ineluctably tied to anatomies literal and symbolic; anatomies of the individual body and of the social body.” 28 We have seen this clearly expressed in the discussion above on the ordered nature of burial and separation from the dead. As such, the presentation of the Zombie rests on a social awareness of death as well as the meanings that can be interpreted from the use of the Zombie in texts. As we have previously noted, the Zombie as a fictional character is enslaved. The systems of slavery it is held within change, and it is vital to appreciate that there are varying interpretations of its slavery; depending on the fictional text the Zombie is deployed in. We can separate these interpretations into various categories, based on the historical context of the fictional appearances of the Zombie that are charted throughout this study. If the Zombie can be held to be emblematic of not just an individual body, but also a social body, then the manner in which it is controlled and deployed in the fictions is important. These interpretations range from overarching discussions of political and economic ideology, through to specific debates on race and gender.

If we take as a basic definition of the Zombie that it has no self-will, it comes as no surprise that there are many commentators who explicitly place the Zombie as emblematic of wider socio-political concerns. Steve Shaviro categorically states, “zombies present the ‘human face’ of capitalist monstrosity”. 29 Various critics commenting on Zombie films continue this argument. 30 For example, Gunn and Treat argue that the Zombie is a potent expresser of the concept of ideological determination, especially given communication researchers distrust
of mass media and fears of fascist ideology in the first half of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{31} In this context the Zombie could be held as an indicator of the mass controlled by the persuasive individual: a clear demonstrator of the symbolic power allocated to mans reasoning power within the social sphere, a concept returned to again and again in horror and science fiction narratives.

The same discussion links to the economic worth of bodies portrayed in Zombie films. All of the early texts support the notion of the controlled body, working for the benefit of one man (who is depicted as of being of higher social or economic status). This again bears parallels with Marxist interpretations of socio-economic structures in capitalism and importantly places the Zombies as belonging to an exploited underclass. They are ‘others’ by nature of their existence but also of their ‘employment’. Their use is the logical extension of an economic system based on the economic worth of bodies as workers, if not consumers.\textsuperscript{32}

But again it is in the actual bodies of the Zombies that dialogues of repression become more pertinent, in two key areas. The first is based on the race of the Zombie, which began explicitly as an undead black male in ‘Voodoo’ Zombie fiction. The second is in the gender of the Zombie, who is not always male. The historical enslavement of black and female bodies needs little clarification, but in terms of the Zombie it is fascinating that they are portrayed as the \textit{natural} victims, the black bodies as already enslaved, the female bodies as physically weaker and demanded as potential companions for the white male. As both gender and race form the focus of a large part of film criticism, it is only logical to extend this premise to a discussion of the Zombie body. In terms of racial perspectives and analysis, the beginning of the Zombie in ‘Voodoo’ fiction (discussed in the next chapter) explicitly positions the Zombie as black and enslaved.

The positioning of the gendered Zombie is less clear. The social enslavement of female bodies in Zombie texts is an indicator of altering attitudes to the place of the female in society and as a sexualised individual in the traditions of horror film, explored in Chapter 3 and throughout the study. Though women in horror film are discussed by many commentators as sexualised victims or predators, the Zombie appears at first glance to be a resolutely asexual creature: it is neither a
sexual predator (as with vampires) and is not a result of an usurpation of childbirth (Frankensteins’ Monster). Carol J. Clover ignores this facet when discussing undead creatures, but her observation that sexual difference is a ‘living human’ construct, and therefore inapplicable to Zombies (though this is arguable) indicates that gendered discussions of the Zombie need to be considered. We can argue that the Zombie cannot be a ‘mother’, as it is created and maintained outside of gendered biological functions. The Zombie cannot fulfil the notions of what constitute the “monstrous-feminine” as constructed by Barbara Creed’s argument. In this, she links (using Kristeva’s *Powers of Horror*) the depiction of the maternal figure, alongside depictions of women generally in horror, to a discussion of abjection. Instead, we can consider the Zombie to act as a form of “gender displacement”, what Clover characterises as an “identificatory buffer, an emotional remove”. This ‘buffer’, can remove considerations of gender from the Zombie as a construct, instead questioning how gender roles are presented in the living, which the Zombie is set against. By examining the socio-sexual placement of women, given their biological status as potential child bearers, we can argue that societal structures form around a mother raising children within a defined social group: the family. From this interesting questions are raised as to how the Zombie questions another concept of social structures: those of kinship and emotional responsibility. Mark Jancovich notes that contemporary women’s horror problematises the role of women in such structures, following the creation of the ‘bourgeois family’:

> Women writers have presented the family as a place of confinement in which the female self is threatened with fragmentation or engulfment. Traditionally, women are taught to subordinate their own identity to that of the male in exchange for economic security and protection … the emergence of feminism to changes in the labour market have encouraged women to be independent and to realise their own potential, and these developments have come into conflict with the more traditional social roles associated with women.

The Zombie both threatens and questions these assumed roles, as bereft of personality and because of its abject nature (removed from society) it cannot recognise kinship structures or limitations imposed on living social groups. As such, it negates any gender construction and expectation of socially enshrined behaviour. This is symbolically important, especially in later Zombie texts, as it
raises interesting questions on how social roles can be contested: as Evelleen Richards argues, symbolic monsters can be “an image that may be exploited for its destabilizing and transformative promise”. 37 She references other feminist theoreticians who have

Reinvented the monster as a subversive and potent symbol for a feminist future … “a regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others” … others have promoted a “sociology of monsters” as a site for the analysis and contestation of sociotechnical relations and heir overlapping dimensions of power. 38

Therefore the figure of the Zombie, which can negate traditional gender roles and constructs, should be considered carefully throughout this study, to underline its importance as a signifier of social relations, whether it supports them or undermines them in differing narratives.

So the Zombie, in essence, questions assumed social boundaries. This is through its body, which is construed as abject, and through its behaviour, which is defined as mindless. The Zombie arguably is essentially a sympathetic figure, because it does not act of its own will. This should be remembered when discussing Zombie texts – while the Zombie can represent a mass, and indeed in many texts is intended to, the actual physical presence of the Zombie is intended to remind us of our individuality and mortality, through the returning dead, a theme present in culture before the term Zombie was applied to this undead creature. This is an important consideration. If social spaces and practices are progenitors of later fictionalised presentations of horror (notably in burial practices and related beliefs), changing cultural and historical contexts will necessarily influence later fictional portrayals. The Zombie, while we have forwarded some key basic characteristics, is not a fixed creature of fear in its portrayal and deployment in fictional texts. Therefore serious consideration should be paid to creatures which embody the basic definitions we have outlined, and which force us to reconsider the assumed dominance of the later American cinematic Zombie. The next chapter will do this through tracing fictional antecedents of the term Zombie, throwing new light on how the importance of the dead body in fiction influenced later cinematic texts.
Fictional Antecedents: Before the American Cinematic Zombie

The Zombie as an embodiment of fear occupies a contradictory space with histories of the horror genre, in particular those studies that concern themselves with the ways in which particular horror monsters are displayed within film texts. The Zombie is considered by some critics to be a mere extension of established literary creations, while other commentators, notably those who consider the Zombie genre to be a fixed construct, place it as a cinematic creation separated from previous horror narratives. The Zombie Movie Encyclopaedia by Peter Dendle is a case in point, as he briefly categorises developments in the history of Zombie films:

Though derivative in some respects, the Zombie has nonetheless survived as an independent mythological creature in its own right … after all, their roots are to be found in African and African Caribbean folklore, and so they are one of the few screen creatures in the Hollywood menagerie not of European origin. Zombies are, furthermore, the only creature to pass directly from folklore to the screen, without first having an established literary tradition.

This approach firmly places the Zombie as part of an established cultural context, previous to its appearance in American film narratives. But Dendle’s argument fails to problematise how folklore was translated into a visual medium (incidentally ignoring creatures such as the werewolf and the mummy which also arguably have had few literary portrayals). We should critique this approach, as it ignores how the construction of cultural texts relies upon external factors and the translation of basic concepts throughout different media. Dendle’s summation is also an indicator of the confusion surrounding the ways in which a Zombie is defined – as we noted previously, the shifting representations of Zombies in film and other media have marked the creature as a particularly malleable cultural construct. This chapter then will question both the assumed cinematic beginning of the Zombie, re-assessing the historical appearances of the Zombie in culture. This will also question those approaches that deny Zombie texts agency as meaningful evolutions of previous horror narratives. If we return to our basic definitions of what constitutes a Zombie, we can begin to delineate particular characteristics that can open up intriguing new
considerations of how the controlled undead body is presented in texts before cinematic representations.

The concept of the dead returning to life could be held to start at any point in human history when the concept of spiritual loss and bodily disposal became key. To mention a few examples, whether fictional or not, we could point to Lazarus as the reanimated dead, the stories of those interred by mistake during plagues.\(^3\) Paul Binski also mentions the *Three Living and the Three Dead*, a tale showing “the transience and essential baseness of the human condition” as an example of how decomposing corpses were used in medieval texts.\(^4\) The key motif in these texts is that dead bodies become an exemplar or threat to living humans. From this we can see the narrative roots of early mythological creatures such as the vampire, and as such, measures were put in place to restrict their possible return in dead bodies - burning, burying at crossroads, and the use of the stake. In these actions, the importance of the reanimated body is conceded by the measures taken to distance the living. These practices died away with social changes in cultural thinking on the body and soul, but remained in culture in a different form, through the medium of the Gothic novel and the emergence of horror literature; as Lovecraft phrases it,

> Witch, werewolf, vampire and ghoul…needed but little encouragement to take the final step across the boundary that divides the chanted tale or song from the formal literary composition.\(^5\)

Therefore the fictional beginnings of the Zombie may well be found in the first concerted period of horror literature, known as the gothic.

*Horror Literature: The Precursor to Zombies in Film?*

David Stevens postulates that the term gothic, despite its various interpretations, began its existence as an 18\(^{th}\) century reaction against the overwhelming rationality encompassed by the cultural changes begun in the Enlightenment, when:

> At the same time, social progress, relying largely on more and more rationally based political and social organisation and on various
scientific and technological inventions, had made it relatively ‘safe’ to indulge in irrational fantasies.⁶

As such, gothic fictions allowed for a space to consider the role of the body as part of and opposed to the historical dialogues that ordered societal behaviour, especially the fictional reanimated body with its overtones of sexuality and slavery. In the collection of essays entitled *The Gothic Other*, Ruth Bienstock Anolik considers, in ‘traditional’ and modern gothic tales how these texts allow for members of a marginalized group resist demonization and instead figure members of the dominant repressive group as inhumanly and frighteningly monstrous – members of a subordinate group “use the gothic to haunt back, re-working the gothic’s conventions to intervene in discourse that would demonize them”.⁷

For the purposes of this study, we can draw the obvious parallels with the presentation of the Zombie in their position as a marginalized group, and begin to trace the role of the returning dead body in fiction, beginning with the creature most usually allied with the Zombie: Frankensteins Monster. Leslie Halliwell makes the same link with Frankenstein’s Monster and the Zombie when he argues that they are “Frankenstein monsters created not by science but by black magic”.⁸ This view is problematic, but there are thematic considerations in Mary Shelley’s 1818 text that may indicate early indications for how the fictional Zombie is presented. The Monster is created through the negation of borders both biological and spiritual, and stands as a warning of man’s intervention in life or death. It is notable that both the women in this text and the creature are neglected and punished for the males’ behaviour. The traditional social ‘underclass’ is shown to suffer, but the Monster, a suffering and vocal creature, is allowed a space to show this plight. However, he is still an ‘other’ by means of his creation as something asexually created from the dead, and is explicitly positioned as the ‘threatening other’ in his appearance, codified from the beginnings in darkness and terror (at least for his creator). As Eugenia DeLamotte argues, this duality of terror and threat, from both the creator and the monster only occurs “inside the bounds of an ideology that defines dark people as other to begin with”.⁹ This
bears startling parallels with later Voodoo fiction that I discuss later in the chapter. The figure of Frankenstein’s Monster also indicates several areas of thematic importance: the presentation of the dead body. While bearing in mind Jane Pullman’s critique that “Victor Frankenstein’s creature is not a zombie because it is a crazy quilt of the parts of many people”, the fact that the monster is dead flesh reanimated should not be discounted. The fractured nature of its body, allied with the atmospheric description of Frankenstein’s labours indicates the importance of external decay:

Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay, and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses ... I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain.

Frankenstein’s incursion into the space of the dead thereby brings about his own creation, which itself breaks set physical, moral and religious boundaries. Shelley’s later text _The Last Man_ reflects even further upon feverish death imagery as the human race dies through a plague. The importance of plague imagery should not be ignored in these texts, or indeed in later iconic horror literature, such as Bram Stoker’s _Dracula_ (1897). In this the vampire is an infective dead body, a personalised plague later used in the film _Nosferatu_ (F.W Murnau, 1922). Stoker makes this infective status clear when he has Van Helsing lecture Arthur: “For all that die from the preying of the Un-dead become themselves Un-dead, and prey on their kind.” In this we can draw clear comparisons with the later portrayals of the flesh-eating Zombie. However, we cannot fully place the later Zombie as a direct descendant of the two iconic creatures mentioned above: both Frankenstein’s Monster and the vampire seek a relationship with their victims or creators. Both are aware of their liminal status, evidence personality and reasoning ability, factors that are denied to the Zombie. The animalistic nature of their appearance also defines them as separate to the recognisably human figure of the Zombie. Instead we can turn to separate appearances in horror literature that indicate early appearances of the unquiet dead. The undead body in these are used differently in terms of narrative and symbolic use, but always utilise the concept of a breaking boundary.
Joseph Sheridan le Fanu’s 1839 “A Strange Event in the Life of Schalken the Painter” revolves around a corpse that claims a living bride, despite her attempt to escape his home – a tomb. In comparison Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Fall of The House of Usher (1839) and later “The Case of M. Valdemar” (1845) both focus on a death that is suspended or misinterpreted, leading to the agony of those caught in the liminal state between life and death. “The Fall of the House of Usher” is as much about the decay of the family line as it is of the actual setting, indicating a moral degenerative sickness in the family, whereas “The Case of M. Valdemar” is treated as a scientific experiment in mesmerism that traps a man’s soul in limbo, to his pleas for release and his sudden, shocking putrefaction when it occurs. Both Madeline and M.Valdemar are portrayed in agony, reaching for those who have caused their state, and the descriptions of their undead or nearly dead forms indicate the separation of the dead from the living, and the soul from the body, is not a clear cut status to be decided by men.

Poe, like Shelley and Stoker before him, also created a narrative dealing with plague in “The Masque of the Red Death”, but unlike the two previous authors used the concept of a figure of death without personality. As Elana Gomel argues: “When a pestilence starts in earnest, the vampire's seductive androgyny gives way to the Red Death's sexlessness”. The all-encompassing nature of death (as in historical plagues) is recounted in Poe’s text as the bodies of the aristocratic victims fall and bleed, until "the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all". Again, we see recurring concerns in the undead body and its portrayal in all these texts: a fascination with the physical description of the decaying body, dialogues on spiritual versus rational decisions on the status of the dead, and the conflicting morality the returning dead question. The Victorian era of horror literature continued this tradition, notably in Arthur Conan Doyle’s fictions on the resurrected dead, in the guise of the Mummy. Texts featuring the Mummy offer another potential historical root of the figure of the Zombie, though the Mummy seems predicated within stories as a protector of the dead, rising to restore boundaries between the living and the dead when disturbed, rather than actively seeking to return of its own volition.
At this point we should return to previous critical opinions that position the Zombie as a purely cinematic creature, to see how this has been refuted so far. We have noted that the basic definition of a Zombie is bereft of personality, therefore according to Jane Pulliam, “generally not the protagonists of stories about them”.\textsuperscript{18} We have seen this in the narratives above that record the living’s reaction to the dead. But the focus on the physical appearance of the corpse, which is a key thematic consideration agreed upon by commentators on Zombie film, is present in these works. That so many texts use graveyard imagery to contrast the appearances of these creatures within normal social spaces also indicates a key narrative concern, namely the symbolic breakdown of borders, whether through infection or in the single figure of an undead creature. This argument can be taken a stage further; to specifically show that current studies of the Zombie film are woefully contradictory. Kyle Bishop’s 2006 article “Raising the Dead” seems unable to determine which type of Zombie he is discussing, placing George Romero’s films as “classic zombie movies”, claiming it is a “unique” development on the Voodoo tales that first caught the public’s imagination in the earliest part of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{19} But he then delineates patterns of influence that show the Zombie is not the fixed representation he claims. Similarly, his argument that certain narrative tropes that define the Zombie film throughout its history; “poisoning, premature burial, loss of cognition, slavery, the return of the dead and death itself”, can also be equally well applied to the texts we have discussed above.\textsuperscript{20} But it is Bishop’s problematic assumption on the essential visual nature of the Zombie that proves useful in forming our rebuttal. Noting that the Zombie embodies a fear of the returned undead body, linking it to Freud’s identification of the \textit{unheimlich} or un-homely, Bishop posits the Zombie as a breaker of borders, but because:

Zombies do not speak, all of their intentions and activities are manifested solely through physical action. In other words, because of this sensual limitation, zombies must be watched. Aspects of the film zombie may be recognizable in other classic monsters, but no traditional literary tale conforms to the genre as it has been so firmly established by Romero.\textsuperscript{21}

If we take Bishop’s last point first, he explicitly ignores the previous Zombie film narratives he has been at pains to construct as progenitors of Romero’s
work. If he is placing the flesh-eating Zombie as the definitive symbolic construct in Zombie film, then by extension he should acknowledge the narratives that in turn constructed this – namely concepts of the ghoul and the violent incursions of social space present in 50s horror comics. These are in themselves a form of literature, so the Zombie does have a definable literary background. His contention that Zombies are purely visual creatures is also debatable – all Zombie films rely on the reactions of the living as much as the presentation of the undead for narrative force. We have already seen how this is demonstrated in horror literature. We can also point to one particular horror text that offers all the defining characteristics Bishop relates.

These are present in one of the best – known short horror stories of the early twentieth century, in W. W Jacob’s chilling *The Monkeys Paw* (1902). Lucidly written and paced, it is a simple warning: “be careful what you wish for”. The family of the tale are isolated in a new development, with financial obligations to meet. When a wish for ready cash is granted, it is through the horrific mutilation and death of their son at the factory in which he works. The money comes not as compensation, as the factory representative makes clear, but as a gesture towards the value their son Herbert gave while alive and working. The economic worth of the male body is here exploited, against the familial attachment of the parents. The final sequence of the story sees the mother wish for her son alive, and after a period of time, he returns. But it is notable that the father has already made up his mind that what has returned is not his son: “For God’s sake don’t let it in” and later “before that thing outside got in”. Here the boundary between the dead is reinforced by the readers’ knowledge that Herbert was terribly mangled and has been buried some time, and by the fathers panic at the state of the dead thing outside. I contend that *The Monkey’s Paw* can be considered as one of, if not the first, most concerted presentations of the figure of the Zombie, and without any explicit discussion of the undead body. The unheimlich nature of the son’s return, to the family home from a cemetery some miles distant, the frantic attempts to keep the “thing” outside by the father while the mother wishes the dead alive, the barrage of blows on the front door – all conform to representations of the undead in cinema. The creation of the undead
body is kept deliberately vague, but the use of Indian mysticism as a magical force echoes the ‘exotic’ magic used so heavily in Voodoo literature, discussed later. The reader’s knowledge that the undead body outside the family home is severely damaged also negates the need for an explicit discussion of its presentation, but we do not need to see it to know this. Therefore the argument that the Zombie can only be a cinematic creature through visual representation, to instil fear through its decomposed state and mindlessness, is demonstrably wrong.

While Zombies in literature may not have been presented in accepted seminal works, as in the case for *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*, there are enough recurring uses of the returning dead body to give us an indication that later cinematic portrayals were not reliant upon a swift translation of superstition into film. This is also demonstrated in two final authors, one British, one American, who used the figure for their texts but in markedly different portrayals. Montague Rhodes James (1862-1936) was a medievalist and biblical scholar and influences of both are present in his works. Compared to Sheridan Le Fanu in his use of understated horrors that are rarely described fully, M. R. James mostly uses malevolent ghosts and spirits to torment his protagonists.  But he also occasionally uses a returned dead body to mete out revenge or punishment. The undead children in “Lost Hearts” (1894) seem capable of assuming physical form as well as being apparitions. But in “A Warning to the Curious”, “A View From a Hill”, (both 1925) “A School Story”, (1911) “Count Magnus”, (1904) “The Tractate Middoth” (1911) and “Wailing Well”, (1927) all of the stories feature bodies that are described as other and undead: cobwebbed eyes and dried skin in “The Tractate Middoth”, and the predatory skeletal figures in the “Wailing Well”:

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Something in ragged black – with whitish patches breaking out of it: the head, perched on a long thin neck, half hidden by a shapeless sort of sun-bonnet … Worst of all he saw a fourth – unmistakably a man this time – rising out of the bushes a few yards behind the wretched Stanley, and painfully, as it seemed, crawling into the track. On all sides the miserable victim was cut off.
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The description here of ragged clothes and bleached skin, the awkward but relentless movement of the dead all tally with what we could recognise as later Zombie film depictions. In these short stories, the undead are vengeful, actively seeking to kill the living for their transgressions. The same underlying tone also appears in one of Howard Phillip Lovecraft’s earlier stories, “Herbert West – Reanimator”. An American writer, the majority of Lovecraft’s early work was published in pulp magazines such as Weird Tales, only later being collected and reprinted. This was the case with “Herbert West – Reanimator”, which began as six stories called Grewsome Tales in 1922. In this Lovecraft re-works the tale of Frankenstein to show the returned dead as violent, cannibalistic and mindless, finally led to destroy their creator:

The fiends had beaten, trampled and bitten every attendant who did not flee … These victims who could recall the event without hysteria swore that the creatures had acted less like men than like unthinkable automata guided by the wax-faced leader … Their outlines were human, semi-human, fractionally human, and not human at all – the horde was grotesquely heterogeneous.

In these passages we can isolate again characteristics of the fictional Zombie: the violence, the controlled state of being, the concept of the toiling mass, and finally, the fractured state of the body. As such, the Zombie can be recognised to have existed before its cinematic incarnation, in single literary appearances of the returning dead. These vary in their use of the undead figure, but as the rest of the study will discuss, this is one of the characteristics of how the fictional Zombie is deployed, in whatever media. However, we should not discount the importance of the spate of popular literature that is claimed to be the earliest body of work to inspire the American cinematic Zombie. Before we turn to the cinematic Zombie, we should consider the Voodoo Zombie in literature.

Voodooism and Slavery: Horrors in the background.

The eyes were the worst. It was not my imagination. They were in truth like the eyes of a dead man, not blind, but staring, unfocused, unseeing. The whole face, for that matter, was bad enough. It was vacant, as if there was nothing behind it … I reached out and grasped one of the dangling hands. The zombie stared without responding. Lamercie, who was their keeper, now more sullen than ever, pushed
In this excerpt from his story “Dead Men Working in the Cane Fields”, William Seabrook capitalised on the popularity of his book *The Magic Isle* about his experiences in Haiti. Published in 1929, it is notable as the text that first drew popular attention to the practices of *Vodun*, albeit in a sensationalised form. It was from this text that both the first American stage play and film on Zombies would originate. However, this popular cultural product was an indirect result of a dark chapter of American intervention in Haiti.

Haiti declared independence in 1804, but the country was left with little economic or political stability. It became an object of contention for America, who saw the Caribbean as its “backyard” in military and economic terms, leading to the eventual invasion of Haiti by U.S Marines in 1915, under the pretext of helping to restore national order. This intervention eventually included a forced labour system and increased racial tensions between the varying races in Haiti. Peasant farmers lost their rights to land, and the country was riven by a series of uprisings. In 1929 the massacre of over 24 unarmed civilians by U.S Marines at Aux Cayes would eventually lead to a gradual lessening of repressive legislation (ending altogether in 1934). As a result of American intervention, cultural interest in Haiti grew as white ‘order’ and ‘discipline’ was set against black ‘superstition’ and ‘disorder’ – notably in the presentation of Vodun and alternative cultural practices. This was mediated through the implicit acceptance of American culture and religion as proper, and would reach its heights in 1929, not only with the publication of Seabrook’s text, but also with the Harlem Renaissance. As Tanya Krzywinska suggests, in the particular case of Voodoo in American popular culture:

> Voodoo becomes a way of trading on the lure of a transgressive counter-discourse, involving a relativisation and critique of western values.

From 1929 onwards, a critique of western values in popular culture would be particularly appropriate in American society, especially when discussing the powerful and the helpless. Created through ‘black’ magic, white spectatorship of the Zombie in these fictions stands as a condemnation of ‘pagan’ ritual and
belief, rather than an acceptance that for Haitians, and Black Americans, the type of physical drudgery experienced by the Zombie was also their lot. Hans Ackermann and Jeanine Gauthier proffer a more detailed exploration of the zombi (the term given to the actual creature, rather than the westernised term Zombie) as spirit and body in their article “The Ways and Nature of the Zombi”. Their article makes fascinating reading, especially so when considering the etymological roots of the term zombi, which was used within different contexts in Africa. However, despite their disdain for the popularised and false accounts of Zombies, the article does reiterate some key thematic factors presented in the fictitious accounts. The zombi is created for servitude, in any manner of religious, magical or pharmaceutical ways. The bodiless zombi can be used as an infective force. Ackermann and Gauthier also propound that the concept of the zombi began as a dialogue on the fractured nature of the human soul, and only later did this become physical:

From zombification of the soul, it is a small mental step to zombification of the body. Logically, this must be a secondary belief because the feat is much more difficult to accomplish.

This closely echoes the superstitions arising from Europe on the dangers of the un-shriven or unburied body. We see in the history of horror literature how this translates into fictional monsters, and it is apparent this same process is at work here. William Seabrook merely facilitated the process of the zombi into the Zombie, introducing the concept in a fairly muddled and inaccurate way to American audiences.

The key themes from the zombi mythos remain in his translation – the use of the enslaved and ‘dead’ body, the lack of personal awareness, the use by unscrupulous or indeed evilly motivated controllers, and the repercussions of letting Zombies become aware of what has happened to them. The physical descriptions also tally, in that it is male and female Zombies who are controlled but the majority are always black. They speak rarely. Without orders they stand silent, when working they move slowly, not necessarily with arms outstretched. Their eyes are blank and staring, they do not emote, and unless freed, do not act on their own impulses. As American political repression in Haiti grew (not ending until 1934) these descriptions would find greater expression in horror

This Voodoo literature is notable in its concerted historical period of production, and in the clear links made between voodooism and Zombies in the first American Zombie film. However, the returning dead, whether controlled or uncontrolled, and the thematic significance of the undead body, were present in literature previous to this. We should also consider whether other representations of the controlled Zombie body may pre-date American film productions. We can find them in some of the earliest horror films created (themselves evolved from the gothic literary tradition) from the first concerted period of horror film production, in Germany.

*The First Cinematic Zombie? The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*

The end of WW1 positioned Germany as economically and politically unstable. Many commentators (notably Siegfried Kracauer) have suggested that the themes of mesmerism, sickness and darkness in films of this time film as symptomatic of Germanic society, given the economic and political turbulence endemic in the Weimar republic at the time. While this argument is flawed in many respects, it is useful in its discussion of the Weimar Republic.35 With no overarching policies on films or their content, the turbulence of social life allowed for a space in which to interpret longings and fears though cultural products. The German horror film became seen as a viable method of expression and commerce, as Erich Pommer explained:

> Germany was defeated; how could she make films that would compete with the others? It would have been impossible to try and imitate Hollywood or the French. So we tried something new: the expressionist or stylised films. This was possible because Germany had an overflow of good artists and writers, a strong literary tradition, and a great tradition of theatre.36
The strong literary tradition, based primarily on Romantic literature, which itself had engendered the Gothic, proved itself useful to the film industry at this point in “the use that could be made of German Romantic motifs and motifs from the eerier folk ballads”. Linked with the iconographic traditions of German painting depicting the forces of nature overwhelming humanity and the overwhelming physical losses of WW1, the subjugated human body became a focus of intense interest. This is perhaps most vividly demonstrated in the German Expressionist film of 1919, *Das Cabinet des Dr Caligari*. The history of *Caligari* as a film, with its contradicting accounts of creation and thematic intent, are well documented within several texts. *Caligari* is a seminal film, not only visually, but also in the use of Cesare as a cipher for the loss of societal control to a powerful, hypnotic individual. That fear of subservience would be reused in later filmic texts – notably various screen incarnations of *Dracula*, for example – as a role that relates very clearly to the fear of loss of individualism. More importantly, it predates the keynote of most Zombie films with their dialogues on mental and emotional death. In *Caligari* this is explained through the use of the enslaved, depersonalised body in the characters of both Cesare and Jane, and the dialogues on mentality and personality as a result of the film narrative and *mise en scène*. The physical depictions of both settings and the body within *Caligari* were a result of the rigid control of set design and lighting, costume and movement. The floor of the studio was angled and distorted to make the actors walk in a stilted manner, while the background of painted shadow and angular buildings, hemming in the protagonists, hints at a restricted and threatening milieu. In the character of Cesare, this fragmentation of emotion and environment becomes personalised, because in Cesare we are faced with our most obvious indicator of difference. Cesare in *Caligari* is a somnambulist, discovered and manipulated by Dr. Caligari to utter prophetic sentences of death. The first introduction to Cesare positions him both as spectacle and as a version of living death. While he is never explicitly referred to as dead, he is presented to the sideshows audience, and to us, framed in a coffin-like box. His pallid face fills the frame, to show dark-rimmed eyes opening, staring in a moment of implied despair, and then returning to a blank, vapid gaze. In this moment he is both slave and victim,
depersonalised and manipulated, aware and unaware. He stands on the borders between being and non-being, death and undeath. If we consider the definition of a fictional Zombie pre-1968, we can make the following characterisations. The Zombie is soulless, without personal motivation or interest save for that demanded by its creator or owner. They exist to serve, and are typified by their blank stare, awkward gait and pallid, expressionless face. At this point, we can speculate that in appearance Cesare is the first cinematic Zombie – the Mesmerised Zombie.

It is important to note that Cesare in Caligari bears more resemblance to another horror creature than the Zombie we are used to. This creature is of course Frankenstein’s Monster. However there is another, earlier German parallel, based on a legend of the Prague Ghetto. The Golem is a creature made from clay, given life through magic and controlled by a Rabbi. The Golem rebels against its creator, thus prompting the final breakdown of reliance on ““unlawful” black magic”. These creatures, while having more in common with Frankenstein’s Monster than the contemporary Zombie, are still potent figures of repression and control. Societal control of the body is key to understanding these films, as it is the action of the individual to bring these undead creatures – whether created or mesmerised – under their control to either help or hinder sections of society. Control through the hypnotic doctor, or magic by the Rabbi, places these authoritarian figures as emblems of control against the eventual uncontrolled ness of their unwilling slaves. As Thomas Elsaesser opines:

Thus, in Caligari’s medium Cesare, as in The Golem, a force is set free, which at least in part, escapes its creator’s control. Cesare is Caligari’s double and the embodiment or condensation of rebellious, anti-authoritarian drives which stand in direct contradiction to his own authoritarianism.

The controlled, therefore, are supporters of both the controller’s power, and of his implied desire to strike at societal power structures. This contradictory need for control and rebellion, and these figures of misused authority or knowledge would also appear in later Zombie films, along with another key figure first used in Caligari, that of the controlled, soulless female. As Prawer points out:
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari has given us a disconcerting image of a zombie-like presence and absence, of existence in a limbo between life and death, through the appearance of the heroine, Jane, walking slowly towards the camera while staring straight ahead with unseeing eyes.\textsuperscript{42}

At this point we can trace elements of the behaviour attributed to Zombies in these early German portrayals. The bodies are presented in a form of undeath; while the controlled are without direction, save for what their owner gives them. Cesare is an oppressed underclass, a sideshow attraction for the wealthy, while Jane is discussed and disposed of by the men around her as a sexual object. Even given the ending, which places the characters as insane, her figure drifts aimlessly, emotionally and mentally destroyed by unknown events. This concept of limbo for the enslaved, depersonalised body indicates to us another antecedent of the American cinematic Zombie.

In conclusion, the figure of the Zombie bears similarities in behaviour, creation and narrative use that were established in literature. Aspects of these early written narratives are also found in later cinematic portrayals, indicating that to isolate particular interchanges of popular culture over others – notably the inherent bias towards placing the Zombie as a purely American creature – is a highly problematic method of determining a genre’s historical beginnings. This is particularly the case when we recall that the term Zombie itself is a construct based on an incomplete understanding of African (and later) Haitian religious practices, thereby investing the word with particular racialist undertones in its primary meaning. When the presentation of the cinematic Zombie changed, the term also offered itself to different interpretations. We have already determined in the previous chapter that the term Zombie used in narratives should be held to indicate the concept of liminality, or borders crossed in their discussion. The Zombie carries no memories of its previous life or relations, and has no desires or motivations. It exists as a product of economic and social enslavement, a cultural reminder to retain individuality. This dialogue re-iterates concepts of self-consciousness, without which the body is useless to the individual, only to those who would use it for their own ends. Here we can see the underlying message of \textit{Caligari}, as well as nineteenth and twentieth century dialogues on the self. More importantly, the Zombie, as with all horror creatures, is a
reminder of death and threat. These messages however, are altered and changed over time when placed within the specific context of American horror film production. How it was deployed, and in what social and production contexts in America up until the late 1960s, will be the focus of the next chapter.
The Zombie in a Cinematic Context

The Zombie as a fictional concept embodies dialogues on death, loss of identity and physical slavery from its earliest beginnings in horror literature. When translated into cinematic portrayals, the methods in which these dialogues are considered, resolved or rejected in individual films indicates altering perspectives on dialogues of the body and spirit: therefore this chapter examines the altering presentations of the Zombie within American horror film production from the 1930s to the 1960s. Studying these changes indicates their altering cultural, economic and production contexts. It also allows for a closer determination of changing audience tastes and expectations, compared with others of the same nature. Andrew Tudor introduces this concept in his study *Monsters and Mad Scientists* when he posits that:

> The simplest metaphor for genre change is that derived from evolution. Financially successful films encourage further variations on their proven themes, thus generating broadly cyclical pattern of successes which then decline into variously unsuccessful repetitions of the initial formula …However, such profit generated sequencing is overlaid with other less immediately obvious patterns, interrelations that depend upon historically specific conjunctions of commercial, cultural and social factors.

Horror films are characterised by change, by cycles of popularity and exhaustion where generic conventions can be considered, re-utilised, and ultimately discarded in favour of new portrayals of fear and disgust, as charted by differing commentators on the horror genre. By examining the historical appearance of the cinematic Zombie, we can begin to trace the particular evolution and commercial viability of this cinematic threat to the social order. This is not to define the boundaries of the genre, but rather to examine the context of individual films as potential indicators of generic tastes and conventions of the time. This also allows for consideration of the role of the individual director or producer in instigating these changes, which in itself is directly linked to the influences of film production in America from the Studio era. Therefore it is not enough to chart the number of Zombie films released, but we must also examine the commercial viability of these films, their production context, and the wider
social, political and economic factors that influenced these authorised expressions of fear and disgust.

In the case of American Zombie films, we can see a range of commercial, stylistic and thematic considerations, which are imported, re-used and finally evolve into a startlingly porous genre predicated on American fear of the ‘Other’. This sub-genre is not only voracious in its use of established characters and situations, but is also, unusually, characterised by rapid, sometimes unexpected, thematic change within the contexts surrounding horror film production. Therefore the sections in this chapter are chronological, but attention has been paid to particular texts that refine or introduce new depictions of the Zombie, in order to chart the changing use of the Zombie as an embodiment of differing fears.

Before this, we must consider the beginnings of horror film production at a time when America itself was suffering one of the worst economic crises of history. This would leave its mark on the production and reception of what is now termed the classic age of American studio horror films, and to the particular minority that were the early Zombie films. The Wall Street crash not only affected the American economy, but also the lives of most individuals. Late in 1930 the effects of the crash had filtered through to the general public. As a result, more people would turn to fantasy to distance their harsh daily realities. The new mass medium of sound cinema provided such an escape. The relative cheapness of admission meant that audiences slowly began to grow. As Gilbert Seldes proposes in his work on the American depression, the shared difficulties of the crisis instigated different responses of escape: “The rich could still go to the South Seas Islands; the intellectuals to Mexico; the poor went to the movies”. As they did, a genre that had occupied a minor part in American film history came to prominence, partially in response to theatrical presentations of classic literature, partially in response to European imports of film personnel and ideas – notably from Germany. The golden age of the studio system now produced the golden age of horror films. Noted horror film historian David J Skal presents this moment as:
During a twelve-month period that coincided with the darkest hours of the great depression, four Hollywood horror archetypes were released or readied for public consumption. America’s worst year of the century would be its best year ever for monsters.  

This began with Tod Browning’s *Dracula* in 1931. The popular success of Horace Liveright’s 1927 American stage play of *Dracula* (which ran for another three years) alerted Universal to the possibility of success from the story, and indeed they bought the rights to the film version from the entrepreneurial Liveright. Although there had been attempts at haunted house comedies from American studios previously, the attempts at fear were diluted by basic narratives relying on comedy and staged clichés in the settings – taken mostly from the stage plays of the same type. With the input of European directors and producers, exemplified by Paul Leni’s *The Cat and the Canary* in 1927, this approach was discontinued and figures of fear were transplanted into film texts that made use of the wider capabilities of the medium, through lighting and set design. Leni, as an experienced director in Germany, transplanted the visual aesthetics of expressionism into his American work while other personnel, notably Universal associate producer Paul Kohner, supported the aesthetic of cinematic, not stage, expressionism. This interplay of European influences and studio personnel would work well for Tod Browning’s interpretation of *Dracula*. It was, however market pressure and the fear of competitors that precipitated the making of *Dracula* as Universal attempted to stave off competition. As such, the studio viewed the end result of the film closely, in an attempt to consolidate their financial positions during a difficult economic period.

With the success of Browning’s *Dracula*, the Universal studio began producing other horror films, certain they had found a winning formula. James Whale’s *Frankenstein* (1931) improved upon the success of *Dracula*, to such an extent that other studios increased their competition. In response to Universal’s early Horrors, Paramount released Rouben Mamoulian’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in 1932. Universal responded to this by buying the rights to other texts while introducing its own variations on figures of fear. In 1932 Carl Freund’s *The Mummy* was released. James Whale reappeared directing *The Invisible Man* in
1933, while Universal returned to Edgar Allan Poe inspired films such as *The Black Cat* in 1934, and *The Raven* in 1935. The effect of this dominance was felt in several ways. Universal established itself for a period as the maker of horror films, while other studios cast around for new horror ideas to translate on screen. The makeup and appearance of the monsters, as well as the ideas behind their behaviour, were copyrighted and protected. The horror films had also produced new icons and stars of the screen, notably in Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff. To capitalise on this horror boom, other producers outside the dominance of the main studios began to interpret and search for their own figures of fear.

*The 1940s: White and Black Slavery*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, popular interest in Haiti after years of American military intervention had fuelled popular texts on the practices of Voodoo. In this manner, the influence of William Seabrook did not end with his publication *The Magic Island*. Several other American writers began their own reinterpretations of voodooism and the portrayal of Zombies. One such was Garnett Weston, an admirer of Seabrook. He had positively reviewed *The Magic Island*, and went on to write his own Zombie story, *Salt is not for Slaves* in 1931. The popularity of Seabrook’s text had also inspired a stage version, *Zombie*, in 1932. Several film producers noted the interest in Zombies in popular fiction at the time, including Victor and Edward Halperin. They hired Garnett Weston to write the script for their film production, entitled *White Zombie* (1932).

The Halperins, due to the fluctuating fortunes experienced by the film industry in the sound era were very conscious that films had to be marketable to distributors. The period during the silent era when the Halperins had been associated with larger studios had passed, and as such the necessity of selling films was based on cheapness and quickness of production. As Price and Turner explain:

Their analyses of hit pictures brought their attention to the successes scored by a number of Horror pictures … they reached the accurate conclusion that most contained too much talk and not enough action.
They decided to hold dialogue to 15 per cent of the action, limiting it to whatever was necessary to advance the story.\textsuperscript{12} Within \textit{White Zombie} this control of dialogue and action is notable, especially in the use of matte paintings to imply wider landscapes and interiors, and reusing prop elements from major studio productions of horror, including \textit{Dracula}.\textsuperscript{13} This was also extended to personnel normally involved in higher budget productions: they could draw upon major stars such as Bela Lugosi from the larger studios (for a fee), and also key technicians such as Jack Pierce on makeup, and Arthur Martinelli as the cinematographer. This places \textit{White Zombie} between two easily identified modes of production, and may account for its deviations and adherences to established genre expectations. It is at once a product of and an alternative to the dominance of the main studios. This is clarified through the production context of the film. As we have noted, the Halperins had links to the larger studios, although at this point they could not always count on large distribution or publicity support from the controlling interests of the main film distributors. With a budget suggested in the region of $50,000, an adherence to controllable studio settings and detailed planning was vital: according to Enzo Martinelli, an assistant cameraman on the film, the crew never left the Universal lot.\textsuperscript{14} While ascribing details of textual and visual influence is difficult in the case of many ‘B’ films of the smaller producers and studios, in the case of \textit{White Zombie} the visual detail and style can be attributed not to the director Victor Halperin, but rather to the crew of the film who controlled the sets and cameras.\textsuperscript{15} Where \textit{White Zombie} distinguishes itself apart from the main studio horror films however, is in its use of the Zombie and in the multiple narratives surrounding class, control and economic worth in the film. The narrative structure revolves around the possession of a white woman called Madeline (Madge Bellamy) by three men – her new husband Neil Parker (John Harron), his undeclared rival Charles Beaumont (Robert Frazer) and the mill owner and voodoo practitioner Murder Legendre (Bela Lugosi). The rigid social structure in the film explicitly places the white middle class American characters as heroic, while the monied or foreign characters are explicitly the threat. Black characters are relegated to the status of slaves or servants, and are ignored.
This is not surprising, given the contemporary attitudes to race at the time of the film’s making, but the concept of the mesmerising foreign threat is a reference to the iconic status of Lugosi as an embodiment of the foreign, threatening ‘other’. In White Zombie, his eyes, such a feature of Dracula, are used again and again to convey his overwhelming hypnotic power. Typified as ‘other’ in his accent, dress, and use of voodoo, Legendre has been cast out from white society, while his sugar mill is staffed by black Zombies, whose tireless, plodding work has increased Legendre’s wealth. Considering the impact of the Great Depression on American society, Legendre’s comment on his workers:

They work…faithfully. They are not worried about long hours. You, you could make good use of men like mine on your plantation.

This seems intended to highlight both the aspects of black slavery he employs, and a general opinion on the working classes who slave without end. Given the contemporary tensions between Haiti and America, the setting for White Zombie and its dialogue on race and class tensions becomes more pertinent. This is demonstrated in one of the films most well known sequences, as Beaumont enters the sugar mill. A distanced perspective allows us to take in the scale of the operation with shuffling black men tipping their baskets of cane to be shredded in the engine below. As Beaumont is framed in a doorway, a device cinematographer Martinelli employs throughout the film to frame character responses and threat, we are moved closer to watch these shuffling men walk along the top of the machine. A close up of the blades indicates the relentless nature of the work, with connotations of Fordist practices in contemporary industry, and then its implications for the ‘soulless’ workers. One Zombie is tracked along the walkway in medium close up as he stumbles, then falls without a cry into the machine. The camera pulls down to take in the shuffling masses pushing the machine, continuing heedlessly.

This focus on economic and racial slavery is further embedded by the position of the white Zombies within the film. The white Zombies have names, and had occupations. They were individuals. They supervise the mill workers, drive the carriage, and accompany Legendre on his walks. The black mass of Zombies are nameless – truly grist for the mill. This comment on social inequality is underscored by Madeline’s’ zombification, where her role is defined as a
desirable female commodity (and potential slave) that passes from (white) man to man. Neil sees her as wife, and by extension property that can be tainted. Beaumont desires her body, but realises it is nothing without her soul, while Legendre’s ownership of her seems predicated on the status of owning a beautiful woman of a high social class. Within this film text, the Zombie itself is not a threat, but a reanimated dead body, enslaved for economic slavery (and also by the implication of the title, “white slavery”). As such, the Zombie begins in American film as a discussion on the economic ownership of bodies, dressed up in the romanticised ‘black magic’ of Voodoo. At the time of release, critics dismissed the horror genre as a phase that was over, unlike audiences who made *White Zombie* a minor financial success. This was enough for the distributors United Artists, and was also an indication that budget horror films could work well, as long as they used recognisable actors and popular themes. The following years would not alter this assessment, but instead filmmakers would search for new presentations of the Zombie, in narrative intent and setting.

For example, Warner Bros. *The Walking Dead* (Michael Curtiz, 1936) portrayed its main character as a revivified victim of organised crime, tortured by his experiences. Given the early fidelity of Warner Bros. to the ideas of social ‘reality’ within their popular gangster film texts, (perhaps a commentary on the effects of prohibition where lawlessness was imposed on people who wished to drink) the hardworking man trying to live honestly is denied through corporate interests. Partially a modern Frankenstein’s monster reanimated through science, partially a bearer of (divine?) justice, Boris Karloff’s portrayal of John Ellman hints at varying horror incarnations in his slow steps, deformed body and confused reactions to his questioners, but notably reiterates both the concept of a vengeful force and the idea that man should not meddle with the dead. He is not truly a Zombie, but his reanimation is a rebuke to those who would repress a man’s desire to work and go straight – an interesting implication given that the audience were expected to identify with Ellman and perhaps an expression of unrest still felt over the Depression and its effects on the working classes. In the same year the Halperin’s next portrayal of the Zombie was deployed in *Revolt of The Zombies*. An attempt to recapture the success of *White Zombie,*
Revolt follows a group of ‘international’ explorers as they attempt to find the secret of Cambodian priests who can control men that fight without fear or injury – as Zombies. A member of the group misuses the power to control what is implied to be a whole country, introducing a new concept: that of the Zombie used for mass destruction and repression. Given interest in political events in Europe at this time, it is perhaps no surprise that such a story with an ostensible setting in a First World War foreign conflict might be considered to hold some attractions by the Halperins. But as a new development within a new sub-genre it received critical attention. Frank Nugent complained that

Under any code of fair practice, a Zombie is entitled to be authentically dead but revived horrendously by some sorcerer to do his evil bidding…And to hint they are not really zombies at all, but sleepwalkers or something, is to imperil the very foundations of a grand spook legend.18

Therefore, given the short amount of time that the Zombie had been present in literature and cinema, certain expectations were held of the presentation and genre conventions within these films. The use of Zombies within film texts subsided for the next few years in America, reappearing in Columbia Pictures’ The Man They Could Not Hang (1939, Nick Grindè), featuring Boris Karloff as a scientist executed and then reanimated, and then in Paramount’s’ The Ghost Breakers (George Marshall, 1940) a comedy film featuring Bob Hope and Paulette Goddard. In this film text, the Zombie featured is used purely as atmospheric scene setting and as a foil to later physical gags. It seems as if at this point the status of the Zombie has been relegated to that of the comedy prop, recognised as a threatening presence, but ultimately powerless.

Poverty Row Zombies?

In 1941 the Zombie or the threat of Zombification returned in focused film texts, in a production context now known as the ‘Poverty Row’ studios and films. Gregory Mank characterises the main studios (Monogram, Republic and PRC) as a “physical place and state of mind”, and in terms of production, poverty is an apt term.19 Being excluded from the dominance of the five main studios in their production and distribution facilities and limited by tight budgets, instigated
attempts to reproduce popular stories and themes from successful films in a fraction of the time. This would explain the early dedication to horror films evidenced by Monogram and PRC, alongside serial films, (used to fill out the film programme in cinemas). Gregory Mank offers the following comparisons of the time and money spent on a mainstream horror production, compared with a PRC horror film as an example:

Universal’s *House of Frankenstein* (Erle C Kenton, 1944), a big movie of the time, was made for $354,000, and had a shooting schedule of 30 days. Universal’s *Man Made Monster* (George Waggner, 1941) had a budget of $84,000 and a schedule of 12-15 days. The PRC production *The Devil Bat* (Jean Yarbrough, 1940), considered by many fans to be Lugosi’s finest Poverty Row picture, had an exact budget of $21,371 and 45 cents, and was shot in 3 days.

As such, quantity and speed were considered the key elements in film production. This is also indicated in the personnel utilised for such cheap films. In his study *Poverty Row Horrors!* Tom Weaver examines the production and reception context of the 31 horror films made by the three studios between 1940 and 1946. He indicates how many new and established actors, production staff and writers were forced into ‘Poverty Row’. Many had contracts that demanded their participation in films, or had lost their star status and were working to make ends meet. There were also staff and actors who wanted a foothold in the industry.

This was the context surrounding the Monogram production of *King of The Zombies* (Jean Yarbrough, 1941). Inspired by the success of *The Ghost Breakers*, the film is a mix of action, horror and comedy focused on an implied Axis plot to gain American military information. Indeed, Zombification in this film is directed at the white characters, in an attempt from a European (implicitly characterised as German) to gain access to military secrets. The black characters are there to intimate the roots of Voodoo, and in the case of Manton Moreland’s character, to display the necessity of being dead before being reanimated as a Zombie. It is his exuberant belief in the reality of the Undead, which leads to many of the plot dénouements. However the problematic status of the black characters in the film, as servants and slaves, is still a reminder of the lowly status ascribed to black actors, and in turn, the role of racial minorities.
in American society at this historical point. Unlike *White Zombie*, which at least allowed a measure of implied sympathy towards racial beliefs, the reliance on comedy and stereotype in the Poverty Row films reduces the original ideas of black voodooism, as Tanya Krzywinska suggests, to: “The ‘nonsense’ approach. Voodoo is rubbished as childish superstition. This involves a superior distancing from it.”

This idea of distancing black culture is continued in these films, and in *King of the Zombies* the film presents foreign others utilising ‘primitive’ means to assert control over ‘natives’ in the relative proximity of the West Indies. As was noted earlier, historically the West Indies was subject to interventionist methods to assert American dominance economically and politically. With the advent of war, this again became a clear concern in promoting patriotism and security beyond the home shores. The need for marketability also meant that producers needed to ally themselves closely with the prevailing mood, and in the case of the Poverty Row films, this was established through characters simply delineated to express their allegiances. Zombies were an easy allegorical figure, in that they were normally controlled by an authoritarian character and inexpensive to portray. This could partially explain the preponderance of Zombie films that were issued from Poverty Row Studios from 1941 to 1944.

*The Bowery at Midnight* (1942, Wallace Fox, Monogram) features unspecified yet Zombie-like creatures. Bela Lugosi, who at this stage of his career was inextricably linked with cheap productions, is typecast as a doctor with a double life, unaware of what his assistant is creating in the basement. But this is not set in a foreign context – this is happening in an urban environment. Given the geographical connotations of the Bowery in New York, identified as a place of tenement buildings, working class inhabitants and an area associated with crime, the implied social commentary on how poor working-class bodies are used for the ends of science presents a turning point in the creation of cinematic Zombies, as the product of misapplied science. The subtexts of class and economic worth of bodies, as controlled by an ostensibly higher-class male, remain.
In the 1943 film *Revenge of The Zombies* (Steve Sekely, Monogram), this idea is taken a stage further, but abandons ideas of inner city poverty and repression to focus on reaffirming the need for vigilance within America during wartime. In the same manner as the Halperins, the Monogram studio decided to repeat ideas from their first Zombie film. Given the quick turnover of production staff, a key idea or plotline was held to be necessary in ensuring staff stayed on budget. In many respects, *Revenge* holds the same basic outline of *King* in the number of men investigating, the Zombified state of a scientist’s wife and the comic relief from Manton Moreland. However, where it varies is that now the Zombies themselves, in much the same way as the Halperins used in *Revolt* are to be used as soldiers in a fifth column of invasion from within the Louisiana swamps. The scientist Dr. Altermann (John Carradine) who is responsible for this positions the Zombie as a creation of scientific knowledge rather than Voodooism, and also intimates that the brain is vital in the Zombie – an idea that gathered greater significance later in Zombie films. What also has great significance in this film is the role of the Zombified wife. While the Zombie workers are presented and behave as earlier incarnations in Zombie films do, the American wife of Dr Van Altermann, Lila, (Veda Ann Borg) does not conform to previously established characterisations of the Zombie wife. The role of the enslaved white woman, at once submissive and ultimately responsive to commands can be deconstructed as a masculine fantasy enacted on screen, if not always an accurate indication of women’s roles within society at the time. As Ellen Draper demonstrates, it is easy enough to classify a Zombie woman – she is defined and directed by men within the film text – “the desiring gaze of the villain/camera has the power to subdue the heroine to its will”.23 Draper’s definition encompasses many of the female characters noted in early horror films, from *Svengali* (Archie Mayo, 1931) onwards. We can also draw the same parallels from *Caligari* and the characterisation of Jane onwards to *White Zombie* if we wished. However what is singular about the later Zombie films, particularly *Revenge of The Zombies*, follows on from Draper’s commendation of certain Zombie women films:

The films recognize that the world beyond their fiction is riddled with sexism … the second thing to be said in support of these films’
exploration of patriarchal fiction is that the patriarchy is itself a fiction.\textsuperscript{24}

In \textit{Revenge}, the active female Zombie challenges the supremacy of her husband. She drowns herself – and him – in an act of ultimate reproach for his treachery. This, if not an outright celebration of female independence, implicitly applauds the right of a White American woman to intervene for family and country. At this point in Zombie cinematic history, the implied feminine virtues of familial loyalty offer a new interpretation of Zombies and voodooism, based around familial structures. It came to its height in a release of the same year, in Jacques Tourneur’s’ \textit{I Walked With a Zombie}. The production genesis of \textit{I Walked} can be attributed to the studios’ (major and minor) desire for financial returns that they felt were guaranteed by the horror genre. Variety reported in 1944 that Universal’s

\begin{quote}
Creepers and chillers will have poured not less than $10,000,000 [in] profits into the company’s coffers for the 13 years which have elapsed since Frankenstein first reared his ugly head.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

With such financial incitements, many studios attempted their own interpretation of horror films. RKO pictures were a case in point: the decision was made to establish a B-movie unit for the production of horror films, after witnessing the budget-driven practices of Poverty Row, and the popularity of the main studios excursions into horror. A ‘B’ Movie unit promised cheap expenditure, with the possibility of better returns than some of the main units of production. What raises RKO’s Horror unit efforts above many other films of the time, despite its short existence (from 1942 to 1945) was in the determined influence of its head of production, Val Lewton. Lewton has been described as an auteur producer, in that he defended his film projects from people above him in the chain of decisions, re-wrote scripts, researched and choose the direction of storylines, and worked closely and generally productively with the directors and editors chosen for each film.\textsuperscript{26} The end result are a series of films that have been characterised as literate, fluid and poetic, despite an average budget of $150,000 for the nine horror films the unit made.\textsuperscript{27} However, this was not possible without directors who matched
Lewton’s own interest in substance with style. In Jacques Tourneur Lewton found a director with established directing experience, who had also begun to exhibit definite auteur tendencies in his use of repeating motifs, both thematically and visually.²⁸ Tourneur and Lewton had worked together for MGM previous to Lewton moving to RKO, and Tourneur had already proved his worth as a director of shorts for MGM from 1936 to 1942. When Lewton was given his first project for RKO in 1942 – simply a title, *Cat People* – he called upon Tourneur.

While the quality of *Cat People* is undeniable to modern critics of the horror genre, RKO viewed it with distrust until steady box office receipts were issued: by the end of 1944, *Cat People* had returned a domestic gross of $4,000,000.²⁹ The success of this study of a woman’s sexual fears established not only Tourneur’s and Lewton’s working partnership for the next film project at RKO, but also their approach to horror generally. This approach is summarised by J. P Telotte as “a lack – of monsters, of gruesome processes, and even of concrete evidence of a malevolent force at work in the human environment”.³⁰ This understated approach was next applied to the unpromising title *I Walked With a Zombie*. According to Bryan Senn in his study on Voodoo cinema the title, inspired by a recent sensationalised article in a paper by Inez Wallace, was not the only condition of pre-production Val Lewton faced from RKO executive Charles Koerner:

> Koerner also told the dismayed producer that screen writer Curt Siodmak would be penning the script … Lewton must have balked at having a writer thrust upon him whose last assignment was *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943). The following day, however, Lewton turned up in an inexplicably exuberant mood … “They may think I’m going to do the usual chiller stuff which will make a quick profit, be laughed at, and be forgotten, but I’m going to make the kind of suspense movie I like…” (Quoted in *Cult Movies* by Danny Peary)³¹

Despite the unpromising title and assigned writer, Lewton undertook to rewrite the final draft of the script (unaccredited), and conversed with Tourneur on the approach to the film text. In this particular Zombie film, Tourneur and Lewton’s use of absence as a narrative device is key: the Zombies are unimportant both as victims and threat within it, when placed against the destructive emotions of the living.
The two Zombie characters, Jessica (Christine Gordon) and Carrefour (Darby Jones), are created by inexplicable means. Jessica has been reduced to a somnambulist state since a confrontation with her husband combined with a tropical fever. It is in fact left unclear whether she is a Zombie. Carrefour, a tall, gaunt black Zombie, is present and explained throughout the film as a Zombie, but nothing more. Indeed, the entire discussion of Voodoo and Zombification is artfully placed to one side by the context of the film. If not Jane Eyre with Zombies, as several Zombie guides designate the film, it is still a gothic romance, narrated by the nurse Betsy (Frances Dee) in her attempts to nobly restore Jessica to normality. This is where the idea that Zombie women’s films explore and deconstruct fictional patriarchies starts to bear more fruit. The active intervention of Betsy, firstly through approved medical methods of treatment, and then Voodoo, indicates an awareness of potential in black culture that both Jessica’s husband and lover have ignored. In the character of Mrs Rand (Edith Barrett) we see the fullest and most nuanced exploration of western attitudes to Voodoo – and the possibilities of Zombification. Placing herself as a pragmatic practitioner who uses Voodoo as a ‘placebo’ for her superstitious patients, Mrs Rand is positioned between the two forms of belief, compromised by her own admission of guilt in the ‘Zombification’ of Jessica. Dismissed by the rational man of science, it is nevertheless Mrs Rand, and by extension her youngest son who demonstrate the efficacy of Voodoo beliefs. The sequenced shots of a needle piercing Jessica’s effigy and Wes’s implied use of an arrow to kill her leave the audience to draw their own conclusions as to the actuality of Voodoo influence.

The use of the Zombie character Carrefour leads to some of the most emotionally intense and suspenseful sequences within the film, as his imposing if undernourished stature leads characters to recoil from his mechanical progress in his duties. This impassiveness (a hallmark of the Haitian Zombie mythos, as Seabrook intimated) can be read as a reference to previous cinematic Zombies, but also as holding symbolic meaning within I Walked’s discussions of guilt. Carrefour is the logical extension of the concept of slavery, the slavery that the white characters uneasily acknowledge through their own presence as masters. He stands as a tangible credit to the belief system that created him, while his
unseeing yet persistent attempt to retrieve her from Wesley also hints at his use as an avenging or at least societal purpose – as an eradicator of white sin.

While it can be argued that *I Walked* is a gothic romance rather than a dedicated horror text, it still remains one of the most nuanced portrayals of race, guilt and belief within Zombie film and finally introduces an iconic portrayal of a black male Zombie. However, *I Walked With a Zombie*, while attracting enough of an audience response to please the studio, proved to be an individual exemplar among low-budget film productions. Monogram offered another Zombie film in the shape of *Voodoo Man* (1944, William Beaudine). Perhaps in an attempt to attract audiences beginning to tire of predictable narrative patterns, *Voodoo Man* uses three key horror actors: John Carradine, Bela Lugosi and George Zucco, and a more explicit, exploitative vision of female Zombies. Audiences identified these actors with the horror genre at this point, although they participated in ‘B’ movies for varying reasons. Lugosi had chosen to refuse several roles offered to him from the main studios. By 1944, his appearances were limited to work within the ‘B’ Movie industry. Carradine and Zucco were working on ‘B’ movies to pay the bills, but were both now identified as horror actors as a result of their work. Carradine would go on to have a long and varied career beyond Monogram, but at this stage was working in any film, to support his Shakespearean repertory company. By combining all three actors, Monogram may have been hoping for an increase in interest from audiences, especially as the film is a very direct meditation on enslaving female bodies in an abduction narrative. While the females are typified as Zombies, created through mesmerism and implied ‘Voodoo’ worship by Lugosi’s character (to reanimate his dead wife) there is more of an emphasis on titillation in the spectacle of the women chased, mesmerised and imprisoned and as the focus for imperious commands. The emphasis on viewing the women as Zombies is through the comments of the other characters. When Betty (Wanda McKay) explicitly makes the link between her friend’s behaviour and creatures she has seen at the movies – Zombies – she is ridiculed by her fiancé. The breakdown of narrative strength in the idea of the Zombie is also evident in the fact the screenwriter in the film does not want to write about horrors. This self-referential humour, perhaps intended to deflect any criticism for reworking
the concept of the Zombie, did not work. The critics compared *I Walked* with *
Voodoo Man*, and made it clear that the genre needed diversions from the
standard horror narrative to interest them: “This picture isn’t content to portray
zombies; it gives an impression of being made by them”.

As a result of poor audiences and distribution for this film, Monogram did not make any other
horror films in the same quantities as previously. There would be individual releases from time to time, but the concerted period of horror filmmaking at the
studio was brought to a halt.

RKO had raised the prestige of the Zombie film with *I Walked*, an example that
other studios were unable or unwilling to pursue. It seems ironic then that an
RKO film is also the final Zombie film of this particular period, and it relies on
the same depreciation of horror and Zombies as *Voodoo Man*. The film *Zombies
On Broadway* (1945, Gordon Dines) is intended as a vehicle for comedians used
as an answer to Abbott and Costello in the shape of Wally Brown and Alan
Carney. RKO recycled many of the elements and settings used in *I Walked*,
including the setting of San Sebastian, and the iconic figure of Darby Jones as a
Zombie (no longer called Carrefour). The production style of the film is lusher
than other low budget horrors, due to the recycling of *Tarzan* jungle sets and
there are moments of stylish horror that revolve around the figure of Kolaga, the
Zombie. In the scene of the voodoo worship, the intercut shots of his
implacable movement hint at a plausible presence of terror. This is not
continued through the film, with the conflict between the conventions of horror
and comedy making for an uneven narrative. It stands as a poor ending to what
had evolved as a genre based on discussions of race and enslaved bodies,
whether racial, sexual or economic.

The American Zombie film, up until this point, began under the inspiration of
the main studios horror films and icons. Their dialogues on race and work were
based on misunderstanding and exercising superiority over ‘native’ superstition
and religion. The popularity of the films during the Depression, and the
possibility for audiences to read into the texts their own disillusionment and
fears of economic slavery, may have answered for some of the adherence to the
ideas of voodoo and slavery in these Zombie narratives. These fears of control
were utilised to discuss the threat of invasion in the build up to WW2, and within those narratives the development of the female Zombie began, allowing for a deeper examination of the role of women as enslaved, even if their portrayal rested on sexual implications. It also allowed, in certain texts, for the female characters to at least show awareness of their status as owned. In most of these narratives however, it is the privileged white male, as doctor or scientist, who controls the Zombies, who are inherently harmless. The white male, who is always defined as an iconic ‘other’ either in terms of nationality or social/sexual intent, brings about their loss of individuality from a misapplication of ‘primitive’ science. What emerged in the next period of Zombie films are an extension of these ideas in the context of America’s nuclear and cold war fears. The fifties brought the fear of mass loss of identity – potentially instigated by the external, to take over the internal.

The 1950s: Science, Horror and the White Collar Zombie

In the 1950s, independent horror film production continued, but this was in conjunction with the rise in popularity of science fiction film. Like horror, science fiction film existed from the early beginnings of fiction film – arguably in Méliès fantastical ‘voyages’, and continued through popular literature in the twentieth century in the ‘pulps’ and later comics. Science fiction film therefore claims a history of production as extended as horror, with similar peaks and troughs of audience popularity, becoming established in American film production through the popularity of serials and B-movies in the forties. As with the horror films made by the ‘Poverty Row’ studios, cheap production methods were statutory to fill out a programme of films as quickly as possible, and to attract as many audiences as possible. This allowed serials to focus on providing cliff-hanger narratives, and to rework differing concepts of what characterised a science fiction film text. Therefore, in many ways the rise of the science fiction film genre in the 1950s was echoing the rise of the horror genre during the early 1930s in terms of the production ethos, and in its methods of reassessing existing narratives for a contemporary audience. Added to this there was a growing fictional discussion on the possibilities of ‘the space age’
whether in terms of future achievements of mankind, or the possibility of extra-
terrestrial visitations. 37

These cheaply made film narratives on popular topics had become more economically necessary than before, as the American film industry faced profound challenges to its status as a powerful popular medium. The first challenge was the result of a bitterly contested legal battle, United States v. Paramount, et al, which resulted in anti-trust laws forbidding vertical integration of all the major studios in 1948. Not only did this destroy the monopoly of the main eight studios, it also weakened the already tenuous position of lesser studios and production offices that relied on the main eight to distribute their products. From now on, the attempts by smaller companies to place their product in cinemas either encouraged the growth of independent studios such as AIP which began in 1954, or made the drive for popular formats within these cheap texts even more of a priority, as evidenced by Allied Artist’s (previously Monogram) output during the 1950s. 38 Secondly, the anti-communist political climate that had allowed Senator Joseph McCarthy to rise to prominence had started to focus on cultural producers. Hollywood became the next target in 1947, with potential damage to be endured in terms of the industry’s image, with the introduction of blacklisting and harsher scrutiny on the inferred political sympathies of studios and directors.

However, a bigger economic threat became apparent at the end of the 1940s that impacted heavily on the production and marketing of films. This was the new consumerism, exemplified by the rush to own television. As Kevin Heffernan in his study Ghouls, Gimmicks and Gold suggests:

> Between 1947 and 1948, television ownership skyrocketed, increasing by over ten times to 175,000 sets, on its way to 90% penetration by the end of the fifties ... snapped up by a public hungry after decades of war rationing, diverted discretionary income from movie tickets, and the huge migration to suburbia moved many upscale consumers away from the downtown first – run movie houses. 39

Not only was Hollywood’s image under threat, its secure hold on the viewing public had slipped. To combat this, the main studios focused their efforts on creating larger narrative spectacles that would place cinema as a total experience of entertainment, notably through new technology. The strongest era of science
fiction film in America had begun at a time when the production system itself was looking to the future. This was not, however, a complete change of genre preferences from audiences and filmmakers. Horror monsters had not disappeared in the ten-year gap between 1945 and 1955. Instead, horror and science fiction introduced monsters from space in *The Thing From Another World* (Christian Nyby, 1951) *Invaders From Mars*, (William Cameron Menzies, 1953) and *Invasion of The Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956) while remnants of atomic experimentation also appeared: *Gojira* (Ishiro Honda, 1954) *Them*, (Gordon Douglas, 1954): *It Came from Beneath The Sea*, (Robert Gordon, 1955). Repackaged low budget horror films of the 1930s and 1940s for new television audiences also surfaced – notably though the character of Vampira in 1954. Pre-adolescents also had access to horror texts through the now infamous horror comics, typified by the productions of E.C. Comics. These followed the horror narratives first published in pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales*, (first run 1923-1954) which established the careers of notable horror writers. Critics deplored these publications: Les Daniels, writing in 1975 opined that:

> Formal literary decorum was mislaid as mass public education led inevitably to mass-oriented periodicals … the pulps became the primary depository for lurid fantasies in the United States … thus initiating a pantheon of heroes into the mythology of a new but tenacious “lowbrow” culture.

The horror comics, aimed at the rising number of literate and economically approachable pre-teens and adolescents, continued this presentation of horror literature, graphically illustrated and coloured. While, as Stephen Sennitt argues, there were literally hundreds of horror comics available by 1953, the most influential and certainly popular were the E.C. Horror comics that began in 1950. *Tales from the Crypt* (1950-1955), *The Vault of Horror* (1950-1954) and *The Haunt of Fear* (1950-1954) have come to typify this period of popular horror culture. The keynote of many of the stories is darkly humorous, often accompanying morality tales to warn against greed of all types, destructive relationships, crime and violence. What also accompanies these is a re-use of traditional horror icons in differing locales, notably the suburban home. The appearances of Zombies in these texts are regular, either as vengeance driven
creatures or ironic reminders of *The Monkey’s Paw* dictum – “be careful what you wish for”. For example, the *Vault of Horror* story “Till Death” (1952) focuses on the reanimation of a plantation owners’ wife by his loving workers. Unfortunately, she is decomposing. While the story itself relies on stereotypical depictions of ‘native’ superstition, the real visual detail is reserved for her gradually decaying state. Vengeance stories, such as “Together They Lie”, “Sink- Hole!” and “Graft In Concrete” also focus on the physical state of the undead, juxtaposing their fragmented bodies against the lurid colours and settings of the living, whether unfaithful spouses or business partners. The visual style of these texts is important – each story evidences detailed attention to composition and use of colour: as Grant Geissman notes, each artist was encouraged to promote their own visual style. What is particularly notable is that the comics evidence cinematic techniques in the visual framing of characters reactions, and in establishing shots and close-ups of the returning dead. The horror comics fell out of popularity in 1955, hounded by a moral panic and instead science fiction comics took their place in popularity, alongside super-hero texts. The horror comic’s boom may have only existed for a short space of time, but in the development of the cinematic Zombie, these ideas and portrayals would return in later texts of canonical importance.

Therefore horrific creatures still existed in popular culture, though their creation and utilisation in cinematic narratives were slightly different. This is reflected in early genre studies of science fiction and horror film that study both: as various commentators have noted, the two genres are not always distinguishable in terms of content and the portrayal of threat. This is best exemplified by discussions concerning the thematic foci of 1950s science fiction and horror. Vivian Sobchack clarifies this “uneasy connection” by admitting a surface extension of horrific content and intent:

One can equate Dracula’s embrace with alien mind control, mummies and zombies with robots, Frankenstein’s monster with the machine that’s run amok. Both genres contain their laboratories, their experiments, their creatures, their empirical litanies…The films which most typify what is considered by some to be the “miscegenation” of the two genres are what we commonly call the Monster or Creature film.
While this argument is persuasive, it fails to comment on the changing nature of horror beyond the “traditional” portrayals of the monstrous individual, in the shape of the vampire or the mummy. By the 1950s, Universal Studios had almost finished their retirement of the main horror icons, finally ending the creation of cinematic horror monsters in 1954 with *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (Jack Arnold). New concepts of the monstrous, in both horror and science fiction, relied upon new portrayals of threat within America.

For the 1950s, while a period of economic growth in America, was also an era where the effects of science both promised and threatened radical change. The development of the atomic bomb and the concurrent mass destruction of Japanese cities at the end of WW2 had demonstrated the power of science: in the hands of the government and scientists. As Susan Sontag considers, these events seem to have prompted a

> Trauma suffered by everyone in the middle of the 20th century when it became clear that from now on to the end of human history, every person would spend his individual life not only under the threat of individual death … but of something almost insupportable psychologically – collective incineration and extinction which could come at any time, virtually without warning.50

We could then suggest the concept of global destruction caused by rational thought and practice began to take greater hold within popular culture. Paul Boyer argues that the narratives science fiction writers engaged in after the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were nearly always “bleak and pessimistic” reflecting not only a loss of faith in rational scientific behaviour, but also a fear of progress that had erupted into this generation. As Boyer phrases it, “Hiroshima ended the luxury of detachment”.51 Within the context of the Cold War, to ascribe portrayals of cinematic fear to the bomb as well as ‘the reds’ seems rational, but we should avoid simplistic classifications. Mark Jancovich argues that assumptions on the conservative content of American invasion narrative horror films of the fifties (which in some cases are indistinguishable from science-fiction film narratives) are endemic to many studies of Horror. He argues instead that:
Again and again, the threats that distinguish 1950s horror do not come from the past or even from the actions of a lone individual, but are associated with the processes of social development and modernisation. In this period, it is the process of rationalisation, which is the threat.\textsuperscript{52}

Rationalisation in this case is from the consensus consumer culture of modern living, typified in the images of businessmen in grey flannel suits, implicitly the ‘breadwinners’ who assisted the post-war cultural impetus to reconstruct the woman as homemaker. This corresponds closely with the contemporary positioning of the working middle class white male as an “organization man” as discussed by William H Whyte's text of the same name. In various fictional texts – notably Richard Matheson’s \textit{The Shrinking Man} (1956), remade as a film: \textit{The Incredible Shrinking Man} in 1957 – the implied impotence of the non-working male is referred to again and again, as the home becomes a trap for the unemployed emasculated male. The key thematic threat in these texts, and in the next era of Zombie films, is in the loss of social identity of the white, middle class male within the sacred space of responsibility and family.

We can begin to discuss this within the invasion narrative \textit{Invaders From Mars} (William Cameron Menzies, 1953). Filmed in colour, \textit{Invaders} is primarily focused on the increasingly frantic attempts by a young boy, David (Jimmy Hunt) to alert adult authorities to a crashed spaceship and ominous sandpit that is sucking in and altering people, beginning with his father. As Vincent di Fate notes, the destruction of the aliens and the insertion of the ‘dream’ story cycle – which begins and ends the film - has been attributed to both Menzies and the attributed writer Richard Blake, against Battle’s original concept of the story.\textsuperscript{53} This may account, in part, for the eventual style of the film. Commentators have noted the cheapness of many of the effects – the film was made for about $150,000\textsuperscript{54} – but the style of the film has been lauded, especially in the use of sparse, expressionistic settings for places of implied threat and the depiction of community that Vivian Sobchack describes as a necessary component of these invasion narratives:
Small-town America, a community which is as familiar, predictable, snug, and unprivate as a Norman Rockwell magazine cover. What is chilling about the films, what causes our uneasiness, is that they all stay right at home threatening the stability of hearth and family, pronouncing quietly that nothing is sacred.

Within this setting, the use of stark framing devices such as fence posts and trees around the danger area becomes more potent, against the cosy familiarity implied through the home interiors. We can ascribe this stylistic flourish to Menzies, who was a noted production designer first and foremost. This also explains his adherence to studio-based sets that add to the paranoid mise en scene, mainly based around the family home of David. This main setting allows for more than a reduction on costs.

The film returns again and again to the setting and supposed ‘normality’ of the nuclear family. David’s father is portrayed as both grown boy and responsible father in his early introduction. His reappearance, staring directly ahead, dishevelled and brusque, is our introduction to the effects of alien control. His movement, previously fluid and in close proximity to his family, now becomes stiff and apart. The same could be inferred from the behaviour of the policemen, and also that of the little girl who tries to burn her family home down. The common factor for these controlled beings is the removal of emotion, instigated through a chip in the base of the skull. This proximity to the brain, and the removal of emotion, highlight the key fears portrayed within this film, a loss of identity and emotional responsibility to each other (and by extension, the community). It is therefore no surprise that the three main protagonists (David, Patricia, Stuart) are framed as a potential nuclear family, assisted by caring yet efficient military personnel. This highlights the concept of a joint community effort against cold alien rationality. As we have seen in previous Zombie films, the loss of self-definition becomes more disturbing in figures considered rational (normally white males), but perhaps more worryingly for the contemporary audience of the fifties, this now extends to the changed mother and girl child, who socially and biologically are expected to be caring. The horrors have truly come into the home.
Several commentators read these narratives differently in the context of American socio-political fears. Vincent Di Fate asserts that the film is a direct mirror of McCarthyite policies and fears of communist infiltrators, while also responding to and influencing descriptions of Alien abductions. David J. Skal focuses on the outraged responses of PTA representatives on viewing the film. For them, the lack of resolution in the narrative was a “projection of the formless fears abroad in our world of technological annihilation and savage ideologies.” We could argue that this film does concur with an implied threat of communism: “savage ideologies”, but a more likely narrative explanation can be constructed through ideas of social conformity – as Carlos Clarens opines:

> The ultimate horror in science fiction is neither death nor destruction but dehumanisation … this type of fiction hits the most exposed nerve of contemporary society: collective anxiety about the loss of individual identity, subliminal mindbending, or downright scientific/political brainwashing.

The idea of individual identity lost and controlled is key to the next film text. *Creature with the Atom Brain* (Edward L. Cahn, 1955) returns to the idea of the Zombie as a reanimated body, with dialogues on the use of atomic power to replace the human brain, which in this film text is the “first thing to die”. Industry reviews of the film in the *Monthly Film Bulletin* and *Variety* easily categorise the film as a descendant of the earlier Zombie films: “In effect, this is a transplantation of the old “zombie” theme into a contemporary science fiction framework”. *Variety* explicitly placed the film as a ‘programmer’, commenting on how the “atomic zombies” are controlled through implants in their radioactive heads. The overall tone, from both commentaries, is that the film is accomplished in terms of eliciting audience interest in both the narrative and filming style given its independent production (By Clover under the *aegis* of Sam Katzman) and distribution by Columbia. Columbia, as Heffernan points out: “led the industry in 1957 with forty-two independent productions”, and may well have seen this as the most economic way to stay in business.

Unlike *Invaders*, the sanctity of the American family is not under question within *Creature*. The film explicitly places atomic knowledge as dangerous in the hands of single males, who by implication are outside familial circles of responsibility and roles as productive and active societal members. By doing
this, they set themselves up against the combined forces of science, law and the military: a socially conscious force of males within a system designed to uphold society - namely the nuclear families shown listening to news reports. As Sobchack notes, these films are essentially about re-instigating a sense of communal responsibility and action: “the preservation of social order…what is called for is teamwork, cooperation, and, above all, organization”. Therefore *Creature* stands as a deeply conservative work that does not allow for the single male to be victorious outside a defined societal role that is both family and work based. This is reversed explicitly in the next film we consider as part of the evolution of the cinematic Zombie, in the acclaimed film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956).

Perhaps more than any other science fiction film of the 1950s, *Invasion* has prompted critical readings, dependant on differing interpretations of its social context and political background. For example, Peter Biskind explicitly positions the film as a right-wing discussion of individuality. Katrina Mann analyses the text in terms of discourses on racial masquerade and alien immigration within 1950s society. The multiplicity of potential readings indicates not only the film's strength as a contemporary metaphor for general concerns, but also that within the genres of science fiction and horror, the narrative use of external threats can be vastly different depending on the production context of the film text. *Invaders From Mars* ends with the threat about to become reality, while *Creature With the Atom Brain* celebrates the restoration of conservative order and the family. *Invasion* veers between the two, demonstrating not only thematic concerns displayed previously, but also stylistic flourishes established within other American film genres. This is underpinned by a production history that indicates the varying influences brought to bear on the film itself.

*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is a late addition to the previous invasion narratives of the 1950s and at the time of its release did not garner an overt critical reception, due in part to its production origins through Allied Artists. George Turner contends that the company was still inextricably considered as low budget producers, even though by this point it was attempting slightly larger budgeted features. *Invasion* examples this change in production ethos: while the budget was small by main feature standards (estimates range from $382, 000
to $416,911) explaining perhaps the use of black and white film stock, it did at
least feature actors with previous experience and a veteran producer in Walter
Wanger. It also meant that the quality of the film editing was high, compared
to other low budget films from Allied Artists. The popularity of Jack Finney’s
original magazine serial and later book of *The Body Snatchers* instigated a
rushed acquisition of rights from Allied Artists. As a result, several
screenwriters and other creative personnel worked with Finney, before moving
on to rework their own alterations. This also included frequent post-production
changes to the film text, so that the narrative of the film was altered beyond the
highly pessimistic tone that Siegel claimed was his original intent – most
famously in the added framing story and narration. As a result, ideological
messages in the film can be attributed to any political/social perspective held by
the viewer. As Al LaValley notes, the film text is “highly unstable”. This
instability, however interpreted, still allows us to draw interesting
comparisons with earlier themes noted in 1950s Zombie films. Unlike earlier
texts and despite a low effects budget, the physical transformation from pod to
replicant is distinctly organic, an overt physical as well as emotional change.
The “pod-people” are perfectly physically matched to their original victims, but
again, as with other Zombie texts, individual emotion gives way to a controlled
mentality. Interestingly, as in *Invaders in Invasion of the Body Snatchers* the
changes are first discovered by a child, indicating the alienation found in adult
rationality. This discovery by the 'innocent' followed by a woman’s declaration
that her relation has ‘changed’, is debated by the main protagonist, Dr. Miles
Bennell. This is a rational world directed and explained by men, echoing the
social drive to re-establish a masculine workspace post WW2. However, his
reliance on other males and their rationality, in particular those positioned as
authoritative or as ‘grounded’ in marriage, mark him as outside the individual
and familial constructs evidenced by previous Zombie film narratives. It is also
notable that this outsider status is identified, notably by Benjamin Shapiro, as a
narrative characteristic of *film noir*, in which the alienation of the main male
protagonist is key – as Shapiro phrases it, we identify with the voice-over of
Miles which is redolent of “self-narrated fatalism”. This difference in
portrayal of the heroic figure, within this Zombie text, lies in Miles’s marital
status as a divorced man. Marriage has not worked for either Miles or Becky,
and Becky eventually betrays Miles. The conformity defined by society as the working man with loving wife can be construed as the destroyer of individuality here. The rationality displayed by the ‘pod people’ is also the logical extension of working – and living – by the masculine rules of assimilation and organisation rules.

While we could question the applicability of terming these replicants as Zombies as Carlos Clarens does, we should take note that their behaviour now includes a desire to replicate themselves asexually, while negating any emotional link to their past ‘lives’ as humans. These are enslaved bodies, and the overall aims – of domination and replication – closely match previous cinematic incarnations of the Zombie, while questioning the conventional behaviour of ‘men in grey flannel suits’. As Don Siegel is reported to have said, Invasion is “meant to scare us out of greyness”. The fear of conformity – as we see when Becky and Miles flee the massed pod-people of the town – is also the first true visual indicator of the threat of the Zombie mass, ultimate conformists by their very definition.

However, this narrative use of Zombies was not immediately replicated in other film texts. Zombies of Mora Tau (Edward L. Cahn, 1957) focuses on the supernatural creation of a group of Zombies to protect a sunken treasure. Another low budget offering from the same producer of Creature With the Atom Brain, the film hints at the concept of colonial guilt in its setting of Africa, but as all the characters are predominantly white, there is little discussion of racial or sexual equality. It is no accident that in this film the women are saved or punished depending on their relative independence or attitude to marital relations.

Indeed, if the early Zombie films of the 1930s and 1940s offered a space for depicting social and sexual slavery embodied in these controlled figures, the texts of the 1950s seem predicated on re-establishing a male dominated space that is concerned only with male individuality and responsibility. The later Zombie films of this period seem to concur with this attitude, given that the target audience for these films was a young, mostly male pre-teen and teenage audience. As Thomas Doherty discusses in his study Teenagers and Teenpics, this newly recognised (post WW2) social and economic group became the
targeted demographic for producers of films, due to their disposable income. In the case of 1950s horror films that were mostly low-budgeted efforts reliant on quick returns, the teenage audience was the essential one. It is therefore no surprise that horror texts in the late 1950s and early 1960s allow for the active agency of teenage protagonists, as in *The Blob*, (Irvin S. Yeaworth Jr., 1958) or as outcasts struggling to deal with their own peers as well as internal and external threats, as in *I Was A Teenage Frankenstein* (Herbert L. Strock, 1957) or *I Was A Teenage Werewolf* (Gene Fowler Jr., 1957). This also extended to Zombie films. In *Teenage Zombies* (Jerry Warren, 1959), the threat of chemical brainwashing by “Another Power” as the *Monthly Film Bulletin* phrases it, is using a narrative device used in earlier films of the 1950s, but specifically places the male teenagers as both potential victims and active protagonists. It is also notable that the main instigator of the threat is a highly sexualised female foreign scientist, aided and abetted by the local sheriff: obviously adults cannot be trusted.

Importantly however, the majority of the Zombie B-movies did not always place the teenager at the centre of the narrative. The rest of the Zombie narratives in production from this point until the late 60s might include teenage characters, but only as secondary narrative figures. The adult world of responsibility and conformity was still the main preoccupation, especially in Edward L. Cahn's *Invisible Invaders* (1959). Cahn had already produced two other Zombie films, *Creature With The Atom Brain* and *Zombies of Mora Tau*. At this point Cahn had moved away from Clover Productions and distribution through Columbia, and was now working for Premium Pictures with distribution through United Artists. This was to be his final Zombie film, and displays his preoccupation with male responsibility and destruction, while also utilising several narrative threats used earlier in the 50s. As with most of the low budget features this is a pragmatic attempt to ensure an audience. An alien race threatens destruction of the planet as humanity's control (or lack of) over atomic power grows. A scientist tries to warn authorities of the threat, is ignored, and the aliens enter the bodies of the recently dead to wage war on the living humans. In one of the most noted scenes, a crowd of Zombies stagger towards the camera. All are male, white and dressed in neat suits. The “Organisation Man” discussed by William H. Whyte as “destined to live poised in a middle area that still awaits a
satisfactory euphemism” has reached its ultimate conclusion, as male bodies are detached from souls, knowledge and home – as a mass of middle class Zombies.78

This last key film in the 50s Zombie canon (though Zombies are used as a vague threat in the background of Edward D Wood Jr’s 1958 Plan 9 From Outer Space) amply demonstrates the preponderance of independent horror film production in America at the time. Horror as a genre was a filler item, cheap to produce and ultimately considered as second feature material. As Kevin Heffernan relates:

United Artists board chairman Robert Benjamin told Motion Picture Herald in 1955 that most major studios were incapable of bringing in a so-called low-budget picture for less than $750,000 because of overhead costs. An independent, on the other hand, could bring out an almost identical film for $350,000, with an excellent chance of recouping the negative cost even if the film was a second feature.79

The main studios were less interested in the genre than with attempting to slow the overall drop in cinema audiences, paving the way for the concept of the carny barker productions of William Castle in the late 50s, whose gimmick laden presentations attempted to retain the youthful audience well into the late 60s.80 This lack of main studio interest also allowed for the rise of Roger Corman and his work for AIP in the 60s. This loss of revenue and drop in studio controlled production also strengthened the claims of European Horror films – the rise of art house cinemas in America during the fifties had led to an increased search for filler material from abroad – and canny proprietors linked foreign films to the concept of ‘exploitation’ film. Studios, notably Columbia with Kingsley International and United Artists with Lopert Pictures as their subsidiary distributors, followed the path of importing European Horror and exploitation films, as well as occasionally funding American products of the same type. This would have important repercussions on the later portrayal of the cinematic Zombie in a tumultuous American decade.

The 1960s: Fragmentation and Innovation

Horror films in America up to this historical point were mostly the preserve of smaller productions, attempting to retain a youthful audience in the face of anti-
trust legislation and the rise of television. This would alter with Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960), which instigated a rush to produce psychological horror films alongside depictions of violence and fear within the American home. The majority of American horror films after this were produced alongside changing expectations of audiences who also had access to foreign horror films, and were prepared for implied physical violence.81 This was facilitated by the global film economy that still favoured America, even when attempting to protect national film industries. The Eady Levy in Britain, meant to support British Film productions, was eagerly used by American financiers of ‘co-productions’, especially after the levy became mandatory in 1957. The relative cheapness of films made in Italy and France also interested American distributors looking for material. This had important repercussions in terms of American low-budget horror film production, which became marketed as lurid and exploitative to potentially appeal to audiences. This is particularly true of the producer/director Del Tenney and his works that attempt to meld differing genre styles. Del Tenney’s two contributions to Zombie film, *Zombie / I Eat Your Skin* and *The Horror of Party Beach* (both 1964), are characterised by fairly low budgets with an estimated $120,000 cost for *The Horror*.82 *I Eat* uses the concept of a mad scientist creating Zombies through snake venom, while *The Horror* melds the generic form of the beach party film, attacked by (supposed) Zombies created through radioactive waste leaked onto skeletons and sea creatures. Tenney’s use of the term Zombie seems to be in an attempt to link these horror productions with recognisable figures of terror, without using established narrative patterns. As such, the reviews of both films refer to the 40s B-movie style of the productions and dialogue, remarking on the weakness and absurdity of the films.83 The same year also saw another production: *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies!!*? (Ray Dennis Steckler) which also uses the term Zombie to attract audiences with little in the way of narrative discussion of the Zombie figure.

Instead, other texts offer a more concerted use of the Zombie in this particular time period. The first is *The Dead One* (alternative title: *Blood of The Zombie*) in 1961.84 *The Dead One* returns to the concept of early Zombie films in the setting of New Orleans and the vengeful use of the unwitting Zombie character
by a woman wishing to retain her rights to property. *The Dead One* problematically revisits the racial basis of early Zombie texts, and given the production company folded after this film, it is easy to determine that it failed to accrue much audience interest. Of more potential influence in terms of its independent production context, is Herk Harveys *Carnival of Souls* (1962). *Variety* expressed surprise at the “creditable can of film considering it was put together for less than $100,000” noting that the film was made in the midwest, away from most areas of established filmmaking. The low budget accounts for the lack of music in the film, as well as the black and white film stock used, while the narrative focuses on how a woman who seems to have escaped death is finally claimed by a group of Zombie-like dancers in a rundown fairground. The ending of the film shows she was dead throughout, in “la zone, the limbo between life and death” as Prawer phrases it. Narratively this film bridges the divide between the embodied Zombie and the bodiless Zombie of Haitian legend and also displays a bleak aesthetic, focusing on small communities, rundown rural areas, and in the appearance of the Zombies – speechless, pale, dressed in their best with darkened eyes and considered movements – a new depiction of how the Zombie can include all ages and genders.

This new consideration was also present in a film normally considered as a vampire text, which holds interesting parallels with a later, seminal Zombie film of the same decade. The vampire film is *L’Ultimo Uomo Della Terra Vento di Montagna*, or, in its American title, *The Last Man on Earth* (Ubaldo Ragona/Sidney Salkow, 1964) based on the novel *I am Legend* by Richard Matheson, a prolific horror writer of the fifties and beyond. Mark Jancovich typifies Matheson’s style and concerns as being:

> preoccupied with the male anxieties of the 1950s, although he does not necessarily endorse these anxieties. More commonly, he explores and criticises the conceptions of normality upon which these anxieties are often founded. Normality is always relative within his fiction and, usually, it is monstrous. For these reasons, his fiction displays a general concern with paranoia, loss of control and enstrangement.

We have seen in the science fiction films of the 1950s how these concerns were also expressed in film. In *The Last Man on Earth*, these fears are represented in the barricaded suburban home of Robert Morgan (Vincent Price), who spends
his days destroying the undead he finds and at night is trapped within his home by the undead – some of whom are friends and neighbours – trying to kill him. While they are categorised as vampiric beings, the creatures also bear startling resemblances to previous Zombie incarnations.\textsuperscript{88} Their clothes are rumpled, their skin pale. Eventually Morgan learns that some of the original vampires have evolved into reasoning, almost human beings. He has been killing them alongside the ‘primitive’ vampires, and now they will destroy him. \textit{The Last Man on Earth} is an important film to include in the Zombie canon for several reasons. Firstly, the thematic loss of control which takes over nearly everyone is well established in previous – and later – Zombie texts. The rational man is left alone to battle forces he cannot defeat. Secondly, the concept of a plague or mass infection will have resonances later on in the seminal \textit{Night of The Living Dead} (Romero 1968).\textsuperscript{89} Thirdly, shot in “grim monochrome” the deserted streets and house under siege would have direct visual influence on \textit{Night}.\textsuperscript{90} The method of production also examples the interest in international horror co-productions from American studios. \textit{The Last Man}... was a co-production between Italian (Produzioni La Regina) and American (AIP) studios that utilised both American and Italian actors to appeal to both audiences. Given Vincent Prices’ previous work in Horror films in general and AIP in particular, it was good practice to use his name as the marketing tool in America. Horror film was still trying to exist without the larger studios production finances, despite the success of \textit{Psycho}. Therefore co-productions offered some financial security for both filmmakers and distributors who could re-edit, dub and repackage films for different audiences, whereas independent American productions were struggling against the foreign imports, established producers of horror film, and changing audience tastes. In terms of the Zombie film, the early to mid 60s seem to be a period of minimal production, with little exploration of the Zombie figure to embody fears. While the 30s, 40s and 50s had seen generally consistent production of Zombie films, even at B-movie level, the 60s at this point do not evidence the same levels of output. But there were other presentations of the Zombie in popular culture. Television had moved beyond simply presenting older horror films, and now horror programmes were available in which Zombies were occasionally present. Notable amongst these were such episodes as “Pigeons From Hell” and “The Incredible Dr. Markesan” in the television
series *Thriller* (1960-1962). Directed by Robert Florey, the latter features Boris Karloff as an professor revivifying dead colleagues to prove an academic point, from an August Derleth story first published in *Weird Tales*. Other television series used the returning dead: “Mr. Garrity and the Graves” in *The Twilight Zone* in 1963, and *The Outer Limits* featured at least 4 episodes with Zombie – like creatures between 1963 and 1964, including “Corpus Earthling” (Gerd Oswald, 1963) in which alien rock samples Zombify those who touch them. All of these presentations rely on the same visual deployment of the Zombie, as staring, physically degraded bodies, regardless of the narrative causation of their state. We can also see that the same dialogues of paranoia are present, particularly in the *Outer Limits* episodes, where authoritarian figures are likely to succumb to control.

Therefore throughout this early period of American Zombie film, key thematic devices return again and again, focusing on the control exercised over bodies in differing social contexts. Dialogues of race and gender became sidelined by a shift into post war dialogues on male authority and rationality, but the concept of the threat of Zombification remained steady – it always instigates a loss of personality and responsibility. The later films and cultural products were able, given changing audience tastes, to experiment with more realistic portrayals of physical change, reinforcing the visual connotations of the Zombie as dead body. How these early portrayals influenced and were updated by the supposedly seminal work George Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), is the focus of the next chapter.
Beginning as a controlled, depersonalised slave in the 1920s and 1930s, representations of the Zombie in American film culture changed gradually up until the late 1960s, as filmmakers attempted to reclaim a shrinking horror film audience. As a result, films that utilised the Zombie as the primary figure of fear declined steadily in production from the 1930s onwards. However, in 1968, an independent horror film was released that has since been accorded seminal status not only within Zombie film but also within horror film as a whole, and may be directly accountable for a rise in Zombie film production in America and worldwide. The film is *Night of The Living Dead*.

At first glance, *Night* does not seem particularly deserving of such critical devotion from both fans and historians of the horror genre. The first film from a production company noted for its advertising work, with a budget of approximately $114,000, it is shot in grainy black and white with the soundtrack provided by archived music. Made in Pittsburgh, it has only two professional actors: the rest are the production crew, friends and investors in the film. The dialogue is often stilted, the sound levels alter. There is a simple narrative structure. Johnny and his sister Barbra pay their respects at their father’s grave, are attacked, and Johnny killed. Barbra flees to a supposedly abandoned farmhouse, where the resourceful character Ben rescues her and barricades the doors. Other survivors emerge from the cellar. We learn though the television and radio that the recently dead are returning to life and attacking the living. Tempers within the house run high, an escape attempt fails, burning alive the young lovers of the film. As a result, a fight breaks out in the house, the living dead overrun the defences. The only survivor is Ben. As daylight arrives, so do rescuers. As Ben approaches cautiously, they mistake him for a Zombie, shoot him in the head and burn his body. Recounted as simply as that, there is little to convince the contemporary viewer that this film is worthy of attention. It is this film however, that according to many histories and genre studies of horror film, encouraged a more graphic representation of bodily violence that found fuller expression in horror films of the 1970s.
These studies, whether academic or written for the film fan audience, all stress the importance and influence of Romero’s work. Kim Newman, amongst other popular commentators, credits Night as the pivotal horror film of the late 60s. His study of horror film, Nightmare Movies, takes as its central premise that Night is a key influencing factor on modern horror film. In academic texts, commentators such as Robin Wood explicitly place Night as part of the emerging exploitation horror trend of the 70s, an instigator of such low budget films as Last House on the Left (Wes Craven, 1972) and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Tobe Hooper, 1974). Rick Worland continues this theme when he argues “Night of the Living Dead mapped major new directions for the American Horror film for the next 10 years”. In many respects Night appeared at both a critical point in American cultural history, as well as horror film production. As Kim Paffenroth claims: “More importantly, it is a cinematic statement totally in tune with the horrors of assassination, riots and war that were going on when it was made”.

This chapter discusses and questions the importance placed on this one cinematic text by commentators and consumers of Zombie film, and examines the production and generic contexts in which Night operates. As an independent first feature film, the filmmakers made conscious decisions to work within a genre typified by low budgets, and many of the stylistic qualities so apparent now were the result of budgetary restrictions and attempts to entice an audience with overt violence. We should also take note of the links to previous horror texts with which the film engages, as the innovation that is ascribed to Night is problematic, and we must clearly delineate where the filmmakers are reusing established genre narrative patterns and references, especially in reference to the use of the undead body within horror film.

Therefore notice must be taken of the changes to the body of the cinematic Zombie in which Romero does engage. Night of the Living Dead is defined as a cultural and historical icon in the history of Zombie film by all commentators and constantly re-assessed in light of new film productions. George Romero is accorded status as the Zombie sub-genre’s key director: this notion of Romero as auteur: “The Shakespeare of zombie film” as Peter Dendle characterises him, should be discussed with regards to his later Zombie films, as I would argue that
the academic critical status awarded to him is retrospective, awarded with little consideration of previous film incarnations of the Zombie.\textsuperscript{7} Assessing his body of work will allow for key historical changes in the portrayal of the cinematic Zombie to be fully appreciated, in turn extending the examination of the Zombie as bodily threat. This may in turn help clarify how international representations of the Zombie became possible, a representational shift discussed later.

As noted in the previous chapter, American horror cinema of the 1960s was divided between low budget and occasional main studio productions of horror. \textit{Psycho} had intimated a shift towards psychological horrors based in the American family, which later filmmakers, notably Roman Polanski in \textit{Rosemary’s Baby} (1968) continued, albeit in a more established horror narrative of demonic agency. Smaller budgeted horror productions were created to fill viewing programmes for the intended audience, which remained the same from the demographics of the 1950s – these films were targeted at young male adolescents and adults.\textsuperscript{8} Generally, horror films were considered cheap fare to be produced and consumed rapidly. This became the major commercial motivation in filming \textit{Night}. As the director and production team have all commented, horror was the cheapest type of film to make.\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Night’s} production was also being considered at a vital point in the American film industry. The availability of cheaper filming equipment, the breakdown of the established studio system and a reliance on low-budget films to support a struggling industry was, in turn, encouraging a newer generation of filmmakers. As Kevin Heffernan concludes in his work \textit{Ghouls, Gimmicks and Gold}, 1968 proved to be a pivotal year for filmmakers beyond the horror genre. The introduction of age-based film classification indicated a shift away from the repressive Production Code administration. At the same time the importation of foreign films provided an aesthetic change for audiences.\textsuperscript{10} Roman Polanski, David Cronenberg and others who began their own additions to the horror genre during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, drew aesthetic inspiration from European films and American independent productions in opposition to the “Old Hollywood”. At the same time the ‘New Hollywood’ directors and actors, themselves of the baby boomer generation who grew up with B-Movies and low-budget matinées, were starting their individual careers. While they were
part of the main studios attempts to reclaim a youth audience, Roger Corman had mentored many of them within the low-budget horror film industry. Horror films of the 1950s and 1960s, it should be argued, provided much of the economic and production experience needed for the young directors, while the changing aesthetics and focus of horror films may have provided the links to youth culture that the studios so desperately tried to maintain. While this gradual emphasis on young directors and youth culture was occurring within the supervision of the main studio’s, the production context for Night was much more regional and independent than these films, which had some economic security in terms of distribution through large studios. As such, it could be argued that Night of the Living Dead was a local reaction to changing film making practices and markets.

Production, Influences and Alterations

Latent Image Corporation, the company that produced Night, started as an advertising company in Pittsburgh, with clients that included U.S Steel and two candidates for local government. With the financial rewards from a Calgon advert, a group comprised of George Romero, Russell Streiner, Karl Hardman and John Russo among others, decided to try their hand at a feature film. It must be noted that the group were not all working at Latent, and formed the corporation Image Ten to secure investment for the film project. Investment was small, coming from local businessmen, friends and family, who also acted as extras and production crew. The limited budget accounts for the restrained use of action within the film, given that it was shot over many weekends, finally totalling 30 days in production. It also accounts for the occasionally shaky camerawork, lack of professional actors and black and white film stock used as part of keeping costs down. This restraint also extends to the plotline: the action takes place in a relatively small geographical area, although there are indications in the film (through the narrative device of television and radio) that this is a much more widespread problem.

All the production team note that at the time of discussing possible film topics for filming, there seemed to be “a very heavy influx of so-called horror films”.
Given the financial incentives necessary to return their investment, the genre of horror seemed predisposed to assure an audience. George Romero wrote the original screenplay, directed and edited the film, John Russo reworked the screenplay, while Karl Hardman and Russell Streiner produced and also acted in the film. As such, this was a limited production in terms of filming equipment, budget and timing, and the limited resources are apparent in the finished product.

But from this economic necessity, several aesthetic choices were made in *Night* that differentiated it from other low-budget horror films. By filming in black and white, (for economic purposes) with an occasionally shaky camera, Romero aesthetically captured two key visual styles, one dependant on naturalistic shadows and light during the daylight scenes and a nightmarish expressionist use of shadows and angles inside the lighted house. The other is more a product of the cultural expectations of the intended audience. By the mid 1960s, most American films were filmed in colour. By reverting to “grim monochrome” with an occasional handheld filming style the film evokes newsreels and documentaries.\(^{13}\) The instances of quick cutting during the final besiegement indicate not only the careful use of film stock, but also indicate the urgency of the situation, assisted by the low-key library music. Even with the lack of professional actors (Judith O’Dea and Duane Jones are the only two) and a tendency to some histrionic characterisation, the generally muted dialogue and louder verbal disagreements indicate a panic and despair that Tony Williams refers to as a method of acting and filming inspired by “naturalistic literature”.\(^{14}\)

As such, the production context of *Night* marks it as part of the tradition of low budget horror film making, but the aesthetic results indicate a departure from the stylised horror acting and narratives seen previously. The narrative of *Night of The Living Dead* deserves particularly close attention, because it continues with, and diverges from, established genre convention. Romero himself acknowledges various filmic and stylistic influences. In an interview with Richard Porton he humorously responds to the question of influences:

Romero: Half of it is parasitic and the other half is instinctive. A small percentage of it is thoughtful.
Q: Given your admiration for directors such as Welles and Michael Powell, I have the impression that you didn’t start out with the intention of being pegged as a director of horror movies?
Romero: I never did. Of course, I loved horror films. I grew up with E.C comics and, when I was a kid, they re-released the Universal Famous Monsters…I had this weird mixture of seeing these beautifully staged Gothic films, while the next day I would go to see *The Thing* or *The Day the Earth Stood Still* or some other paranoid vision…I saw everything and came up with this very curious mixture of styles.  

The paranoid visions Romero is referring to are the science fiction invasion narratives of the 1950s, and here we can start to discuss the links to previous generic narratives that bear comparison with *Night*. The narrative of *Night* allows for radiation to be the factor responsible for the events, as in several early science fiction and horror films of the 1950s. In the changed nature of dead/invaded loved ones we can also trace overtones from *Invaders From Mars* (1953) and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). Indeed, *Invasion* bears close similarities in its mostly pessimistic tone, and the varying interpretations on what the actual threat the mass of ‘pod people’ encompass. Like *Night*, the loss of family and social ties is the most threatening aspect. The actual depictions of the physical change/threat (both films had very low special effects budgets, hence the brief but overtly organic depictions in both the greenhouse scene in *Invasion*, and the entrail scene in *Night*) are used as pivotal moments before continuing to focus on the human survivors and their concerns. 

In depicting a mass of Zombies, there are of course stylistic similarities with *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *Invisible Invaders* (Edward. L. Cahn, 1959) in the scale of the infection, but there is another, much more pertinent influencing trend in the shape of Richard Matheson’s book *I am Legend*, and the film *The Last Man on Earth* (Ubaldo Ragona/ Sidney Salkow, 1964). The undead in both the book and the film actively seek to destroy the last survivor, who has barricaded himself in his suburban home. This of course bears an obvious parallel with *Night* in the form of the besieged farmhouse. Several years before the concept of *Night* was raised, Romero wrote an allegorical short story, *Anubis*, following the main premise of Matheson’s text, but made his monsters flesh eaters. This piece of fiction would later form the basic plot for *Night*. The influences of Matheson and *Last Man* are not only thematic. In a scene from *The Last Man on Earth*, the undead vampire-zombies converge mindlessly on
Morgan’s home, beating the front with sticks while moaning his name. While Night’s Zombies cannot vocalise actual words, their intent and manner in attacking the farmhouse are the same, and in this besiegement we can trace symbolic and visual links between the two films. At the same time, other horror films exerted an influence on the production and distribution of Night. The marketing strategy for Night indicated the impact of Psycho on audiences when claiming a much more terrifying experience and also indicates a level of thematic influence.19

The thematic links between two of Hitchcock’s films, Psycho and The Birds (1963) and Night of The Living Dead are easy to identify. The semi-rural setting of Psycho and its threats within the family home (embodied in Norman/Mrs. Bates) and the besiegement faced by the group in The Birds are simple enough parallels to draw. The ending of The Birds is uneasy enough to remind us of the ending of Night, and the beginning of Night (with the unexpected death of Johnny) is often compared in terms of the overturned audience identification caused by the death of Marion Crane in Psycho. In terms of horror narratives generally, Psycho is credited as a forerunner of mainstream violent horror narratives, notably those of the ‘slasher’ film, and in itself an indicator of changing depictions of fictional violence.20 The violence in these films is not visited upon the protagonists by some ‘other’, either foreign or alien, but by a seemingly innocuous personage or creature, while family/group tensions cause other issues for the protagonists. This is also apparent in Night.

Indeed, in Night it is the tensions within the group that actively cause their downfall, in a series of incidents that overturn the expectations of standard horror narratives. The destructive American family that Hitchcock indicated in Psycho is taken to its most extreme depiction in Night. The wisecracking Johnny is killed and comes back from the dead to attack Barbra. Harry and Helen Cooper are trapped in a loveless marriage, expressed through their bickering. Their only link is their daughter Karen, who kills her mother and eats part of her dead father. The young lovers Tom and Judy (the embryonic nuclear family) are burnt alive in a failed escape. It is here that Night begins to establish part of its reputation that has placed it as a seminal text. Filmed in black and white, the actual depiction of violence is restrained compared to Gordon Herschell Lewis’s
colourful works of gore, such as *Blood Feast* (1963) and *Two Thousand Maniacs* (1964) but the actual depiction of intestine eating and the murder of Helen (with its overtones of the Shower scene in *Psycho*) is visually explicit. This, coupled with the high rate of character mortality is a distinct departure from previous horror films. The violence in the film is also practiced on the characters in their verbal attacks, and in the end, the destructive male power play between Ben and Harry.

So far *Night* displays strong thematic and visual links to previous science fiction apocalyptic narratives, as well as showing the tendency to discuss the internal threat of the family in horror that began in the early 1960s. As such, the female characters in the film are defined by their relationships to men, and suffer accordingly. There is no innovation in this film that allows for the female characters to act as anything other than physically frail. It is in the male characters that we see a shift in the portrayal of standard heroic actions and intended audience identification. This is because the lead male, Ben, is black. Romero himself notes that this choice was unintentional – the actor Duane Jones was, in his words, simply the best actor from among their choices. Black heroes were not unknown within film narratives at this time. Harry Belafonte had taken a leading role within *The World, The Flesh and The Devil* (Ranald McDougall, 1959) and Sidney Poitier had starred in many films dealing with racial tensions during the 1950s and 60s. Robert K Lightning suggests that Ben’s status in *Night* can be traced to his position between Poitier’s supposed middle class status in most film texts, and the later blaxploitation film heroes, and this is persuasive, although we should bear in mind two key narrative aspects of *Night* that mark Ben as a different type of black protagonist. Firstly, Ben is proactive and persuasive, but his belligerent stance towards Harry is only initially justified by his role as Barbra’s rescuer (but not love interest). Their jockeying for position renders the others vulnerable. Ben is the character we are most asked to identify with, yet he is proved wrong in his actions and subsequent behaviour. Secondly, Ben’s sudden death at the hands of the posse is a narrative departure unexpected by the audience, no matter what their identification with Ben has been. His death truly fixes *Night* as a paranoid and negative text.
Night refers to previous shifts in horror film narratives by placing the film firmly within an American family setting. But the alterations that Night engages in are also important. The overarching tone of the film is its pessimism. There are no heroes, only bickering, failed humans. There is no hope even in the rescuers, who do not determine between the living and the undead. This bleak pessimism revolts against all horror film convention laid down by previous low budget films and most American horror films, and is assisted by the setting of the film, the shadowy mise-en scène of the farmhouse and its environs. Like the science fiction narratives of the 1950s, the family and home are important, but here the external and internal threat is fused. Therefore Night of The Living Dead both adheres to and ignores aspects of established horror genre film styles and narratives, providing at once a familiar but changed setting for the audience. If we consider for a moment Barry Keith Grant’s definition of genre:

Stated simply, genre movies are those commercial films which, through repetition and variation, tell familiar stories with familiar characters and familiar situations. They also encourage expectations and experiences similar to those of similar films we have already seen.  

Night, while using established archetypes in terms of the characters and setting, and also in some aspects of the filming, militates against this description. Night encourages surface audience identification with characters, only to question our allegiances to these characters later in the film. The shocking beginning and ending, the fairly explicit gore and violence, also contravene the experience of narrative closure and security traditionally expected from horror. This would have repercussions on Night’s reception within America at the time of release, attracting the main focus of criticism it received.

Critical Receptions: Contemporary Concerns, European Enthusiasm.

Night was released (through Walter Reade distribution mostly to its dependent theatre chain Continental) in late 1968. Walter Reade at this point, like many other companies, was attempting to cover as many potential audiences as possible to return a profit. As Heffernan discusses, inner city cinemas were pressured to present an eclectic mix of films, some for children, teens, racial
minorities, as well as showing the ever-present horror and exploitation films. This led to several cases of overlap when the same film was shown in the matinée and in the evening showing, which was intended for adult audiences. This was the situation that perhaps accounted for most of the negative criticism surrounding Night. Roger Ebert viewed the film amongst a mostly juvenile audience, and was so shocked by the nihilism and the youngster’s reactions to the second half of the film that at the end of his negative review he appealed to the MPAA age rating system. He was not the only one to respond so vehemently. In one of the most quoted comments on the film, Variety opined:

> Until the Supreme Court establishes clear-cut guidelines for the pornography of violence, NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD will serve nicely as an outer limit definition by example. In a mere 90 minutes, this horror film (pun intended) casts serious aspersions on the integrity and social responsibility of its Pittsburgh-based makers, distributor Walter Reade, the film industry as a whole and the exhibitors who book the picture, as well as raising doubts about the future of the regional cinema movement and about the moral health of filmgoers who cheerfully opt for this unrelieved orgy of sadism.

This comprehensive list of criticism also highlights an aspect of concern that is repeated in at least one other dismissal. Both Variety and Vincent Canby note the geographical placement of the filmmakers – Canby dismisses the film and adds, almost as an afterthought: “The movie was made by some people in Pittsburgh”. For these critics, this attempt at a feature film from outside established metropolitan and filmmaking centres is an aspect of criticism, perhaps reflecting unease with filmmakers working outside of established protocols. For other critics assessing Night later on, this would become a main strength of the films production. Cahiers du Cinema reviewed the film enthusiastically, which led to a later, more considered reappraisal by American reviewers. In Britain, several reviewers noted, reservedly, that the film worked despite its limitations. Michael Pye commented on its ability to “overturn horror convention” and went on:

> There is no crystal opposition of good and evil in the Terence Fisher manner, and none of the fashionable arguments about scientific responsibility that one finds, for example in Haller’s “Monster of Terror”. It is unprincipled, an exercise in suspense.
Interestingly, he finishes with an observation that neatly encapsulates the problems of assessing Night at the time of release: “Innovation, of any sort, introduces the problems of evaluating the film”.²⁹ Penelope Huston concurs, conceding that Night succeeds by “playing off its own limitations”, and in the distortion and ordinariness…the sickly drabness of the agents of its depredations, the squabbling cannibalism inside the house facing the silent threat outside. A true piece of modern American gothic, the film has the wit to use horror instead of being used by it.³⁰

Films and Filming continued this positive vein, commenting on the “justified acclaim” that Night was garnering in America on its second run.³¹ In 1970 Sight and Sound noted that Romero had been invited to present the film at a study session for the Museum of Modern Art, the film had grossed one million dollars so far, and on a more gleeful note that that had caused “Dame Variety to treat the makers with more respect”.³²

This belated American acclaim was partially due to the graphic content of the film, which attracted horror viewers, and to favourable word of mouth responses, but there were other factors at work. The release of Night at inner city cinemas and college campuses tied in well with the ongoing youthful demographic for horror films, but now generated a more thoughtful response from viewers who themselves were being targeted by the emergence of the ‘New Hollywood’ productions. The violent ending of Night also encouraged a more contemporary reading for the youth of America in the early 1970s, in part a response to the ongoing race riots and overall disenfranchisement felt against politics and culture in America in the late 60s and early 70s. While Romero disclaims any overt political statement in Night, he acknowledges that contemporary concerns did affect the film, notably in his consciousness of the race riots occurring across America:

There were race riots here in Pittsburgh, although the city is generally pretty much out of the loop. That shit was happening and it was partially in my consciousness - particularly when I was shooting the newsreel stuff with the posse and the dogs coming out of the police wagon.³³

Russell Streiner declines any suggestion of intended social comment in the film, but acknowledges the power of socio- racial readings, especially when viewing
the film in an all-black theatre. As Streiner recounts in an interview for 
*Cinefantastique*:

> It was one of the 13 or 17 situations the film opened in, and it was a predominantly black theatre in a black neighbourhood...I’ve never seen anything like it in terms of audience involvement. People were standing on their feet and shouting instructions to the characters.

CFQ: What was the reaction of the black audience to the end of the film. Was the audience taken aback by this? Oh yes, and also very angry about it. You could hear murmurings of, “Well, you know, they had to kill him off” and “Whitey had to get him anyway”. “He bought it from the Man”.  

It is this type of response that may be accountable for the film’s enduring status as a classic horror film, in that the narrative is simple, but can be read by any commentator as referencing wider human concerns, whether social, racial or political. It is these critical perspectives, retrospectively applied to *Night* and its creator, that are partially responsible for the seminal status of *Night of the Living Dead* and George Romero as creators of the new cinematic Zombie. However, while assessing *Night* may be easier retrospectively, the narratives engaged in by the critics ignore previous incarnations of the Zombie and discuss *Night* in the context of Romero’s other film works.

It should be remembered that Romero is not only noted for his work within the Zombie genre. After *Night of the Living Dead* it was ten years before he returned to the Zombie apocalypse that *Night* presaged. In the meantime, he worked as both a television and film director. His film works included more horror films (*The Crazies*, 1973 and *Martin*, 1977) as well as meditations upon modern society (*There’s Always Vanilla*, 1972) and female disenfranchisement (*Jack’s Wife*, 1973). However, it is for his Zombie films that Romero is best known. The application of auteur status to Romero is widespread and is based on both the film texts under discussion as well as Romero’s working practices within the film industry. Romero continued working in Latent Image until 1976, when the financial troubles caused by a string of commercial failures were fortuitously resolved when he entered a partnership with Richard Rubinstein and formed Laurel Entertainment. Romero remains based mostly in Pittsburgh, and indeed most of the investment for his earlier films came from the same location. As such, he remains
recognised for his film work, and asked to work for certain studios, but also has a degree of autonomy that allows him a certain measure of independence in the projects he chooses to work on. As Romero phrases it: “I much prefer to work at the two-dollar betting window, it’s a little safer and you’re also just left alone and you can make the film you wanted”. 36 This also extends to his choice of working partnerships, as he maintains links with writer Stephen King, director Dario Argento and draws upon Tom Savini’s expertise as an actor and special effects creator. His production teams also hold some of the same personnel that return to work on his films; while Romero holds the majority of influence on the editing of his films, he is keen to devolve responsibility and accept alterations from his filming team. As Russell Streiner and others have noted, Night was not the single creation of George Romero. 37 However, his work since then repeats ideas and characters that strengthen the argument for Romero as providing the thematic inspiration in all his works. Romero himself is involved as director, writer and editor in the majority of his films, and intimates that the themes in his films are the starting point, rather than a concrete narrative. This allows for a narrative space in which many commentators ascribe influence and meaning to his Zombie works. Romero himself comments upon this trend when interviewed:

R: I’ve read accounts describing the zombies as either the silent majority or the nuclear family…to me they’ve always represented change
Q: Are you bemused by the many academic commentaries on the Dead films?
R: Well, basically I’m very grateful. I’ve made a handful of films and they’re still all there. It’s funny when people say you’ve opened all the doors or changed the genre; you just don’t think of yourself in that way. 38

As a result of the depictions of the Zombies that Romero has created over a wide period of time, commentators have been able to ascribe varying meanings to his body of work. For example, Tony Williams in his book The Cinema of George A Romero: Knight of the Living Dead argues that Romero’s film output is characterised by a naturalist style and intense focus on the disenfranchisement felt in contemporary society, normally linked to consumerist concerns, musing that Romero’s films approach themes expressed in Emile Zola’s work, even
though he admits Romero has not read Zola. The overall text is less a focus on the *Dead* films than an argument for Romero as auteur in a philosophical sense. Kim Paffenroth links Romero’s Zombies to Dante’s depiction of the damned, arguing that these particular films are a theological debate about human nature. Again, the argument is persuasive, but refers to a concept of hell and undethat Romero himself does not indicate in his works as a definite narrative concern.

Richard Dyer explicitly places Romero’s *Dead* films as clear political allegories over the treatment of blacks and racial minorities. In comparison, Barry K Grant argues that Romero is prominently a feminist filmmaker, in his later *Dead* films and in his other works. Grant lists interpretations that *Night* collects: as a modernist interpretation of the vampire myth, “a critique of the Nixonian ‘silent majority’, of American involvement in Vietnam, and of the family under capitalism”. As such, it is easy to see the wider interpretations possible in Romero’s films. This is not to denigrate Romero’s standing as an innovator and part of an acknowledged pantheon of horror film directors. Indeed he is considered as one by other producers of horror, both in his characterisation and influences on the style of horror. However, we should note that the critical readings are possible because Romero leaves a narrative space, beyond his own political and social commentaries.

This narrative space is possible because of the symbolic status of the Zombie. We can argue that the Zombie is a cultural blank slate, over which can be superimposed fears and anxieties of sexual and racial tensions, the role of masculinity within society, the impact of technological advances, as we discussed in previous chapters. The majority of commentators on *Night* do not acknowledge this, or the film’s historical and narrative positioning between innovation and established Zombie film genre expectations. Therefore we should consider the multiplicity of readings available because of Romero’s portrayal of the undead body, an aspect of Romero’s films that is only sketchily considered by critics in general. As always, the Zombie body is key, and should be considered before wider interpretations are placed upon it.

The Zombies in *Night* are referred to as ghouls, which in folklore haunt graveyards and are essentially eaters of dead flesh. This makes sense
considering the film begins in a graveyard, but as the film continues the ghouls’ portrayal mixes previous Zombie characteristics with new additions. The Zombie’s walk is shuffling, as in all previous incarnations, but they can also lunge. They cannot vocalise, but instead moan, and seem to be able to utilise tools, albeit in a simplistic manner. They are the recently deceased, and their creation (never properly explained) is rapid, without magic or science. Those that surround the farmhouse are dressed for bed, are naked, wear suits and dresses. In short, they are a normal cross section of the populace, and importantly, are uncontrolled and uncontrollable in their desire to eat the living. Anyone bitten by a Zombie becomes one, as does anyone who dies a natural death. This includes women, themselves previously used in Zombie films as heroines and sexual slaves. This alteration is marked, as these Zombies, depicting as they do an infected mass of the everyday, are steadfastly non-sexual. Children are also not exempt, as shown in the character of Karen who returns to kill her mother. While the evil child in the horror genre was already established in previous films, the actual consumption of parent’s bodies indicates again the remorseless nature of Night’s discussion of structures of responsibility and kinship.46

The Zombie’s bodies appear as if they belong to sleepwalkers, or indicate traces of decomposition or injury. The individual Zombie is less of a threat physically than a massed group, and their ceaseless attempts to infect humans is perhaps the most startling extension of the Zombies original plodding, unquestioning behaviour. These creatures do not sleep, do not reason or emote, and will constantly attempt to find the living and destroy them without any methods of control placed on them: as a later Romero film will clarify, they are “pure motorised instinct”. This instinct is to feed and destroy, and given the speed with which their bites infect and kill, this is obviously much more of a widespread, generalised threat. Bearing this in mind, Night’s Zombies bear a close thematic similarity to those monsters portrayed in the apocalyptic science fiction films of the 1950s, and of course the creatures from Matheson’s text. In those narratives, the overwhelming mass threat redefines the humanity and individuality of the survivors, while commenting on the social structures that support and define humanity – notably in the family home.
However, this is also where *Night* differs. Within *Night*, the greatest threat comes from other living humans, whether as direct aggressors or uncaring rescuers. In this, the narrative threat of the Zombie is placed to one side as the extension of normal human behaviour, which in itself is much more threatening. Also, because their cause is unexplained, there is no narrative resolution for the new Zombie – they are beyond a social or scientific rationale. These Zombies are destroyed by removing or injuring the seat of human behaviour and experience – the head/brain. While this refers to the narrative use of the Zombie as a creature of borders, both in its undead state and in its reasoning power (as we discussed in Chapter 1), it is also a brutal reminder of human frailty. It is emblematic of a more modern set of genre conventions started by this film, that religious or scientific reasoning and resolutions are absent unlike earlier horror and science fiction narratives. This nihilistic viewpoint modernises the Zombie beyond its mesmerised and enslaved beginnings – the Zombies are a mass, and their numbers promise an obvious breakdown of the societal borders between the dead and the living. As such, *Night* reinvents the symbolic threat of the Zombie, an underused figure of fear during the early 1960s, by making the Zombie an active agent in destroying the separation between life and death, pollution and cleanliness. This continues in Romero’s other *Dead* films, where these initial themes become a focused exploration of both the symbolic meaning of the undead and their embodiment of societal fears.

As we saw above, multiple readings of Romero’s work are possible because the nature of the Zombie threat in film changes with time to become more contemporarily in tune with events. The later *Dead* films: *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Day of the Dead* (1985) *Land of the Dead* (2005) are set in a linear development, or rather decay, of the Zombie situation. Briefly defining the portrayal of the zombies and the survivors, and the narrative choices in which Romero engages, may help clarify his additions to the Zombie sub-genre and to validate his role as a thematic innovator. The *Dead* films engage in a conscious development of the portrayal of the Zombies, the survivors and the edifices of society and control, beyond the initial concerns developed in *Night*. It should be noted that the films are unconcerned with the narrative cause of the Zombie apocalypse. Radiation, a god-directed plague (or return of the damned) are potential reasons propounded throughout the film, but the essential dialogues are
mostly carried out between the survivors and their attitude to the disaster. Instead, it is the repercussions of the Zombies on society that forms the greatest narrative focus, and whether society is worth saving.

The settings of all four films are relatively restrained in terms of geological area. *Night* takes place in a farmhouse, *Dawn* moves from a besieged city to an immense (and contemporarily new structure) shopping mall. *Day* focuses on a missile silo and underground military complex (with a brief view of a decayed Oceanside town) and *Land* depicts an inhabited city and its environs. This essentially throws the focus of the narrative onto how people react to changed social situations while still in recognisably socially ordered spaces. Therefore *Dawn* becomes a trenchant comment on the trap of consumerism, with the survivors realising their haven in a mall is as desirable to the Zombies as it is to them. Their mindless clamouring is neatly offset by the survivor’s acquisitive and pointless recreation of an upper-middle class existence, which weakens them and insulates them from reality. *Day*, due to its militaristic setting, is a dialogue on the equal uselessness of scientific or military enquiry or violence, and *Land* returns to a dialogue between the haves and have-nots. That the Zombies eventually overrun the prime living location in the city – Fiddler’s Green – intimates the uselessness of the materially based existence the survivors have coldly resuscitated. The depiction of the survivors and their attempts to deal with Zombies indicate the relative importance Romero ascribes to both sets of characters, the threats and the assumed ‘good’ *i.e.*: living characters.

However, as *Night* indicated, the Zombies are really an extension of the threats posed by humans, and many of the male characters in all four films exhibit the same instinctive mindlessness and destructiveness as the Zombies. The role of gender and racial difference deserves close attention, as Romero moves beyond the stereotyped horror convention he displayed in *Night*, but also indicates a shift away from the traditional hierarchies of power and powerlessness in previous Zombie film narratives.

*Gender and Race: The ‘Outsider’ in the Dead films*

Against the horror film conventions of the 60s and 70s that saw a continued use of the female character as victim and sex object, mainly in the so called
“slasher” sub-genre, Romero actively promotes his later female characters to positions of authority and audience identification, outside the familial roles that destroyed the women in Night.48 Alongside this there is an overt use of the Black or Hispanic male as a counterpoint to white male aggression and societal structures within the three later Dead films. As such, Romero actively promotes an equality based on experience, practical worth and communication. All the females are willing to negotiate, to work as a group, and are (eventually) unshackled from ‘normal’ male-female familial and sexual dependencies that caused the deaths of the women in Night. As Barry K Grant argues, the link between the old society and the new is most consistently shown in the failures of the male characters:

Social order collapses – because of the inability of Romero’s Male characters to work together. Threatened with violence and dissolution, masculine power oppressively asserts itself in attempts to impose order through authorial control rather than group co-operation.49

Within this context, the ability of males and females to work co-operatively determines their ability to survive. Romero makes this point forcefully in all three Dead films by explicitly positioning his potential survivors as outsiders to the previous social structure and to any new structures based on old masculine concerns. Instead, those characters that are willing to learn and move on, unshackled by traditional family or gender roles, have the chance of survival. Fran (Gaylen Ross) in Dawn is a professional woman, pregnant, divorced, who begins the film as a mostly acquiescent partner to Steven (David Enge). However, as the film progresses she demands and receives equal treatment and responsibilities as part of the group of four: “I’m not going to be den mother for you guys”. It is her forward thinking that leaves at least the possibility of escape for herself and Peter (Ken Foree), the black individual. He is the only one of the group to answer Fran’s questions, to acknowledge her plans, and in the end, to throw off the deadened life he has acquired in the mall. He also muses on the potential religious causes of the Zombies and respects the religious beliefs of others, evidenced by his treatment of the tenement priest and the refusal to give up their (un) dead. In this film, both Fran as the gender marginalized and Peter, as a historically marginalized black man, co-operate equally because of their previous oppressed status enshrined in society. Their ability to negate previous
societal structures allows them to develop and eventually work as partners when again their social system (the sterile and secure mall) is invaded.

This development is carried through into Day of the Dead. Sarah (Lori Cardille) supports her disturbed Latino boyfriend Miguel (Anthony Dileo Jr.) and establishes a rapport with John, (Terry Alexander) the Caribbean helicopter pilot and his friend, the radio operator McDermott (Jarlath Conroy). Interestingly, while Peter acknowledged his Trinidadian heritage in repeating his grandfathers’ religious statements in Dawn, he was clearly defined as an American black man, in his discussion of real and ‘street’ brothers. John refers much more closely to an attitude of individuality against American concerns, specifically when referring to escape to an island and his dismissal of American military concerns. Sarah’s final acceptance of this situation means that she forms part of a group that attempts to escape. While John’s interest in Sarah is rooted in a sympathetic but ironic dismissal of her attempts to find the cause of the Zombies, he also pointedly gestures towards the biological difference and promise that Sarah holds when he discusses vague plans for an island in the sun and a fresh start – including childbearing, the one method humans have to re-establish their numbers. While this is problematic in terms of the gender role that Sarah may potentially be expected to play, John and McDermott value her precisely because of her professional determination and defiance of the military oppression. Eventually, in Day’s ending shot, we see this regard fulfilled as the three relax and fish on a tropical beach. The violent and sadistic soldiers of the base are fated to be eaten.

In Land there are fewer stronger female characters beyond surface action stereotypes, partially as a recognition of the emergence of strong female characters in horror during the late 1970s and 1980s. Land features more characters than previously used in a Romero Zombie film, and as such narrative space is allocated to those who drive the narrative, not characters such as Slack (Asia Argento) and Pretty Boy (Joanne Borland) who are characters with a practical team mentality. Given the previous empowered female characters in the Dead films, it seems as though the street level society of Land has accepted strong female compatriots and sees no need to distinguish them based on their sex. Instead, the active partnerships are based on practical ability and respect.
In the *Dead* films, the women hold the most promise of a new society because they reject masculine domination, coupled with the ability to nurture life. However, they are not purely sexual or reproducing machines, and must be treated as equals by the groups they survive in. This is in contrast to previous Zombie films where women are portrayed as Zombified sexual slaves, or constrained within traditional familial and societal roles. In Romero’s texts, the independent woman is accorded the greatest chance of survival, as they refuse to fall into patterns of male domination and violence that ultimately make more dead bodies. The other group who hold potential are those who have also been oppressed historically, both socially and in Zombie films - those who are not white and middle class. Peter and John (from *Dawn* and *Day* respectively) are practical black men who eventually refuse to uphold structures that are self-destructive. However, the Hispanic Cholo (John Leguizamo) in *Land* acts as Romero’s indicator of re-instituted social oppression, in his desire to enter the lifestyle of the upper classes ensconced in Fiddler’s Green. Bitten by a Zombie, his desire to become rich has sealed his fate. When offered a quick death by a compatriot, he waves the gun away, claiming, “I always wanted to see how the other half lives”. He returns as a Zombie to wreak vengeance on Kaufman (Dennis Hopper) as a racial and economic oppressor (complete with black manservant), as the Zombies overrun the city.

This is where Romero’s engagement with the Zombie film contemporises and questions previous generic conventions. Unlike the earliest Zombie films, starting with *White Zombie* that focus on the implied colonial powers of America in the West Indies and enslaved black bodies, Romero’s films actively extol the separateness of race from white culture. In these films, the individuality of the character determines their fate. Attempts to repress or reject racial otherness (pointless in a society where the dead are the majority) invite a lack of empathy and practicality that ensures destruction. We could argue that Romero in these films has overturned the genre conventions in Zombie film that insisted on “weak” minorities (racial and sexual) as natural “victims”. This is added to Romero’s consideration of the evolution, if not humanization of the cinematic Zombie. In Romero’s *Dead* films, there is another repressed underclass: the Zombies themselves.
**Bub to Big Daddy: The Zombie as us.**

But at least since *King Kong* and *Frankenstein* there’s always been this concept of the sympathetic monster. So, I’ve always had that conceit. They’re basically blue-collar monsters and they’ve always represented change…They’re *us* and they’re *us changed* and change is going to get you.52

Romero here explicitly places the Zombie as an underclass (in standard socio-economic terms), but also clearly sees them as agents for a force that should not be denied. This is clear in the subtexts of the films that explicitly show the failure of religion, science, the military and politics to uphold previous social structures, and in the mass of Zombies who are, in the end, individuals who are all included in a new mass movement, regardless of age, sex or race. This is a development on previous Zombie films where initially Zombies were enslaved blacks, or selected white victims were zombified (either for a social or sexual reason). The inclusion of children among the undead also indicates the universal nature of change, and adds another layer of pathos to what started as a sympathetic, abused creature in the 1930s, and here develops into a primal carrier of death. For the Zombies in Romero’s *Dead* films are also individuals, by nature of their dress and decay. Each body indicates a social status or profession, and an individual life ended. It is not only for comedic effect that we see undead Hare Krishna’s, majorettes or graduates, but to indicate the scope of the infection that claims people from all walks of life. Indeed, it is a contemporary vision of the medieval “Dance of Death” images that Catherine Arnold discusses as a potent reminder of human mortality.53

But where these films alter the image of the cinematic Zombie into a more potent and sympathetic creature is when Romero depicts them as capable of learning, emoting and creating a truly egalitarian society. Bub (Sherman Howard) in *Day of the Dead* begins this process, as the ‘star’ student of Dr. Logan (Richard Liberty). Bub recognises military insignia and salutes (in life he was a soldier), apparently enjoys music, and has been taught to vaguely vocalise. He is rewarded with lumps of flesh, but evinces a new, developing intellect. When he finds his ‘master’ dead, Bub displays sorrow and anger, shoots Rhodes, sarcastically salutes, and leaves him to be ripped apart by the
Zombies who are in the base. This in itself is partially a moment of black comedy, but Bub has correctly deduced whom the monster is, and has left it to his more primal compatriots to deal with the problem. Bub is a return to the sympathetic Frankenstein’s monster, created without his consent, but attempting to integrate with those around him. His mentor gone, he shuffles away, but without indulging in ‘normal’ Zombie behaviour. Romero here intimates responses beyond primal behaviour; itself considered an indicator of intelligence.

This continues in *Land of the Dead*. The Zombies are the first creatures to be shown, unlike the humans in the preceding three films, and the focus on their activities is more sustained and sympathetic than the activities of the humans. The montage of shots showing undeath in the town is shot in a sickly blue colour, with physical decay evident, but the activities of the Zombies are peacefully purposeful. A band jerks instruments and wheezily attempt notes, a Zombie couple holding hands walk, and a Black gas station attendant, alerted by the bell, walks out, pulls out a nozzle, and puts it back when he sees no car. His nametag reads Big Daddy (Eugene Clark) and he is a literal paternal figure as he attempts to save other Zombies from a senseless rampage by human looters. While no words are spoken, grunts, growls and inarticulate howls indicate his emotions, and he is notable for his refusal to eat human flesh. Instead, the Zombies are directed by him to continue the rampage into Fiddlers Green, when he selects Kaufman as a direct target. The film ends with him leading the Zombies in the city, watching the surviving humans leave. The Zombies are more human than the humans, who instigated the attack.

*Land* is perhaps most strident in its assertion of the Zombies as us and in this case, as better versions of us. However, their attacks on the human body evidence an interest in the gory physicality of life and death, and for this Romero furthered the violence introduced in *Night*. This is a development noticeably prominent in films of the late sixties –exampled by *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967, Arthur Penn) and Sam Peckinpah’s *The Wild Bunch* (1969). This shift in the physical portrayal of violence and blood occurred as a result of changing codes of censorship (instigated by the removal of the Production Code) audience attitudes to gore on screen, and perhaps, as Fleming and Manvell theorise, the abundance of violence within American society at the time. The development
of gory portrayals in horror film was partially through the efforts of independent horror filmmakers like George Romero, who is occasionally credited with the introduction of the “splatter” film in his depiction of gore in *Dawn of the Dead*.\(^{55}\)

We should also note that previous depictions of ironic vengeance and decomposing bodies were potential inspirations for Romero – in the form of the 50s horror comics. The eventual fate of victims in *Dawn* and *Day* revolve around their transgressions while alive, and the blackly comic depictions of the Zombies in *Dawn of the Dead* indicates an aesthetic appreciation of the gore filled comics present while Romero was growing up, a link Tony Williams makes with Romero’s later film *Creepshow* (1982), but which is apparent in Romero’s previous Zombie films.\(^{56}\)

The final influence we could claim from the *Dead* films, both for the Zombie film and horror in general, is a focus on the desecration of the body, a breaking of the boundary between skin and blood evidenced in the gaping wounds and bullet ridden corpses. The Zombie as a concept is by its existence liminal, it breaks borders of belief and hygiene, death and undeath, as was discussed in the earlier chapter. By making the Zombies carnivorous Romero actively and visually breaks down the integrity of the human body, both individually and as a social concept – as Richard Dyer extends in the context of race when discussing the *Dead* films:

> The historical boundedness of the white body is grotesquely transgressed as whites/zombies gouge out living white arms, organs, etc. The spectre of white loss of control is evoked by the way the zombies stumble and dribble in their inexorable quest for blood. White over-investment in the brain is mercilessly undermined as brains spatter against the walls and zombies flop to the ground. “The fear of one’s own body, of how one controls it and relates to it” (Brophy 1986:8) and the fear of not being able to control other bodies, those bodies whose exploitation is so fundamental to capitalist economy, are both at the heart of whiteness.\(^{57}\)

This overt spectacle of death and destruction marks the Zombies apart from other established horror creatures, but in several ways. The Zombies are recognisably us, and inclusion to their ranks is automatic on death. As such, theirs is a truly equal society, and the film texts then focus on survival narratives
for the characters existing within old and new societal structures. These structures depend on the willingness of humans not to construct borders based on physical differences that are socially enshrined (in terms of age, gender, race). As such, Romero’s films are innovative because they allow a multiplicity of contemporary readings, which may or may not have been intended by the filmmakers, and in fact inspire the active reading of the film text for further social commentary, a factor which seems to have inspired many of the fan texts on Romero and the modern Zombie film.

But in essence, the modern Zombie film initiated by George Romero is about humans, not the undead. The Zombie is a modern plague, undiscriminating and (by implication) global in its speed and spread. As such, the contemporary post 1968 Zombie film could logically extend its premise of the returning dead to all cultures and geographical locations, regardless of their own dialogues and beliefs on death and the undead. The next chapters will discuss the appearances of the cinematic Zombie in several countries and discuss whether these appearances indicate national or global concerns, both thematically and in the film industry. Is the Zombie film culturally homogenous, displacing national fear?
America may still dominate film markets within Europe with its established film practices in production and exhibition, but this exchange of cinematic influence was and is not one-sided. As established earlier, representations of undead figures in early American horror film descended from European narratives. What this chapter will clarify is that the Zombie as a figure of fear may well be utilised in European texts in order to respond to American cycles of production, but this must be considered in the context of the country of origin’s film industry, the production of the Zombie film text, and how the use of the Zombie in the film text changes over time.

It is important to note that many European countries have not produced large numbers of Zombie films, excepting fan-made productions that are recently increasing in numbers due to the popularity of Internet communication. This chapter considers the countries that have displayed and display notable output of works using the Zombie as its focus, and refers to individual film texts that may help exemplify shifts in European Zombie film production and ongoing narrative reconsiderations. What must also be taken into account is the high number of co-productions during peak years of Zombie film production. These were not only mergers of finance and production methods to ensure good financial returns, or simply an ongoing struggle with American film markets. They were also reconsiderations of established film narrative and genre patterns, sharing concepts of how the Zombie figure could be deployed in horror films across Europe to mixed audiences.

America claimed prominence in producing horror films during the 1930s, but it should be remembered that short ‘horrific’ films had been produced shortly after the first flowering of fiction film in Europe. Georges Méliès used the cinematic tricks he discovered to introduce both fantastic and disturbing monsters in his works – notably in *Faust and Marguerite* (1897), *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) and *The Conquest of the Pole* (1912). American entrepreneurs were not slow to react, and in 1900 Edwin S. Porter created his own version of *Faust*, imitating the appearances and transformations of Méliès work. Méliès was eventually
forced out of the film business, but his addition to popular narratives in film guaranteed that horror as a topic would be remembered and re-used throughout film history. Indeed, the two national cinemas of France and Germany, which dominated the early part of the twentieth century in terms of filming and thematic innovation, were responsible for the earliest depictions of the returning dead or controlled bodies.

German horror films from before and during the 1920s, notably Paul Wegener’s *Golem* films (*The Golem* 1914, *Der Golem und die Tänzerin*, 1917 and *The Golem*, 1920) explicitly consider the enslaved automaton, while *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) can be considered an early inspiration for the cinematic Zombie in the somnambulist Cesare. But in the same year as *Caligari* was released, a French film openly utilised undead soldier’s bodies to question the morality of the living. Abel Gance’s *J’accuse!* (1919) explicitly condemns the deaths of WW1 through the narrative device of the Zombie. Production information is difficult to determine, although accounts of the director’s clashes with censorship exist, indicating official resistance to such overt portrayals of death. *J’accuse!* was remade in 1937 by Gance while the French film industry was still recovering from the impact of war, repeating the same concerns. His use of the mutilated faces and wearied bodies of war veterans acted as a potent reminder of the human cost, but also allowed a verifiably human undead figure to act as a thematic warning. Given the political climate within Europe at the time, it is easy to read this as a portent of the trauma to come. Indeed the war damaged bodies of the living – and dead – remain a potent metaphor for Zombie films, and indeed horror films in general to this day.

While Gance’s films offered an clear deployment of human monsters to question living politics, David J. Skal proposes that the horror icons created by the American studios were unconscious meditations on the bodies scarred by World War One. Their popularity – at least in America – displays the exchange of social experience and cultural imagery between countries after the events of the Great War. Following this, America’s predominance in the fictional film after WW1 (and by extension horror film) had consequences for those countries that accepted its output and its restrained portrayal of undead bodies. Historically and linguistically, the closest link was with Britain. As Michael Chanan phrases it, the British film market was positioned with “symbiotic
allegiance to the American leaders in the field...since neither party was properly able to do without the other”. 5 This relationship holds particular relevance when discussing the symbolic use of the Zombie in British horror film.

**British Zombie films: 1933-1995**

Histories of British horror acknowledge the paucity of horror film production throughout the first part of the twentieth century. Ian Conrich argues that the overwhelming influence of American horror was in part a reason for this, while Jonathan Rigby characterises early British films that included attempts at horror (notably within comedies) as marked with “prissiness and gentility”. 6 The influence of the British Board of Film Censors after 1913 also accounted for this lack of horrific content, especially so when the former Home Secretary Edward Shortt, then overseeing the BBFC, characterised the output of American horror films as “unfortunate and undesirable” in 1933. 7 Jeffrey Richards among others notes that the Presidents of the BBFC were particularly involved in detecting “trends in films which were felt to be injurious to the moral welfare of the populace”. 8 While the BBFC was not an official body of state censorship, close ties with Governmental policy helped determine what constituted suitable viewing, depending on the films, their country of origin, and Britain’s own political climate at the time. The recognition of cinema as a hugely popular mass medium also predisposed the BBFC to search for material that might disturb the sensibilities of the film audience. Richards quotes *The Times* viewpoint on the need for censorship in British cinema in the mid 1930s:

> Twenty million people go to the cinema every week: and in those millions the young, the unsophisticated, the slightly educated are so many that they need protection against the evils of which they are hardly aware...the taste of a vast number of cinema-goers cannot be held to be so trained and formed as to be capable of deciding right. 9

This then was the social and critical reception awaiting any potential British horror production. The introduction of the ‘H’ Certification for horror films in the early 1930s reflected the unease felt by the censors in relation to American horror films. Given this viewpoint, British horror films would have to meet very stringent demands. Notification to the Home Office that a film would potentially
be horrific was necessary, and it is with the first British horror film to declare itself as such that this discussion begins.

In 1933 Boris Karloff retuned to Britain and was asked to star in a film called *The Ghoul*. Produced by Michael Balcon, using a production team including American and German personnel, the film’s narrative bears close resemblances to the ‘haunted house’ films previously made in America such as *The Old Dark House* (James Whale, 1932) while the reincarnation of Professor Morlant (Boris Karloff) is ascribed to Ancient Egyptian burial practices, a textual reference to his role in Universal’s *The Mummy* (Karl Freund, 1932). Karloff’s actual appearance – as a desiccated old man and then vengeful creature – clearly presents him as a human monster, minus the burial trappings associated with the mummy. In this portrayal of the reanimated dead body we can argue that there is the potential to see an early, undefined Zombie, poised midway between the superstitions surrounding the Egyptology craze of the 1920s and a vengeful Zombie. As such *The Ghoul* stands at the beginning of British Zombie films, as undefined and transitory as the earliest British horror films.

However, there are several important narrative and production concerns within *The Ghoul* that resonate in later British horror films. Given Hollywood’s dominance over the newly re-visualised creations of fear, such as the Mummy, Frankenstein’s monster and Dracula, filmmakers outside the dominance of the main American studios had to re-interpret texts carefully, while attempting to maintain the attraction that these figures held for audiences – this would account for the careful blending of horror monster attributes and narrative as seen in *The Ghoul*. The production context of the film is also highly significant. The make-up artist Heinrich Heitfeld from Ufa, Günther Krampf the cinematographer who worked on *Nosferatu* (F. W Murnau, 1922), and the art director Alfred Junge who had also worked for Ufa displays the strong level of European interconnectedness in and influence on British film of the time. This was also indicated in Balcon’s links with German film production, notably Erich Pommer and Ufa. This can be seen as a microcosm of the working practices that Tim Bergfelder characterises as an attempt to defy “the market hegemony of Hollywood”.

Given these wider contexts, British horror film production of the period should be recognised as a genre poised between European styles of representation and production and American narrative and genre expectations.
The restrictions placed upon filmmakers stylistically and officially also had the effect of stifling the earliest attempts at frightening narratives. Peter Hutchings notes that while clearly definable “Horror” films were a rarity in Britain pre and post WW2, elements of terror and suspense were occasionally visible in British films, notably in films starring Tod Slaughter, and later isolated film examples, such as *Dead of Night* (1945, Alberto Cavalcanti, Charles Crichton, Basil Dearden, Robert Hamer).  

This difference in approach to horror film production can be partially explained through culture, but more importantly, as a response to the threat of American film dominance within the British film market. In 1927 legislation was implemented to protect and support the British film industry through introducing import quotas and supporting national production of ‘quality’ films. This in turn helped prompt a boom of British filmmaking which had attempted to reciprocate America’s dominance by exporting British films, notably high budget historical costume films, to American audiences. When this failed, the economic backing for British films was also lost. The dependence on American product also became culturally and economically marked during WW2, when as Margaret Dickinson argues;

> increased political and financial dependence on America made it harder to tackle the particular problem of the cinema’s dependence on American films. The British market was a vital source of revenue for Hollywood.  

The ongoing popularity of American films also meant that attempts to break these alliances resulted in serious economic and production crises in an industry that simply could not match American output throughout the 1940s and 1950s. As a result, producers of British film were faced with difficult choices to create a product that might receive favourable markets both within and outside the United Kingdom. In terms of horror film production, WW2 had seen a gradual relaxation of some aspects of censorship, notably in terms of portraying sex and swearing. This would have repercussions in a newer style of horror film, as the horror of WW2 that had been witnessed allowed for a reconsideration of the use of the human body in a genre that had been suppressed during the war years.
In practical terms, British horror filmmakers opted for several strategies to popularise their product. Their first tactic relied upon using source material for films that would prove popular as an extension of but still alternative to American narrative concerns, and the second was an appreciation of gaps in the market that British horror films could exploit, given the rise of a less family based cinema audience in the late 1940s and 1950s. As was the case with American audiences, exhibitors noted a shift in viewer demographics towards the younger generation. As S. S Prawer outlines:

In the 1950s it was discovered, by means of various polls and public relations enquiries, that 70 percent of those who went to horror movies were aged between 12 and 25. This acted as a spur to manufacturers of such products to cash in on the newly affluent youth market by providing more of the same.  

At this juncture, a film company that had already established itself in making films suited to altering audience tastes began to move into prominence within British film production. The rise and decline of Hammer films has been charted by various historians, but the period of so-called “Hammer horrors” and their competitors offers us a clear indicator of how film texts were shaped by societal, production and exhibition concerns, overshadowed by repressive legislation and the dominant American film market. Hammer films started by producing B-features and held contracts with American film companies from 1948 onwards. This beneficial arrangement suited both sides of the Atlantic as Hammer would lend the necessary definition of ‘British’ to American financed productions, release American films and would provide very cheap B-features for American studios. In return, Hammer received finance, work, and importantly, American distribution. Therefore as a conscious production strategy Hammer films began – and continued –using established and popular texts within an implicitly European setting, though never enough to alienate a potential American audience. This is clear through their first concerted horrific feature film, *The Quatermass Experiment* (Val Guest, 1955) based on a popular British BBC television programme of 1953. *The Quatermass Experiment*, (1953) written by Nigel Kneale and directed by Rudolph Cartier, was intended by Kneale to draw upon public interest in space exploration and research (the flying saucer craze being
an example of this), coupled with the concept of contamination. Interviewed for *Hammer Horror*, with his comments reprinted in the BBC Viewing notes for the DVD release, Kneale commented that:

People didn’t know what you might “pick up” in space, so I thought I’d write a story about a space flight that returns with some very nasty contamination. In fact, my original title for the story was “Bring Something Back”!\(^{20}\)

*The Quatermass Experiment* proved to be a popular television show, with regular viewing figures of over 3.2 million for the series.\(^{21}\) What is notable is the focus on the degenerating body of the lead character Victor Carroon. His mutation and violence as his physical form changes indicates the importance of the physical form in defining the humanity of a body. While not a Zombie figure that we would recognise from previous film narratives, Carroon’s behaviour and the focus on how the body changes during infection proved particularly important, especially in Hammer’s more graphic portrayal of his physical degeneration. The clearest themes within the two interpretations of the first *Quatermass* story revolve around the loss of Victor Carroon’s humanity and his infective status, key characteristics of both established and more contemporary Zombie film texts. Hammer emphasised their interpretation as more disturbing, in marketing the film for American audiences as well as British ones: the spelling of the 1955 film title – *The Quatermass Xperiment* - explicitly referenced the X certification applied (for adults only, introduced in 1951) to promote the film.

In the next *Quatermass* text for television the emphasis shifted from a single infective human to a consideration of mass loss of identity. In *Quatermass II* (1955) the setting for the narrative is updated to locations based around a factory and a “New Town”. *Quatermass II* should be considered as another addition to British uses of the Zombie. Not only are the workers explicitly referred to as such, the narrative use of these figures links to depictions of the cinematic enslaved Zombie deployed in the early American horror films. Here the status of a Zombie is linked to an economic and social alienation felt by the locals of a “New Town”, ignored by cold bureaucrats and technicians. This is continued within the Hammer film production of *Quatermass 2* (Val Guest, 1956) produced to enlarge upon the high popularity of both the television series and
the first Hammer film. As such, the presentation of the Zombie – as servile and unquestioning – was juxtaposed against the concrete forms of a modern factory, highlighting the isolation of the workers and the controlled status of their bodies. The *Quatermass* films also essentially portrayed the physical threat to and disintegration of the human body more vividly than the television programme – a key visual aspect that would bear fruit in later Hammer horror films. Hammer had recognised the worth of the horrific, and were pleased with audience awareness that the X certificate defined their product as horrific and disturbing, especially considering the ongoing complaints and cuts suggested by the BBFC when scripts were submitted. The positive distributor and audience responses (both American and British) encouraged Hammer to specialise their production further, and so *Quatermass* could also be seen as the beginning of Hammer’s coherent reinterpretation of horror figures. This came with restrictions. Financial support from United Artists for *Quatermass II* had been accessed with, as Harper and Porter argue “little intervention” in the production. This was due to the rights to the narrative being bought by Hammer, even with input from Nigel Kneale. Therefore when Hammer decided to portray other horror figures, continuing their success in the horrific, American studios showed interest – and alarm. In 1957 Warner Bros. considered distributing Hammer’s proposed *Frankenstein* film through Associated American Pictures (AAP) – but showed concern over the possible litigation that Universal could instigate. After resolving this issue Hammer was determined to use the iconic figures of Early American horror film, but with enough narrative and visual reconsiderations that they would be both profitable and legally different in Europe and America. These depictions used the source material and behaviour established by the early American films, but altered the visual representation and settings of the main Horror icons. Therefore Hammer’s Frankenstein’s Monster is more terribly mutilated and patched, clearly defining his composition through corpses, Dracula’s animal lusts are obviously shown, and the Mummy displays more withered skin as one of the returning dead. The undead body – including Hammer’s portrayal of the Zombie – became a site for deconstructing the worth of bodies: either sexual or economic, but only as an adjunct to visualising overt physical degradation. This was a reflection of changing social attitudes within depicting horrific and sexual
imagery in cinema, but also neatly encapsulates Hammer’s approach to wider contextual changes safely displayed and discussed within their film texts. Hutchings phrases this dualism in the following manner:

“Clearly the films’ engagement with present-day matters was, at the very least, veiled or coded… period settings permitted a conservative nostalgia for a fixed social order, one in which those who were powerless were legitimate prey.”

Hammer films therefore work on two levels – as explicitly violent and sexual presentations of the body, either monstrous or normal, which take place within a ‘safe’ historical and social narrative setting. This coded discussion of class and social order became more explicit within Hammer’s use of the Zombie in its one dedicated Zombie narrative, *The Plague of the Zombies* (John Gilling, 1966). Other British Zombie films before Hammer’s attempt also discussed the enslaved body, though with little derivation from previous horror film narratives. While Hammer claimed pre-eminence in horror film production at this point, there were other companies attempting to profit from the perceived boom in horror audiences. The Zombie, as a preferred B-movie creature of American film, was similarly positioned in these British attempts to cater to audiences. *Womaneater* (Charles Saunders, 1957) is a clear example of this trend, in that this independent production from Fortress Film (a small company specialising in crime narratives) centres around a plant that eats women, so producing a fluid that can bring the dead back to life. Marcia Landy proposes that the narrative responds to the “invasion of the familiar by the exotic.” It is important to note that the British man who uses the plant is destroyed for his use of an exotic ritual within a British setting. The Zombie, used as a background threat throughout the narrative, reiterates the definition of the living as able to think, while the killing of the women (chosen for their lack of marital or familial ties) hints at the earlier American Zombie films in their use of the helpless female as a potential undead companion.

*Doctor Blood’s Coffin* (Sidney Furie, 1960) from the short lived Caralan production company, plays upon Frankenstinian motifs in a doctor reviving the dead. However, in the narrative it is clearly expressed that the Zombie retains some vestige of his former memory, while being a destructive creature. Here is a narrative departure from previous American Zombie films pre-1968, in which
the Zombie is controlled. In *Dr Blood’s Coffin*, the Zombie attacks of its own volition. Attention is also drawn to the regional identity of the doctor, in defining a Cornish setting while using African poison. This will bear an interesting parallel with Hammer’s later Zombie work, but again hints at the misapplication of foreign knowledge within a British context, as seen in *Womaneater*. The producer, George Fowler, would later go on to be production manager on horror films such as *The Day of the Triffids*, (Steve Sekely, 1962) and Hammer’s *Plague of the Zombies*. This indicates the intersecting careers of many of those producing horror at the time, exampled in Lippert Films’ *The Earth Dies Screaming* (Terence Fisher, 1964). While Fisher is better known for his work for Hammer, he also directed films for other companies, in this case an invasion narrative. The *Monthly Film Bulletin* referred to *The Earth Dies Screaming* scathingly:

> Once the fog of preliminary developments begins to disperse, obot-controlled eyeless zombies soon reveal themselves as the menace to man...The robots and mindless humans are effective enough, but tritely used.²⁹

Given the popularity of re-visioning ‘classic’ horror monsters that Hammer was enjoying during the early to mid 1960s, it could be surmised that invasion films had fallen from favour within the horror/science-fiction film genres. Instead, the controlled body, whether dead or alive, that was evidenced in earlier British Zombie film returns in a Hammer production which is notable for its approach to body horror, while dissecting social and sexual mores. *The Plague of the Zombies* (1966) like *Quatermass 2*, explicitly terms its Zombies as such. Unlike other British texts, *Plague* returns to the concept of the Voodoo Zombie, controlled by a white man. The films mentioned above placed other forms of ‘exotic’ knowledge as the cause of British destruction. Importantly however, the Zombies in *Plague* are white, lower class, and are taken from their place of death to work for a monied landowner. Set firmly in a rural locale, the appearances of black men and Voodoo practices are meant to act as a undercurrent of threat that is more obviously shown in the callous brutality of the local lord. The dialogue on class and exploitation Hammer conceals within its other texts is here clearly visible, in that the lower classes (the villagers, the Zombies) are to be exploited or protected by the upper class
characters. Race here is unimportant, and the tension within the film is played around the threats facing two young women, the wife of the local doctor and the daughter of an eminent and titled surgeon. The setting of the film may also hold significance in its implication of a bleak Cornish countryside dominated by class difference. John Gilling filmed his next offering for Hammer, *The Reptile* (1966) back to back with *Plague*, using the same locations. Both films use the concept of foreign religious beliefs infecting British society, and the same sexualised narratives of the female body are displayed, as with most Hammer texts of this period.  

This is also where *Plague* provocatively mixes the established “white slavery” subtexts of early American Zombie film alongside Hammer’s own particularly sexualised depictions of wounds and blood. The infected wound on Alice Tompson’s (Jacqueline Pearce) wrist, her concealment of it and the obvious distress with which she greets her guests hint at a dark secret involving the squire. Similarly, the interest shown in Sylvia Forbes (Diane Clare) by the squire and his intended murder of her in a voodoo ceremony is loaded with penetrative imagery. Alice’s zombification is hinted as the culmination of a relationship predicated on the squire’s ownership of bodies, by reason of his class and his voodoo proclivities. This exploitation of bodies is fascinating by virtue of the racial differences shown in the film – the few black characters who are shown are the squire’s manservant and the drummers for the voodoo ceremony. The Zombies, by contrast, are all white, and with the exception of Alice, male. Their appearance is also noteworthy, in that the gait of the Zombie remains stylistically similar to American productions, while the appearance and behaviour of the Zombies has been altered. Firstly, these Zombies are shown rising from the grave, while their appearance of flaking skin and white eyes were the result of intensive layering and shading. The *Monthly Film Bulletin* overlooked this, preferring to note: “The zombies themselves are conventional bundles of rags with faces like peeling wallpaper”. However, the actual decomposition shown – notably in Jacqueline Pearce’s bloated and colour tinted appearance as a Zombie rising from the grave – is considerably more graphic than previous incarnations of the Zombie in film. Their costumes, mostly comprised of sackcloth, indicate the economic status of the Zombie, and this
roughness is also apparent in the behaviour of the Zombies; scenes in the mine show overseers hitting them to continue working. Where *Plague of the Zombies* also innovates is in the method of killing Zombies. In much the same patriarchal manner as the male characters from *Dracula*, Alice’s husband and his mentor watch over her grave and dispatch her by removing her head. While this is never mentioned as the surest method of destruction, and the Zombies are also burnt, it is interesting to note that Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* made three years later, also uses this narrative rule: “beat ‘em or burn ‘em up”.

In conclusion, *Plague* stands as a noteworthy exception to Hammer’s previously understated discussion of class-based exploitation of bodies. It also innovates in the graphic treatment given to the body as both a site of sexual pleasure and decomposition. As with previous Zombie films the female characters are defended and desired by the male characters around them, but Hammer’s production ethos, desiring a maximum audience for its products, ensured a reliance on overt horrors and implied sexual savagery. *Plague of the Zombies* is the key text of this period in that it actively uses the American voodoo and Zombie mythos as its narrative focus within a British setting, to appeal to both intended audiences at home and abroad and is also the one concerted use of the Zombie figure within British cinema at this historical point.

While Hammer continued reconsiderations of more established horror icons throughout the late 60s and early 70s, the Zombie was once again relegated to a minor character within horror film texts, not always from Hammer Productions. In 1971 the film *Psychomania* (Don Sharp), from Benmar Productions bucked this trend by making its main characters a motorcycle gang gleefully committing suicide to return as immortal undead bikers. David Pirie characterises the film as “one of the very few black comedies to derive from British horror”. The bikers, as in previous Zombie films, are presented as decaying, but are motivated by their own desire for destruction. It is also notable that their undead status is brought about by a commitment to witchcraft and cult worship, signified as alien to British culture.

Later Zombie films, like their American counterparts, displayed no need to explain the creation of the Zombies – their presence as controlled beings was enough. Amicus, a British Production Company created and managed by
American B-Movie filmmakers, used the vengeful Zombie repeatedly within its anthology horror films, including *Tales from the Crypt* (Freddie Francis, 1972). Amicus, like Hammer, intended its horror products to be consumed by multinational audiences. While there is an obvious debt to *Dead of Night* (1945) in the structuring of the film through a framing story, the more obvious cultural references within Amicus’s portmanteau films are the American EC Horror comics of the 1950s and 60s. As Peter Hutchings notes, this cultural referencing and the contemporary setting of many of Amicus’ productions, places Amicus as part of but still adjacent to many histories of British horror.

What is fascinating in terms of the development of the British Zombie film is that the dark morality of EC horror comics is replicated: the Zombie within them is motivated by vengeance, to accord with the idea of poetic justice that the comic narratives used to entertain and shock. The popularity of EC horror comics in Britain (which in turn sparked a moral outrage) seems to have been extended to these cinematic narratives, in which the framing story, such as in *Tales from the Crypt*, is incidental to the main narratives that make up the bulk of the film. Indeed, the returning dead in these texts use long-established narrative patterns of vengeance directed against protagonists who may have been responsible for the Zombie’s initial demise. The human characters in these films are generally unpleasant, allowing sympathy for the cause of the Zombie. The decayed physical form of the undead is also contemplated fully – notably in the risen character of Arthur Grimsdyke (Peter Cushing) in the “Poetic Justice” segment of *Tales*. In these portrayals of the undead (Zombies also appear in *Vault of Horror*) the Zombies are shown rising from their graves – in the same manner as *Plague* – but Amicus’s presentation of the undead happens within a contemporary setting, normally homes, firmly placing the Zombie as a modern creature of terror.

Differing companies handled the figure of the Zombie cautiously, within increasingly disparate narratives. A sombre love story, *Neither the Sea Nor the Sand* (Fred Burnley, 1972) uses the narrative ploy of using Hugh Dabernon (Michael Petrovich) as an unexplained (possibly fantasy) Zombie, created by his lover’s wish for his return, whereas *Disciple of Death* (1972), directed by Tom Parkinson features a demonic agent surrounded by female Zombies while
searching for a new sacrifice. *Horror Express* (Eugenio Martin, 1972) a co-production between Spain and Britain (Granada Films and Benmar Productions respectively) uses a claustrophobic narrative of monstrous possession on a train. The cast features Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, with an appearance by Telly Savalas, but the majority of the other characters are played by Spanish actors and actresses. This is important, as the European theme of the film - a monster loose on the Trans-Siberian Express – allows firstly for a very tight narrative focusing on the bodies of the characters, which in turn allows for moments of eroticism or gore, both staples of horror at this time. Secondly this also presents the film as not quantifiably British or Spanish. With many characters bearing supposedly Russian names, the film could be, as Peter Hutchings opines: “a film which unlike many international co-productions managed to give the impression of being both authentically Spanish and authentically British.”

However, I would argue that it offers enough cultural signifiers to classify itself as a hybrid European text in the international and class tensions evident in the characters’ dialogue, and through the figures of those killed and controlled by the creature. While those the monster controls can be clearly denoted as Zombies, the most overt use of the Zombie figure lies within the zombified Cossacks, whose pale, blinded eyes act effectively as a reminder of the controlled nature of the Zombie. This co-production uses an easily defined Zombie – destructive and under the power of another, while not actively terming the creatures as such. As such, the film cleverly sidesteps the Voodoo inspired creation and motivation of Zombies that Hammer had used to such effect in *Plague*.

Remembering that in 1968 George Romero had overturned the standard cinematic appearance and behaviour of the Zombie, and that by 1970 British and European critics were applauding this innovation, we can argue that gradual reappraisals of Zombie behaviour and appearance within British horror texts were inevitable. Partially instigated by texts such as *Night of The Living Dead* (1968), horror narratives were altering in America, and British productions were aware of a cultural shift that could influence their own intended audiences. 1968 could be held as a pivotal moment within not only American but also British horror film narratives. David Sanjek characterises this period of the late 60s and early
70s in British horror as “increasingly safe and moralistic” in terms of Hammer’s output. This, coupled with a downturn in cinema attendance and crippling obligations to American studios and finance, furthered the financial problems faced by British horror producers. The situation can be held as one of the factors instigating European co-productions and also the attempt by Hammer to combine a horror and martial arts narrative in the film *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* (Roy Ward Baker, 1973). A co-production with a Chinese company, Shaw Brothers Productions, the film portrays Dracula alongside seven Chinese vampires, protected by their undead army against van Helsing, Hsi Ching and his seven brothers, a narrative described by Peter Dendle as a “colourful mongrel”. Peter Hutchings more clearly positions the film as both an example of the marginalisation of Dracula as a figure of fear for British audiences, as well as Hammer’s attempts to secure finance away from an increasingly unreliable US market. David Sanjek concurs, seeing in *Psychomania* and *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* a “frantic” attempt to resuscitate the British horror genre. As a result, the horror characters within the film are an uneasy hybrid of both Western and Asian conceptions of the undead, leading to the portrayal of the Zombies as victims of the vampires. Their narrative use as a controlled mass is visually impressive, but serves merely as a threat to be dispatched through martial arts.

1973 was also the year that *Horror Hospital* (Antony Baulch) was released by Noteworthy Films. Steve Chibnall includes *Horror Hospital* as part of a British cycle of “demon of the establishment films” made in the late 60s and early 70s, where guests at a retreat are experimented upon to turn them into Zombie-like creatures. These texts all indicate a fragmented approach to considering the Zombie as a figure of fear in its own right. This was while stronger re-visionings of the Zombie occurred in European texts that were experiencing a boom in horror film production. As such, *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* is both an indicator of the weakness of British horror film production and the strength of European productions that were gaining attention.

But there was one final consideration of a Zombie-like figure in British cinema that hinted that the lessons of Romero’s internal, familial horrors initiated in *Night of the Living Dead* had been learnt. Tyburn, another of the smaller horror film producers in Britain, made its last horror film in 1975 with *The Ghoul*. 
While not a Zombie film, the film creatively considers the flesh eating proclivities of Dr. Lawrence’s (played by Peter Cushing) son and his father’s attempts to keep him concealed and fed. The flesh eating concept owes much to Romero’s vision of the Zombie, while the tension of the horror hidden in the family home offers a hint of the newer forms of ‘natural’ or ‘real’ horror that both James B Twitchell and Noel Carroll argue was sought by audiences tired of ‘artificial’ horrors. As such, while not a key example of Zombie film, the text offers us a starting point to consider later British horror of the 80s and 90s. Like The Ghoul made in 1933, the 1975 Ghoul stands between established British horror narratives and the newly popular American horrors, created by independent filmmakers reconsidering figures of fear.

Romero, the Italian director Lucio Fulci, and Amando de Ossorio, among others, capitalised on and extended the Zombie mythos with their respective works during the 70s and 80s, taking full advantage of a relaxation in censorship (within their own countries) to portray much more visceral horrors. British horror in contrast fell into a relative stupor, overshadowed by European and American imports. As Chibnall and Petley argue, this was not only because of the overall decline of British film production in the late 70s and 80s and the loss of identifiable genre production companies like Hammer, Tigon and Tyburn, but it would also be:

Uncontroversial to suggest that the stridently censorious campaigns against horror videos since the early 1980s, and especially in the wake of the James Bulger case, would have discouraged many producers from contemplating a foray into the genre.

The rise of home video had dealt another blow to cinematic distribution and exhibition within Britain, with audiences rapidly disappearing as improvements in technology gradually made VHS players more affordable. With this rise in home film viewing, the demands for feature film on video encouraged some distributors to re-issue older films, and some to market those that had not been released at all.

The first “Video Nasty” panic of the early 1980s resulted through a lack of regulation on the content in the new format of videotapes. Films that had not been passed by the BBFC for cinematic showings, or even those that had,
became the target for an extended press campaign against horror films on video, notably imported European and American horror. As Mark Kermode notes, the resultant mediated hysteria resulted firstly in a list of prosecutable films under the Obscene Publications Act (the list becoming known as the ‘Big Sixty’ during 1983 and 1985, while in 1984 the Video Recordings Act (VRA) handed powers of censorship and certification to the BBFC. The ongoing hostility to horror films from the BBFC, so evident at the beginning of the twentieth century, continued. British film production, already weak, was even less inclined to support a sub-genre that had lost popularity and was swamped by imported terrors. As such the British Zombie, a minor figure even during peak horror film production, slipped from view. It would re-emerge much later, in response to a very different production and distribution context, and against hugely altered audience expectations.

As Peter Hutchings notes, while the heyday of horror production companies was passing by the late 1970s, the historical context of defining a discrete British horror film movement itself is a very problematic concept:

> British horror in general does not exist as a discrete national object but is instead caught up in a generic history that involves a constant crossing of national borders as both ideas and personnel circulate between countries.

This ‘circulation of ideas and personnel’ offers us an interesting introduction to the European treatment of the cinematic Zombie. We have noted how international co-productions, whether American, Asian or European, gained ground during periods of British and American film production when finance and new audiences were needed. This concept of shared audiences becomes key, as the histories of French, German, Italian and Spanish horror film production combined in the 1970s and 1980s to produce a new visualisation of the undead, predicated on sex and gore rather than previous narrative uses of the Zombie.

*Mainland Europe and the Zombie film: 1960-1995*

Cathall Tohill and Pete Tombs in their study *Immoral Tales: Sex and Horror Cinema in Europe 1956-1984* introduce their work by claiming an overarching
aesthetic that influenced most European sex and horror films of the 60s, 70s and 80s. According to Tohill and Tombs, this aesthetic, termed ‘fantastique’, was:

Erotic, way out and fabulous. Linear narrative and logic are always ignored in a ‘fantastique’ film. The pictorial, the excessive and the irrational are the privileged factors…The European horror film was unique in this respect.49

While this argument offers a pleasingly simple discussion of the overarching tropes of European horror, it dismisses films that fall outside the writers selected canon of key directors and works. Instead, we should take note of the influence of censorship, international markets and the previous production tendencies of the main countries that we discuss, in order to explain the apparent boom of horror that emerged during this historical period.

This is problematical in some respects, as horror film production in Europe is not particularly well documented in the period immediately following WW2, unless individual films are discussed in the context of national film movements. Instead most histories of European horror focus on individual directors or periods of film production that display a strong focus on particular generic tropes. As a result, the production of Italian Zombie films is well documented, whereas Spanish, German and French Zombie films do not attract the same critical attention. However, there are strong unifying trends that structure these European Zombie films. Firstly, many are co-productions between European countries that also received American distribution, whether cinematically or later on the new format of VHS. Secondly, the focus on the body, whether sexual or violent, is much more apparent than in other horror films from Britain or America up until the mid 1970s. This section will consider individual directors’ and countries’ production of Zombie texts, but within an overall discussion of the interlinking factors and narrative considerations that are displayed across borders, despite differences in language. Therefore the depiction of the Zombie body and the narrative use of the Zombie figure becomes a key consideration against a fragmented European horror film history, where national identity may or may not be a decisive factor in discussing the undead figure.

*Italian Zombie films: The First Wave*
The aftermath of WW2 left the European continent physically and politically shattered, with borders, economies and societies under the control of varying regimes. As with British cinema, American production and distribution companies were keen to extend their markets into the newly liberated Europe. AIP (American Independent Pictures) was a notable example of this trend in its strong links with Italy in procuring cheap and stylish horror films to supplement its own home product. Italian horror commands a strong position in horror histories, primarily through the large amount of films created and distributed with American assistance, problematically considered by some commentators as an Italian attempt to keep up with British and American filmic trends. This argument, while dismissive of the aesthetics created in early Italian horror, does offer a consideration of why the Zombie figure appeared in Italian film, but does not explain why Italian production of Zombie films has exceeded that of other European countries. This is where a discussion of the European Zombie can fruitfully begin in terms of changing production concerns. Italian Zombie films may have begun as an attempt to mimic popular narratives, but as we shall see, they evolved drastically over time.

The cinematic use of the Zombie in Italian film began inauspiciously, with an appearance of revivified Roman soldiers in Giuseppe Vari’s 1964 film *Roma contra Roma* (issued as *War of the Zombies* in the U.S). The appearance of the Zombies is limited, as the film narrative is concerned with the actions of a particular hero, following as it does the ‘peplum’ or ‘sword and sandal’ motifs established in this Italian sub-genre. However, as Christopher Frayling notes, *Roma* was advertised in three separate ways for its differing audiences (Italian cinematic, American cinematic, American television): “as a historical epic, a zombie movie and a new age fantasy”. This altered perception of what constituted the greatest attraction for audiences indicates the varying status of the Zombie as a figure of fear in differing film cultures, but also indicates AIP’s approach to choosing and distributing Italian films. Kevin Heffernan positions this as an ongoing political and economic tactic by American companies after attempts by European and British governments to halt American dominance in their respective film industries were stopped:
The Italian film trade organisation, Associazione Nazionale Industrie Cinematographiche ed Affini (ANICA), eased both import restrictions and blocked currency throughout the fifties...Both co-production and expansion into the Italian theatrical market was initiated by AIP during this period. From its Italian operations, AIP would seek both inexpensive color theatricals for the American market and access to some of the money from the sizable Italian box office.54

Therefore AIP’s acquisition of Roma contra Roma followed a pattern of interest in European ‘exploitation’ and costume films in America, which gradually evolved into an interest in horror to supply the needs of American audiences. Heffernan also argues that Italian film producers desperately needed American finance, and as such would tailor their product for the international market.55 Italian audiences also had to be considered, and given their intense dislike for “locally produced horrors”, many Italian horror films not only featured the American and British actors needed to reassure international audiences, but also were edited differently and had anglicised credit sequences.56

AIP continued to increase its reliance on Italian horror productions, by not merely buying distribution rights (as with Roma contra Roma) but also co-financing and producing films, such as L’Ultimo Uomo Della Terra Vento di Montagna (The Last Man on Earth) (Ubaldo Ragona/ Sidney Salkow, 1964). American finance also influenced the presentation of Italian films, notably I tre volti della paura (Black Sabbath), (Mario Bava, 1963), a portmanteau style film (introduced by and starring Boris Karloff) that uses the figure of a Zombie in the section entitled “A Drop of Water”. A nurse who steals from a dead body is killed by the returned victim. While similar to earlier anthology tales (notably Amicus’s productions from Britain), the production context offers an insight into the startling differences expected by international and Italian audiences. As a co-production between the Italian company Galatea and AIP, the director Mario Bava filmed more violently explicit sequences and shots that would be edited from the American release but retained for a European audience, while dubbing and narrative changes altered the emotional tone of the narrative (notably suggestions of alternative sexuality).57

In this Bava was not merely following directions from the controlling financiers of the film, AIP, but was also responding to cultural and national differences in the visual presentation of horror. In the course of his career Bava was noted for
his stylish attention to the atmosphere of terror and sexuality in his works, notably in horror and Giallo films. Alain Silver and James Ursini among others propose that his status as one of Italy’s premier horror directors is attributable to a number of factors, notably his “compositional and colour sense”, and the narrative uncertainty of what constitutes reality for the protagonists in his films. In the case of *I tre volti della paura*, the Zombie may or may not be the product of the nurse’s madness. However, the overt depiction of the woman’s corpse is as considered as the revivification scene from Bava’s debut, *La Maschera del demonio (Black Sunday)* in 1960. This should not be ignored, as the majority of criticism surrounding Italian horror of the 1960s and beyond, is on its preoccupation with flesh, whether sexual or dead. As the American horror director Joe Dante argues:

> Hammer certainly pushed the envelope on the sexual and violent fronts, but Bava and his Italian contemporaries took another quantum leap forward in terms of intensity because the violence and erotic levels became quite extreme. The line between eroticism, violence and horror became very fuzzy with Bava on the scene.

Therefore the explicitness with which sex and death were presented differentiated Italian horror film from other national film products from the 60s onwards. This was extended to narratives where Zombies or Zombie-like figures are present. Massimo Pupillo’s *5 tombe per un medium (Terror Creatures from the Grave)* (1965) sees the primary Zombie as a murdered occultist who rises from the dead to take vengeance on his murderers. What is innovative in this text, which narratively owes much to *Dracula*, is that other Zombies are overtly termed as plague victims, spreading the Black Death amongst the humans. While commentators on Zombie film have dismissed the film as “routine hokum” with its cheap effects and rushed narrative, this idea of an *infective* Zombie as a carrier of death is a startling, if underplayed idea, later continued by George Romero. This point must be noted, considering how this narrative ploy changed the sub-genre’s treatment of the Zombie body after 1968 and onwards. Indeed 1965 stands as a hiatus between these early horror texts and the later Italian Zombie film that owed a certain amount to the influence of George Romero to begin with, but developed beyond to enjoy fan popularity as extreme and eventually banned texts.
From the outset the ‘Second Wave’ Zombie films were predicated on explicitly sexualised gore. *Le Notti Erotiche dei Morti Viventi* (*Erotic Nights of the Living Dead*, 1979) directed by Joe D’Amato ignores plot in favour of sequences leading to sex and nudity, while the setting of the film indicates a return to the concept of exotic voodoo rituals as the narrative cause of the Zombies, themselves mostly black men dressed in rags. The setting of the film is noteworthy, in that the location filming in the Dominican Republic adds to the underplayed, if indeed intended, discussion of economic poverty within the film. The narrative depends on the designs of a white property developer who is destroyed by the Zombies. As such, the film delivers a subtext of sexual and economic slavery that D’Amato (also credited as Aristide Massacesi, his birth name) did not fulfil in his later films such as *Rosso Sangue* (*Zombie 6: Monster Hunter*, 1981). This is unsurprising, given his career was mostly based around creating softcore pornography, with only occasional horror films. But this use of cheap, exotic location filming offered incentives for filmmakers to potentially expand their marketability, while relying on standard generic tropes of gore and sexual imagery from both horror and Gialli films. Linked with this was a recognition, following the international success of George Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) that Zombie films were again a potentially lucrative source for film narratives. *Dawn of the Dead’s* production had an Italian influence, as Dario Argento acted as a script consultant and had provided music with the band Goblin for the soundtrack while Claudio Argento and Alfredo Cuomo helped finance the film. As an accomplished director of Gialli films, Argento would later use his experience to create further horror films alongside both Italian and American directors. This dialogue between American and Italian Zombie films offered a potential mixing of cultural references, given Romero’s political subtexts and the visual complexity of Italian horror films. Instead the next addition to the Italian Zombie film genre mixed the exoticism of early American Zombie films and D’ Amato’s recent offering with a heavily gendered representation of bodily trauma. It was also the
first Zombie film from another director considered as influential as George Romero in his revisioning of the figure of the Zombie.

Lucio Fulci’s *Zombi 2: Gli ultimi zombi (Zombie 2/ Zombie Flesh Eaters)* released in 1979 is introduced by varying commentators as an attempt to capitalise on *Dawn of the Dead*’s popularity. Given the title of the film, this is undeniable (*Dawn* was released as *Zombi* in Italy with dubbed dialogue and extra scenes by Dario Argento) but this approach simplifies a complex interplay of production contexts and thematic considerations. Giorgio Bertellini characterises the period of the late 1970s and 1980s in Italian cinema as:

>A period of profound narrative and visual poverty and ensuing commercial dearth…Consequently it lost its previous vital contact with national and international audiences. Between 1978 and 1993 the domestic box-office share of Italian films decreased from 48 per cent to about 17 per cent, while Hollywood gained about twenty points over the 40 per cent share of 1983.

As such, the shift towards mimicking successful American productions while relying on cheaply made and potentially successful genres – such as horror – was merely a repetition of previous European attempts to retain home and international audiences. Hence also the appearance of an Italian Zombie comedy in 1979 with Nello Rossati’s *Lo Zombo, tu zombi, lei zomba (I am a Zombie, You are a Zombie, She is a Zombie)*. A partial parody of *Dawn*, the film also referred to previous Italian farcical comedies. In the case of *Zombi 2: Gli ultimi zombi*, Fulci was not merely responding to the success of an American horror film, but also drew upon an established cycle of Italian horror and thriller films, notably cannibal films of the 1970s such as Umberto Lenzi’s *Il Paese del sesso selvaggio (Deep River Savages, 1972)*, Ruggero Deodato’s *Ultimo Mondo Cannibale (Last Cannibal World, 1977)* and Joe D’Amato’s *Emanuelle e gli ultimi cannibali (Emmanuelle and the Last Cannibals, 1977)* in the use of exotic locales, nudity and flesh eating. Fulci’s previous work included *Gialli* films, spaghetti westerns and biting satires on the Catholic Church, all of which contribute to the thematic and visual development in *Zombi 2*. Notably, he used the Dominican Republic for location filming in much the same manner as D’Amato, but situates the film as a detection narrative for the first twenty minutes as the main protagonists leave New York to trace a missing person. In this, Fulci refers to the long established traditions of Italian cinema and *Gialli* films, before
developing the text into a discussion of how the sanctity of the human body is broken.

Fulci places the characters as helpless, with the figure of the Doctor hopelessly trying to find the source of the infection within a battered clinic in a ramshackle church. Fulci’s distaste for religion becomes clearer here, as evidenced by the assault on the church building that cannot protect the characters inside. The Zombies rise from the earth and remain encrusted with it, a hint to resurrectionist imagery that Fulci clearly foregrounds during the film. Indeed, while there is a hint that voodooist causes may be to blame for the Zombies, this narrative is never really developed, instead leaving the causation unimportant.

What does concern Fulci is the trauma that the body endures. The male Zombies ragged clothes and appearance, notably their peeling faces and skin, indicate a conscious decision to present the undead differently to Romero’s individual corpses – here features are obscured by layers of dirt implicating a sense of overt decomposition. The make-up artist for this film, Gianetto de Rossi, was also the artist for Grau’s *Non si deve profanare il sonno dei morti*, and his attention to the internal areas of the body, in jagged wounds, eye trauma, blood and intestines became key to Fulci’s interpretation of the undead.⁶⁷

Fulci’s intentions in using the Zombie as both an established cinematic threat and as a carrier of symbolic importance become clearer in his next three Zombie films. *Paura nella città dei Morti Viventi* (City of the Living Dead, 1980), *E tu Vivrai nel Terrore – L’aldilà* (The Beyond, 1981) *Quella Villa Accanto al Cimitero* (The House by The Cemetery, 1981) set themselves within a Lovecraftian discussion of portals to hellish dimensions, while the Zombies appear as malevolent bearers of carnage. As such, the anti-Catholic subtexts of the films are clear in how hell breaks through into everyday life, with the Zombies indicators of a nihilistic worldview. Stephen Thrower clarifies this position with regards to Fulci’s use of the Zombies as carriers of “iconoclastic connotation”:

> It is explosive: able to fragment realism by inferring the implacable presence of something supernatural yet stubbornly corporeal: and it is philosophical, beyond good and evil; parading the flesh without the much vaunted spirit.⁶⁸
As such, the narrative incoherence noted by many commentators on Fulci’s films is here answered partially by the use of the Zombies – Fulci seems less concerned with offering conclusions to apocalyptic visions, focusing instead on the multiplicity of readings the audience can experience. In this, the attacks on living human flesh are more than gory set pieces: they are dialogues on the Zombie as the ultimate abjection. Their representation as mouldering corpses adds to the violent incursions into the space of the living – as Patricia MacCormack notes: “Fulci’s violence is rarely clean, aligning itself with repulsing effluence of bodily secretion and violence which crumbles rather than cuts its victims”.

Fulci insists on placing the Zombies as “accessories to the story” within his later films, adding that films such as *E tu Vivrai* are attempts at “absolute horrors…I have often envisaged Hell, since we live in a society where only Hell can be perceived.”

This is furthered in the Zombies attacks on the living – throughout Fulci’s films attacks on living flesh open up the insides of the human body for inspection, assisted by Fulci’s detailed and static camerawork. Sergio Salvati, whose attention to the lighting marks him as a primary contributor to the atmosphere of Fulci’s films at this time, makes this approach clearer: “We have to establish beauty first, then it should be taken away by the action, not the lighting”.

The Zombies in Fulci’s films serve to demonstrate this approach to surface and beauty – by their actions as flesh eaters and destroyers, they serve as a vicious *Memento Mori* of the living’s own status as meat, even in his return to an exoticised Zombie infection narrative in 1988 with *Zombi 3 (Zombie Flesh Eaters 2)*.

Fulci’s visions of the undead constitute a great part of popular criticism surrounding Zombie films, and his work is foregrounded amongst other Italian Zombie films of the same time. Given his thematic use of the Zombie within hallucinatory narratives, this is understandable in that the films offer a body of work that displays a consistent agenda. However, this does not account for a surge in production that offers interesting variants on established visual and thematic tropes. The quantity of Italian Zombie films is notable in the period between 1978 and 1994, showing continual production of Zombie films, either for the international cinema or VHS market. Given the shorter production
periods of Zombie film in the rest of Europe, this extended period indicates a longer period of re-evaluation and narrative deployment of the Zombie.

In 1980 and 81 many other Italian Zombie films were released, essentially to capitalise on the success of Zombi 2, and the associated visual links to earlier Cannibal films. Marino Girolami’s Zombi Holocaust, (1980) is overtly placed as a crossover between the two, relying on the exotic locations and a mad doctor to explain both the threat of the undead and tribal cannibals. Andrea Bianchi’s Le Notte del terrore (Burial Ground, and also known as Zombie 3, 1981) relies upon excessive use of tool-wielding zombies attacking a house fill of weekend guests, owing more to the Spanish Amando De Ossorio’s envisioning of the undead, discussed later. Antonio Margheriti’s Apocalypse domain (Cannibal Apocalypse, 1980) offers a more considered discussion of flesh eating as a result of Vietnam war trauma, with one supposedly ‘cured’ victim regressing to a zombified state after watching a war film. In this the interplay between images of violence and the effect on the character offer a concept of infective violence. The film, attempting as it does a mix of Vietnam veteran’s commentary, war and crime action scenes and a Zombie film within the one text, may be narratively mixed, but by using these overtly masculine genres the film itself comments obliquely on the recurring trope of male violence within most Zombie films of this point. Bruno Mattei’s Italian/Spanish co-production Inferno di Morti Viventi (Night of the Zombies, 1981) follows this pattern, using a SWAT team to dispatch the Zombies within a tropical setting, while Umberto Lenzi’s Italian/Spanish/Mexican co-production Incubo sulla Città Contaminata (Nightmare City, 1980) places the Zombies within an urban environment, tracing their devastation through the narrative of an investigative reporter.

Donato Totaro correctly notes that these two films, as well as others, make great use of scenes from Dawn of the Dead to inform their narratives – the TV station in Incubo, the soldiers of Inferno. As such, the influence of Romero’s works can still be determined within Italian Zombie film of this time, outside of the continuing concerns of Fulci’s works.

These influences were ignored in a horror miniseries made for Radiotelevisione Italiana in 1983. The popularity of horror and thriller television programmes imported from America had indicated a potential audience for European
versions by the mid 1960s, and indeed both Spain and Italy produced notable thriller programmes – *Historias para no dormer* (*Stories to keep you Awake*, Narcisco Ibáñez Serrador) running from 1966-1968, and again in the 1980s in Spain.\(^{74}\) Dario Argento filmed an episode for the series. In Italy Argento was also involved as the introductory figure (in the same manner as Alfred Hitchcock in *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*) for the Italian TV series *La porta sul buio* (*Doors to Darkness*) in 1972. Comprising four one-hour suspense/thriller films, (made-for-television films became more popular as cinema audiences decreased) the series did not last long but helped enshrine Argento as a recognised director associated with *gialli* and horror.\(^{75}\) These popular television texts arguably cultivated horror audiences for cinematic texts, as Andrew Willis proposes.\(^{76}\) The restrictions of what visual violence could be shown and also the potential for funding for filmmakers within and outside the television industry (such as Argento) could potentially instigate a newer style of implicit narrative violence. This is the focus of Pupi Avati’s mini series *Zeder* (1983), an envisioning of the Zombie on television that offers interesting insights into the deployment of the Zombie throughout popular culture.\(^{77}\)

Following the established detective narrative patterns of *gialli*, *Zeder* follows the protagonist Stefano (Gabriele Lavi) as he uncovers evidence of “K-zones” that offer immortality for those residing there, or reanimate the dead buried within the zone. Donato Totaro argues that the ‘bleak fatalism’ of the film is underscored by resonant holocaust imagery – incinerators, barbed wire enclosures, experiments that are ignored by the local populace in Northern Italy, all within a series of concrete buildings used by both the Nazis as an internment camp and the Catholic Church as a summer camp.\(^{78}\) With these indications of horrific mortality throughout the text, the use of Zombies and their associated gory violence is restrained within *Zeder*, to conform to acceptable levels of televisual violence: especially in the films chilling dénouement as Stefano awaits his wife’s reanimation. He embraces her and is bitten, we assume, with the final image frozen as he screams in terror. While *Zeder* is noted as an innovative departure for Italian, and indeed Zombie films in general, the links to previous *gialli* narratives place the text firmly within an ongoing pattern of investigation leading to destruction, following Fulci and his predecessors works.
A more abrupt departure from established genre conventions arose in Lamberto Bava’s *Dèmoni (Demons, 1985)* produced by Dario Argento. The son of Mario Bava, Lamberto worked closely within the horror and *gialli* genres in Italian cinema, as an assistant director to Dario Argento on *Tenebre* (1982) and *Inferno* (1980). His addition to the Zombie genre takes place within a cinema, as those invited to a preview of a horror film about infective demons are bricked up to suffer the same fate. Thus the narrative works to discuss the conventions of the horror genre, slyly focusing on the conditions of pleasure experienced by both the fictional audience and our own responses to their growing realisation of their predicament. *Dèmoni* is a curious mixture of intent and presentation, flitting between action set pieces of fighting and tension as the cinema audience is killed off. As Donato Totaro argues in *Eaten Alive!* this fast paced incoherence, amplified by an electronic and rock music score leaves the narrative disjointed, while the escape of the main characters is “a *deus ex machina*”.

While this is accurate, this ‘ricketyness’ of the film may help account for its popularity on release in Italy and elsewhere. The infected victims ooze before transforming and emerge from their hosts bodies in great detail, offering a newer interpretation of the Zombie as an active malevolence – literally the beast within. With the harsh interior décor and exterior of the cinema (the Metropol Theatre in Berlin) Bava offers a warped sense of space and time – the events take place in one night, yet the ending sees the Zombie-Demons as spreading across the city. As such, while the pop aesthetic and confusing narrative may date the film, it is arguable that by placing the infection within the socially ordered space of passive spectatorship in the cinema, Bava is relating not only to previous ‘infection’ films, but also the abjection actively sought by a horror film audience.

This is continued within *Dèmoni 2 (Demons 2, 1986)*, made with the same production team as before, but shifting the setting to an apartment block. While echoes of Cronenberg’s *Shivers* (1975) are evident in the banality of the inhabitants lifestyles, again Bava is attempting a critique of the passive spectator – this time through a television programme. The isolation of the groups in the building is notable, with the only sympathetic protagonists as hardworking parents-to-be. In this, Totaro’s comment that the film could be entitled “*Demons 2: Attack on the Hedonist Bourgeoisie*” is an apt, if glib appraisal.

This focus
by Bava on materialism, whether heavily influenced by Cronenberg or not, is notable: the indicators of affluence – television sets, luxurious settings, become a trap for those unwilling to grasp the situation, while the children of the block are infected by their adherence to the television set. While this may seem grudging, given Bava’s later made-for-television horror film, *Una notte al Cimitero* (*Graveyard Disturbance*, 1987) it indicates a recurring concern with passivity – either of images or material belongings. This is particularly the case for *Una notte*, where a group of crime-addicted teenagers accept a bet to survive a night in catacombs, filled with Zombies and other creatures. Their attraction to the prize, a large glass vessel filed with gold, money, wallets and jewellery is a reflection of their own shoplifting habits. While the narrative is particularly confusing, the labyrinthine setting of the catacombs echoes Bava’s previous thematic use of claustrophobic yet extensive settings to make the characters move through new challenges. That the film was made for television explains the restrained use of gore within the text, and may account for the garbled ending, but also indicates that the application of action film narratives of conflict and resolution established in the *Dèmoni* films was continued by Bava in an attempt to retain a youthful audience. *Dèmoni 3* was made by Umberto Lenzi in 1991, but ignores the established entrapment narratives in favour of an exoticised setting for white teenagers in peril from Black Zombies, while Claudio Fragasso’s *La Isola Maledetta* (*After Death*, 1988), like Fulci’s *Zombi 3* relied upon placing an infection narrative in a tropical setting. A similar premise is used for Claudio Lattanzi’s *Raptors* (1988) in which an atmospheric and minimal use of Zombies, set in the Louisiana swamps echoes *The Beyond* in its use of a dark, pervasive force that motivates the undead.

It is arguable that at this point the Italian Zombie genre had turned full circle, repeating the narratives that had gained the genre such notoriety from *Zombi 2* in 1979. However the final addition to Italian Zombie genres of this period is a startling departure, a mix of lyricism and dark humour on the nature of love and death. Michele Soavi’s *Dellamorte Dellamore* (*Cemetary Man*, 1994) an Italian/German/French co-production is based on the Italian fumetti (comic book) *Dylan Dog*. As such, Soavi’s film uses bleak humour, extending the characterisation of the lead male Francesco Dellamorte (Rupert Everett) to make the film a meditation on subjective reality and the “fear of living”.
Francesco’s alienation from the reality of life outside the cemetery is comedically and bitterly played out against the Zombies, or “returners”. In this, the Zombies are potentially a symbol for Francesco’s alienation through mental illness, and the recurring figure of ‘She’ (Anna Falchi), as both living and undead, provokes both guilt and desire within a Catholic subtext of repression. In this text the Zombies are not as abject as Francesco, who cannot break outside the boundaries placed around the cemetery, who is not welcome in normal society. He is the destructive Zombie, numbed by rejection and illness.

*Dellamorte Dellamore* is a fractured text through its rapid shifts between pathos and comedy. This allows a multiplicity of readings, notably on the abjection experienced between the living and the undead in the recurring motifs of food and vomit, sex and death. Even more noticeable is the treatment of the living, as Rupert Everett clarifies in his discussion of Soavi’s “morality play”:

Death here means emotional death, pop-artered into a mad, psychedelic fantasy…Sclavi’s story is how he sees contemporary life in Italy: the people, the governmental betrayal, the mafia scandals, the bleak future. The Living Dead/Returners are us in effect because we’ve all become so boring, so cauterised, so politically correct. What the movie says is there is no such thing as normal.  

As such, the film stands as a continuation of the filmic Zombies gory physical depiction, but a departure in terms of the multiplicity of readings the undead body and its relation to the living holds. Whether read as a discussion of the mental downfall of Francesco, or a meditation on gothic imagery’s reliance on the links between sex and death, *Dellamorte Dellamore* stands at the end of this period of Italian Zombie film as a visually arresting piece.

This is not to claim an end for the Italian Zombie film, which continues in isolated film texts until the present day. However, it must be noted that the spate of Italian Zombie film production from the 60s to the 90s was not occurring in isolation from the rest of Europe. In a similar manner to Italy, Spanish horror films began to include fragmented depictions of the Zombie from the early 1960s onwards. For the next ten years, Spanish and Spanish co-produced Zombie films would hold dominance – at least in the European film market during the interlude in Italian Zombie film between the mid 60s and late 70s.

*Spanish Zombie films*
While the Italian film industry, even during WW2, had managed to retain some distance from Fascist politics and control, leading to a well equipped if under-funded industry in the 50s, the Spanish film industry fared less well. The overwhelming cultural control exercised by church and state, headed by General Franco, led to a repressive and censored film industry. As such, topics critical of the state or its policies on religion, sexuality and family life were broached only with extreme care, if at all. This was slightly lessened by Spain’s re-admittance to the international community in 1955 (particularly favoured by America due to General Franco’s stance against Communism). Spain became a focal point for tourism and experienced the beginnings of consumerist youth culture, partially from tourists, but also from an influx of imported films – notably from Italy. As such, the cultural climate encouraged a change in film production starting in 1962 that allowed more European co-productions based on genres and narratives that would previously have been un-allowed, including horror films. But it was a slow process. Cathall Tohill and Pete Tombs argue that prior to 1964, Spanish horror as a genre did not exist beyond pale imitations of Italian horror films. Antonio Lázaro-Reboll also notes that even after the beginning of the Spanish horror boom in the late sixties, it is still mostly ignored in histories of Spanish Cinema.

This altered with Jesus Franco’s 1964 film *El Secreto del Dr. Orloff (Dr. Orloff’s Monster)*. While the narrative purportedly follows as a sequel to Franco’s 1961 film *Gritos en la noche (The Awful Dr Orloff)* that had featured a enslaved, bulging eyed assistant (following previous visualisations of Zombies after *White Zombie* (V. Halperin, 1932)), *El Secreto* makes more use of a Zombified figure in the shape of the reanimated brother. Killed for his infidelity with the scientist’s wife, the Zombie Andros is used to murder young women in the town. Notably, these women are again positioned as outside familial structures, displaying a repressive morality that the scientist imposes on all women while titillating the audience with the nudity instigated in *Gritos*. Familial responsibility is also made more explicit in *El Secreto*, when the Zombie Andros responds to his daughter’s pleas, and visits his wife’s grave. As such, the Zombie has two functions within this film: to provide pathos as the resurrected and controlled body, and as the vicarious fulfiller of the scientist’s own sadistic
tendencies. That these two functions are confused is no surprise, as this film’s use of the Zombie figure is in itself confused – Andros is neatly dressed and wears gloves, but his face is horribly mutilated.

This may be due to the director’s own tendencies in narrative and editing, as the name Jesús (normally referred to as Jess) Franco is synonymous with low-budget and quickly produced horror and exploitation films. This has led to two divergent opinions of Franco’s overall body of work. Joan Hawkins considers that Franco’s position in the context of aural dissonance and visual instability in the use of the zoom and hand held camerawork - are attributes intended to make the audience participate in reading the text, but also notes the incoherence of storylines and romantic themes. Even Tohill and Tombs, in an otherwise adulatory discussion, note that Franco’s spontaneity and jazz-inspired interruptions in plot and editing rhythm occasionally fails to “work”.

Instead, what recurs as a fascinating visual trope in Franco’s films is the explicit linkage between bodily pleasure and detailed visual presentation of the body as a site for surgery, scarring and decay. In this, the juxtaposition of young female flesh against the decomposition of a Zombie figure is used, notably in Franco’s next addition to the Spanish Zombie in Christina, Princesse de l’érótisme (Virgin Amongst the Living Dead) (1971). The appearances of Zombies in this film (as part of a dream had by the title character) bear no relation to the narrative of the film. Indeed, rumours around the films’ production suggest that Jean Rollin was induced to splice the sequence into the film after Franco had finished filming, although this is difficult to verify. What can be clearly inferred is the fractured nature of the production, partially explained by its multiple countries of investment: Spain, France, Italy, Belgium and Liechtenstein and their differing demands in edited versions for home audiences. There are several interpretations of why this fractured narrative includes Zombies, the most obvious being an understanding of what potential investors and audiences desired, noting the general background popularity of Zombie–like characters in Italian and Spanish Horror previously. There is also the more obvious visual attraction of scantily clad women.

Another explanation for the recurring Zombie in Italian and Spanish horror films of this period was its essential cheapness to create visually. The Zombie was
still mostly a potential threat rather than a primally motivated creature, a background figure to a more obvious personified evil in the foreground. The few films where the Zombie appears to act of its own volition take for granted the essential morality of their actions against others. But there were other narrative innovations in the same year as *Christina, Princesse de l’érôtisme*. This was also from a Spanish director, but altered the presentation, motivation and depiction of the cinematic Zombie beyond previous European – and American – incarnations. Amando de Ossorio’s 1971 film *La Noche del terror ciego (Tombs of the Blind Dead)* was a notable innovation in how the Zombie body was depicted. The *Monthly Film Bulletin*, while deploiring the “cut-price” narrative, clearly valued the portrayal of the undead in their

Unembarrassed, close-up cadaverous detail, have a nice line in mouldering costume and even a degree of icy menace in their slow-motion antics. But the movie does them something less than justice.  

The film places the creatures as risen Knights Templar, blinded and killed for their human sacrifices. A religious sub-text is clarified as the Knights initially seek lone female victims (seen as aberrant because of their sexual desires), gradually increasing their killings to include all people, regardless of age or gender. While an interpretation of the film as a direct attack on restrictive, Catholic-inspired social repression is possible, it is also fruitful to consider the restrictions of Spanish censorship. The social changes that welcomed tourism and the beginnings of youth culture also produced official decisions about the unsuitability of portraying young people being killed in a Spanish setting. Hence Ossorio’s choice to film in Portugal, hiring technical staff to ensure the film was classified as a Portuguese co-production.  

This highlights the difficulty of considering national film markets – Ossorio was aware, as were previous Italian and Spanish directors that his films were intended for a varied audience, and that within his home country only heavily edited versions were feasible. As Antonio Lázaro-Reboll notes, the “specific cinematic institutions and practices – censorship, co-production, double versions and exhibition” also instigated “hot and cold versions (distinguished a such by the nudity or censorable material present)”.  

Therefore the focus on nudity and graphic torture that form the basis of most discussions of Ossorio’s *Blind Dead* films’ popularity are inappropriate when
placing the film as a product of Spanish film production. Following previous narratives of punishment allowable in Spanish horror, both the dead and the living punish female sexuality. However, the representation of the undead Templars should also be considered. Ossorio places considerable emphasis on their appearance and movement. The implacability of the Knights movement is filmed in slow motion sequences, their desiccated appearance in hooded robes, and the focus on the skulls of the Knights, all indicate a shift away from the fleshier Zombies used in Italian and Spanish films to this date. Ossorio’s emphasis on the slowness of the Knights emphasises George Romero’s similar consideration of the undead body, but here the Zombies are malevolent and intelligent. This treatment of the undead body as a historical and contemporary threat is important, as the Zombies are clearly denoted as a repressive religious force reflecting unease with the group they represent. Their appearance in the modern world, itself sexually brutal, highlights the exploitation and isolation of live flesh. However, as the Knights themselves are repeating their earthly pleasures, the underlying morality of the tale is lost. These are nihilistic, violent Zombie films, with little hope for humanity in the texts. In many respects, Ossorio pre-empted as well as reflected George Romero’s narrative from Night of the Living Dead that was extended in 1978 with Dawn of the Dead. La Noche del terror ciego (Tombs of the Blind Dead) performed well with Spanish audiences (Mike Hodges places the internal gross at 27 million pesetas) as well as international markets. As such, Ossorio followed the established route of other directors by capitalising on his early success with similar films. El ataque de los muertos sin ojos (Return of the Blind Dead), (1973) El buque maldito (Ghost Ship of the Blind Dead) (1974) and La noche de las gaviota (Night of the Seagulls) (1975) all reuse the same narrative device of the blind Knights. That four films were made indicates the potency of the imagery Ossorio instigated alongside the popularity of the Zombie sub-genre. This is demonstrated in the appearance of four other Spanish/Italian Zombie films in 1972, although their visual and narrative use of the Zombie body is different. Carlos Aured’s film El Espanto surge de la Tumba (Horror Rises From the Tomb) also uses the narrative ploy of a reanimated knight (played by the noted Spanish horror actor Paul Naschy, termed “the Spanish Lon Chaney Jnr.”) commanding legions of the undead. Both this film, and the Italian co-
production La Orgía de los Muertos (Return of the Zombies) (José Merino, 1972) refer to the controlled status of these Zombies, rather than the motivated Zombies of Ossorio’s film. The focus on their resurrection and descent upon unsuspecting victims also echoes previous film incarnations. The Spanish/British co-production of Horror Express (Eugenio Martin) was also released in this year. Therefore the quantity of Zombie films produced by Spanish creators at this point is notable, indicating an awareness of popular genre motifs that could be financially successful.

Following this trend was the director León Klimovsky. Klimovsky is critically noted for his financially successful addition to the werewolf sub-genre in the film La noche de Walpurgis (Shadow of the Werewolf) (1970) starring Paul Naschy. Antonio Lázaro-Reboll argues that Naschy is partially responsible for the international cult status of this particular film text, but also that the film’s re-use of established horror narratives and visual conventions (notably its homage to Mario Bava’s La Maschera del demonio (Black Sunday) in the resurrection of the corpse) accounts for its enduring status. This referencing of previous horror films is understandable in the context of Spanish horror production of the time – as Lázaro-Reboll argues, financial and censorship strictures actively instigated “recycling techniques such as the re-using of old footage, and characters from earlier films and formulaic storylines”. This repetition of elements, aesthetically in the use of location shooting and representations of horrific characters, narratively in placing the film narrative emphatically away from Spanish soil, are defining features of this period of horror production. In this light, Klimovsky’s addition to the Spanish Zombie film in 1972 with the Italian co-produced La rebellion de las muertos (Vengeance of the Zombies) is notable in its adherence to and deviation from standard narrative uses of the Zombie. Ostensibly set in Britain, and again starring Paul Naschy (also the screenwriter), the film is a vengeance narrative, featuring slow motion sequences of female Zombies. The “highly stylised and unnatural” movements of the undead act as a counterpoint to the grisly scenes of black magic and voodooism. What acts as an interesting subtext in the confused horror/thriller narrative is the implicit discussion of class and race – the perpetrator is Indian, enacting revenge upon established families, while the lead female Elvira (Rommy) is denoted as upper class within the narrative. As
such, Klimovsky refers obliquely to themes of class established in Hammer horror, while adhering to established narrative and visual discussions of sexuality and horror in European horror film.

Representations of sex, horror and violence were gradually becoming more explicit throughout the mid to late 70s. The death of General Franco in 1975, and the subsequent seven years of change (known as transición) into a social democracy was reflected in the eventual renegotiations of control and acceptable content in the arts. However, it is arguable that even before the death of Franco, filmmakers in the Spanish horror genre as well as those outside it (notably French exhibitors who opened cinemas just over the border to show explicit sex films to Spanish audiences) had attempted to negotiate these ‘acceptable’ borders within the pretext of delivering moral messages – hence the punishment of the sexually liberated or young woman without a family within horror narratives. At the same time as levels of acceptable filmic nudity were altered in the early to mid 70s, so Spanish horror also began to present the body as a more explicit site of pain and decay. Jesús Franco had begun this within the safer confines of co-productions; Ossorio continued the trend within his discussions of undead, while Klimovsky, a prolific director, returned to themes of sexuality and surgery within Odio mi cuerpo (I hate my Body) in 1973. A more potent example of this renegotiation – and also a disguised criticism of authority – is present in Jorge Grau’s 1974 film Non si deve profanare il sonno dei morti (Let Sleeping Corpses Lie), instigated and produced by the Italian Edmondo Amati. Discussions of Non si deve…acknowledge that the film’s narrative is confused by an attempt to respond to established horror narratives, most obviously Night of the Living Dead in its treatment of the hero, but also It’s Alive (Larry Cohen, 1973) and Phase IV. Grau also notes that his determination to impose some personal interpretation led to the inclusion of a meditation on ecological damage, which essentially structures the narrative and much of the film. It is the setting which isolates this particular Zombie film as worthy of attention, with location shooting in Britain (following the precedent of situating horror away from a Spanish setting) notably the Peak District and Manchester – emphasising the shifts between urban and rural landscapes. This is made clear
within the opening sections of the film that presents urban areas as diseased.

Nigel Burrell fluently discusses the juxtaposition:

> People stare zombie-like from the windows of buses and cars, arely reacting to anything around them…a dead bird festers in the gutter, and businessmen pop pills and stride the pavements wearing face masks against the rising tide of inner city pollution, epitomised here by close up shots of steaming drains and soot-streaked buildings.\(^{103}\)

This imagery, combined with the discussion of pollution through radiation marks this as one of the earliest European Zombie films to specifically place its horrors in a contemporary – and criticised – space of isolation and infection. The later scenes within the hospital underline this, as the pale uniforms, walls and floors are spattered with blood as the undead reclaim areas codified as sterile.

By both placing the undead within a idealised countryside and a socially ordered space, Grau is pre-empting Romero’s visualisation of ordered and infective spaces in *Dawn of the Dead* in 1978, while offering a criticism of political and social intervention into nature. The use of the Zombie body also innovates, both visually and narratively. The portrayal of the Zombies, notably Edna (Christine Galbo) and George (Ray Lovelock) becomes sympathetic when placed against the brutality of the living humans. The explicit foregrounding of one particular male Zombie, the autopsy subject, in both publicity stills and key scenes of violence within the hospital is a visceral meditation on the violated borders of the human body, while the violence inflicted on and by the Zombies themselves clearly places the film as attempting to not only satisfy implied audience tastes, but also extends visualisations of the undead body toward a more realistic portrayal of wounds and disease.

This violence against the body, which resulted in heavily edited releases of the film, is an extension of Romero’s pessimism in *Night*, which Grau references in the portrayal of ineffective officials. Considering the mixed production team of the film, with an Italian composer, production designer and art director, make-up artists and camera operators, British and Italian actors, and a mix of Spanish and Italian scriptwriters and editors, the argument, forwarded by Julian Petley and Nigel Burrell that the film is an overt criticism of Francoist repression is questionable.\(^{104}\) Notwithstanding, this addition to Spanish-Italian Zombie films stands as a notable individual piece, positioned between the market demands for
visceral terror, and the growing reappraisal of the Cinematic Zombie as not only a blank slate for gory horror, but also social critiques of humanity.

While production of Spanish Zombie films continued into the mid 70s, alongside Spanish horror generally, changing social tastes and political control in Spanish cinema was altering the content of films. By 1977 the process of transición was fully under way, culminating in a relaxation of censorship. Adult film productions, previously denied a Spanish market, flourished as a result. The need to maintain profits instigated a shift from many low-budget filmmakers – such as Jesús Franco and Carlos Aured – into mainly sexploitation and pornographic films, although Franco would film more horror over the course of his lengthy career, including the French/Italian Zombie film L’Abîme des Mortes Vivants (Oasis of the Zombies), the Spanish/ French co-produced El Hundeimiento de la Casa Usher (Revenge in the House of Usher) in 1982 and the Spanish La Mansión de los Muertos Vivientes (Mansion of the Living Dead) in 1985. Jorge Grau moved away from horror films completely, while Amando de Ossorio gradually moved into television work, before a serious heart attack rendered him incapable of work in 1984. Shifts in audience taste and the emergence of films that openly challenged social institutions positioned Spanish horror as outdated in the mid to late 70s, reducing the production of horror films. Ironically, we return to John Gilling as the director of a final example of Spanish Zombie film of this brief boom. We must recall that Amando de Ossorio’s Blind Dead films ended in La noche de las gaviotas (Night of the Seagulls) (1975). Gilling, who had offered a striking interpretation of the Zombie in Plague of the Zombies (1966) and had resided in Spain for some years, directed La Cruz del Diablo (The Devil’s Cross) (1975). Paul Naschy assisted with the screenplay, but the most important sequence in the film is where Gilling uses a slow motion sequence to depict a hooded, skeletal knight, following Ossorio’s interpretation of the Zombie figure. La Cruz can be held to be emblematic of the intertwined production and distribution histories of European horror films, as invention, derivation and exhaustion seem to exemplify national treatments of the Zombie at this point, in both British and Spanish horror.
French Zombie films

The re-emergence of the American horror film in the 1970s also indicated that international markets were poised to dominate European markets once again. But, true to the monster’s nature, Zombie narratives appear to lie dormant and then re-appear unexpectedly. Alongside the resurgence of Italian Zombie films in the late 1970s, there were additions from France, a country noted for its lack of a clearly defined horror film industry. As David Kalat notes:

> It has nevertheless substantially and extensively influenced the evolution of horror cinema internationally. However, since there is no national film tradition to summarise, each film is basically an island to be discussed on its own…iconoclastic and haphazard experiments appeared – shots in the dark, to be sure, but perhaps all the more powerful and effective for their independence. ¹⁰⁸

Therefore critical texts focus on French horror films that are either internationally recognised, or bear the name of a particular director associated with horrific texts. This is particularly the case with Jean Rollin, whose film texts reflect changing styles of exploitation cinema within French production as a whole. His career and Jesùs Franco’s overlap considerably – as previously mentioned Christina, Princesse de l’érotisme (Virgin Amongst the Living Dead) (1971) supposedly features the post-production intervention of Rollin, and later films from both directors indicate stylistic interventions from others. In Rollin’s case, as with Franco, sex cinema proved a primary economic determinant in his film career. Cahill and Tombs characterise French softcore sexploitation and hardcore films as a mainstay of French cinema during the early to mid 1970s, encouraged by audience popularity and a relaxation in censorship laws. Horror films were relatively unusual, and as such Rollin’s early films indicate an acceptance of this through their fragmented attempts at poetic lyricism, with scenes of nudity to titillate potential audiences, rather than a complete reliance on gore. Colin Odell and Michelle Le Blanc also argue that Rollin derives influences from pulp literature, painting and surrealist thought, and as such “The supernatural themes that he adopts may be associated with the horror genre, but they do not conform with its narrative or stylistic conventions”. ¹⁰⁹ While this is a problematic generalisation, as it is arguable whether the horror genre has any one set of narrative or stylistic demands, it offers an interesting opening into
Rollin’s fragmented narratives and his painterly uses of landscape, particularly when discussing his Zombie films.

It must be clearly stated that French Zombie films are a rarity, and bear more influence from co-productions than a recognisably “French” approach to the genre. Rollin is notable in that he was involved in at least four Zombie films, either as the primary contributor, or in an uncredited role. His best known, *Les Raisins de Mort* (*The Grapes of Death*) (1978) is regularly cited as the first French horror film to include excessive gore, a startling consideration given that by this point in the genre’s history, gore had become a primary consideration for Zombie film makers. Rollin himself acknowledges this, placing the films commercial success abroad as the result of his use of “gore à l’américaine”. This is partially a reflection of both Jorge Grau and Romero’s Zombie films and their popularity, though Rollin claims that *Les Raisins* rejects the claustrophobic setting of *Night of The Living Dead*, instead engaging with the then popular ‘catastrophe’ films narrative of peripatetic characters movement. However, the narrative bears striking similarities to *Night* in the threatened female protagonist and Grau’s ecological concerns in *Non si deve*. What differs in *Les Raisins* is that the infectious stages of the victims are especially liquid, following the satirical premise of infected wine as the causative agent, while their status as Zombies is undercut by their awareness of their mad state. In many respects, their homicidal tendencies refer more to *The Crazies* (George Romero, 1973) rather than previous Zombie narratives. Linked with this is an extensive consideration of insularity within the French countryside, placing the undead as victims of trapped economic status as well as poisoned wine.

Rollin’s most accessible horror film is also an interesting departure from his previous and later works. Following the economic status of exploitation film in Europe at the time, Rollin shifted between co-productions, independently funded pieces and differing types of film, his Vampire and sex films particularly. As such, *Le Lac des Morts Vivants* (*Zombie Lake*) (1980) can be considered as a stopgap piece for Rollin, as he supplanted Jesús Franco as director. *Le Lac* is notorious among Zombie film commentators for its low budget values, including green make-up for the Nazi Zombies, and the temporal incoherence of the narrative. Rollin himself comments on this by explaining that:
My responsibility on this film was merely a technical one…I merely followed the producer’s instructions. I had some fun doing that, but this Zombie’s Lake is by no means a film of mine. A film can be my film only if I have previously worked on the script, as I think the story is something essential in a film.  

In comparison, Rollin’s last Zombie film *La Morte Vivante* (*The Living Dead Girl*, 1982) is a thoughtful meditation on the undead, combining as it does both aspects of the Zombie and Vampire genre. The figure of Catharine Valmont (Françoise Blanchard) acts as a reproach to her lesbian lover who failed to maintain her half of a suicide pact. While Rollin disliked the “commercial concessions” within the film’s narrative, the film is striking not only for its mix of nudity and gore but a considered portrayal of the tormented undead and their relationship to the living. Hélène (Marina Pierro) feels compelled to feed Catharine as part of her guilt. As such, the film discusses the limits of responsibility and remembrance, while allowing for a truly sympathetic if monstrous female Zombie. Such discussions did not filter through into other French Zombie films: *Était une fois le diable* (*Devil Story*, Bernard Launois, 1985) and *La Revanche des Mortes Vivantes* (*Revenge of the Living Dead Girls*, Pierre Reinhard, 1987). These are marked by attempts to integrate extreme sexploitation and gore through undead figures, or indeed *Trepanator* (Norbert Moutier, 1991) a direct remake of Stuart Gordon’s *Re-animator* (1985) featuring Jean Rollin. As such, French Zombie film production is limited to a brief historical period, an ignored sub-genre of an equally disdained film genre.

Rollin reflected on this in an interview for *Cinéfantastique* in 1973 concluding: But it is very difficult to make fantasy films here. It is a genre which is despised. The pure fantasy film, without explicit blood and gore, is difficult to achieve successfully. I have tried, but I have failed. The burning question that needs answering is, is there a public for such films? If there is, then we will be able to do the films we want.

The following twenty years of European Zombie film made it clear that blood and gore were the overriding attractors of the sub-genre, as a re-consideration and eventual abandonment of the American cinematic Zombie occurred. However, the overall production of European Zombie films within the three main countries of production: Spain, France and Italy, began to noticeably slow in the early 1990s. The rise of the home video market in the 1980s prompted a
rise in quickly produced horror films from across Europe to fill demand, while the market dominance of American financed and produced films was felt in the VHS market. As a result, many independently created horror films were intended purely for the video market, and as such very few records exist in terms of production quantities for differing countries. The rise of a global film market, centred on the rise of the blockbuster film alongside restricted funding, also pushed many filmmakers into international co-productions. While European cinema responded to these challenges by accepting or challenging ‘Hollywood’ dominance, through such aesthetic experiments as the *Cinema du look* of France, or the Danish *Dogme* movement, the European horror genre seemed to become an unnoticed adjunct to American productions, at least on a global scale. This was particularly the case for the final example of European Zombie film production within this chapter. While German film narratives had dominated the 1910s and 1920s with nightmare imagery - arguably the first concerted visualisations of horror – the history of German horror film is remarkably absent after this point. As Carlos Clarens notes, the vogue of the *Schauerfilme* (films of fantasy and terror) retreated, as social and economic security seemed assured in the late 1920s.\(^\text{116}\) As such, the brief history of German Zombie film reflects this lack of concerted attention to the horror genre in contemporary German film production.

*German Zombie films*

Jill Forbes and Sarah Street argue that as a result of Nazi control of German film production and the imports available to audiences, German cinema was “resilient to the absorption of external styles and influences” that potentially influenced those countries accepting American output during WW2.\(^\text{117}\) This led to a production reliance on established film genres that proved popular, notably musicals and light comedies.\(^\text{118}\) The end of WW2 did not alter this adherence to genre, but as Tim Bergfelder proposes, it became piecemeal, drawing on varied filmic and economic sources to supply new narratives:

Even a cursory comparison, however, reveals a number of significant differences in production patterns and generic formulae from the 1950s
As we have seen in the previous discussions of national horror film histories, the shift towards co-productions was economically unavoidable for most centres of production. Even taking this into account, horror film still remained a minimal part of German B-film production. Bergfelder mentions the exploitation filmmaker Wolf C. Hartwigs’ additions to the horror genre in the late 1950s, noting the “blurring of generic as well as national distinctions” in the use of narrative, setting and cast. The sex film industry, a key audience attractor throughout the 60s and 70s, also introduced horrific elements in recognition of the popularity of horror films across Europe. But concerted studies of contemporary German horror film are rare. Randall Halle acknowledges this, but also propounds a detailed examination of what he considers to be a German “Underground Horror” wave that began in the late 1980s. Halle places this surge in horror film production as part of an excluded ‘subcultural milieu’ – young directors such as Andreas Schnaas, Olaf Ittenbach and Jörg Buttgereit who were excluded from film schools, became self taught, and had an appreciative and knowledgeable horror fan base for their independent productions.

Many of these film texts focus on the abject figure of the corpse, notably *Das deutsche Kettensägen Massaker* (*The German Chainsaw Massacre*, Christoph Schlingensief, 1990) and *Nekromantik 2* (Jörg Buttgereit, 1991). Following these discussions of the dead body, the Zombie logically became used as a key narrative device, starting with *Zombie 90/ Extreme Pestilence* (Andreas Schnaas, 1991), and focus on the use of excessive gore to break the boundaries of skin and life. Jamie Russell dismisses many of the German Zombie films as “dishonourable Teutonic cinema – (some SOV, some a little classier)”, and fails to engage with the films as a startling burst of film production from a country noted for its lack of horror. These films, while undoubtedly cheaply made, do exhibit a concerted contemporary discussion on borders. Randall Halle argues this positions many of the horror films of 1989 to the mid 90s as discussions on
the re-unification of Germany, and the resulting spate of Zombie and other horror films should be discussed in relation to their discussion of borders – whether geographical or biological. However, the films themselves display a variety of narrative devices and concerns that hint at the mutability of the Zombie as a figure of fear. *Zombie 90* and *Urban Scumbags Vs. Countryside Zombies* (Sebastian Panneck and Patrick Hollmann, 1992) focus on mistaken spills of chemicals and conflict with authority, while *Requiem Der Teufel* (*Requiem for the Devil*, Jans Reiff, 1993) depicts murdered victims tormenting their killer. *Premutos: Der gefallene Engel* (*Premutos: Lord of the Living Dead*, Olaf Ittenbach, 1997) concerns itself with an undead army raised by a demon, while *Nur über meine Leiche* (*Over My Dead Body*, Rainer Matsutani, 1995) is a black comedy on marital problems and infidelity. As such, these films are difficult to classify as developing depictions of the Zombie. Given the production and distribution contexts of these films, it is not surprising that they differ so markedly – many were straight to video productions, making the quantity of German Zombie films difficult to determine.

German Zombie film production of the 1980s and 1990s characterises the difficulties for contemporary European horror film production in general, and of researching it, beyond the late 1980s. While individual films are still made for cinematic release, the shift in audience viewing choices coupled with the rise in cheap filming equipment, has led to a boom in independent horror filmmaking. This allows for a diversity of stylistic approaches to the Zombie sub-genre, indicating the growing intertextual use of the Zombie in differing film texts. The history of European Zombie film production up until the mid 1990s however, offers some clear indications of how the Zombie is deployed in national contexts as an extension of and occasionally as a challenge to the market dominance of American Zombie films. In the case of the British Zombie film, the restrictions of censorship delayed the shift to graphic depictions of gore and sexualised violence so prevalent in other European countries, but instead offered criticisms of class systems of exploitation, making clear use of the Zombie as a symbol of economic and social repression. Within Italian and Spanish Zombie films, not only was the setting of the film of great importance, in the restrictions placed particularly on Spanish filmmakers to place the horror outside an Iberian setting,
but also in the implied exoticism and primitivism of foreign countries, notably in the Caribbean islands. These films also used an explicit link between pleasures of the flesh and death to serve as an ostensibly Catholic warning, but undermined these messages in the nihilistic narratives of the *Blind Dead* and Lucio Fulci Zombie films. Even within the limited productions from France and Germany, variations on the presentation of the Zombie, from lyrical love stories to gore-drenched made-on-video offerings, offer a range of visual reconsiderations unseen in American Zombie film of the 1970s and early 1980s. The movement of the Zombie across differing national film borders indicates that these film texts offer an open space for assessment of socio-political factors, relating to previous horror narratives as well as a directors personal interpretation.

Given the shift towards the portrayal of the Zombie as an infective presence in texts of the 1960s onwards, it is tempting to position the Zombie film as *infecting* the horror genre of the country of production until its popularity is exhausted: it is also a logical step to symbolise the spread of the Zombie film in Europe as an extension of American film industry dominance. However, what this chapter has clarified is that these spates of production and popularity have *not* always been linked to American interpretations, and in some cases were intended to supply an American as well as European audience. This allowed for a space for re-assessment and use of the undead body as a symbol of contemporary and historicized fears of the abject, whether biological, spiritual or social. Assessing if these deviations from and additions to American genre conventions were continued in differing global film production contexts, is the focus of the next chapter.
While European Zombie films appear in extended periods of film production, other global appearances of the Zombie outside the historical dominance of Europe and North America are harder to trace. This is partially a reflection of the history of film production globally, where a lack of political and economic support for film has left some countries unable to create, let alone match, the production output of these ‘Westernised’ countries examined in previous chapters. For this reason, this chapter examines other countries that have created Zombie films, allowing for a detailed consideration of how they deploy the Zombie body, and whether these representations offer any challenges to the implicit dominance of the American and European Zombie. This excludes Zombie films from Africa, which despite repeated anecdotal evidence that they exist, have yet to be traced.¹ While African horror films have been made, notably the *Lucifer* films (Bob Smith), production information is non-existent. Even within self-reliant and large film industries, such as the Indian film productions categorised as “Bollywood”, the production and reception of horror films (and therefore Zombie film) is limited. As Pete Tombs argues, while there was a boom of horror filmmaking in the 1980s in India, it was as part of other established genres, such as epics and crime narratives. Many films including horror tropes failed to draw audiences: “Most Indian horror seems second-hand, threadbare and sadly lacking in contemporary gloss or cultural depth”.² Given the large budgets available for the more traditional genres of film in India, the low production values of most horror films have precluded them from concerted audience popularity and have kept the horror genre to minimal independent production.³ This is not to say that Indian Zombie films don’t exist – the noted film producers of horror in India, the Ramsay family, made *Do Gaz Zameen ke Neeche* (*Two Yards Underground*, 1972). It should be noted that the appearance of the Zombie in this film is not overtly horrific, and sympathy for his plight is fore grounded throughout the film. The filmmakers refer to the corpse as a *bhoot* (ghost) and it is questionable whether we can place this as a Zombie text, though the use of the corpse indicates a strong thematic link to other incarnations of the cinematic Zombie.⁴
Remaining Zombie film productions outside North America and Europe seem centred around three diverse geographic areas: Latin America, Australasia and the problematic grouping termed East Asia. While these regional areas are not historically dominant within the global film market, they evidence a breadth of horror film texts, whether historically or in contemporary film production. These all refer to their own cultural, political and social definitions of the undead, but all respond to American dominance in terms of genre narratives and representations. What translations, deviations and challenges they offer to this traditional dominance is the focus of this chapter, following Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka’s assertion that these centres of film production, which could be classified as “second” cinemas:

Tend neither to compromise the projection of a likeable self-image, nor test the supposed inability of Americans to understand much outside their own culture. A second cinema may be expected to provide some evidence of resistance, but primarily it will accommodate the dominant stylistic paradigm of Hollywood film. Its most aesthetically interesting films are probably those that to a degree refuse to play this game, or produce conscious mutations.  

As we have seen in previous chapters, the concept of mutation seems suited to discussing the Zombie in cinema. To what extent this creature ‘mutates’ according to historical factors of production and reception, may offer a clearer understanding of the overall global changes affecting cinema, and in particular the horror genre.

**Latin American Zombies**

Within Latin America, Mexico has dominated horror film production, and indeed the majority of Latin American filmmaking since WW2. Tamara Falicov argues that Argentina, for example, was much more technically developed than Mexico, yet was hampered by the United States decision to intervene with Argentina’s policy of neutrality by restricting sales of film stock during WW2. Given the historical struggles to form a concerted national cinema, Argentinean horror film is overlooked in histories of Latin American cinema, and modern additions to the Zombie genre produced in Argentina are shot on and for video.
Plaga Zombie (Pablo Parés and Hernán Sáez, 1997) responds to established American narrative structures while using comedy characters, extended within their follow up Plaga Zombie: Zona Mutante (2001). This independent production offers a hint of the problems in recreating histories of film genre, given the changing production contexts post-video. The same is applicable to histories of Brazilian horror film, which focus on one particular figure, that of director and actor José Mojica Marins, (also known as Coffin Joe) who began horror film production in Brazil with his film A Meia-Noite Levarei Sua Alma (At Midnight I’ll take your Soul, 1963). Marin’s limited career reflects the precarious nature of Brazilian horror film, given the repressive censorship and limited production facilities current in Brazilian cinema until the late 70s and early 80s. Following this, only one Brazilian Zombie film has been found for this study, Zombio (Petter Baiestorf, 1998), on which no production information has yet been found, though the website Infernotícias summarises it as a short black comedy, and perhaps the first Brazilian Zombie film. No other Zombie films, or indeed any concerted information on horror film production has been found for the other countries that historically constitute Latin America. As such, the history of the Latin American Zombie focuses on one part of the region, itself problematically situated on the borders of Northern America. Given the proximity of Mexico to the United States, it could be assumed that the Mexican film industry would be dominated by American productions throughout its history. This is to some extent historically true, as Jason Wood suggests:

After a period of boom, there followed one of decline in the 1920s as Hollywood established itself as the dominant force in filmmaking. With audiences turning increasingly to imported newsreels originating from America, film production in Mexico – which was not supported by the state – suffered a rapid downturn, while the more sophisticated Hollywood films offered fantasy and escape. This rejection of localized product would repeat itself many times.

Home production within Mexico was reasserted during the mid to late 1930s. This was partially an audience response to Hollywood films, that assumed that Castilian Spanish was recognisable across Latin America in the “Hollywood Hispanic” films, but used actors with a variety of regional accents, as in the case of the Spanish language version of Drácula (George Melford, 1931). These
left Mexican audiences, in Carl J Mora’s words, experiencing “a collective culture shock”. This shock did not extend to a complete dismissal of Hollywood product, but did help support home film production that could both challenge and use American film genres and styles in order to satisfy a diverse and mostly illiterate working class audience.

Genre films such as horror were made in the earliest days of Mexican filmmaking, such as the noted Expressionist–style films of Juan Bustillo Oro (Dos Monjes/ The Two Monks (1934) and Misterio del Rostro pálido/ Mystery of the Ghastly Face (1935)) and the Hispanic folk tale La Llorona (The Crying Woman, Ramón Peón, 1933). However, Mexican film production was still low, compared to American releases, given the economic and political turmoil in Mexico of the period. Ironically, this was partially solved by America’s need to keep allies on their borders happy – and controlled – during the Second World War. Tomás Pérez Turrent characterises the period of Mexican filmmaking after WW2 as “privileged”, in that:

Mexican cinema benefited from favourable wartime conditions because of US technical and economic aid and produced the most important Spanish-language cinema.

But this also induced a period of crisis within Mexican cinema, one of many occurring between the 1930s onwards. As Pérez Turrent continues in describing the post WW2 period:

This crisis has been economic, political, artistic, industrial and technical. Producers and most directors refused to take risks and were content to repeat formulas. The production, distribution and exhibition systems became dysfunctional. The only thing that interested producers was making the least expensive product with the least possible effort.

During the 1950s the industry faced declining audiences for home product. This was partially due to a slight rise in TV ownership (though the poverty of Mexico precluded the huge purchasing capabilities of American, and later British consumers), but a reliance on formulaic films also led to what Mora describes as a “suffocation of true cinematic art”. Therefore the 1950s can be described as a period of formulaic film taking precedence in a highly commercialised industry. This would explain the references to established American tropes within Mexican horror film that emerged at this time. This
period also offered the earliest representations of the Zombie within Mexican cinema, and indeed Latin America as a whole. What arguably began as attempts to reference popular American texts, developed into new uses of the Zombie — in highly specific national contexts.

Chano Urueta’s El Monstruo Resucitado (Doctor Crimen, 1953) is the first key Mexican Zombie film. While the text itself uses a mixture of the Frankenstinian motif of the mad doctor and the Phantom of the Opera’s disfigured protagonist, Urueta’s use of the mindless Zombie that the Doctor creates underlines the Doctor’s need to become part of humanity. His female assistant is faced with a dead suitor who cannot think, and the appearance of the doctor who repulses her. The Zombie stands as a testament to the Doctor’s power, but also as a reminder that only the whole human, in looks and mind, is considered socially acceptable. This motif of physical and mental control is considered within Fernando Méndez’s 1957 film Ladrón de Cadaveres (The Body Snatcher), in which the popular characters of lucha libre (professional wrestling) investigate a doctor who is performing brain transplants on killed wrestlers. Keith Crocker’s adulatory reviews of Mexican horror place this as the beginning of the popular “Wrestlers vs. Monsters” films of the early 60s, which we will return to. The film Misterios de Ultratumba (The Black Pit of Dr. M Fernando Méndez, 1959) instead focused on the concept of the vengeful Zombie, as two doctors pledge to record their experiences of the afterlife to the surviving doctor. Méndez eschews narrative logic in favour of atmospheric terror, focusing on the disfigured corpse of the risen doctor.

Importantly, given the strong association with Zombies and Voodoo, only one early Mexican Zombie film refers explicitly to black magic as a source of possession. Benito Alazraki’s Muñecos Infernales (The Curse of the Doll People, 1960) uses a controlled Zombie to place possessed dolls in the houses of intended victims. Again, like earlier Mexican horror film, Alazraki favoured a shadowed, set-bound visual style relying on visual grotesqueness. Given the smaller budgets available to Mexican filmmakers, this is hardly surprising, but the varied use of the Zombie figure in these texts indicate an exploration of the Zombie figure over a very short period of time in contrast to established American generic tropes. This is in contradiction to Rhodes’ assertion that
Mexican horror films of the 50s can be ascribed to “US and British-inspired efforts: vampires (notably Fernando Méndez’s 1957 *El Vampiro*), monsters, werewolves, and even a remake of *La Llorona*”. This is particularly the case for Alazraki’s 1962 film *Espiritismo* (*Spiritism*).

Using W. W. Jacob’s tale *The Monkey’s Paw* as its basis, the film offers a searing indictment of the values of a bourgeois family in their use of three wishes to preserve their material status. As with Jacob’s short story, the son pays the price for this and returns as a hideously scarred corpse. While the spiritualist elements were not present in the original text, they extend the film’s narrative beyond a simplistic horror tale into a coherent social drama. This was not an element that characterised many horror productions of the time: Crocker’s assertion that Mexican horror films of this period can be deemed simple, in order to “entertain the poor and working class, hence, the bulk of Mexico” is hugely problematic; but does offer an explanation of the wave of popular genre films that integrated both Zombies and *Luchadores* (*Wrestlers*).

The popularity of professional wrestling in Mexico should be briefly explained in order to situate the immense popularity of cinematic and televisual texts featuring individual *luchador*. Appearing in the 1930s, Lucha libre as a national sport was instigated by the televised matches available in the 1950s and the elevation of a particular *luchador* into a cultural icon. El Santo (*The Saint*) became codified as a popular hero through his wrestling, but more importantly through the use of his mask (which he removed only in private, and once briefly on television before his death), which allowed his image as a fighter for common justice to be consolidated in popular culture, as Steve Slagle describes:

> Santo's feature films were a huge part of the Latino culture, elevating him to what would be the Mexican equivalent of action stars like John Wayne was at the same time in America.

Carl J. Mora contextualises the appearance of *Santo* films more coherently, as part of a production crisis in the América studios that made television serials:

> However, their marketability on that medium was so restricted that the producers turned to combining the separate serials into one or more full-length features that were released to neighbourhood theatres. One of these, which spawned a never-ending series that continues to the present day, was *Santo contra el cerebro diabólico* (*Santo versus the Diabolic Brain*) (1961) (El Santo was a popular wrestler); it made 125,000 pesos at its premiere in spite of its atrocious quality.
The popularity of the *Santo* films indicates how filmmakers searched for profitable formulas and then re-utilised a key character to maximise potential audiences. As such, the placing of El Santo as a figure of good against representations of evil offered a space for cross-genre films, including the splicing of horror into action narratives as seen with *Ladron de Cadaveres* in 1957. Between the early 60s and mid 80s, Santo featured in more than 50 films, portrayed as both a wrestler and detective.  

*Santo contra los zombies* (Invasion of the Zombies, 1961) is arguably the first Santo text to feature Zombies. Their use within this text as controlled minions seems predicated on the narrative necessity for various fight scenes, and as such there is little narrative difference between this film and earlier American B-movies of the 50s – notably *Creature with the Atom Brain* (Edward L. Cahn, 1955). The same conclusion can be drawn from following wrestler vs. monster films featuring Zombies, notably Gilberto Solares’s *El mundo de los muertos* (The Land of the Dead, 1969) and *Santo y Blue Demon contra los monstruos* (*Santo and Blue Demon vs. The Monsters*, 1969), Frederico Curiels *Las Momias de Guanajuato* (*The Mummies of Guanajuato*, 1970) Alfredo Crevenna’s *Santo contra la magia negra* (*Santo vs. Black Magic*, 1972), and Tito Novaro’s *Castillo de las Momias de Guanajuato* (*Castle of the Mummies of Guanajuato*, 1973). However, this is not to dismiss these films. They offer a clear indication of the necessity for a clear moral hero in the texts, battling those who control the Zombies. Given the rates of corruption and crime within Mexico, these texts arguably seek to redress social imbalances, through the figures of wrestlers presented as incorruptible. Importantly, in the figure of the zombies from the films *Las Momias de Guanajuato* and *Castillo de las Momias de Guanajuato*, these films also offer a cultural interpretation of the Zombie that differs from its American and European counterparts. This is through the setting of Guanajuato, which is famous for its mummies. A sudden cholera outbreak in 1833 led to a mass placing of corpses (and tragically, comatose victims) within a large crypt, where a confluence of environmental factors preserved the corpses. As such, the visual representation of a mummified, terror-struck corpse (of those who died of asphyxiation) resonates within Mexican culture.
Despite this, Mexican filmmakers arguably preferred to return to tested formulas in terms of the cinematic Zombie. The American-Mexican co-production *La Muerte Vivante* (*The Snake People*, 1971) features an ageing Boris Karloff within a text offering LSD controlled victims zombified through black magic. The American influence of Romero and early Voodoo film narratives are combined to target those audiences aware of exploitation film of the 60s and 70s, linked with the iconic status of Karloff, himself a veteran of cheaply produced horror film throughout his career. This combination of established Zombie narratives and representations is also present in René Cardona’s *Le invasion de las Muertos* (*Invasion of the Dead*, 1972). *Le invasion* is a truly fragmented narrative, combining the persona of Professor Zovek, a noted heroic personality within Mexico and Blue Demon, one of the famous *luchadores*. The fragmented narrative of the film (partially explained by the death of Professor Zovek during filming) is displayed in the differing portrayals of the Zombies. Some retain skills from their former lives, others are presented as recently deceased bodies, but the later scenes rely on creatures that combine with other horror phenomenon, such as the wolf man. In this, the collision between Mexican Zombie film narratives and the influence of America is displayed. It is also present in the final key Zombie text from Mexico, Ruben Galindo’s *Cementerio del Terror* (*Cemetery of Terror*, 1985), which is set in Texas and focuses on Zombies reanimated by black magic. The sexualised depictions of teenage youth and their gory demise is not remarkably different from the slasher cycle of films present in America during the 70s onwards, and the text itself relies on the gore effects and leading man from the Italian–Mexican–Spanish co-production *Incubo sulla città contaminata* (*City of the Walking Dead*, Umberto Lenzi, 1980).

The gap between *Cementerio* and previous Mexican horror films is not easily explicable. Mexican horror is a particularly understudied aspect of film criticism, focusing on the early period of 30s horror, the *lucha libre* films and the contemporary films of Guillermo del Toro. The period between the late 60s onwards is not discussed at length in terms of horror production in any texts. However, we can draw the following conclusions. Given the dominance of American films within Mexico, and the rise of horror film production in America during the 1970s, it is arguable that Mexican horror films,
characterised as they were as cheap b-features within America, fell in popularity with intended audiences. As Carl Mora argues, this in turn led filmmakers to shift to more popular genres.\textsuperscript{27} At the same time, the growing stability of other Latin American countries, and their own access to cheaper filmmaking equipment meant that Mexican dominance in horror film production was under threat. Indeed, we can draw the global conclusion that the rise of video production during the 80s spread horror film production beyond the studios and established film production centres of any country, making a clear historical account of trends in filmmaking very difficult.

As such, the history of the Mexican Zombie is confined to a small historical period, in which few departures from established generic convention occurred, but which did respond enthusiastically to national preferences for the setting and characterisation within the film texts. What is also notable is the use of national history in the representation of the undead –the Guanajuato mummies being a case in point. Guillermo del Toro, the contemporary horror film director, notes that his own visual influences in his works such as \textit{Cronos} (1993) that features a decaying, aged vampire are directly attributable to his Mexican upbringing:

\begin{quote}
“I was exposed to a lot of very brutal images and situations. I saw my first corpse when I was four…That, plus the very gory religious imagery we have in Mexico, combined to give me a very intimate relationship with death at a very early age.”\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

This religious imagery is a key cultural influence, and one that should be noted. While not always directly visible in the Zombie films discussed above, the Latin America concept of the undead is strikingly different to the predominant American, and indeed British conceptions present in popular culture. The religious festival \textit{El Día de los Muertos} or the Day of the Dead, which takes place on the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} of November revolves around a welcoming of ancestral spirits. The predominant imagery connected with the festival revolves around the dead engaging in everyday activities, alongside Catholic iconography and shrines.\textsuperscript{29} Offerings of food and drink are made for the dead and the living, and the overall emphasis of celebrating death and life makes it clear that public and private spaces of death and life (cemeteries, homes, streets, schools) are intertwined, unlike the stricter demarcations of cultural space found in modern Western European culture.
The festival, which goes under different names, is prevalent within Latin America, and Mexican communities in Northern America. It also occurs in Haiti, where the festival incorporates Vodun imagery. This migration is also global, to the setting of European cities, and more interestingly, to New Zealand. It is arguable that the acceptance of death and life within this cultural means of expression, resonates with people of varying or no religious affiliation, in that it is both personal and public, and offers another possible means to situate the cinematic Zombie’s iconic status globally. In order to discuss this potential thematic explanation of the Zombie figure, we will follow the Día de los Muertos ‘s path to New Zealand and Australia, countries part of, but separate to both East Asian and Western markets.

*Australian and New Zealand Zombie film*

The film production of both Australia and New Zealand offers an interesting representative of what Solanas and Getino characterise as a neo-colonial ‘second cinema’, as opposed to their call for a recognisable ‘third cinema’ of national filmmaking against the ‘first cinema of Hollywood’. Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka continue this debate, positioning Australian cinema, notably the ‘New Australian cinema’ movement of 1968 onwards as a:

> Moment of desire for a ‘national culture’ in opposition to British and American cultural dominance, but never free either of the dominance nor of the problems that riddle the question of national culture – especially in a second world state like Australia.  

They continue this by characterising differing types of film production into thematic types that may challenge or appropriate the assumed dominance of (mostly) American film products. This is due, in part to the economic and historical factors that position Australia and New Zealand as ‘post-colonial’ but with extensive economic control exercised by American and Asian markets. This may explain the Australian shift to make popular genre films in order to broach an international market, in a home market dominated by foreign imports:

> ‘Genre films’…are films whose identity responds primarily to genres perennial in some echelons of the international marketplace; for instance, they appear among lower budget U.S cinema and tele-movies, cable-and video-fodder. These films acquire a marketplace identity and attempt to trade from it. The number of projects developed
and publicised as genre films increased after the 1981 tax incentives, but even in this phase they have remained a small part of the aesthetic field.  

What should be noted is that horror films, a staple genre for low-budget and marginalized film production centres, existed in Australian cinema before the tax incentives, and offer interesting discussions of Antipodean identity within the settings and content of the films. Robert Hood characterises the main period of horror filmmaking, from the late 70s onwards, as follows:

Though Australians have made horror and horror-related films, some of which have been among the most well-regarded and influential films produced in the country, they tend to be a bit isolated, with little specific on-going influence... The very best ones, which are more essentially 'Australian' in approach, often minimise narrative movement and hence don't fit snugly into the form of the essentially narrative-driven horror genre.

Following this, clear genre patterns of depiction and narrative are not easy to identify, and in the three film texts that involve Zombie figures, there is a wide divergence in how the Zombie body is deployed. Peter Weir’s *The Cars That Ate Paris* (1974) revolves around a town causing car crashes and scavenging the wrecks. Victims of the crashes are turned into “veggies” or Zombies by brain surgery performed by the local doctor, populating the local hospital. In this film the outback and the small town are threats, cannibalising the culture of travel and freedom (in cars). The main character of Arthur (Terry Camilleri) is gradually integrated into the town’s culture, where the surface of normality is undercut by the actions of the inhabitants and the Zombies, who are not always distinguishable from each other. As Dermody and Jacka note in their definition of ‘Australian gothic’ film:

> Their hallmark is dark, inward comedy. ‘Normality’ – of the Australian suburban and small town station – is the hunting ground for gothic/comic hyperboles and motifs... The normal is revealed as having a stubborn bias towards the perverse, the grotesque, the malevolent. And the sources quoted in this visual style are deliberately mixed; the best examples of Australian Gothic are intuitive and bizarre mixtures of B-grade genres.

This will also be apparent in Peter Jackson’s New Zealand horror films discussed later. In terms of the Australian Zombie however, there are large gaps between individual productions, which explains the divergence in narrative
forms. Carmelo Musca’s *Zombie Brigade* (1988) is a case in point, attempting as it does a vengeance narrative centred on historical Asian-Australasian tensions. Economic hardships lead the mayor of Lizard Gulley to sell land housing a Vietnam War memorial to a Japanese businessman. Jamie Russell dismisses the film as “racist, offensive nonsense”, and in the sense that it stereotypes Japanese economics as overwhelming Australian land, he may have a case. However, what he fails to acknowledge is that the two main protagonists of the film are Asian and Aboriginal, proffering an awareness of responsibility to land and memory that the white Australians cannot. *Variety* noted this, alongside the xenophobic Australian stereotypes used to promote the comedy within the film.

Comedy may be a key factor in placing the Australian and New Zealand Zombie in a generic context. The dark humour apparent in both *The Cars That Ate Paris* and *Zombie Brigade*, and the eclectic approach to the Zombie /horror genre is repeated in the most recent Australian Zombie film, *Undead* (2003) by the Spierig Brothers. In the opening sequence of the film, Rene (Felicity Mason) is illuminated by a sickly fluorescent light in her local bank. A montage of people fishing, playing cricket and shopping is shown, and the lighting and pace of the film place this as a sleepy, economically run down environment. The colour of these sequences is important – the greenish tinge of the bank marks the place as unpleasant and unhealthy, while the bright, over-exposed exterior hints at the heat the town is experiencing. The actual creation of the Zombies (by a meteor) is presented as horrific and blackly comic, with a little old lady (punched through by a shard of meteorite) rising to rip off the head of an anxious enquirer. The town as infective state is a key thematic device, in that Rene’s attempted economic escape, which turns into a battle for survival, is reiterated time and time again. In this, *Undead* offers a self-aware understanding of the tropes of the Zombie film – infection, escape, and survival – but innovates markedly for such a low budget, first time production. It is also arguably referring to popular ‘Hollywood’ conventions in the use of the action sequences and the textual references to Romero’s Zombie films, while relying on stereotyped characterisation in order to mock Australian identity – after Rene has dispatched a large number of Zombies, as a alternative hero to the masculine survivalist, Marion (Mungo McKay) an Australian flag flutters to the ground behind her.
‘Normality’, the quiet town, and the confined spaces of the infection as opposed to the open spaces of Australian freedom of movement as seen in *The Cars That Ate Paris* have been overturned. *Undead* therefore stands poised between Hollywood and Australia, in the manner argued as characterising ‘second’ cinema, but it does so knowingly, drawing on a tradition of black comedy and hyper-violence that could be held as a particularly Australian – and importantly, New Zealand – horror genre trope.

While Australian film commands much greater critical attention than New Zealand film, New Zealand still offers a cinema that has become characterised since the late 1970s as “a uniquely strange and dark film industry”. The 1995 documentary *Cinema of Unease* also clarifies that while filmmakers and writers used the new space of expression to combat dull parochialism, many also turned to the influence from American B-movies to express their contempt for a repressive society. This is in the context of a film industry, which as Roger Horrocks explains, is fragile in the extreme:

> Why? Because it’s best directors are continually head hunted by Hollywood and its best actors and producers pursue better career prospects in Australia. No New Zealand Government has ever given film or television the level of support that is customary in Australia. There are no tax breaks and no public cinemas… New Zealand has one of the lowest levels of local content of any country in the world.

As such, the minimal amount of horror film production from New Zealand is easily explicable. What is perhaps surprising is that a New Zealand film director has become noted for his addition to the Zombie genre, albeit in one of his earliest films. Peter Jackson like many other New Zealand filmmakers, has made the transition to Hollywood, most recently in his epic *Lord of the Rings* films (which features Zombie-like creatures in the second and third films), but began his career by consciously reworking the use of the monstrous body in American horror tropes. This is not to claim that he instigated New Zealand Zombie films – the earliest use of a mindless, controlled being can be seen within David Blyth’s *Death Warmed Up* (1984) that *Variety* characterised as “surreal art deco punk, with dollops of action and blood”. Kim Newman’s review of the film was much more measured – after noting the “film’s sick-comic undertone” he argued that in relation to Zombie film: “it has nothing to add”. While the
narrative is confused, relying on violence rather than coherent characterisation, we can argue, as does Lawrence McDonald, that Blyth amongst other directors was attempting to exploit the enormous potential for international and local audiences by “working out their obsessions in exploitation genres”. This is apparent in Jackson’s earliest work, starting with Bad Taste (1988) and Meet the Feebles (1990), but reached its fullest expression in Braindead (1993). Jackson also refused to “take it (the Zombie genre) seriously”, but uses the format of a black comedy to invert the expectations not only of Zombie film, but also to criticise the ‘comfortable’ parochialism of the 1950s. References to a comfortable colonial past litter the opening sequences of Braindead, with footage of the Queen and the British national anthem playing preceding the actual narrative. Jackson then uses this suburban, colourful mise en scène to unleash horrors within a repressive middle class home. This then allows a space for the shock and comedy of juxtaposition, but also to display controlling mother figures, notably Lionel’s mother (Elizabeth Moody). By extension, this can also be applied to a metaphorical mother figure, in the shape of the Queen. Karl Quinn notes that ‘Mum’ in the film plays a “monarchic matriarch”, and given Jackson’s use of the film footage of the Queen, as well as the moment when Lionel (Timothy Balme) turns the Queen’s portrait to the wall, there is arguably a symbolic discussion of controlled regard. In this, Jackson is revoking the 1950s sociological concept of the importance of motherhood, but is also indicating the strength of unfettered relationships – questionably a reflection on New Zealand’s colonial past and ‘dull parochialism’. These interpretations exist as an undercurrent to the overt horrors and comedy Jackson engages in, which negate Newman’s dismissal of Zombie comedy previously: Braindead is a key innovation in the ‘Zombie comedy’ film and the sub-genre. Jackson contrasts between repressed normality (the living) and the transgressive, spirited undead. As Jackson elaborates when interviewed for Cinéfantastique:

“I didn’t want the zombie to be the bad guy, always chasing the good guy”, said Jackson. “I chose to make the mother a zombie so Lionel can still relate to her despite the terrible things she’s doing to him and the monster she is turning into. It takes him until the end of the movie to realise she’s a crazed creature and not his mother anymore”.
It is arguable that by challenging the standard Zombie film genre motifs – the threat to the familial space from outside which then becomes internal, the emphasis away from gendered Zombies – Jackson is placing the Zombies as comedic extensions of human behaviour, apparent in his treatment of the fractured undead body.

This begins in the depiction of the initial infection of Lionel’s mum, with its presentation of infective fluids and appendage loss. By placing this in the context of a lunch attended by another couple and Lionel, Jackson explicitly places consumption and infection against social expectation and behaviour. Throughout the film this idea of attempting to control excess recurs – the guests at Uncle Les’s party gorge food and alcohol, an action mirrored by the Zombies when they appear. Excess becomes a definition of the infective undead, and of the living’s response to them in the bloody dispatching of the infected party. This is what has marked Braindead as a transgressive and innovative text, in that the bodily violence it offers is a response to the hyper-violence of late 70s and 80s Zombie films: by pastiching the violence offered by and to the Zombies, Jackson explicitly foregrounds the importance of the body, as both a holder of comedic and symbolic meaning.

Braindead’s use of gore marks it as a turning point in Zombie cinema, but reportedly very little censorship was applied to the film – Starburst reported the comment by the British censor James Ferman in 1993 that Braindead was passed uncut because “The film is a comedy. I couldn’t take it seriously”. As such, the film indicates the Zombie genres own self–reflexivity at this historical point, notably taken from American texts, but marks itself as a national text through Jackson’s pastiche of conformity and colonialism within New Zealand.

Such national considerations are less evident in one recent New Zealand Zombie film. Craig Godfrey’s Back From the Dead (1997). A video production, it indicates fan interest in the presentation of the shattered body, evidenced by the films reliance on effects rather than a considered plot. The same cannot be said of Ben Steinbeck and Michael J Asquith’s Zombie Movie (2005). Another independent short film, released briefly through American television, the narrative focuses on three ‘bogans’ (a pejorative term for lower class individuals that has a similar usage to the term ‘white trash’ in America) who are trapped in a car during a Zombie outbreak. The opening sequence makes much use of
Romero’s use of media reports to clarify the context of the film, but the situation of the three friends again links closely to the previous concerns with masculinity, freedom of movement and black comedy seen in Australian and New Zealand Zombie film, which is also repeated in the most recent New Zealand production *Black Sheep* (Jonathan King, 2006).

This is not to claim an assiduously defined identity for Australasian film. As this chapter has shown, from Mexican to Australian cinema there has been a double consciousness within the respective film industries to be part of, and separate to the global dominance of ‘Hollywood’ and to a lesser extent Europe. This situation may or may not be applicable to the film market that is problematically defined as “East Asian Cinema”. The geographical uncertainty of the term is marked, and as a blanket term for a diverse range of regional film production, the term bears marked connotations of Edward Said’s critique on how the ‘Orient’ was constructed by western commentators, to promote “the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’) and the strange (the Orient, the East, ‘Them’)”. This is evidenced in Patrick Galloway’s personal evaluation of Asian ‘dark’ cinema in his text *Asia Shock*:

> Comparing what’s on the menu with Western fare, there’s no escaping the conclusion that the Asian stuff is far more intense…What is it about Asian dark cinema that makes it so deeply dark, so intrinsically transgressive?

The ‘transgression’ here is in the mind of the western viewer – it is arguable whether the same texts are as shocking in their country of production. That Galloway feels the need to explain the differences in Asian cinema to a western audience indicates the current popularity of horror texts from this region.

Critical interest in East Asian cinema is marked in terms of histories of those production centres that have held mutual productions with the U.S and Britain – Hong Kong cinema being an example of this, as well as studies of established national cinemas and the breadth of writing on Japanese film testifies to its established history and accessibility to western audiences.

*The ‘Other’ Zombie? East Asian Zombie film.*
This recent critical interest was formed as the result of connecting economic, political and reception factors. Galloway positions 1997 as a pivotal year for East Asian film markets, noting a confluence of economic factors: the East Asian financial crisis of 1997/8, the handover of Hong Kong from its colonial holders Great Britain back to mainland China.\(^5\) This view simplifies a market that had already formed close links with western film markets, offering cheaper production facilities and personnel than established North European and American facilities. It also disregards the close interest established in Asian film product (notably Japanese anime, films from noted directors such as Mizoguchi Kenji, Kurosawa Akira, Chen Kaige, and the Hong Kong action films of the 70s and 80s) from western audiences who actively sought these texts as cult products. Larger film markets beyond mail order video and samizdat fan lending responded to this interest quickly, as part of a historical Hollywood response to potential markets both at home and abroad. As Christina Klein argues:

> Foreign audiences have always been important to Hollywood, but their relative value to the studios has fluctuated. From the 1910s through 1941 they generated about 35 percent of the studios' film rental income...that figure rose to about 50 percent in the 1960s and early 1970s... and then dropped back to about 35 percent again in the early 1980s...Foreign earnings began to climb in the mid-1980s and in 1994 they topped 50 percent...While foreign film rentals have dipped below domestic earnings since 1999, Hollywood today remains heavily dependant on overseas audiences.\(^5^4\)

So the influence of ‘Hollywood’ is a two-sided one, importing and exporting key creative personnel, ideas and themes between American, European and Asian film markets. To what extent this influences horror, and specifically the Zombie film, is the focus of this section. Historically, the strongest link between ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ markets lay with the former colony of Hong Kong, positioned culturally, economically and geographically between Mainland China and the rest of the world.

*Hong Kong Horror*

This split identity is referenced within most studies of Hong Kong cinema, with Jenny Kwok Wah Loh arguing that the division between Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland Chinese cinema was characterised by differing approaches to
depicting authority, and a split depiction of what constitutes a ‘good’ person. She finishes her assessment with the assertion that: “Although the Hong Kong films are satirical towards tradition and are apparently Westernised, they are still fundamentally Chinese”.  

It should be noted that Mainland Chinese cinema does not evidence a detailed history of horror film production after the rise of the ‘Communist’ regime, despite a rich literary tradition of supernatural texts, which can be attributed to a policy of treating supernatural matter as “officially taboo”. As such, there are no indications that contemporary Horror film production exists within Mainland China. Taiwanese film, in comparison, does have a history of horror film production, though as A. L Huang notes, the creation of ghost films in the 1950s happened “somewhat underground” as a result of strict censorship from Chinese communist authority, and only emerged as a popular genre following the success of Hong Kong horror films. The strongest area of Cantonese language horror film was therefore based in Hong Kong, free of the restrictive cultural rulings of Mainland China. While most histories note the surge in popularity of horror film in the 1980s, little attention is paid to previous Hong Kong horror texts. We have already noted the Shaw/Hammer co-production Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires in 1973, and this forms the basis for most discussions charting Hong Kong horror film and its hybridity in using both Chinese and western concepts of what constitutes the horrific, although Cantonese film had depicted horrific tales before this.

This ‘hybrid sensibility’ also marks the depictions of the cinematic Zombie before the “horror boom” of the 1980s, with the Shaw Brothers produced Gou hun jiang tou (Black Magic 2, Neng Hua Ho, 1976). The Zombies in this are the product of a black magician, who controls dead bodies by means of nails in the Zombies heads. Their rapid decomposition, indeed their vulnerability, places them firmly within Chinese imaginings of the undead. This is continued in I-Jung Hua’s Wu long tian shu zhao ji gui (Kung Fu Zombie, 1982). It should be noted that these texts are relying upon mixed genres: where horror incorporates other elements borrowed from kung-fu, comedy, thrillers, science-fiction, melodrama and the opera film… Mobilising indigenous sources from legends, folklore and the supernatural and mixing them with different Western devices of
narrativity, this heterodoxy makes the genre a showcase for Hong Kong cinema’s East-West identity.59

This mix of different cultural concepts and signifiers is clear within these early Hong Kong Zombie films: Wu long tian focuses on the attempts at reincarnation of a criminal, who is using Zombies to attack the hero over a dispute. While the predominant focus of the film is in the fight scenes, the entire concept of the Zombie is carefully linked to Chinese superstition – they are raised by a Black magician, souls can be transported from body to body, and as Stephen Teo notes:

The rule of pragmatism which guides Chinese thinking in matters of the afterlife requires that one’s physical, human shape be kept intact for reincarnation and for the wheel of life to keep on revolving. The Chinese preference for cutting off one’s head as the ultimate form of capital punishment takes this thinking into account.60

As such, the resuscitation of a corpse is conceivable within Chinese concepts of the undead, though it should also be noted that the trained ‘expert’ can dispatch them easily through kung-fu, prayer, and in notable cases, holding your breath. This remarkable concept is introduced within the film text Geung si sin sang (Mr. Vampire, Ricky Lau, 1985). The translated title is misleading – as Teo notes, the term ‘vampire movies’ was started by Hong Kong publicists to engage potential Western audiences. A more accurate translation would be the term jiangshi dianying or ‘cadaver movies’.61 As such, these can be seen as entirely Chinese created monsters, which owe much to the Zombie-like figures seen in previous films. Like the earlier texts, Geung si uses differing aspects of genres to broaden the film’s appeal, notably action and comedy sequences, but responds within the film to encapsulate a differing portrayal of the undead as both humorous and threatening. This is partially signified through the “hopping corpses”, dressed in Manchu era costumes, led by a Taoist priest to a final resting ground. The corpses are threatening, following the western Vampire genre conventions of actively seeking living victims to drain off life energy. But this is where most comparisons end. They are not destroyed, but placated, and led to a new burial ground. In this respect for ancestors and the dead is upheld. Therefore Audrey Yue’s comment that the ‘vampire’ films display an “ambivalent milieu”, part western, part Chinese, part modern, part traditional
can be open to interpretation. Arguably, these are hybrid monsters that relate far more clearly to Chinese folklore and previous films than western cinematic conventions. This may account for the spate of additions to the ‘cadaver movie’ after the popularity of Geung si sin sang up to the mid 1990s, though as Stephen Teo notes, the ‘hopping’ corpse had been used in previous film texts, notably Mao Shan Jianshi Quan (The Spiritual Boxer Part 2, Lau Kar-Leong, 1979) and Gui Da Gui (Encounters of the Spooky Kind, Sammo Hung, 1980).

The possibility of melding differing genres within one film text also offered producers a method of enticing mixed audiences. Commentators on Hong Kong horror at this time also point to another factor, which may partially explain the sudden rise in ‘cadaver movies’ as a means of expressing ambiguity over the onset of transition back to China, as Teo argues:

> The theme of reincarnation in Hong Kong’s cinema may be read also as a way of dealing with the fundamental hybridity of Hong Kong’s situation, caught between the modern worlds of both Western capitalism and Chinese ‘communism’ on the one hand, and the abstract nationalism invoking a older, vaguer notion of Chineseness on the other.

This ambiguity perfectly matches the figure of the Chinese Zombie, ignored in most commentaries on Zombie film precisely because of its hybrid form.

The ‘hopping corpse’/Zombie reappears throughout popular horror films such as Sinnu I Yauwan (A Chinese Ghost Story, Ching Siu-Tung, 1987) as well as the controlled re-animated corpses used in earlier kung-fu films – Zombie vs. Ninja (Godfrey Ho Jeung Keung, 1989) being a case in point. A more thoughtful approach to issues of reincarnation appeared alongside the ‘cadaver movies’ in the early to mid 90s, relying not on action sequences or comedy, but a discussion of responsibility and humanity. Er yue san shi (February 30/ The Day That Doesn’t Exist, Wellson Chin and Danny Ko, 1995) follows two interlinked tales of men linked by a car crash. One, unknowingly a Zombie, returns to his girlfriend, while another is reincarnated in another body. As David Bordwell notes, the film positions both “as monsters preying on innocence, but the second tale becomes morally complex by punishing the truck driver for his selfish disregard of his family”.

This restrained narrative stands as an antidote to the established narrative uses of gore and violence established by the introduction of a new rating for Hong Kong films in the late 1980s termed “Category III”.

Intended to define and isolate
adult material, following a rise in pornographic film, the category also became applied to certain horror and film texts, notably the films Tony Williams categorises as “dystopian” texts dealing with “capitalist exploitation and a supposedly primitive mode of cannibalism”.

These texts, notably *Baat sin faan dim ji yan yuk cha siu baau* (*The Untold Story*, Anthony Wong, 1993) and *Yi boh laai beng duk* (*Ebola Syndrome*, Herman Yau, 1996), explore the underside of Hong Kong’s status as a wealthy capital, using gory narratives of infection, whether in terms of disease or violence, that permeates the society in which they take place. This may account for the shift from the overtly Chinese Zombie film narratives which use traditional supernatural elements in the mid 1990s to a Zombie more closely related to the primary infective motif of George Romero’s Zombie films, particularly in the film text *Sang dut sau shut* (*Bio-Zombie*, Wilson Yip Wai Shun, 1998). An infected fluid disguised as a soft drink turns a man into a Zombie, after being hit by a car and deposited in a mall by two teenage employees. Their attempts to survive in a Zombie-infested mall are an obvious homage to Romero, while there are visual references to the video game *House of The Dead*. This is a horror film divorced from the traditional narrative patterns of Chinese horror, placing itself firmly in modern Hong Kong, but the need to attain audiences (both home and abroad) ensures that the mixing of genres within the film is a direct descendant of previous Hong Kong horror films: a social satire, a black comedy, an action film and a gory horror. The same concept of mixed genres applies to the film *Sheng hua te jing zhi sang shi ren wu* (*Bio-Cops*, Wai-Man Cheng, 2000). This film positions an American led experiment on withstanding pain as the direct cause of a CIA agents infection. The obvious concerns over American global expansion (the experiments, the CIA agents trip to Hong Kong and his ex-Chinese girlfriend) are sidelined with a focus on fight and action sequences, while the inclusion of Triad fights and Zombies is also a reflection of the popularity of true-crime and gangster narratives within Hong Kong cinema of the late 1980s and 1990s.

These two films indicate a gradually changing focus for Hong Kong horror film. While the industry had remained relatively healthy throughout the 90s, several factors were gradually forcing a reduction in overall film production, and a sharp drop in category III films. The major crises were partially as a result of the
Asian Economic Crisis of 1997/8, which led to a drop in attendance at the new multiplex cinemas that charged more for tickets, and had taken precedence over smaller cinemas. The large numbers of production companies attempting to gain dwindling regional audiences were then forced to cut back production, focusing purely on Chinese audiences. At the same time, a reliance on formulaic product – remakes, sequels and the ever-present hybrid genre films – were increasingly unpopular. The huge trade in pirated videos also damaged a fragile film economy.69

But while the Hong Kong and Chinese Zombie films faltered, other horror texts emerged from East Asian countries attempting to create their own film industries against the market dominance of Japan and Hong Kong. The East Asian financial crisis offered younger filmmakers from differing cultural backgrounds an exhibition space for their own interpretations of regional supernatural creatures and the undead, in a low-budget environment. In a sense, these texts act as both a proclamation of regional identity and culture, against what Grady Hendrix describes as Hong Kong’s deep suspicion of other Asian countries in popular Hong Kong horror film:

> Thailand is inevitably a place you return from with a blood curse. Japan is a quasi-fascist military state. And Mainland China is home to ruthless, criminal hillbillies, occupying the same psychic space as the American South does in Hollywood horror movies: the place where the stupid inbreds want to kill you.70

The space created by Hong Kong’s film industry crisis offered an opportunity to rebut these stereotypes – but also raised the possibility of reaching wider global audiences. The East Asian Zombie within horror film could potentially occupy a new cultural space.

**Nepal, Thailand, and South Korea**

This space was still dominated by the need to appeal to regional audiences, and therefore the history of other East Asian Zombie films (excepting Japanese productions which we will turn to shortly) are scattered and brief. This is partially a reflection of the double cultural connotations of the undead within Asian film texts, where ghosts can manifest themselves as bodies that appear alive, but are also vengeful spirits. The Zombie as a western audience would
recognise it is, as we saw with the earlier Hong Kong Zombie films, not always applicable in terms of defining this cinematic monster. It should also be noted that market domination by China and Japan, alongside differing histories of political repression and economic hardship, have impeded the development of an established horror film industry until relatively recently in most smaller East Asian countries. For example, horror films from Cambodia and indeed the overall Cambodian film industry were restrained by Khmer Rouge control and the eventual genocide. Even recent independent low budget horror films such as Nieng Arp (Lady Vampire Kam Chanty, 2005) that proved popular in Thailand are still viewed with suspicion:

> Ghost movies are not educational nor are they beneficial to society, but are simply there to horrify, to give unrealistic dreams, and aspirations to Cambodians, especially the youth, by making them believe in superstition, gods, and spirits.\(^\text{71}\)

This critical view of horror may also explain why many Cambodian features are small and independently budgeted (or co-produced), as the institutional frameworks are not in place for either a supported national cinema or a prolific commercial cinema, given the historical dominance of other countries. The horror films of Singapore and South Vietnam are also testament to this - notably in the production of Muoi: The Legend of A Portrait (Tae-Kyeong Kim, 2007), the first rated film in South Vietnam which benefited from South Korean investment and distribution beyond its home country. Even countries with an established history of horror film production have significantly failed to find a market beyond their home audience, restricting the availability of films for critics – as Mauro Feria Tumbocon Jr. notes in his case study of Filipino horror film, this has led to a perceived lack of critical engagement with smaller countries of production.\(^\text{72}\) The recent case of the Nepalese film Kagbeni (Bhusan Dahal, 2008) advertising for foreign distribution on its website acts as an indicator of this.\(^\text{73}\) This is despite adulatory reviews: “Given its inane mediocrity and crass imitation of Bollywood, anything would be better than Nepal’s pubescent film industry. But even by international standards, Kagbeni is a handsome movie”.\(^\text{74}\)
In comparison, those smaller East Asian countries that have established commercial links with larger countries, Japan, Hong Kong, or the U.S, have fared better in terms of stronger film economies and distribution of films. In the case of Thailand, the film industry is relatively strong, although dominated by foreign imports. The production of horror films is also an extended one, although texts until relatively recently visualised legends of the phi pop or liver eater, and the retelling of the famous love/ghost story of Mae Nak Phra Kanong.75

Zombie films are limited to occasional productions, the earliest featuring the ‘hopping corpse’ established in Hong Kong film. Rotar Ru-Tar’s Ginseng King (1989) is a confused but lively fairytale, with a small boy seeking help from a tree god (the titular Ginseng King) to cure his mother and aid him to destroy a Nazi hopping corpse. A more coherent use of the returning dead occurs in Bangkok Haunted (Oxide Pang Chun, Pisut Praesangeam, 2001) an anthology of horror stories recounted by three women in a Bangkok bar. The second tale focuses on the sexual desire of a young woman, which leads her to use an oily love potion to secure the man of her dreams leading to a chilling dénouement. It should be noted again that the concept of the undead within these texts allows the ability to switch bodies and souls, an ambivalent concept of undeath that makes classifying such a creature as an Asian Zombie difficult. This is unlike the recent action narrative Khun krabii hiiroh (SARS Wars, Taweewat Wantha, 2004) where a new strain of the SARS virus from Africa is accidentally released in an apartment block in Thailand. While this narrative is not strikingly different from previous containment/escape narratives of Zombie film, notably those from Hong Kong cinema and before, the concept of the ‘foreign’ infection should be noted, as the same premise was used in Yi boh laai beng duk (1996), Sang dut sau shut (1998) and Sheng hua te jing zhi sang shi ren wu (2000). In all cases, the infection originates from outside the home country, and is released within it. Given the contemporary relevance of this during the 2002-2004 period of the SARS crisis, it should be noted that Khun krabii hiiroh is replying to a shared experience of fear experienced by those Asian countries exposed to the SARS virus. The quarantined building, face masks, the accidental infection; were events noted within news reports and histories of the SARS epidemics in
Therefore while the film is intended as a popular genre piece drawing on western Zombie film convention, the concerns it addresses are clearly regional and specific, considering the interrelated economies and histories of East Asian countries.

The final regional area discussed in this section is perhaps the most successful in terms of its recent horror film output. South Korean horror cinema has experienced a boom within the last ten years, both influencing and being influenced by previously established horror film productions in other countries. In terms of Zombie film production, its history is very limited: the 1981 film Goeshi (Strange Dead Bodies, Beom-gu Kang) offers Zombies reanimated by an insecticide. As Jamie Russell notes, the film is both a remake of Jorge Grau’s 1974 film Non si deve profanare il sonno dei morti and a consideration of biological weaponry, which is “sadly undeveloped”. The narrative of Oigyeingwa Kongkong Gangshi (The Aliens and Kong Kong Zombie, Seung –ho Ahn, 1989) revolves around a child Zombie protagonist. The inclusion of child Zombies in both texts offers an interesting diversion from the Zombie as a creature of fear – referring back to Ginseng King, these films indicate an ambiguity over defining the dead as intrinsically harmful.

A definable taxonomy of South Korean Zombie film is difficult, as we saw for the other countries above, purely because the concept of the undead allows for a multiplicity of readings. Within South Korean film production as a whole horror is not a separate genre – as Kim So-Young argues, “Korean cinema is becoming the liminal space of apparitions”, which can occur in any film text, whether presented as horror or not. This situation is ignored by the application of the term “K-Horror”, meant as a sly acknowledgment of its closeness to “J-Horror” or the Japanese Horror productions of the early 1990s onwards. As Kyu Hyun Kim and others note, this term ignores the history of Korean texts in favour of a marketable, contemporary history linked to stronger film industries. These film industries are the U.S and Japan, historically two of the dominating film economies of East Asian cinema. Their inter-relationship, and the resulting re-interpretation of the figure of the Zombie form the last part of our discussion. A diverse range of presentations has had implications for the cinematic Zombie – especially when we consider the influence of Japanese video game history.
**The Japanese Zombie**

With Hong Kong horror films the changing nature of international film markets contrasted with extended traditional depictions of the horrific, resulting in hybridised film texts. Japanese cinema is no different, in that in Japanese literature, art and plays, horror texts have an extended history. Of particular note are the stylised Noh Category IV plays which focus on *Kyojo-mono* (‘mad woman plays’), *Kurui-mono* (‘frenzy plays’) and also draw in aspects of *Shuramon* (ghostly vengeance) narratives; as Richard J. Hand notes, all display aspects of style and presentation known as the *zankoku no bi*: the aesthetic of cruelty. The plays that feature the character of the *Onryō* (a vengeful spirit) are particularly relevant. *Yotsuya Kaidan* (*Yotsuya Ghost Story*) a bitter story of betrayal and revenge is one of the most popular horror texts in Japan, being adapted into film over 12 times. The key feature of this narrative is the vengeful figure of Oiwa, poisoned by her faithless husband. Her ability to be both a physical manifestation, bearing the scars of the poison, and a bodiless spirit indicates that the treatment of the undead body differs markedly from western texts that generally position monsters as either/or constructs: either the physical monster or the bodiless entity. This similar treatment of liminal states can also be arguably found in key horror film productions throughout Japanese film history, such as *Onibaba* (Shindô Kaneto, 1964) and *Kwaidan* (Kobayashi Masaki, 1964). As Phillip Brophy argues when discussing the *Gojira* films, Japanese sci-fi/fantasy cinema embraces the human figure within the cinematic frame rather than denies its status just because of the photographic medium’s propensity to be seemingly more ‘realistic’ (which itself is less relevant to Japanese visuality and its calligraphic base). This ‘theatricalised unreality’ marks many Japanese horror texts, even those placed within a recognisably contemporary setting. These are an overt display of the body as both a social and spiritual construct, displayed through texts that are less concerned with ‘realism’ as with the significance of using the body in differing ways. Depending on the context of the individual film, this offers various interpretations as to the meaning inherent in the returning dead in film, and how representations have changed over time.
Jay McRoy makes the blunt assertion that “Horror cinema has long been a component of the Japanese film industry”, a statement that is partially borne out through the noted critical and popular success of such texts as the *Gojira* (*Godzila*) series (1959-1972) and individual horror films. Horror films have had a presence throughout Japanese cinema history, as part of the established main studio’s output, however these were limited to occasional films or highly popular serial films. But this does not account for the contemporary prominence in Japanese Horror films due, in part, to changing production contexts and audience demographics. The production of horror films has notably risen in the last twenty years, but in a more competitive market. As Darrell William Davis notes, shifts in cinema audience numbers and differing media’s popularity have influenced cinema as a whole:

> It would be a mistake to overestimate the market for popular Japanese cinema, relative to that of other media. The film market is dwarfed by the so-called Big Four: television, newspapers, magazines and radio…in 2000, the Big Four together brought in Y3, 971 billion. The smallest is radio, at Y207 billion (3.4 percent of total media revenue). That year movies earned just Y171 billion, including imports …the popularity of Japanese cinema is highly dependant on synergies with television and other moving image media.

These synergies involved the popularisation of horror narratives on television, notably the *J-Movie Wars* series for television that inaugurated the career of horror director Nakata Hideo. Other examples include the *Ju-On (The Curse)* series, (2000 +) directed by Shimizu Takashi. Originally shot on video, the films are notable for their restrained use of locales, effects and sound, placed within a production context originating in television. The short films *Katasumi* and *444444444* (Shimizu Takashi) were shown as sections of the television movie *Gakkō no kaidan G (School Ghost Stories, 1998)* produced by Uemura Yasuyuki. In *Katasumi* we can begin to note difficulties in isolating the Japanese Zombie as a concept. The creature in *Katasumi* is recognisably human, though physically distorted and bloodied, emitting groaning death rattles. The killed schoolgirl also displays these features, though the presentation of the older female monster originates from a traditional figure of fear within Japanese horror: the *Onryō*. 
It should also be noted that the Japanese concept of the flesh eating undead is not a recent fictional construct; within Japanese Buddhist mythology the *Jikininki* or ‘human-eating ghosts’ bear many similarities to the western concept of the ghoul in their presentation as impure undead humans.\(^9^9\) However, the use of Zombies, or indeed *Jikininki* inspired creatures appear relatively recently within Japanese horror film, which as Davis argues was transformed by television joint production ventures.\(^9^0\) This factor should not be ignored, as horror and *jidaigeki* (period films) films had been limited to television production after dwindling cinema audience attendance, and the majority of horror films during and after this period are marked by low production values.

Earlier appearances of Zombies within Japanese film are hard to trace, though Fukasaku Kinji’s 1981 film *Makai Tensho (Samurai Resurrection)* offers a clearly defined returning dead *samurai* in a *jidaigeki* film narrative, since remade by Hirayama Hideyuki in 2003.\(^9^1\) As with Hong Kong film, Japanese directors attempted to reclaim audiences with mixed genres that promised some narrative familiarity. The rise in film production during the early 1990s challenged this, and also instigated a concerted period of Japanese Zombie film. The potential influence of western Zombie narratives, alongside the previous Zombie action narratives of Hong Kong cinema should not be discounted when contextualising these productions, but it is notable from the outset of this production period of the 90s that national concerns and representations are offered in texts which are uniformly low-budget. In Komizu Kazuo’s *Batoru Garu (Battle Girl/ Living Dead in Tokyo Bay*, 1992) the Zombies are caused by a meteor that decimates the city. The initial textual reference here is a close reference to the apocalyptic narratives previously established in Japanese horror film, notably the *daikaiju eiga* (giant monster films) and apocalyptic films. Jay McRoy situates these films as discussing “Dread of mass destruction, mutation and the environmental impact of pollution resulting from rapid industrialisation”.\(^9^2\) The historical significance of mass destruction of Japanese cities during WW2 also finds echoes within these films, offering an overall theme of precarious isolationism and a love-hate dependence on technology as an ongoing filmic concern.\(^9^3\)

Within *Batoru Garu* the heroine must battle through an infected city, dealing with military plans for world domination while hoping to rescue her father. As
Graham Lewis notes, this is within a narrative that does not restrict the lead female to either a romantic or helpless role, and criticises the position of faceless authoritarianism that seeks to profit from misery. This will have particular resonance in a later influential Japanese Zombie text, *Biohazard (Resident Evil, 1996)* that we will discuss towards the end of this chapter. The theme of military/industrial contamination continues throughout Japanese Zombie film, notably *Junk: Shiryo-gari (Junk, Atsushi Muroga, 1999)*, where Zombies are created by a Japanese–American military venture. With the same combination of differing plot elements as seen in previous horror films, (yakuza, teenage criminals, scientists and fight sequences) the narrative is fragmented, relying upon detailed visual effects to portray the Zombies. The same is also true of Takeuchi Tetsuro’s *Wild Zero* (1999), another action narrative featuring a rock band. These texts focus upon displays of power of the living body against repressive structures – abandoned factories, controlling military forces, and the undead. While these films are undoubtedly created as parodies of previous Zombie films (notably Romero’s) in an attempt to participate in the success of Japanese horror film production of the time, there are also larger discussions on guilt and responsibility present. Within all of the texts mentioned, the notion of teamwork and social responsibility in how the body is treated is in the foreground, while the encroaching forces of modern technology and global structures of power – notably American – challenge the stability of the Japanese characters.

Other texts of this period also utilise the Zombie, but are more focused on national representations of life, death and social group formations. Notable amongst these is Miike Takashi’s *Katakuri-ke No Koufuku (The Happiness of the Katakuris, 2001)*, a musical comedy of a dysfunctional family. Zombies (the corpses of their guests who keep accidentally dying at their boarding house) rise to participate in a dance routine, mocking the songs discussion of the family as a social construction. The same unreality pervades Kitamura Ryuhei’s *Versus* (2001), set within a forest that reanimates the dead; in an action film that draws upon yakuza characters endlessly recreating conflicts from past lives. The reincarnation theme of the film indicates again the multiplicity of meanings the body can hold, drawing upon concepts of hell and undeath caused by a continual
need for violence. The Zombies are as violent as the ‘humans’, who themselves are fated to live forever. Versus, Katakuri-ke and Junk evidence a melding of genre characteristics from action, comedy and horror genres, but are still offering a discussion of social groups and their respective behaviours. This is also apparent in texts that portray younger protagonists, notably the undead schoolgirls of Stacy (Tomomatsu Naoyuki, 2001). While Norman England’s brief claim that Japan’s “populace wilfully divides itself into self-labelling groups” is a problematic generalisation, the attention paid to Japanese adolescents in film has become much more prominent within contemporary horror texts, indicating concerns over a pessimistic view of maturity and society.96 A black comedy, Stacy offers a concerted discussion of physical body change and the fear this generates, for the adolescents and society at large. The representation of the girls as simultaneously innocent and diseased is an uncomfortable revoking of socio-sexual imagery associated with the standard school uniform of the schoolgirls, indicating innocence contaminated by life experience. Indeed, this use of primarily female monsters indicates an important shift in the cinematic Zombie’s portrayal. Japan is notable for its prominent use of both female protagonists and Zombies in film texts, from Batoru Garu onwards. The prominence of the Onryō Kayako in the Ju-On series also testifies to the power of the female body in Japanese horror, particularly given shifting familial roles in contemporary Japanese society. As Susan Napier notes, this may indicate the socially symbolic use of the vengeful female monster, when Japanese men are undergoing a crisis in gender roles.97 This concept of societal breakdown is also prominent in horror texts that position viral contamination of social structures, whether physical, emotional or technological, as a key thematic factor in contemporary Japanese horror. This is as true of the Zombie texts, including recent productions such as Jigoku Koshien (Battlefield Baseball, Yamiguchi Yudai, 2003) and Tokyo Zombie (Sato Sakichi, 2005), as other horror films that are considered ‘mainstream’ in terms of budgets and production facilities, notably the Ring series (Nakata Hideo, 1999-2000) Kairo (Pulse, Kurosawa Kiyoshi, 2001) and Jisatsu Sākuru (Suicide Club, Sono Sion, 2002). The concept of social infection, leading towards the breakdown of society, can arguably be considered the driving narrative force behind many of the horror films that comprised the ‘J-Horror’ boom. Concerns over the social
body and national state of Japan has been apparent in monster films and horror film texts post WW2 and contemporary fears still revolve around Japan as a country that is positioned as economically powerful, yet open to influence from other countries, notably the west, as Marilyn Ivy amongst others has noted. The Japanese Zombie film exemplified this concept in a period of film and cross-media production characterised by a merging of media forms and exhibition, indicated by the popularity of cable TV, DVD releases and the video game industry.

As Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano argues, this melding in contemporary Japanese film production leaves a “risk adverse environment” which has left film directors outside the major companies: (Toho, Shochiku and Toei) “paradoxically independent as filmmakers, and increasingly dependant on multimedia financing and distribution by the major film companies.” At the same time, this context of low-budgets and the need for distribution may paradoxically account for the surge in Japanese Zombie films as hybrid action, comedy and gore filled texts, as historically the ‘B-movie’ context has proven fertile ground for re-inventions of established horror genres, in all countries of film production. The ‘B-movie’ production context also demands a quick response to changing audience tastes in popular culture – as seen by the ‘Poverty Row’ horror films of America, the European Zombie films of the 70s – and Japanese Zombie films are no different in this respect. While certain directors of Japanese Zombie films have commented on their perception of their texts as oppositional to ‘mainstream’ horror, (not the historical dominance of American texts, but rather the larger budgeted successful “J-Horror” texts that have been selected for extensive foreign distribution) they are still responding to dominant thematic and narrative concerns present in other texts. In the case of most of the Zombie films mentioned above, notably Junk and Versus, the positioning of Zombies as creatures destroyed only by excessive force allows for narratives focusing on active protagonists and the physicality of destruction. But this use of the undead body as a disposable target to re-assert the primacy of the living was apparent in Japanese popular media before the surge in Zombie film production in the late 90s.
Developed by Capcom and created by Shinji Mikami, *Biohazard* (released as *Resident Evil* in western computer game markets, 1996) is a “survival horror” video game centred on a rescue team stranded in a mansion and laboratory filled with Zombies and mutated creatures – results of genetic experimentation by a global business called Umbrella. The *mise en scène* of the game is influenced by both previous video games and also horror films – notably George Romero’s depiction of Zombies - while the narrative of the game is both violent and exploratory, and in terms of drawing influences from cinematic narratives, makes much use of shadows and ‘camera angles’ from which the characters/players view their surroundings.

The restrictive milieu also positions the player as a potential victim, revoking the distanced perspective in cinematic Zombie texts, depending on the player’s choice of view. As Tanya Krzywinska argues, the strength of these game texts relies upon “particular representational capacities”, allowing a vicarious identification traditionally promised by cinematic texts. The appearance of characters as western, mostly white protagonists also indicates that the global market for the game was considered in positioning the setting of the game within a fictional American/western geographical context, a factor which bears interesting parallels when compared with previous co-productions of Zombie film narratives, such as the Italian Zombie films that offered exoticism and American settings to position the threat away from the home audiences, to potentially also attract international audiences.

There are several interesting thematic concerns that indicate *Biohazard*‘s debt to and development of Zombie film narratives. Firstly, the integration of the fear experience applied to a character the player identifies with, noted in some previous Zombie film audiences (notably *Night of the Living Dead*’s audience mentioned by Russell Streiner in Chapter 4), indicates a level of audience emotional connection with entrapment scenarios. These form the basis for most Zombie film narratives. Secondly, the positioning of a global corporation as an instigator of disease hints at an emerging critique of globalisation without control, invading the national space and the personal body. The ongoing *Biohazard* series (currently 16 games) also make a point of moving the setting from America to Europe and Africa in their most recent developments. In this the idea of shifting global definitions of threat and infection are clearly
positioned, centred on a critique of global genetic businesses: features that re-emerged with greater clarity in contemporary Zombie films.\textsuperscript{102}

There is a strong case to position the makers of Japanese Zombie films as responding to the popularity for violent entrapment scenarios by utilising a contemporary, globally recognised pattern of entrapment and infection. The Japanese Zombie film then uses these patterns to comment on national concerns and beliefs, which are also indicative of other concerns of East Asian countries: the scarred history of the Pacific countries post WW2 with varying levels of political, economic and biological damage (again referencing the SARS crisis, nuclear destruction and genocide), a multiplicity of religious beliefs that allow for both a spiritual body, a physical body and transmutations between and a level of ancestral reverence within an established familial structure that has only relatively recently been challenged by changing gender roles.

As we have noted previously, within East Asian culture there is a marked lack of a singular didactic belief on the importance of the living body and dead body, compared to Catholic or indeed Protestant traditions. However, given the popularity of Japanese horror within western markets, we must re-position the multiple meanings of the undead body in Japanese horror culture against western expectations – exemplified by Patrick Galloway’s concept of East Asian “transgressive texts” referred to earlier.\textsuperscript{103}

As Laurence C. Bush notes in his attempt to offer an introduction to Asian horror culture, western ‘ethnocentric culture’, the language barrier and “the tendency to defuse horror” present within Asian horror texts has compounded simplistic definitions.\textsuperscript{104} Certainly, commentators on East Asian horror film make constant references to the perceived ‘alternative’ narratives offered in contrast to the American horror film of the 80s and 90s, placing the surge in interest from American distributors down to the vaguely Orientalist concept of ‘difference’ from a jaded western audience.\textsuperscript{105}

But this ignores two vital factors. Firstly, the global film market has existed since the creation of strong national production contexts sought international audiences in the early twentieth century. The contemporary introduction of cheaper filmmaking and distribution has facilitated a culture of easy access to previously isolated national film markets, as Wada-Marciano among others
notes. But this interchange has also facilitated an interchange of cultural and social representations within genre films. Hamish McAlpine, head of Tartan distribution for “Asia Extreme” films argues that:

I don’t think it means filmmakers are homogenising their art. In terms of pop culture we are in fact becoming more and more of a global community, and the new films simply reflect that fact. Then of course that makes it much easier for these cultural products to travel from one world to another.

The use of the term ‘world’ still underlines the concept of a difference in production and reception between east and west as concepts. In the case of Zombie film production historically, both in North America, Europe and Asia, we have noted that the majority of the texts are marked by low production values compared to other, more ‘established’ horror texts. This extends across all periods and regions, indicating that the Zombie film genre is inextricably linked with an aesthetic of ‘cheapness’. We have also noted that these representations have also shifted their portrayal of the undead body from a minor character to a holder of significance – either as a conduit for portrayals of gore to attract an audience, or through displays of violence that fitted with the rise of action films in the late 70s onwards. What must also be noted alongside these narrative choices is that there is a discussion that repeats throughout all Zombie film to a greater or lesser extent: the dual identity of the body as holder of national significance and its potential infection from other cultures resonates throughout Zombie film, regardless of the country of origin.

What the potential threat of infection is has changed historically, evidenced by the changing representations discussed in this chapter. Both the minimal production of Australasian horror and Mexico’s lucha libre films, indeed the majority of the texts discussed here, have responded to a recognisably western concept of the Zombie, with minimal changes to established depictions and characteristics of this undead figure. This is partially accounted for by the cultural ‘closeness’ to American horror texts in Mexico, New Zealand and Australia, the development of the Zombie as a figure of fear at the time, and restricted horror film production that needed to be both attractive to potential distributors outside the country of origin as well as within it.
By contrast, a closer examination of the Asian Zombie indicates a contemporary shift towards large infection narratives that owe their origins to George Romero, but resolutely position global infection and indeed genetic infection as their main thematic concern alongside established cultural contexts. This is not just a rejection of American genre tropes, it is a contemporary acknowledgment of a global community through which terror and disease spread rapidly, facilitated by new social structures and technologies. The ‘viral curse’ in films such as *Ju-On*, (Shimizu Takashi, 2000) *Ringu* (Nakata Hideo, 1999) and *Kairo* (Kurosawa Kiyoshi, 2001) evidence this, alongside the popularity for new media such as video games (*Biohazard* foremost) that also contemplate rapid and disastrous genetic destruction. Ironically, this now positions Asian films as stronger creators of generic convention than American film. The particular success of Japanese horror film and video games in America has led to a spate of releases and remakes that retain and re-interpret established narrative patterns: a mirror image of perceived Hollywood hegemony.108

This shift in narrative dominance, and the rise in independent patterns of production against studio-led films globally has in turn led to a multitude of interpretations of what constitutes a Zombie film. The further fracturing of Zombie narratives that indicate the evolving nature of a global figure of fear is the focus of the next chapter, analysing the peak years of Zombie film production in America, and the resulting narrative patterns of change that are evidenced by contemporary Zombie films of the last ten years.

**An American or Global Zombie? 1968-2008**
In the two previous chapters we noted that a range of market pressures and the supposedly inescapable dominance of American-produced films encouraged various countries to re-utilise the figure of the Zombie. This process of translation was facilitated by several key factors: as Meghan Sutherland notes, the Zombie genre’s “affiliation with a no-frills B-film production-style, and its record of solid returns in the Hollywood mainstream surely contribute to the high concentration of remakes”.¹ This is a persuasive interpretation of the industrial concerns that established the Zombie sub-genre within cinematic history. However, there must also be a consideration of changing production contexts, and the changing thematic and visual deployment of the Zombie to explain its relatively steady appearances in contemporary horror film, inside and outside American markets.

Unlike films that utilise the werewolf, the mummy and Frankenstein’s Monster (to cite key examples of the canon of horror monsters established through the main American studio productions of the 1930s and 40s) the Zombie film, since the early to mid 1970s, has not ceased in terms of production numbers. We have not yet considered how the Zombie, considered an essentially American figure of fear by many commentators, has altered within its own country of origin post-1968. This needs attention, as the current status of Zombie film production is arguably global in terms of industrial and thematic concerns. In order to recognise this fully, we must note how the production context of American horror altered in the 1970s and 80s, leading to a split between independently-financed and studio-financed Zombie films. In turn, this may account for radical shifts in the thematic consideration and deployment of the Zombie, leading to a hyper-conscious genre that reacts quickly to shifting global tensions as well as conventions established within the sub-genre by Romero and others, as I will show.

Evolution? The American Zombie film post Night of the Living Dead

To begin this placement of the new American Zombie film, we must return to the film considered as the seminal work that instigated later portrayals of the Zombie. George Romero’s independently financed Night of the Living Dead stands as part of the New American cinema of the late 1960s and 1970s, in
terms of its aesthetic choices and production context. It also heralded a rise in low-budget horror films that in turn encouraged a shift towards graphic portrayals of violence, notably in the films of Tobe Hooper, Wes Craven and later David Cronenberg. Night’s influence however, should be situated in its financial reception alongside its critical reception, noted in Chapter 4. Since its release in 1968, Night has gathered $30 million dollars in domestic and worldwide returns.\(^2\) Dawn of the Dead (1978) continued this trend, with over $40 million returned through worldwide release.\(^3\) Considering the budget for both of these films (approx $114,000 for Night, $1.5 million for Dawn), this continuing financial success indicates popularity that has not diminished.

This popularity was not immediately replicated within other horror films that used the Zombie as a central figure of fear. Night should be considered as a retrospectively influential text, especially when considering the narrative use of Zombies in the years leading up to 1978. Both Steve Beard and Kim Newman argue that the years following Night’s release are characterised by a “sudden epidemic of inferior flesh eating films”, but fail to see that rather than merely replicating Romero’s text, the Zombie films of the early to mid 1970s evidence a wide range of narrative deployments, with differing thematic intentions.\(^4\) Amongst these are John Hancock’s Let’s Scare Jessica To Death (1971), Blood of Ghastly Horror (Al Adamson, 1971) Children Shouldn’t Play with Dead Things (Benjamin Clark, 1972) and Dead People (aka Messiah of Evil, Willard Hyuck, 1973). Both Let’s Scare and Dead People use the undead as unexplained forces within their texts, following the visual styles of the films that rely on inference and shadows to induce unease. As Filmfacts argued at the time, this lyrical approach from low budgeted horror films, notably Let’s Scare makes it difficult to position the creatures within the film as Vampires.\(^5\) Instead the Village Voice noted that “they behave more as if they were zombies from a film like Invasion of the Body Snatchers; rather than attack, they hover menacingly”.\(^6\) In this we can see the same narrative uncertainty as in Herk Harvey’s Carnival of Souls, another low - budgeted independent film. Romero himself shifted from Zombie narratives in his film productions after Night. The Crazies (1973) follows a narrative pattern of escape and besiegement, but within the context of a town poisoned by a chemical spill and quarantined by the military. The victims become insane, attacking accepted social structures through murder,
incest and self-immolation. The links to the ‘instinctual’ Zombies of Night are clear, though the victims are alive. As with Night, the pessimism of the film is notable, and it is made clear that other spills are occurring.

At this point in American Zombie film, narrative uncertainty marks the deployment of the Zombie as a concept, though Bob Clark’s Children Shouldn’t clearly places the undead as vengeful corpses in a film that veers between comedy and terror, written by Alan Ormsby. The Zombie film Deathdream (aka Dead of Night, The Night Andy Came Home, Bob Clark, 1974) an American/Canadian/ British co-production, continues this. In both texts, the Zombies are decaying re-animated corpses, though Deathdream is explicitly an anti-war text, with the main character Andy as a reanimated dead soldier. While Romero’s film Night has been read as an unconscious meditation on Vietnam, Deathdream is explicit in its links to the horrors faced by the soldier, eventually “Taking the war back home”. Indeed, there is a case for the team of Clark and Ormsby to be considered as key producers of American independent Zombie film in the 70s, considering the low budgets available for both Children and Deathdream, ($40,000 and $200,000 respectively) and how they consolidated the concept of the overtly decaying walking corpse. This reputation may be solidified further when we consider that one of the key figures of modern horror make-up and fx, Tom Savini, began his career on Deathdream, before his later works with George Romero. This should be noted, as the use of special effects to further the grotesqueness of horror creatures would shape the directions of American horror into the 90s and beyond.

This was partially due to the higher production values of horror films such as The Exorcist (William Friedkin, 1973), which made a great play of the physical effects of demonic possession. The success of demonic possession texts, at least up until the late 70s and early 80s when ‘slasher’ films rose to prominence, indicates a shift in the narratives of horror film that had previously been dominated by thrillers such as Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960), at least in terms of mainstream horror film production. David Pirie briefly discusses this in Anatomy of the Movies, arguing that:

The general trend in horror movies over the past decade – the financially successful ones at least – has been to accentuate both of
Hitchcock’s ploys. Hence on the one hand, the emphasis on blood and guts, shown with a gratuitous indulgence that is exploitative rather than necessary. And on the other, the persistent attempt to ‘domesticate’ horror, to make it more shocking by decorating traditional themes with current traumas.9

In his analysis of the returns for successful horror films of the 70s, Pirie notes that Night should be included; save for the fact no reliable rental figures were available.10 That there was marked shift towards more overt portrayals of gore should also be noted as changing audience tastes for horror (instigated by the early 70s independent films) moved into mainstream films. However the Zombie sub-genre remained a marginal area of production, compared to the popularity of possession texts. It is therefore not surprising that their narratives shifted between different uses of the Zombie in order to claim an audience. The period between 1974 and 1978 encapsulates this perfectly, with Deathdream as a war-themed reworking of The Monkey’s Paw, while Donald Passmore’s/ Klaus Vetter’s Corpse Eaters (Canada, 1974) attempts to encapsulate a B-film aesthetic. The Dead Don’t Die, (1975 Curtis Harrington) a made for TV film returns to the concept of the wrongly executed criminal, while Garden of the Dead (John Hayes, 1974) sees a resurrected chain gang unleash terror. William Castle’s Shanks (1974) uses Marcel Marceau as a puppeteer controlling dead bodies for fun. Sugar Hill, (Paul Maslansky, 1974) by contrast reworks the concept of Voodoo practices, within the Blaxploitation genre’s narratives of violent revenge. The titular character is a fascinating mix of modern dress and behaviour, in her differing roles as modern woman and vengeful practitioner of voodoo.11 The Zombies are explicitly coded as former slaves and victims of the gangsters, also making an expressive link back to the American origins of the cinematic Zombie. But this link to the popularity of blaxploitation did not continue in other texts. The fragmented approach to using the Zombie body within differing narratives continued. A key example of this shifting portrayal can be found in The Stepford Wives (Bryan Forbes, 1975). In much the same manner that Invasion of the Body Snatchers (Don Siegel, 1956) depicted the fear of conformity for the middleclass American male of the 50s, The Stepford Wives depicts a backlash against the second wave feminist movement, played out in a suburbia where the
titular wives are replaced with robotic clones.\textsuperscript{12} Indeed, the \textit{Films and Filming} review explicitly characterises the film as “the ultimate male chauvinist fantasy”.\textsuperscript{13} This shift in the threat to gender also characterises many of the devil possession and later slasher films of the 70s and 80s, indicating a social concern foregrounded around the American home, a continuation of previous horror film narratives updated to indicate a shift in political and social consciousness.\textsuperscript{14} Kim Newman characterises this thematic change as the birth of the “Hate Generation”, adding that by \textit{Blue Sunshine} (Jeff Lieberman, 1977) the “flower children have become the Living Dead”, a reaction against the supposedly sexually liberated 1960s.\textsuperscript{15} This ‘Hate Generation’ of horror films also instigated the career of David Cronenberg, a Canadian director noted for his portrayal of ‘infective’ narratives. Cronenberg himself places his works as part of the approach to horror that Romero had used in \textit{Night of the Living Dead}, by making his horrors contemporary and focused on the familial and social body.\textsuperscript{16} As Jesse Stommel notes, for Cronenberg the abject nature of the human body is a recurring theme, perhaps most clearly displayed in his first feature film \textit{Shivers} (1975).\textsuperscript{17} In this, repressed and wealthy apartment block inhabitants are gradually contaminated by a parasite that instigates extremely sexual and violent behaviour. In Cronenberg’s films the individual body should be feared as a holder of the potential for transformation and degradation from external infections: themes that are a strong precursor to later Zombie films. As Cronenberg himself states:

\begin{quote}
I don’t think the flesh is necessarily treacherous, evil, bad. It is cantankerous, and it is independent. The idea of independence is the key. It really is like colonialism…the independence of the body, relative to the mind, and the difficulty of the mind accepting what that revolution might entail.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

This division between the socialised brain and concepts of the acceptable body are key to placing the Zombie film within an overall generic development. As several commentators have noted, the growing fascination with ‘body horror’ during the 70s and 80s indicates a shift in audience tastes that recognises and expects to see the fragmentation of the social body as well as the personal one.\textsuperscript{19} Both \textit{Shivers}, and later \textit{Rabid} (Cronenberg, 1977) clearly position the modern body as controlled both by internal desires and external factors, making
infection a key factor in discussing how the split between mind and body is essentially a social definition. This was continued in Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), itself an explicit commentary on the consumerist body.

*Expansion: The American Zombie post Dawn of the Dead*

As already noted for *Night of the Living Dead*, it is necessary to understand that *Dawn* was replying to innovations within other horror films of the time, as well as extending the narrative established in *Night*. *Dawn*’s production context was also markedly improved: Romero could call upon European financing, post-production and distribution, as well as a reputation based on his film work after *Night*. *Dawn of the Dead* performed well with both domestic and foreign audiences, and as mentioned in Chapter 5, was a factor in the rise of Italian gore films. Romero’s studied depiction of gore indicates he was aware of the controversy surrounding explicit violent imagery. But his use of it in *Dawn* is not merely replicating the gaudy black comedy of the EC horror comics. The use of special effects and gore in *Dawn* is also a reaction to wider shifts in horror film production, shown in such ‘mainstream’ productions as *The Exorcist* and through the rise to fame of such effects artists as Tom Savini and Rick Baker. Rick Worland charts the increasing prominence of both artists as instigators of the splatter film’s interest in “its construction of detailed, often breathtaking gross effects of bodily destruction, decomposition or mutation”, claiming that the increase in popularity of these film texts indicates a return to the concepts of grand guignol and the ‘cinema of attractions’ in vivid spectacles.\(^{20}\) This physical focus on the body perfectly matched the Zombie film, given its thematic basis in discussing subjugated and destroyed flesh. In many respects, this marks the shift in American Zombie films towards what we might term the *spectacle of destruction*, a useful definition of the content of these texts. In Zombie films from 1976 onwards until the 1990s, the majority of the films focus on differing portrayals and narrative uses of the Zombie body, within this overall concept of destruction.

Robert Vorshanian’s *The Child* (1976), Max Kalmanowicz’s *The Children* (1980) and Patrick Regan’s *Kiss Daddy Goodbye* (1981) all utilise children as primary controllers of Zombie figures, or as Zombies themselves, re-iterating
the demonic/ possessed child themes of other horror films, notably *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976). Ken Weiderhorn’s *Shock Waves* (1977) utilises Nazi Zombies to menace a pleasure boat. Aquatic undead portrayals also appear in John Carpenters *The Fog* (1979), a vengeance narrative that specifically places a historical anniversary, as a cause for the undead’s return. *Phantasm* by Don Coscarelli (1979), by comparison, is set around a mortuary that revives its undead to be used as slave labour. Rick Worland notes it as a particular example of splatter films where “story and characterisation became secondary” to the visual excess they portray. A similar conclusion can be drawn from Chuck McCrann’s *The Bloodeaters* (aka *Toxic Zombies* 1979), which sees zombified hippies rampaging after their marijuana crop is sprayed by the government while Steve Burkett’s *The Aftermath* (1980) and *The Alien Dead* (Fred Olsen Ray, 1980) both base their premise on infection from space. Of more note is *Dead and Buried* (Gary Sherman, 1981), where the development of the plot from a murder mystery to a paranoid discussion of physical perfection is an example of how the Zombie genre adapts itself to changing narrative structures. In these films, the figure of the Zombie veers between an infected or controlled creation and vengeful corpses, a melding of previous cinematic narratives. The visual effects range from detailed bodily decomposition in *Dawn of the Dead* and *The Fog*, to limited effects relying on whitened skin and fake blood, notably *Shock Waves* and *The Bloodeaters*. In most cases, there is a focus on set pieces of horror that showcase destruction of the body and in the majority of these films destruction is the key narrative drive.

This is also applicable to George Romero’s *Creepshow* (1982) and Sam Raimi’s *The Evil Dead* (1982) which both highlight bodily degradation in their respective texts, while simultaneously using techniques of relief and humour. Romero had already applied brief moments of slapstick in *Dawn* to underline the essential vacuity of the Zombies and their destroyers. Within *Creepshow* he makes this homage to a particular cultural influence more explicit, in a narrative framed by the arguments, destruction and revenge surrounding a young boy’s comic book that displays all the visual signifiers of an EC horror comic of the 1950s. This is narratively achieved through the use of a decomposing ‘host’, a reference to the ‘narrators’ of the horror comics, but also their television
counterparts from the early 1950s onwards, notably in figures like Vampira and the Crypt keeper from *Tales from the Crypt* (1989-1996).

Romero also frames certain shots in bold outlines, mimicking the panels of a comic book, while also utilising coloured filters, lights and extreme camera angles to visually imitate the comics’ bold aesthetic. The content of the film is no different, relying on the narrative vengeance ethos of the 50s horror comics: in *Father’s Day* a tyrannical patriarch returns from the dead to slaughter his equally unappealing family, while *Something to Tide You Over* sees two lovers return from their watery graves to exact revenge. *Creepshow* is also notable in that Stephen King co-wrote and acted within the film, referencing his own popularity as a horror author. Indeed, *Creepshow* stands as an incredibly self-referential text, both in terms of aesthetics and horror film history. It also indicates the necessity for using marketable concepts within horror film production, and the film industry in general when Romero noted that:

> Very few pictures get made - fewer and fewer each year - and that causes a certain attitude on the part of the studios. They won’t do anything small… if it doesn’t look like your film will hit the $100 million mark, the romance wears off: They start pulling back on the campaign, how they book it and the number of screens.\(^{23}\)

This was the result of the success of bigger budget films, and the increasing reliance on the blockbuster film to ensure success during the 1970s. Within the horror genre, the success of high-budget films such as *The Exorcist* and *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975) focused on special effects as a factor for maintaining audience interest, while other producers of films attempted to re-create elements of the blockbusters for smaller budgeted productions – hence the spate of monster films after *Jaws*.\(^{24}\) However, we can also trace the rise of Zombie film production in the late 70s onwards as referring to what William Graebner describes as a cultural perspective on “a disastrous era that defined life as survivorship”, expressed in the disaster films of the 1970s.\(^{25}\) *Dawn*’s use of this survivalist ethos marks it as a continuation of such texts as *The Poseidon Adventure* (Ronald Neame, 1972) and *Jaws*. However, the majority of smaller budgeted productions could not hope to replicate these expensive spectacles of destruction.
The Zombie film therefore remained viable by adhering to the perceived current audience taste for gore. However, this financial restriction also offered the opportunity to re-assess how gore and horror were presented to the audience, allowing for the emergence of a new horror-comedy, the ‘splatstick’ film. William Paul argues that while the links between horror and comedy are an historical pairing – citing the spectacle of Grand Guignol as an example – the 1970s and 1980s saw a shift in how horror narratives utilised patterns of audience release in comedy:

Gross out horror and comedy present complementary dystopian - utopian visions...the use of grotesque imagery provides the clearest nexus between the two types of film. The grotesque establishes an ambivalence within the films themselves: the horror films often become farcical in the extremity of their devices, while the comedies move into nightmare sequences.  

This interpretation of the body as a site of pain and humour extends the re-interpretation of the undead body begun by Romero. The rise of visual excess in the 70s and 80s horror film also allowed a space for new revisionings of the intent of horror, leading to a self-referential genre. Phillip Brophy argues that this ‘Horrality’ exists within contemporary cinema as a “mode that both ‘tells’ you the horror and ‘shows’ it”. This textual approach allowed for new patterns of representation, particularly in the Zombie film.

This is particularly apparent in Sam Raimi’s Evil Dead films (The Evil Dead, 1982, Evil Dead II, 1987 and Army of Darkness, 1992). While their inclusion into the canon of Zombie films can be tenuous, the effects used within the films display the ambivalence Paul discusses. Based on the director's obvious knowledge of genre convention, both of Demonic possession films, Zombie films and the Slasher genre that had risen to prominence in the early 80s, The Evil Dead’s re-cycling of these conventions is undercut by its use of visual innovation – the swooping camera movements that indicate a released demonic force – and in its embracing of comedy to relieve moments of explicit gore. As Brophy notes:

The humour in a gory scene is the result of the contemporary Horror film’s saturation of all its codes and conventions – a punchline that can only be got when one fully acknowledges this saturation as the departure point of viewing pleasure.
Following this, the humour apparent in Zombie films of the 70s onwards is a result of a saturation of codes and conventions that the audience is aware of. This is displayed most persuasively in a popular music video of 1983, in Michael Jackson’s *Thriller* (John Landis), a text that references the pleasures of cinematic viewing and acts as a reflection on transformation within horror film. Jackson’s star persona, linked with his own bodily transformation through plastic surgery and dance, acts as a holder of double meaning throughout the short film, as Kobena Mercer argues. In the sequence where Jackson leads a troupe of Zombies through a dance routine, the significance of the Zombie body in popular culture becomes more explicit. The Zombies are primal, yet can be led, their rigid body posture grimly mocking the more sexualised dance moves, while the heroine looks on aghast. That Jackson spends much of the video as a Zombie also indicates the carefully neutral status of the Zombie as a sexual object, focusing on his transformation from live performer to ‘undead’ performer.

The appearance of the Zombie in such a popular mainstream text indicates the strength of the creature’s symbolic status. This had its limits however, with Romero’s *Day of the Dead* (1985) receiving poor critical reviews, in part due to its perceived overt goriness. Instead, texts such as Tobe Hooper’s *Lifeforce* (1985) which features vampire-zombies from space and Stuart Gordon’s *Re-Animator* (1985) indicated audience popularity had shifted into large special effects texts (*Lifeforce*) and Zombie texts that offered narrative innovation and black comedy throughout, as was the case with *Re-Animator*. Based on the H.P Lovecraft tale *Herbert West, Re-Animator*, the text begins in all seriousness, but develops into what Linda Badley describes as “a Rabelaisian inversion of hierarchies” in the activities of bodies released from mental control. The rejections of narrative drive in favour of visual impact also defines this text – as well as most splatter comedies involving Zombies, including *The Evil Dead* – as an exploration of physical freedom when unrestrained from societal bounds. The dead in these texts do not suffer as in Romero’s films: their ability to talk, plan and gleefully pursue the living positions them as more animalistic than pitiful, allowing the violence meted out against them to reflect their status as ‘human’ adversaries.
The social commentary begun by the earliest Zombie films, by this point, became a carnivalesque celebration of physical sensation, displayed most coherently in the *Living Dead* series of films. Beginning with *Return of the Living Dead* (Dan O’Bannon, 1985) the films attempt to reassert the primary strength of Romero’s premise for *Night of the Living Dead*, by claiming in *Return* that it was a true story—“so he changed a few facts round”. This quotation of the film considered to be the primary instigator for the modern Zombie genre is also an indicator of conflicting production contexts – after the dissolution of Latent Image in 1972, Russell Streiner, Rudy Ricci and John Russo kept the rights to a script entitled *Return of the Living Dead*.33 *Return* bears more in comparison with *The Evil Dead* in terms of its frenetic editing, action narrative and colourful gore. The Zombies within this text specifically desire to eat the brains of the living, while they also move quickly and tactically to catch victims. The same premise underlies the rest of the *Return of the Living Dead* films (*Return of the Living Dead Pt.2*, Ken Wiederhorn (director of *Shockwaves*) 1988), *Return of the Living Dead III*, (Brian Yuzna, 1993) and *Return of the Living Dead: Necropolis* (Ellory Elkayem, 2005), with varying levels of black comedy in the texts.

1985 can be seen as a pivotal year for Zombie film production, in that the tendency to remake and recycle key established genre conventions became more pronounced. In a wider production context, the establishment of the gore drenched ‘cinema of attractions’ had proved profitable in both larger budgeted studio productions and independent or small company efforts. But this was against a changing feature of audience consumption of films, though the introduction of the Video Home System or VHS throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the rental of films on video became popular. 1985 also saw the introduction of camcorders onto the consumer market. Both new technologies had an enormous impact on the film industry, in that while cinema audiences declined, consumer demand for films still remained constant. While the concept of the ‘straight-to-video’ film developed slowly, back catalogues of films and cheaply made films could be transferred to VHS to increase potential revenue beyond their cinematic exhibition. At the same time, the increasing cheapness of camcorders during the late 1980s and 1990s encouraged more
independent filmmakers to make their own productions. As seen previously, one of the cheapest, and most profitable genres to begin with was horror, but audiences could now select and replay film texts, especially those that had left cinemas. The rise of the post-modern horror, self-referential, accessed through mass media and easily replicated, was beginning.


This boom in low-budget filmmaking makes a definable and reliable taxonomy of this particular period difficult. The amount of Zombie films produced is high, but some texts are unavailable for viewing as their unpopularity on the video market ensured their disappearance. The rise of video filming has also meant that archival material is less likely – small production companies having little incentive to store loss-making material. If we look at production numbers of Zombie films between 1983 and 1993, over 30 films using Zombies as the main creatures of horror were made.

Many can be easily categorised as cheaply made productions, relying on generic conventions already established by previous films. The rise in numbers in 1989 can be attributed to the wider availability of VHS players as a key home
entertainment component for contemporary western homes. Of these films, a few are by established directors of the horror genre. *Deadly Friend* (Wes Craven, 1986), *Prince of Darkness* (John Carpenter, 1987) and *The Serpent and The Rainbow* (Wes Craven, 1988) all use the Zombie figure differently, indicating not only the popularity of the figure of the Zombie but its narrative adaptability. Carpenter’s film uses figures of religion and science to battle Satan and his army of undead, while Craven’s *Deadly Friend* reverts to the concept of the human body controlled by an implant in the brain. *The Serpent and The Rainbow* is a departure from the purely American based narratives seen previously, though its sensationalist account of Voodooism and Zombification links it clearly to the early American Zombie films of the 30s and 40s. By comparison, *Maniac Cop* (William Lustig, 1987) returns to an undead killer popularised by the slasher genre of films predominant in the 1980s, notably *The Friday the 13th* Series beginning in 1980 until 2003, and the *Nightmare on Elm Street* films begun in 1983 (Wes Craven), both of which feature undead killers. *The Video Dead* (Robert Scott, 1988) mocks the prevalence of video as a medium for watching film, making a video cassette a portal for Zombies to enter through a television set. Considering this was made at a time of high video production of horror, the irony is explicit.

This is not to claim that Zombie films had been completely relegated to smaller productions, or indeed that they did not draw upon new sources. The popularity of writer Stephen King as a horror author, and his links with the horror film industry have been indicated by his working ties with Romero on *Creepshow*, but his presence within horror film as a provider of source material is as encompassing as Richard Matheson’s and Ray Bradbury before him. Since 1976, starting with *Carrie* (Brian De Palma) and until the present day, his books are still being translated into film and television texts. Notable examples include *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980) *The Dead Zone* (David Cronenberg, 1983) and *Pet Sematary* (Mary Lambert, 1989).

Mark Jancovich argues that King’s thematic concerns are often overlooked by critics, noting that King’s references to popular culture and consumer goods are intended to show how his protagonists shape themselves through consumption and an adherence to a ‘normal’ life. *Pet Sematary* in particular examples this approach, where a family who are reluctant for their children to confront death
(in the aforementioned burial ground) have their lives shattered. While it is simplistic to claim that all of King’s texts revolve around “the Bad Place”, the significance of the animal burial ground and the Native American burial ground behind it should not be ignored. Indeed, a description of Native American mythology in terms of the figure of the Wendigo (which has cursed the Native American burial ground) bears striking resemblances to western European concepts of the ghoul:

With its bones pushing out against its skin, its complexion the ash gray of death, and its eyes pushed back deep into their sockets, the Weendigo looked like a gaunt skeleton recently disinterred from the grave. Unclean and suffering from suppurations of the flesh, the Weendigo gave off a strange and eerie odor of decay and decomposition, of death and corruption.⁴⁶

The Wendigo is also associated with the taboo of flesh eating and greed, linking it thematically to the modern concept of the flesh-eating Zombie.³⁷ Pet Sematary’s Zombies are created by tribal taboo. That the curse is passed onto white middle class Americans merely re-iterates Kings critique of appearance through consumption, a theme apparent in the film text. The dead return, but are changed and inherently evil, an inversion of their behaviour while alive. In many respects, this is an updating of that noted Zombie text The Monkey’s Paw, explicitly positioning the strength of a belief system ignored by the modern protagonists, to their cost. Indeed, the absence of Native American figures of fear and their cultural importance in horror film is a feature that needs to be considered. Pet Sematary as a film text does not dwell upon the Native American mythology that causes the returning dead, and in this we can note how alternative concepts of the afterlife and undeath outside of the dominant social culture are sidelined in favour of narratives that proffer sensationalism, a pattern established from the earliest American accounts of Voodoo. In many respects this indicates a colonial power of representation – the ‘native’ other is held merely as a threat to be overcome, that can disrupt the ordered existence of the colonial power – in this case, white, middle class America.

The rise of popularity of horror literature during the late 70s also had another influence on horror film, in that previous works of horror were re-interpreted for contemporary audiences alongside works by contemporary authors.³⁸ H. P
Lovecraft’s works were adapted for television and film during the early 1960s, but saw a rise in production during the 1980s (after Lucio Fulci’s Lovecraft inspired Zombie films *Paura nella città dei morti viventi* (1980) and *Quella villa accanto al Cimitero* (1981)), at the same time that Edgar Allan Poe’s works were re-used for cinematic narratives. This had begun in the earliest days of filmmaking - *Sherlock Holmes in the Great Murder Mystery* (1908) combined elements from Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle, continuing through the 1960s to Roger Corman’s *House of Usher* (1960) *Pit and the Pendulum* (1961) *Tales of Terror* (1962) and *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964). Poe’s works made numerous references to the unquiet dead, and alongside Lovecraft is considered a key American horror author. Therefore it is unsurprising that their narratives are re-written and presented utilising modern creatures of fear – in the case of Lovecraft, in the blank Zombies of Fulci’s films, and the unrestrained excesses of *Re-Animator*, which itself was extended into *Bride of Re-Animator* (Brian Yuzna, 1990). Yuzna acknowledges that his own cinematic influences include texts that were created to re-interpret European texts, as was Roger Corman’s appropriation of Mario Bava’s aesthetic and narrative choices: “Corman was remaking European genre movies in American syntax”.39 Yuzna himself is based in Spain, as part of a production company dedicated to global distribution and production of horror films with references to European and American horror traditions based on his own experience as an American “looking in” on his country’s production.40

This acknowledgment of trans-continental interpretation and re-appropriation indicates not only the shifting nature of American horror film production, begun during the 60s with increasing foreign co-productions, but also why the contemporary Zombie film shifts patterns of representation so rapidly. Given the global patterns of production and exhibition that grew in the same period, the re-use of the Zombie by directors considered established horror ‘auteurs’ during the 1980s is symptomatic of horror films increased stability in production, whether for large or small production companies. A key example is *Two Evil Eyes*/*Due occhi diabolici* (Dario Argento/ George Romero, 1990) An Italian production, the film received global distribution on the basis of the two director’s standing as horror/thriller producers. The narratives of the film are based on Edgar Allan Poe stories, *The Black Cat* and *The Facts in the Case of*
M. Valdemar, Romero’s section of the film. In this, Mr. Valdemar is kept in a state of suspended death. Valdemar rises from the freezer to enact his revenge on his wife, a narrative development not found in Poe’s text, but fitting the vengeance narrative of previous Zombie films. In this, the references to Poe are limited, unlike Fulci’s section that updates the concepts of guilt and concealment discussed in Poe’s The Black Cat.

But Romero’s choice to re-interpret only certain aspects of Poe’s tale was also a narrative choice engaged in by other directors portraying the Zombie. By this point Romero was established as the ‘creator’ of the modern Zombie, and film texts since Dawn of the Dead re-used his concept of the undead. Considering the swift increase of Zombie film texts during the 1980s, a reconsideration of his original text was inevitable. The first ‘Romero-recognised’ remake was Tom Savini’s Night of the Living Dead (1990). In this text, the self-reflexive nature of Zombie film production is particularly apparent. Romero, John Russo and Russell Streiner were all producers, with Romero writing the screenplay for the film. Savini himself by this point was one of Romero’s long-time collaborators, evidenced by his make-up work for many of his productions, but also as an actor in Dawn of the Dead. Savini’s Night, while updating the original text in terms of the use of colour and gore effects, seems unable to move beyond the narrative impetus of the original film text, making the characters actions and words, in the opinion of Kim Newman, “anachronistic”. This comment evidences not only the seminal status of the original film text, but also an underlying criticism that the Zombie film should respond to contemporary fears. Indeed, much of Savini’s film can be seen as a discussion of cruelty, rather than an updating of the original film, which was also attempted in 1993 with the 25th anniversary release of Night of the Living Dead that had extra scenes and a new soundtrack. In this, the producers hoped to benefit from the replications of the original text that fans of the Zombie genre were creating. It should be clarified that this fan appropriation was and is practiced both by those within the film industry: like Savini, whose closeness to the production influences mark his work as a professional re-interpretation, and those of fans: who do not have access to the same production context, but offer their own interpretation of key generic elements. While film fans have existed throughout cinematic history, a shift in
viewing practices since the 1960s offered conditions for a new type of film fan to emerge: that of the cult fan who selectively reproduces texts.

The emergence of the cult film fan can be tentatively positioned during the rise of midnight film showings and the independent art house cinema audiences of the 1960s and 1970s in the U.S. Elements of the audiences (notably college students who also had access to the growing field of film studies) began expressing a recognition of an alternative to mainstream film production and reception, themselves problematic generalisations. We must also recall that these film showings included horror and art films from Europe, as well as exploitation films, leading to a mixed presentation of material: “disparate genres” as Jeffery Sconce terms them. However, Sconce provides an interesting aesthetic consideration of cult films, arguing they are marked by a “trash aesthetic” of oppositional intent, arguing against narrative coherence by a devotion to excess. Fans access this aesthetic, as a method of defining their own cultural taste against socially approved ‘good’ taste, in films Sconce terms ‘paracinema’. While Sconce’s argument fails to consider the historical contexts of the audiences and processes he considers, this concept of a devotion to excess indicates another approach to culturally positioning the Zombie film – the low production and distribution contexts, the shifting signifiers within the films, their treatment of unsettling material – as a cult genre, and by extension, the fans of Zombie film as cult fans. Sconce, among others, notes the practices engaged in by cult film fans who appropriate elements of film texts as an extension of their reactions to the text. These range from repeated viewings and quotations of the original texts, to ownership of memorabilia, towards a more interpretative and involved method of consuming the text, by recreating visual or thematic elements in artwork, narratives and film texts.

The introduction of the camcorder in the 80s therefore offered the potential for fans to re-interpret the major visual concepts of the Zombie sub-genre, and the quantity of independent films attest to this shift. Two examples of self-taught filmmakers who appropriated the Zombie for video film production, and provide an indication of the popularity of this particular horror figure are J. R. Bookwalter and Todd Sheets. Bookwalter’s association with Sam Raimi allowed
him to access funding for his first feature film *The Dead Next Door* (1989), leading to filming experience before his next Zombie film *Zombie Cop* (1991), and later *Ozone* (1993). Bookwalter’s career indicates the strength of the video market of the time, as small companies who specialised in horror films distributed his films, while Jamie Russell argues that his first film is directly responsible for the large numbers of shot–on–video and straight–to–video productions that appeared in the early to mid 90s, particularly in the case of Todd Sheets. In his chapter *Poverty Row for the MTV Generation*, Russell makes a case for the fan productions of the 90s to be considered in the same production context of the ‘Poverty Row’ studios of the 40s, in that the limited budgets and time available for the producers of such texts is offset by the potential market for cheap filler material – in this case for the established video market. However, Russell’s own personal taste leads him to dismiss these films for their “amateurish” production values, claiming that the texts are dominated by a “punk aesthetic”, a definition that we can link to Sconce’s discussion of “paracinema” in its supposedly oppositional stance towards enshrined production and exhibition methods. Russell has overlooked a key cultural context for these films: the implicit strength of fan culture supported a potential market for the productions. The producers themselves also reference previous film texts and by their dedication to producing Zombie films (often with little resources) display an involved level of fandom. By presenting alternative expressions of horror narratives, these films indicate not only the symbolic strength of the Zombie as a figure of fear, but also a reaction against the paucity of mainstream film portrayals of the Zombie. If the Zombie film historically has been shaped by low production values and limited exposure in cinematic texts, then the ongoing popularity of the film texts post-1968, culminating in this independent production boom, shows that the Zombie film fulfils not only a key role in providing a thematic figure that is accessible to all, but also acts as strong indicator of shifting film production from large American producers to smaller companies as the film market has changed.

While many of these Zombie films are concerned merely with the spectacle of destruction, as with *Chopper Chicks in Zombie Town* (Dan Hoskins, 1989) *Mutant* (John Cardos, 1989) *Zombie Nosh* (Bill Hinzman, 1989) and Todd

The Zombie comedy film was also in evidence, in *La Cage Aux Zombies* (Kelly Hughes, 1995) and *Sex, Chocolate and Zombie Republicans* (Kirk Bowman, 1998). This was alongside the consolidation of the Zombie in American popular culture in the form of individual television programmes and video games.

Examples include the previously mentioned *Tales from the Crypt* (1989-1996) that adhered closely to the grisly humour portrayed in horror comics. The television show *Monsters* (1988-1991), a Laurel Group production (which also produced *Creepshow* and *Day of the Dead*) featured Zombies frequently, notably in the romantic comedy episode *My Zombie Lover* (Davis Misch, 1988) where a shy Zombie teenager professes his love. The Zombie, or at least Zombie-like figures also appear in other television programmes noted for their use of humour, notably the 1997 episode *Pink Eye* in the animation series *South Park* (Matt Stone and Trey Parker, 1997+). The character of Chef (voiced by Isaac Hayes) sexualises and mocks the portrayal of Zombies seen in *Thriller*.

The same revisualising of cinematic narratives is also apparent in “Treehouse of Horror III: Dial Z for Zombies”, *The Simpsons* (Matt Groening, 1989 +) episode of 1992 that directly takes its narrative from *Pet Sematary*, and overturns its narrative through the comedic use of a dysfunctional family. The same is true of the 2002 *Treehouse of Horror XIII*, where Lisa’s wish for the victims of gun crime to speak out (echoing previous anti-war Zombie films) leads to the rise of Zombie ‘wild west’ criminals such as William Bonney, better known as Billy The Kid. While *South Park*, and arguably *The Simpsons* are intended for older audiences, Zombies are occasionally present in animation products intended for children, exemplified by *Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island* (Aoyama Hiroshi, Fukushima Kazumi, 1998) an extended cartoon released on video. These varying products indicate that the Zombie was recognised as an icon of fear and that less gory and more comedic portrayals filtered through into mainstream popular culture. This is also apparent in a highly popular science fiction/suspense television programme that ran from 1993 to 2002. In *The X-Files* the
Zombie or Zombie-like figure appears throughout the series, in the shape of criticism of refugee camps (*Fresh Bones*, Episode 15, Series 2), infective prison escapees (*F. Emasculata*, Episode 22, Series 2) and wage slavery (*Folie A Deux*, Episode 19, Season 5). The use of the Zombie within this one television series indicates how aspects of the creature can be applied to changing narrative concerns, assisted by a media-literate audience who are aware of the iconic use of the Zombie in film and popular culture.

This knowledge is strengthened by the global success of videogames such as *Resident Evil* (1996) and its sequels and imitators, including *The House of the Dead* (1996) franchise, discussed in the previous chapter. Given that videogames were by this point classified in a similar manner to films, we can position these games as new horror texts in terms of the narratives of horror used and the way in which they involve the player. They also offer newer visualisations of the Zombie, as part of a monstrous bestiary of undead creatures created by science. At this point in the Zombie genre, the multiplicity of texts in all cultural forms indicates that the Zombie is as much a recognised figure of fear as the more ‘traditional’ monsters. That they are deployed in so many narratives indicates their thematic malleability.

What is notable however is the strength of what we could term *epidemic* narratives continued, remaining as the primary narrative impetus for many Zombie texts. This is partially due to the increase of Zombie films released after the mid 80s onwards that focused on replicating previous successful films. We should also take into account that the 1980s also saw reports of the supposedly “homosexual” disease AIDS first reach prominence in mainstream media. This fact should not be ignored. The media reportage of the time, argues Harry M. Benshoff, indicates that the definitions and limits used by horror narratives to determine the monstrous were quickly re-iterated in media discourses:

Perhaps expectedly, an ideological approach to fictional monsters frequently bleeds into an accounting of real-life horrors such as AIDS: recent critical essays on the mass media have demonstrated how the representational codes and narrative tropes of the monster movie (plague, contagion, victimization, panic) have been grafted onto much television and newspaper coverage of AIDS.
This use of recognisable fictional tropes within news reportage offers an explanation of recurring fictional epidemic narratives during the 80s and 90s, as the scale of AIDS became understood. Both Rick Worland and David J Skal tentatively argue that this may be understood as the impetus for the revival of Vampire films in this period.\textsuperscript{49} If this is a partial explanation of the surge in Vampire films, it is advisable to extend this argument to the Zombie film also, as post \textit{Dawn of the Dead} the infective Zombie is the key thematic figure within Zombie films. David J. Skal continues his discussion of how the AIDS ‘viral epidemic’ was refracted in film, by arguing that the twin spectres of AIDS and anorexia nervosa stand as key visual symbols of body trauma within horror film of the 90s onwards.\textsuperscript{50} This can be linked to representations of the diseased and failing human body that reached greater discussion in mainstream media during the late 80s and throughout the 1990s. Roberta McGrath’s comments on the previously concealed aspects of medical photography in the media indicate the impact of these images:

They impinge on and break the fragile base upon which our lives are built – the disavowal of mortality, of disfigurement; a breakdown of barriers between the internal/external. We are shown the body cut open, flesh minus skin.\textsuperscript{51}

This description of factual documentations immediately brings to mind the portrayal of the body within Zombie films of this period. The social disavowal of disease and pain is directly challenged by Zombie film: the concept of the diseased body rebelling against control, and negating the idea of the modern ‘perfectible’ body are the key sites of conflict in the Zombie film of the 80s and 90s. The spectacle of destruction, rendered as realistically as possible through effects and digital photography, becomes at once a site of pleasure for the audiences in their suspension of disbelief and a contemporary \textit{memento mori} of images easily accessed through global media, whether in fictional or factual popular culture. The fear of the epidemic remained as vital as ever and arguably also provided another vital narrative shift in the modern Zombie film.

\textit{Global Concerns: 1999-2008}
The introduction of video technology as an accessible format for filmmaking led to an increase in independent and fan filmmakers’ portrayals of the Zombie during the late 1980s and early 1990s. These representations were based on previous portrayals and narrative styles of the Zombie sub-genre, with varying levels of commercial success. In terms of larger budgeted productions, there is also evidence of the Zombie as an established figure of fear, notably in the reclamation of *Night of the Living Dead* as a seminal text during the early to mid 1990s, and the ongoing use of the Zombie figure by ‘established’ horror directors such as Brian Yuzna, John Carpenter and of course George Romero.

The surge in low-budgeted film production that was evidenced in the late 80s reduced rapidly in the early to mid 90s. There are several interpretations of this. Firstly, the rise in fan-made productions and independent horror had been made as a response to a gap in the market, unfilled by larger studio productions. As the market for horror film was gradually filled during the 80s, smaller producers were not guaranteed a release on video for their work, which favoured those filmmakers who could forge links with either distributors or established production companies, J.R Bookwalter’s career being an example of this. Secondly, the releasing of back catalogues of film and foreign films on video – the Italian Zombie films as a case in point – further flooded the market. Thirdly, the shift in the main studios towards the production and marketing of the blockbuster film also meant that there was an economic imperative for established film companies to forge links with smaller producers, in much the same manner as seen with the B-movie producers of the 40s and 50s and the foreign co-productions and distributions of the 70s and 80s. The potential for financial returns induced companies to branch into specialised areas of interest, heralding the introduction of companies such as Tartan in Britain that specialises in distributing Asian film in American and British Markets.

In turn, the production of horror film arguably becomes less easily isolated as either independent or ‘mainstream’ during the 1990s onwards. This is not to say that fan production halts – it does not – but horror film exhibition itself becomes closely linked with the idea of ‘independent’ production presented by mainstream film companies, making these distinctions problematic. This is linked directly to another shift in technological developments in two key areas:
digital filmmaking and the rise of global communications, notably in the form of the Internet.

Rick Worland makes these connections explicitly in his section dealing with the American horror film post-1995. He notes the preponderance of ‘knowing’ remakes of the slasher genre instigated by Scream (Wes Craven, 1996), linked to a young audience’s detailed generic and technological knowledge of the constructs of horror film. In particular, the success of The Blair Witch Project (Daniel Myrick, Eduardo Sánchez, 1999) acts as a key case study of the changed production and reception constructs of horror film at this point, as Worland argues:

*Blair Witch* added an original notion of style to the genre – horror effects based on a technological and ontological appeal to truth and reality. The ready availability of consumer-grade video cameras in middle-class homes since the 1980s has greatly affected how a younger generation thinks about film and television. In addition… the 1980s home-video revolution encouraged the theatrical and/or video release of the “director’s cut” or other “special editions” of some movies. 

The marketing of the film – on the Internet – created the illusion of the film as ‘reality’, a documentary film made by young people. That the film went on to return over $245 million indicates the strength of the stylistic approach to both marketing and filming that the creators engaged in. This innovation was set against the availability of film texts that the contemporary audience of teenagers would not have accessed on their initial release, alongside the introduction of Digital Video Discs (DVDs) in 1997 and the shift away from video cameras to digital cameras as an accessible filming technology in the mid-1990s. This introduction of new technology offered immediate economic benefits to the low budget filmmaker. The cheapness of the recording format, and the computer packages to edit the recorded material offered, as video had, an approachable method of filmmaking outside of traditional production budgets and constraints. Unlike video however, this format could be downloaded to the Internet, edited to include more detailed special effects and, in the shape of DVDs, could hold much more information. The quick production methods offered by this technology meant that the fan production of Zombie film has now shifted in terms of audience – the Internet is now the key exhibition space for fan
filmmakers. But the availability of Zombie texts in terms of cinematic releases has not diminished as a result. Instead, the rise of global communications, and the need for Hollywood to maintain some form of market dominance, has led to a startling change in how the American Zombie film responds to these global shifts, taking account of other national film productions and international co-productions between 2000 and 2008.

The British Zombie film, for example, remained a marginalized part of a decimated horror film industry. Individual examples of Zombie film occurred in the early 1990s, with Andrew Harrison’s *Zombie Genocide* (1993) being the first example of a Zombie film set and produced in Ireland. Andrew Parkinson’s *I Zombie: A Chronicle of Pain* (1998) is arguably of more import, as it focuses on the personal recountation of the physical and emotional degradation of a man infected by a Zombie. The gruesomeness of the subject matter is intercut with interviews and voiceovers that position this as a study in social isolation. The same discussion of isolation underpins his later *Dead Creatures* (2001), though as Jonathan Rigby notes, both films’ gore and low-budgeted philosophical narratives have ensured that they are subject to “ghetto-isation” within film markets. The same could be argued of Conor McMahon’s *Dead Meat* (2004), a lively discussion of BSE or ‘mad cow’ disease that creates Zombies in the Irish countryside. What is clear in these films is an adherence to national concerns. These productions also hold great significance when it is taken into account that these are attempts to widen the potential overseas markets for British and Irish film (*Dead Meat* was funded by the Irish Film Board) following a brief spate of successful British films. Foremost amongst these ‘Brit pics’, as Rigby notes, is the output of Danny Boyle. If *Dead Meat* offered a vaguely comedic view of the BSE crisis, Boyle’s *28 Days Later* refuses to lighten the weight of its discussion of isolationism and violence within Britain. Boyle’s previous successful works (*Shallow Grave*, 1994 and *Trainspotting*, 1996) both fairly low budgeted films made with the assistance of Arts Council funding, had used the concept of a dark underside to British life, which is amplified in *28 Days Later* (2002). It should be noted that while Boyle initially dismissed the assertion that this was a Zombie film, the
writer Alex Garland makes his links to previous Zombie and apocalyptic narratives in the screenplay clear:

Our male protagonist, waking up in hospital... will be familiar to anyone who has read *Day of the Triffids*. The scene in which our heroes loot a supermarket... the empty mall of *Dawn of the Dead*. Maier, the chained ‘infected’, is in some ways a refugee from *Day of the Dead*. And Selena’s race is a kind of reference to George Romero’s Night-Dawn-Day trilogy, which was notable for the black leading characters. Other influences I should mention would certainly include David Cronenberg, Steven King, Capcom’s *Resident Evil* video game series.\(^5^6\)

In this the links to previous Zombie films are clear, but what should also be noted is the specifically national concerns that emerge from focusing on the devastation of London and the quarantine imposed upon the British Isles.\(^5^7\) Given the relevance of the contemporaneous BSE crisis, with media images of pits of burning corpses, the concept of viral outbreaks in a national context, placed against global concerns, seems particularly relevant and is noted by several critics.\(^5^8\) The infection is rage, first glimpsed in the laboratory where the apes are infected through drugs and televisual violence: multi screens in front of one experiment subject show a stream of fights, riots and burning, taken from news media. The global medium is the message here, and infection is a result. The idea of media as an infective medium is not new to Zombie films – we can cite the *Demon* films of Lamberto Bava, or *The Video Dead* as relevant examples.

However, I would argue that *28 Days Later*, by its foregrounding of this concern as the centre of the virus, instigates a new direction in Zombie film narratives. We have already noted that the genre is completely self-referential by this stage in its history, cannibalising previous narratives and spreading these images through new texts, in different production contexts. This infective genre spans different countries and concerns, notably at a time of rising global communication and the subsequent shifts in global film markets. *28 Days Later* exemplifies this perfectly. With financial input from Fox Searchlight alongside British film companies to supply a budget of $8.7 million, and shot on a digital camera, the film garnered unexpected success both in Britain and beyond. Benjamin Svetkey notes that the opening weekend returns in America garnered $9.7 million from 1,260 cinemas, eventually returning $42 million.\(^5^9\) As several
articles in *Variety* noted, US distribution offered financial benefits for both American and European producers and distributors, concluding: “There’s a growing belief in some quarters that hitching a ride on Hollywood’s global superhighway offers the best hope for local filmmakers to escape their national ghettos”. The success of *28 Days Later* also had another effect: the Zombie genre attracted financial support from larger studios keen to capitalise on the genre’s longevity and innovation.

This is not to ignore American low budget productions that continued alongside the rise in co-productions. From 2000 onwards, low-budgeted Zombie film still account for the majority of productions, from Brian Clements video productions *Meat Market* (2000) and *Meat Market 2* (2001) to Michael Heins’ *Biohazardous* (2001), Tor Ramsey’s *Children of the Living Dead* (2001) and *The Resurrection Game* (Mike Watt, 2001). Meant for video/DVD productions are the key feature of this period – the *Meat Market* films, *Biker Zombies From Detroit* (Todd Brunswick, 2002) *Zombie Campout* (Joshua D Smith, 2002) and the portmanteau narrative *Zombie Chronicles* (Brad Sykes, 2001) in particular example the continued presence of independent and fan filmmakers, though their work is overshadowed by the big budgeted horror films in development and distribution at that point. John Carpenter’s *Ghosts of Mars* (2001) is not strictly a Zombie film, yet uses enough of the signifiers of Zombies for it to make its links to the genre clear. At the same time, a film based on a popular Zombie text was in production. Released in 2002, *Resident Evil* (Paul Anderson), a German/French/British co-production attempted to capitalise on the success of the videogame by combining the horror and action film genre. While its popularity with fans of the game was questionable, the film’s box office receipts for the opening weekend indicated its potential strength, with returns of $17.7 million. The overall returns were enough to assure two sequels, *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (Alexander Witt, 2004) and *Resident Evil: Extinction* (Russell Mulcahy, 2007) and encouraged the production of Uwe Boll’s *House of the Dead* in 2003. The narrative premise of all three *Resident Evil* films still centres on the Zombies as biohazards created by a faceless global corporation, and like the videogames, the series extends the apocalyptic
narratives within each film: the first in a laboratory complex, the second in the city above the lab, and thirdly the entire world.

This occurs at the same time as a general shift in Zombie narratives in large budgeted productions. George Romero hinted at the global scale of devastation in *Day of the Dead* (1985), but succeeding films, limited by budgets, could not hope to envisage this. Instead, it is arguable that the American Zombie film, pre-2004, is distinctly insular in its conception of a Zombie apocalypse, preferring to envisage destruction within recognisable American cityscapes. This is not a criticism, as we have noted that horror film from differing national cinema responds to differing economic, historical and social contexts. In the case of American Zombie film of 2000 onwards, given the influence of foreign film texts, it is notable however that global concerns do start to emerge in Zombie films distributed by major studios. This was allied with a recognition of the strength of other interpretations, as in 2004 the release of the British Zombie film *Shaun of the Dead* (Edgar Wright) was delayed by Universal in order to smooth the reception of the first large budget remake of George Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead*.63

Zack Snyder’s interpretation of Romero’s premise avoids overt social criticism, relying on an action narrative that echoes the *Resident Evil* series. This is understandable, as the popularity of *Resident Evil* may partially have been its action narrative, and for Universal the application of an X rating was unacceptable.64 Snyder commented that his film was made for both fans of the original film and a younger film audience – supported by an audience breakdown reported by Variety: “A sizable 81% were younger than 35, and 54% of those were under 25.”65 Therefore we can place this film not as a remake of *Dawn of the Dead*, but a text that references Romero’s work. Indeed, Snyder’s *Dawn* uses some of the undeveloped concerns of Romero’s film to great effect – notably when indicating the global scale of the Zombie epidemic, and the impact of global media. After the opening sequences, which briefly use a distanced aerial perspective to track the devastation in one town, the credits are superimposed on a montage of news footage of riots and conflicts, taken from reported events. This is interspersed with fictional news reports and images of multiplying viral/blood cells, a sadly underdeveloped rhetoric of infectious
images and narratives. The links to Romero’s news station, and Boyle’s lab tapes are clear to see, alongside the use of fast moving, snarling Zombies, another innovation of 28 Days Later.

A more obvious homage to Romero exists in the film delayed in order to assist Dawn’s sales, Shaun of the Dead. Marketed as a Rom-Zom-Com, or as the tagline for the film would have it: “A Romantic Comedy. With Zombies” Shaun is unashamedly a tribute to Romero’s envisioning of the Zombie plague. Like Romero’s films, Shaun offers a pessimistic view of a consumerist lifestyle, in the case of the titular hero. The banality of his life – and by implication all those around him – makes Shaun’s plight at once a site of comedy and also a telling depiction of mundanity and isolation as people act like Zombies even before they are one. The development of Shaun emerged from a discussion of videogame aesthetics and behaviour in an episode of the TV programme Spaced (Edgar Wright, 1999) and in the film becomes a discussion of British culture opposed to American genre convention – Shaun and his friends rely on garden implements and sports equipment to defend themselves for the majority of the film. From this, Linda Badley argues that Shaun is a return to the social satire begun by Romero that was abandoned in favour of the “cannibal carnival” of Stuart Gordon, Peter Jackson and Sam Raimi’s Zombie films, among others, during the late 80s and the 1990s. This is a plausible conclusion, but we must note that this is because the entire premise of Shaun is based on the directors’ and writers’ love for Romero’s films. Both Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg repeatedly refer to Romero as a ‘master’ of horror within interviews, and their involvement in his later film Land of The Dead (2005) as Zombie extras indicates the level of fan enthusiasm that instigated their approach.

The Zombie comedy sub-genre continued before and after the success of Shaun – notable European additions include the Spanish Juan Pérez Fajardo’s animation short El Ataque de los Zombies adolescentes (Attack of the Teenage Zombies, 2001) and Una de Zombies (Miguel Lamata, 2003) a gangster/horror/comedy hybrid, Mathias Dinter’s Die Nacht der lebenden Loser (Night of the Living Dorks, Germany 2004) the Czech Republics addition to the Zombie genre, Choking Hazard (Marek Dobes, 2004) the French short comedy Le Bon, la brute et las Zombies (The Good, the Bad and the Zombies, Abel Ferry, 2004) and the most recent Irish/American Zombie film Boy Eats Girl
(Stephen Bradley, 2005). Alongside American Zombie comedies such as *Corpses* (Rolfe Kanefsky, 2004), the continuing *Living Dead* series mentioned earlier, *Dead and Breakfast* (Matthew Leutwyler, 2004), *Zombie Honeymoon* (David Gebroe, 2004) the horror genre pastiche of *Slither* (James Gunn, 2006) and *Zombies By Design* (Dave Wascavage, 2006) and *Planet Terror* (Robert Rodriguez, 2007) a recurring theme seems to be the youthfulness of the protagonists and their cultural reaction to relationships and death. That Zombification is linked to adolescence and bodily change (*El Ataque, Die Nacht, Choking Hazard, Boy Eats Girl* and *Dead and Breakfast*) is both a reflection of the youthfulness of the performers and creators of the films, but also a link to the puberty-as-monstrous theme exemplified by the spate of teenage monster movies of the 50s, as well as a clear nod to the intended audience of the films. This continues in texts that do not utilise comedy: *Bubba Ho-tep* (Don Coscarelli, 2002), *House of the Dead* (Uwe Boll, 2003) *The Revenge of Bloody Bill* (Byron Werner, 2004) *Ghost Lake* (Jay Woelfel 2004), *Dead at the Box Office* (Sharon Stutler, 2005) and Carl Lindbergh’s *Shadows of the Dead* (2004). *Shadows of the Dead* in particular is a quietly philosophical examination of illness, mortality and relationships. In much the same manner as *I, Zombie: A Chronicle of Pain*, the subdued visual effects of video filming add to a touching, if gruesome story of true love as a young couple’s bodies are disintegrating.

Such concerns are not present in the majority of Zombie films post 2000. The continuing *Resident Evil* and *Living Dead* films stayed linked to a narrative pattern of destruction started in the 80s, replicated in smaller budgeted films such as *Shadow: Dead Riot* (Derek Wan, 2005) a fast paced mixture of action and horror within a women’s prison; *Feeding The Masses* (Richard Griffin, 2004) and *Day of the Dead 2: Contagium* (Ana Clavell, 2005), a ‘prequel’ to Romero’s *Day of the Dead*. The enduring influence of Romero’s Zombie films, whether explicitly or implicitly displayed in Zombie film texts is a key factor of this period, and it is arguable that the success of those larger budgeted films - *28 Days Later*, Snyder’s *Dawn* and *Shaun of the Dead* - prompted a resurgence of interest in Romero from larger studios, including Universal who had released Snyder’s *Dawn*.88
As such, the production of Romero’s *Land of the Dead* (2005) stands as the largest budgeted of his Zombie films, at $17 million.\(^6\) The resulting narrative reflects this in its use of special effects, large cast and overall scope of the film, focusing on the confrontation between Zombies and the humans’ city fortress. Romero’s ongoing references to contemporary issues are present, as David Pagano argues:

> The nuclear family, racism, sexism, consumer culture, and the military-industrial complex all come under heavy criticism in the first three films, and “thinly veiled” would fail to convey the intensity of the post 9/11 allegory that is *Land of the Dead*, with its indictment of oligarchic, self-assured, imperialistic authority.\(^7\)

The final onslaught of the Zombies against the tower block Fiddler’s Green encapsulates Romero’s criticisms, as the insular wealthy are trapped by their own lifestyles. The city becomes a death trap, vividly conveyed in Romero’s use of aerial shots of the encroaching mass of Zombies, a telling visual link to factual news reports filmed from helicopters of riots and street protests against globalisation, the 21\(^{st}\) century fear of loss of identity.

The distanced camera perspectives used in Zombie films of 2002 onwards indicate not only the advancement of digital effects to replicate ‘reality’, but an acknowledgment of the changing depictions of violence and resistance present in global media. The scale of devastation, these images imply, is larger than before. Problems are global as well as national, and this theme is continued in Zombie films that followed *Land*, in *Resident Evil: Extinction* (Russell Mulcahy, 2007), *Flight of the Living Dead* (Scott Thomas, 2006) and the sequel to *28 Days Later, 28 Weeks Later* (Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, 2007). A Spanish/British production with financial backing from Fox, the film discusses national identity and global imperialism: American troops are re-establishing Britain after the decimation charted in *28 Days Later*, but their rush to reconstruct society leads to the eventual outbreak of the virus. The ending sequences of the film show that the well-intentioned rescue of two children has also led to the contamination of mainland Europe. The same premise of global destruction is present in the film *I Am Legend* (Francis Lawrence, 2007) where a cure for cancer leads to the implied extinction of the ‘human’ race. The most current
reworking of Matheson’s text, the film is set in New York to indicate the scale of destruction.

These global apocalyptic texts indicate that for the American box office, the Zombie was a viable source of narratives intended for a mainstream audience. That so many rely on images of fighting, global unrest and the destruction of buildings may also replicate the climate of uncertainty that America was feeling at the time, as Tom Shone argues in a 2005 article:

In an article entitled Gory Gory Hallelujah, the New York Times relates the public’s love of horror movies to “the national frame of mind. Hollywood, always quick to reflect or stimulate mass appetite” is simply “satiating the bloodlust of non-combatant Americans” This article appeared…as stormclouds gathered over Europe. But with America now entering the fourth year of its war on terror, and the public monitoring its fear levels…on CNN, the national mood appears to have hit Hollywood in the only way it could: by becoming big business again.\(^7\)

If we add to this the coverage of the SARS epidemic of 2002-2004, and ongoing concerns of the growing AIDS epidemic, especially in Africa, these narratives dealing with destructive infection becomes more notable. In two other key texts of the period, the use of the Zombie figure acts as a warning to those unconcerned with wider social issues: Andrew Currie’s Fido (Canada/US, 2006) sets this within a discussion of romance in a consumerist society that enslaves Zombies and enforces ‘homeland security’ after the ‘Zombie Wars’, while Joe Dante’s television film for the Masters of Horror series, Homecoming (2005) is based on the story Death and Suffrage by Dale Bailey. Reworking the premise of The Monkey’s Paw, the returned are dead soldiers. The imagery of flag draped coffins, so widely publicised during the current Iraq war are here used in a chilling sequence, as the soldiers rise to claim their democratic right to vote against the administration that sent them to their deaths. What is a startling innovation for these two films is that the Zombies are inherently peaceful, but will react against enforced submission. The political anger embodied in the undead figures is set against a cynical view of mass media manipulation, as Brian Lowry notes:

Meanwhile, a Karl Rove-like presidential adviser and Ann Coulter-like pundit (the names have been changed, but just barely), manipulate a talk circuit where gaseous windbags presume to speak for the fallen. When exec producer John Hyde told the Associated Press the goal was
to allow the filmmakers to operate “with no restrictions, no second-guessing,” he wasn’t kidding – though in this case, that freedom allows for a bare-knuckled political statement, not buckets of Zombie blood.  

Alongside these films dealing with control and manipulation, a shift in the presentation of Zombie narratives was occurring, reflecting back to the impact of digital filmmaking since the 1990s. These texts took the concept of the aesthetic values of ‘reality’ embodied by the modern documentary style of the first person perspective, and linked it to the preponderance of digitally produced Zombie films of 2002 onwards. Both 28 Days Later and 28 Weeks Later utilised digital cameras to invoke a grainy immediacy in sequences, the handheld cameras adding to the visual impact of attacks by the infected. The same is true for Dead Meat’s roving camera, and the slow takes of I Zombie: A Chronicle of Pain in its mixture of faux-documentary and personal account. Characters within Snyders’ Dawn of the Dead record their eventual fate (notably the plight of the marginal character Andy, as an ‘extra’ on the DVD release). The self-reflexive filmmaker, charting the impact of destruction and its impact on immediate characters becomes a significant trope, in itself a refraction of the independent filmmakers who accessed and created Zombie films. This is perhaps best exemplified by the production of the Zombie film Pathogen (2005) by a 13-year-old girl whose effort attracted the attention of other independent horror filmmakers.

This symbolic use of handheld video cameras – whether digital or video – intimates a return to the personally specific impact of infection, against a global backdrop. The implication that this medium for recording is accessible to all, regardless of experience, is at once the production instigator of many low-budget Zombie films, and also a thematic signifier in extolling the ‘democracy’ of information, set against those narratives that are selected by larger media as worthy of attention. This accounts for the rise in first person perspectives within Zombie film and the subsequent small-scale narratives of destruction and isolation that these films present. Grace Lee’s American Zombie (2007), alongside Bruce la Bruce’s Otto; or up with Dead People (Germany, 2008) use the format of the ‘mockumentary’ to comment on those isolated within society – that Otto is a gay Zombie adds a clear discussion of homophobia to an otherwise comedic text. Michael Bartlett and Kevin Gates’s Zombie Diaries (Britain,
2006) positions a shattering first person perspective on a supposed Asian Flu epidemic that gradually decimates the characters, while the Spanish film *Rec* (Jaime Balaguero, Paco Plaza, 2007) charts a television crew's reportage on a quarantined building while trapped inside with demonic Zombies. The two latter films eschew soundtracks and non-diegetic sound, focusing instead on the aesthetics of the first person perspective of horror, a factor that leads to a disorienting experience as the audience are positioned, both as witnesses and survivors, alongside the protagonists.

This final thematic shift in the narratives and presentation within Zombie film reaches its apogee in the final key Zombie film of this period discussed in this study. Fittingly, it is in many respects the progeny of the Modern Zombie film instigated by the same director. We turn at last to George Romero’s current instalment in the *Dead* series, *Diary of the Dead* (2008). *Diary of the Dead* is filmed on two cameras, one video, one digital, and the narrative follows a group of student filmmakers as a Zombie epidemic unfolds. Here, Romero has returned to the timescale of apocalypse begun in *Night of the Living Dead*, as the plague begins. His reasons for returning to this stage of his Zombie mythos are debatable – Robin Wood theorises that the previous film *Land of the Dead* offered no chance of development into another sequel. Mark Kermode opines that the “mild mainstream disappointments of Land of the Dead” was a mitigating factor. That Romero feels directorial freedom in low-budget filmmaking has already been noted in Chapter 4, and as he commented on *Diary*: “The financial risk was so low that I could afford to gamble... and it was like going home.” This return to the roots of his career – the filmmakers are from the University of Pittsburgh, arguing over the conventions of the Horror film they are making – is at once ironic and telling. Part of the pre-release advertisement for the film was a direct challenge by Romero to independent filmmakers to compete for the chance for their short horror film to be included on the DVD release of the film. His acknowledgment of his fan base and the growing numbers of independent filmmakers is clear. This explains the aesthetic of the film, as an ironic comment on low-budget filmmaking, but also allows Romero to air the particular social concerns that overshadow this film.
Primarily, Romero castigates the reliance on mediated information, whether from mainstream media suppliers or the students themselves. For Romero, the media is always culpable, as seen in *Night* and *Dawn of the Dead*. From the first news report shown in *Diary*, which is later edited to minimise its impact on the public, to the lecturer’s assertion that the filmmaker, Jason Creed, is merely making a “diary of cruelty”, Romero’s attacks on mass media are clear. He makes this explicit in an interview issued as part of the supplementary extras on the DVD release of *Diary* when he discusses the failings of the Internet and personal footage of disasters to maintain integrity when reporting events. This seems a particularly conservative viewpoint, given that the freedom he enjoys is because of his position as an established director who has control over his texts. It can be argued that this need for control and exhibition is much the same impetus for those filmmakers who post material online for audiences. However, there is another interpretation. Romero’s films constantly argue for individual responsibility, and the character of Jason Creed encapsulates this dilemma: is he hunting for Internet approbation, or is he trying to inform others of the ‘truth’? The overall message of Romero’s film is that there is no absolute truth. As is made clear from the beginning this text had been edited and enhanced (with a soundtrack) by Jason’s girlfriend “to scare you”.

The inclusion of ‘news’ footage, and personal appeals online adds to the pathos of the situation, and also invokes the global context of infection that the contemporary Zombie film relies upon, reinforced by the inclusion of ‘news’ sound bites voiced by iconic horror figures (Stephen King, Simon Pegg, Guillermo Del Toro). Romero is not just including an in-joke here (though the humour in the film is ironic when discussing horror) but is invoking specific national and personal concerns. Guillermo del Toro’s voice mocks the anti-immigration policies against Mexico, now pointless in the face of the returning dead, while Stephen King’s eerily accurate impersonation of a fundamentalist preacher invokes the concept of a biblical apocalypse that Romero has briefly noted in previous films. The ‘news’ footage used at the beginning of the film clearly places the dead as immigrants, while the black survivors who assist the students make their new status clear, mocking the flight to the suburbs by white Americans in the 50s; “Cause everybody without a suntan left” this group has reclaimed the urban space of the town for itself: “Finally, we got the power”.

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However it is perhaps in the real news footage that Romero’s ongoing concern with race and economic status becomes clear. The film refers to the proliferation of personal cameras that record the violence of everyday life, but more poignantly the social destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 that resulted in the destruction of large swathes of New Orleans and the deaths of over 1,836 people, with 705 missing. The brief moments of footage Romero uses is of the evacuation and the unrest following the flooding where those people who had not been evacuated attempted to survive by looting. As the singer Kanye West emotively argued on a televised fundraiser, the images shown on television were uniformly negative:

You see a black family, it says, “They're looting.” You see a white family, it says, ‘They're looking for food.' And, you know, it's been five days [waiting for federal help] because most of the people are black. And even for me to complain about it, I would be a hypocrite because I've tried to turn away from the teacher-the TV because it's too hard to watch …with the way America is set up to help the poor, the black people, the less well-off, as slow as possible.

Romero makes his criticism explicit through the fictional media that distorts situations, and his use of the Katrina images showing desperate flight from the area. *Diary of the Dead*, in the final analysis, may be referring to global communication, but firmly within an American context of destruction. In this *Diary* brings us full circle to the original fears espoused in the earliest American Zombie films, of the silent dispossessed, ignored and enslaved. That this representation re-emerged during the late 60s and the 70s is not a simple manifestation of the cyclical nature of genres, but rather a response to the images of brutality – in America and abroad – that fuelled the social changes and unrest of the decades. As Henry Giroux argues:

From the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement to the war in Vietnam, images of human suffering and violence provided the grounds for a charged political indignation and collective sense of moral outrage inflamed by the horrors of poverty, militarism, war and racism

But this social rebellion against injustice has been eroded during the 1990s, Giroux argues, by

Global media consolidation, coupled with the outbreak of a new war that encouraged hyper-patriotism and a rigid nationalism, resulted in a
tightly controlled visual landscape – managed both by the Pentagon and by corporate-owned networks – that delivered a paucity of images representative of the widespread systemic violence. Selectively informed and cynically inclined, American civic life became more sanitized, controlled and regulated.83

If this is the case, then the confrontation offered by the contemporary Zombie acts as reminder: the silent majority cannot always be repressed. Indeed, the final shift in the portrayal of this cinematic figure of fear may be in the explicit reaffirmation of the responsibilities we as individuals and as part of a global society hold. The contemporary cinematic Zombie is at once personal, national and global in its meaning, reflecting the changing historical, social, political and global structures that shape cinematic production. The Zombie is our dark mirror for fear, and as those fears change, so will future representations of those creatures.
Conclusion

BBC News, 15/05/2008: **Cinema Opening for Govan Zombies:**
Kieran Parker and Arabella Croft, who live in Glasgow, remortgaged their home to raise the money to make the film. The couple, who made the film for £870,000, have already won a Bafta Scotland award for the best first-time producers.

So the Zombie is still amongst us, but has altered from Rose London’s assertion that it is merely a “walking corpse” mentioned in the first chapter. It is now clear that the Zombie embodies more meaning than that of a simply controlled figure. The Zombie, as this study has shown, is a complex construct that changes as the cultural context around it has changed. We are now at a point where Zombie film production is a constant. As I write this in the summer of 2008, various Zombie films are in or nearing release, notably *Zombie Strippers!* (Jay Lee, 2008) alongside the American remake of *[Rec]*, entitled *Quarantine* (John Erick Dowdle, 2008). However, the greatest number of Zombie films can be found within independent or fan-made production contexts – *Outpost* (Steve Barker, 2008), the film that the two producers above remortgaged to finance, being one example among many.

As we have noted throughout this study, Zombie film production has historically been undertaken by low-budget and first-time filmmakers, from the B-Movie productions of the American studio era through to contemporary digital filmmaking. We can offer some interpretations of this phenomenon: initially the Zombie as a figure was not appropriated by larger studios in the same manner as the Vampire or Frankenstein’s Monster, leaving the figure open for filmmakers seeking horror narratives to capitalise on the initial American horror film boom. This in turn occurred because the Zombie was deemed to have less of an established literary background. As I argued in Chapter 2, while other commentators consider the Zombie a particularly American cinematic creature, the figure of the returned dead was present in myth, literature and cinema before American interpretations. As such, I argued that the Zombie as a figure of fear is present in malleable forms throughout its history. To ignore the thematic considerations available in such texts as W. W Jacob’s *The Monkey’s Paw*, and the motifs of the returning dead in Lovecraft, Poe and others is to ignore how Zombie texts of the twentieth (and twenty-first) century return to their key...
considerations time and time again – the pain of loss, the wish for return, and the brutal reality of death and the dead body.

The essential flexibility of the thematic Zombie is its key strength, allowing its development throughout periods of cinematic saturation and paucity, responding to changing representations in horror film and culture generally. As I charted in Chapter 3, the American cinematic Zombie itself is not a fixed representation, but altered as changing audience tastes and production contexts dictated. Even the text hailed as the definitive instigator of the modern cinematic Zombie – George Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* – took influences, both thematic and visual, from previous horror and Zombie films, alongside other popular horror and science fiction texts of the 1950s. The innovation of making the Zombies consumers is notable, and should not be underestimated, given later influences on Zombie film, but that Romero was influenced by popular culture in *Night* and later *Dawn of the Dead* should not be forgotten. Romero’s title as a Zombie ‘auteur’ may be questionable, but most commentators and fans position him uncritically as the father of modern Zombie cinema. This has led to a canonisation of his works that have since been used to determine the inclusion of later Zombie films within an overall concept of genre. The influence of Romero is such that the Monroeville mall is a noted destination for fans wishing to experience the space as used in Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead*;

News.biggr.net, 13/11/2007: **New Zombie World Record Achieved in Pittsburgh**: 1, 124 zombies gather at Monroeville Mall to set a new world record … as part of Pittsburgh’s first Zombie Weekend.²

This fan appreciation has led to a reverential re-historicization of the Zombie, in criticism and film production. This process has also led to an appropriation of Romero’s narrative and visual constructs, in that the majority of Zombie film from the 70s onwards can be discussed as texts concerned with the destruction of the body, both individual and social. These spectacles of destruction are not the only extant Zombie narratives, but their frequent appearances indicate that the physical representation of death and contamination became a major consideration for what we could term the contemporary Zombie text.

Before we place this uncritically as a key determinant within Zombie film, we should recall that this study also aimed to question the idea of American
dominance within the production of Zombie film. In terms of numbers of films made, it is clear that American film production exceeds that of other countries. The continual presence of the American film industry alongside America’s financial and political dominance throughout most of the twentieth century has placed American filmmaking as a key player in the global film market. This dominant position has led to two key dialogues within national cinemas, that of appropriating American genres and cultural constructs, to engage both home and global audiences, and that of a rejection of American formats and styles to promote a focused national product. But these dialogues are intertwined, changing as the economic status and popularity of national films has fluctuated.

I argued that the history of British Zombie film is a mix of American, European and British production influences, in the technical staff and co-productions that marked certain films. In the history of British Zombie film we can also trace a developing isolation from American film markets and funding overall. In much the same manner that the Zombie was first used as a “B-movie” creature to follow the major American studio productions of horror, so we could argue that the British Zombie was also utilised to respond to the iconographical dominance of American products. However, the most successful of British Zombie films, *Shaun of the Dead* (Edgar Wright, 2004) melded a particularly ironic portrayal of contemporary British life with a tribute to generic conventions considered iconic by the film’s creators, indicating again the strength of established American narratives and the problematic nature of charting interchanges of influence between historically linked cultures.

European Zombie films offer a clearer insight into debates about how film genres are challenged through global production and distribution contexts. As with Britain, early Italian Zombie films were fragmented texts, relying on co-production finance to secure a larger audience. However, while they may have been characterised as simply derivative, later Italian Zombie films moved away from the narrative considerations that Romero solidified with *Dawn of the Dead* in 1978. These depictions use an exploitative aesthetic to foreground philosophies of nihilistic destruction. We should also note that for American audiences, European horror and sex films had long been imported to provide ‘stronger’, cheaply made material for audiences. Given these contexts, the
Italian Zombie film can be placed as not merely an addendum to American Zombie narratives, but an ongoing evolution.

The numbers of Italian Zombie films place that country as the second most prolific in terms of Zombie film production, given that the Italian horror film genre has historically been a strong sub-genre for production companies. This is unlike Spain, where Zombie films as a result have been limited. Like the Italian films of the same period, many Spanish Zombie films could arguably be categorised as exploitation texts. That many histories of European horror consider exploitation films as part of an overall trend within horror film of the 1970s should not be discounted, but this should only be in the context of how these films attempted hidden social critiques. The Spanish Zombie films in particular show this, as the earlier texts that punish women give way to films such as Jorge Grau’s Non si deve profanare il sonno dei morti (1974), which is explicitly about environmental damage and authoritarian complicity. Unlike the British Zombie films, both Spanish and Italian films did not necessarily set their horrors within a recognisable ‘home’ aesthetic – both relied upon exoticising and removing their horrors to other countries. This can be traced to the ongoing production restraints faced by differing countries.

We can argue that the European Zombie film is characterised by a clear understanding of the need for wide audiences, leading to continual co-productions to counter American filmic dominance. In the case of French and German Zombie films, both of which are marked by a relative lack of numbers, more concerted discussions of national identity can be found in individual film texts, while the independent production origin of contemporary German Zombie film allowed for extremely violent meditations on how bodies and borders are breached. Overall, European Zombie films can be seen to explore the concepts of the undead body in a much more sexualised and graphic manner than American films of the same period and in more varied narratives that deal with religious overtones of guilt and nihilism, sexual repression and expression. That the Zombie appears in so many varying narratives, long before the fragmented approaches evidenced in American Zombie films of the 70s, 80s and 90s also suggests that this cinematic monster is a key figure in horror texts outside of dominant centres of cinematic production.
If the European Zombie responds to American dominance, yet still offers alternative representations of the undead for European and American audiences, can the same exchanges of influence be charted in countries outside of the historically dominant North America and European film market? Chapter 6 discussed varying film markets and products from those countries that have undertaken concerted Zombie film production. Australian and New Zealand horror films are rare, with Australian films in particular lacking a defining sense of generic progression. As such, the Zombie films studied show wildly divergent narrative concerns, though if we place Australian Zombie cinema particularly as representative of “second cinema” we can note that the defining aesthetic consideration is of dark comedy, questioning the freedom to move within typified Australian landscapes. These humorous narratives also characterise the Zombie films of a smaller, more economically precarious country, New Zealand. There is a strong case to interpret the gore-filled narratives of filmmakers such as Peter Jackson as attempts to override a parochial film industry. The nature of Australian and New Zealand cinema, as small, underfunded industries poised between the pervasive influence of American and Asian film markets may account for the lack of concerted genre films. That the majority of their populations are English speaking may also indicate a reason for the dominance of other countries’ films.

This is unlike the two other geographical areas discussed in the chapter. While Mexico and much of the Latin American countries are economically subservient to North American dominance, the difference in language may well account for the development of a particularly cultural re-appropriation of the Zombie, at least in Mexican horror. We cannot claim a complete rejection of dominant US cultural products, but in the case of the luchador-monster films, I argue that we can clearly define a particular national representation of the Zombie, set against popular cultural icons held as embodiments of power and justice.

The same can be argued for the East Asian film industry defined. While many countries do not have concerted Zombie film production, the films available explicitly represent the undead body according to differing traditional cultural contexts. While this altered to facilitate the changing global film market, contemporary concerns are still fore grounded within many Zombie films, notably the infective narratives of Hong Kong and Japanese cinema. Japanese
re-visionings of America Zombie texts also proved incredibly influential, in the field of computer games. The success of the *Biohazard/ Resident Evil* games indicated the importance of differing media in translating and updating key thematic concerns. This bears particular relevance when arguing that dialogues of influence are not one-sided: the contemporary American Zombie film is as much a product of international re-appropriation and translation as it is a descendant of earlier Zombie texts.

This accounts for the diversity of texts encountered in the final chapter. The influence of differing media, including the rise of digital filmmaking, has led to an expanding body of work that demonstrates ongoing popularity with audiences. The sheer numbers of Zombie film now available make it hard to delineate the production context, especially when taking into account the rise of internet-intended material. As I discussed during Chapter 7, Zombie film production is present in both large budget studio offerings and independent digital videos created by fans. Intertextual use of the Zombie, from comics to games to television programmes, also makes the argument for a purely cinematic Zombie redundant. From its earliest beginnings to the present day, the fictional Zombie text can be found in most aspects of popular culture, from literature in the nineteenth century to computer games today.

Instead, I argued for a thematic and visual consideration of the figure of the Zombie, to help construct a concept of a Zombie genre. We can see that there are prominent *types* of Zombie film ranging from body comedies, romance films to action narratives, but these all include repeated visual motifs: the decaying body invading a defined social construct, whether institutional (marriage and the family) or geographical (the city, the home, the hospital). Underlying this is a continual critique of the structures that define modern humanity. These range from destructive foreign or racial policies, to fears of global culture that negate the individual. All of this is centred on the two key factors that define the Zombie – the uncontrolled body and the negation of personality. In the Zombie film, we can argue, the individual is everything.

This is most potently expressed in the contemporary texts that place the viewer within the viewpoint of the survivor. We can define the modern Zombie film as an excessively intertextual construct, through the visual deployment of hand
held camerawork and an appropriation of the aesthetics of documentary realism. As we have seen throughout the study, Zombie films change as popular or newer media forms attract audiences. In this, the Zombie as a popular cultural construct is displayed in its most modern and most defining aspect: as an infection. We can conclude that the defining feature of the Zombie genre is its mutating nature, adapting to and spreading through differing media. This has been demonstrated, though not completely, by this study. In order to fully appreciate the changing context of how the Zombie body is presented in texts, and to question whether we can distil the thematic concerns we have found in literature, film and television to more modern media, further discussion of the Zombie body in modern comics, such as Robert Kirkman’s *Marvel Zombies* (2005/2006) would indicate the utilisation of previous comic book narratives against established iconic figures of comic books.³ Further research on the strong medium of video games is also necessary - I indicated the importance of the *Biohazard/Resident Evil* games, but they are only the most prominent of what are termed “survival horror” video games.⁴ Initial research indicates that the variety of Zombie cinematic texts is matched by the deployment of the Zombie in video games: from the 1984 game *Zombie Zombie* for the ZX Spectrum to the more modern games such as *Left 4 Dead* (projected release November 2008) which depend upon AI (Artificial Intelligence) to move the attacking creatures, forcing co-operation onto players.⁵ Zombie video games also offer a clear indication of how generic tropes from other media – mostly film – are filtered into their narratives and design. *Biohazard* utilised key scenes from Romero’s works, and the popular recent game *Dead Rising* (Inafune Keiji, 2006) faced legal challenges from a film company who claimed it was an infringement of the two *Dawn of the Dead* films.⁶ The games company Capcom, in its legal declaration responded:

> Capcom seeks a declaration from this court that Dead Rising does not infringe on any copyrights… because any similarities between Dead Rising and George A Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* are based on the wholly unprotectible idea of humans battling zombies in a shopping mall … this unprotectible idea will necessarily yield similarities of ideas, materials in the public domain, facts, *scènes d’oeuvres* and other trivial and random similarities that cannot give rise to a copyright claim.⁷
This is a startling development and shows how iconic imagery can be presented as derivative or innovatory. It appears that dialogues surrounding the influence of Romero on Zombie texts are still very current, but in a new form of media representation. Video games also offer a new perspective on how the *mise-en scène* of horror texts are constructed to induce unease and audience involvement. The nature of video games is such that active participation is required by the viewer/gamer, leading to new dialogues on immersion and spectatorship. As Jay McRoy argues, this has led to debate on whether such texts deserve recognition as a "cultural phenomenon" and whether film studies discourses can profitably be applied to analysing them. That video games currently also occupy legal debates over freedom of expression and censorship, at least in the United States and Germany, also marks them as new sites for debate on how the undead body is represented. This would extend not only my discussion of thematic and visual deployments of the Zombie in popular culture, but would also offer an introduction to another aspect of this study that was left undeveloped: the interaction between viewers and fans of Zombie texts and their own discussions and presentations of the Zombie.

While I have offered some historical contexts for the rise of fan filmmaking, constraints of time meant that a concerted discussion of fan agency was undeveloped. This is the key area for any commentator on horror to acknowledge, but needs a dedicated study of its own. This is partially due to the wide-ranging nature of fan texts that criticise or create Zombie texts. Fan dialogues are now not restricted to fanzines and conventions where dialogues of taste can be expressed, but are prevalent in Internet culture through blogs, fan sites, online published material, artwork, comics and of course games and films. These varied cultural products indicate the first problem for further study, in selecting those expressions of taste that would help construct an interpretation of fan discourses. Several approaches are indicated, relying on different representations of fan culture to produce an encompassing study of fan taste and cultural competence.

The first approach is one used by Brigid Cherry to present an overall description of the horror genre through fan dialogues. Her methodology relied upon two groups of horror viewers, a ‘control’ group and the self-confessed fans.
Information was received by questionnaires that considered self-descriptive terms (for sexuality and what was considered by the subject to be a defining characteristic of horror, for example) alongside basic demographic information such as age and profession.\textsuperscript{12} Cherry’s results indicate the particularly individual responses to horror film, and indeed as we have seen through looking at one sub-genre of horror, concrete definitions are difficult to produce. But this approach may yield more concerted results if applied to Zombie film, which as we have seen throughout this study, is defined by discourses from both fans and critics who promote a particular canon of films as worthy of attention. The variety of fan sites for Zombie films (mentioned in the introduction) indicates that the online presence of fans is readily available to the researcher. Therefore an initial research context would be to engage with fans to clarify basic demographic factors (age, sex, race, profession) before asking for individual preferences in Zombie films. For example, the discussion fora on Homepage of the Dead are predicated on a shared enjoyment of Romero’s work, so to interpret fan preferences from this site would be based on an understanding that by joining this site, fans have already expressed a preference towards particular film texts. Fans on this site, among others, are also vocal in their preference for certain Romero films over others, and are willing to make both thematic and visual comparisons between Zombie films.\textsuperscript{13}

The second approach would rely more strongly upon the cultural products created by fans in response to the Zombie genre. This analysis, already briefly mentioned in this study, would closely follow the methodological approaches I have utilised, to determine whether recurring visual tropes and narratives in fan-produced material challenges those we have noted as iconic in larger cultural production contexts. The presence of short stories and ongoing narratives are notable on fan sites, alongside the still images presented for other fans to comment on. To return again to the example of Homepage of the Dead, the fan art produced by username DeadEND presents an ongoing narrative of destroying Zombies in frozen tableaux of action, yet none of the humans have recognisable facial features – they are either in the background or wear gas masks (See \textit{Image 1}).\textsuperscript{14} These artworks not only reference ongoing narratives seen in films in the survival/action themes, but also indicate a depth of fan
involvement in re-utilising key visual tropes: the prominence of the undead body opposed to the concealed identity of the living is notable. The social spaces envisaged – homes, streets – are also an indicator of the importance of the concept of encroached borders. This is a thematic consideration we have noted throughout this work. Fan art indicates the potency of the concept of the fictional Zombie. That they are presented online also testifies to an ongoing dialogue within academic discussions of genre – that fans are active constructors of taste, seeking similar constructions within which to define their agency, either in a supportive or antagonistic role. A further study of how the Zombie genre is constructed through fan dialogues and products would contribute to this area of debate, while also placing these expressions of iconic imagery within a historical context. I would argue that these images are the modern equivalent of the *Danse Macabre*.

Image 1: Artist: DeadEND

The third potential approach to discuss the importance of fan agency continues from the second. The production of fan artefacts and personal involvement with
popular cultural texts indicates a level of sophisticated translation, focusing on elements considered important to the consumer of these texts. This has its most visible expression in how fans appropriate make-up and behaviours found in horror texts. The third approach therefore focuses entirely on the importance of the fan body as a site of demonstration and appropriation of the Zombie. The prominence of special make-up effects within contemporary Zombie film was noted in Chapter 7, and the Zombie body has been the primary holder of meaning throughout this study. It logically follows then that modern Zombie body’s presentation is of key importance in films, and it remains to be seen whether this concept is also applicable to fan uses of Zombie texts. We have seen in the brief example of fan art above that the portrayal of the Zombie is important in static representations by fans: can we apply this to active interpretations as well?

This is not merely within film texts that fans produce, but in their actions to appropriate the visual impact of the undead body. The Zombie walk in Pittsburgh, one of many globally, is but one example of an active personal involvement to claim identification with this undead creature. The examples of fans who become extras in Zombie films – Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright in *Land of the Dead*, or Paul R. Gagne who recorded his experiences as part of his discussion of Romero’s films – are ongoing. Some fans now record their experiences as extras, making films within films to display their involvement. The appropriation of the Zombie body therefore indicates a potential expression of identification, displayed through recreating visual effects noted for their ability to shock. By taking these displays outside of the regulated cinema viewing experience, raises the fascinating question of why the Zombie body is displayed in social spaces. Traditionally, the *Día de los Muertos* festival in Mexico does this through mocking social status in the skeleton figures of *La Catrina*, alongside political statements. We could theorise that as an object out of place, the Zombie body is a useful symbol of discontent for those who wish to criticise patterns of repression – certainly artist protestors in Austria utilised the symbolic nature of the Zombie body to critique mindless consumerism in their street performances.
There is another potential interpretation that links fan appropriation to a wider cultural context: that of the shifting representation of the dead body generally in popular culture. Rayna Denison and Mark Jancovich offer one key example of how shifting representations of the body in media can be traced to changing exhibition contexts – in the example of commercial television:

As cable and satellite television developed in the 1980s, and was forced to compete with existing channels and networks, one of the key ways in which they could mark themselves out as distinctive was precisely through their ability to provide materials that were taboo on the established television channels.\textsuperscript{19}

Citing examples such as \textit{The X-Files} (1993-2002) \textit{CSI: Crime Scene Investigation} (2000+) and \textit{Grey’s Anatomy} (2005+), Denison and Jancovich note that depicting the body in “gory narratives” is not a recent phenomenon, but rather a depiction of the human body that has evolved from previous narratives – such as \textit{The Quatermass Experiment}, or \textit{The Twilight Zone}.\textsuperscript{20} We can begin to note ongoing thematic devices in these contemporary works – there is a focus on medical science working with the dead or diseased body to help the living. That so many doctors/ scientists and their reactions to the body are featured places these texts within modernist approaches to death and dying: we are invited to have a \textit{forensic sensibility} to the corpse. This at once foregrounds the corpse as spectacle: displayed by the contentious 2002 \textit{Bodyworks} exhibition curated by Professor Gunther Von Hagens. In defending his works, he opined:

I want to bring the life back to anatomy. I am making the dead lifeful again … Yes, some of the specimens are difficult to look at. To see a mutilated body is hard because we have fears about our own integrity. We have a deep-rooted anxiety about when we see the body opened up because in this way we have feelings about ourselves.\textsuperscript{21}

Von Hagens also commented that in this he wished to return to the open display of science as begun by the renaissance, where autopsies were open to the public. In this, we are reminded of how social attitudes to the dead changed after that particular historical period, leading to a representational shift in horror literature. This fascination with the dead body and the methods used to determine its working may then indicate how the contemporary popular texts mentioned above, alongside the fictional forensic detection novels of Kathy Reichs, or indeed the controversy surrounding Dr William Bass’s “Body Farm”, (which
provided writer Patricia Cornwell with material for her 1995 book *The Body Farm*) indicate a newer representation of what the dead body signifies – in its use to the living. The forensic sensibility these texts ask for from the viewer offers a socially acceptable position of spectatorship, that of the scientific observer. That so many medical programmes, plastic surgery programmes and forensic investigation dramas exist may offer us a new cultural perspective on viewing the dead body in fictional contexts. If this is the case, then the narratives that Zombies inhabited throughout the twentieth century may be a precursor to a much more general shift in perspectives on death in popular culture.

The Zombie, however, shows no sign of disappearing from view in popular culture. The 2006 advert for Matteson’s Chicken Bites utilised Zombies – and music from *Shaun of the Dead* – to target its comment on carnivorous habits at young males, while the use of the term Zombie is now recognised as a key term in computer terminology, for a computer that is being controlled by a hacker. As such, the concept of the Zombie may be changing yet again, displaying the cultural adaptability that has ensured its place not only within horror cinema, but also in popular horror culture generally.
Endnotes: Introduction

4 Ibid pp 5
10 A. Bryce (Ed.) *Zombie* (Liskeard: Stray Cat Publishing. 2000)
14 The George Romero site is notable for the interview content and also in his seeming openness to answer fan questions. This indicates a producer well aware of his cultural status amongst fans.
17 *Ibid* pp 328-331
18 A. Bryce. “History of The Dark Side” Retrieved from http://www.ebony.co.uk/darkside/history.htm on 17/02/2006. This analysis is sustained through close scrutiny of 42 consecutives issues of *The Dark Side*, running from Issue 42 in Oct/Nov 1994 to Issue 84 in April/May 2000. This figure does not include several ‘special’ or longer length publications — such as the text *Zombie* edited by A. Bryce
20 *Cinéfantastique* (13:1, September-October 1982) pp 16-34
21 S. McIntosh and M. Leverette (Eds.) *Zombie Culture: Autopsies of the Living Dead* (Lanham, MA: The Scarecrow Press Ltd. 2008)
Mary Douglas. 26
of fear and taboo that both Connolly and Kristeva cite have interesting similarities to the text by York: Columbia University Press. 1982) The links between biological and cultural 45
also problematises psychoanalytic analyses in (48:4, September 2003)
www.sensesofcinema.com /contents/01/15/horror_beneath.html.on 16/19/2006. Mark Jancovich 43
12/12/2006
D. J. Skal. The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror 38
Connolly references Kristeva’s key text The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection. (New York: Columbia University Press. 1982) The links between biological and cultural dimensions of fear and taboo that both Connolly and Kristeva cite have interesting similarities to the text by Mary Douglas. Purity and Danger (London: Routledge. 1966) These ideas are clarified and


Endnotes: Chapter 1


6 I. Russell. *The Book of the Dead* p 8

7 P. Dendle. *The Zombie Movie Encyclopaedia* p 3, 5

8 Ibid p 6


11 Ibid pp 25-30. While plagues were a periodic threat within medieval history and after, the Black Death (or Great Pestilence) was notable for the extreme speed in which it travelled and almost total devastation it occasioned. The mortality rate is approximated at 9 dead for every 10 infected, and the concentration of infection was among young males and females. G. Kohn. *The Wordsworth Encyclopedia of Plague and Pestilence* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 1998) pp 251-252

12 C. Arnold. *Necropolis: London and Its Dead* pp 79-81


15 Ibid p 282


17 Ibid p 44


19 Ibid pp 3-4
Endnotes: Chapter 2

3 N. Caciola, "Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture" Past and Present (152, Aug 1996) pp 3 - 45
5 H. P. Lovecraft. Supernatural Horror in Literature (New York: Abramson. 1945) p 18
17 Doyle’s short stories on the figure of the mummy and returning dead include The Ring of Thoth (1890): The Los Amigos Fiasco (1892) and Lot No. 249 (1894). David Stuart Davies contends that the first two stories are definite influences on later American horror film, namely The Mummy (Carl Freund, 1932) and The Walking Dead (Michael Curtiz, 1936). See D.S. Davies. “Introduction” In Sir A.C. Doyle. Tales of Unease (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 2000) pp ix-xiv
20 Ibid p 198
21 Ibid pp 198, 201
23 M.R James also collected together and published many of Le Fanu’s works. M.R James. Collected Ghost Stories (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 1992) p i
24 M. R James. Collected Ghost Stories pp 638-639
25 S. Jones (Ed.) The Giant Book of Zombies p 207
28 Vodun is one correct term for describing the religious practices, although there are regional variants. Fiction in literature and film has renamed it ‘voodoo’ which is the term I will be applying when discussing fictional texts.
31 T. Krzywinska. A Skin for Dancing In: Possession, Witchcraft and Voodoo In Film (Trowbridge: Flicks Books. 2000) p 159
33 Ibid p 490. It should be noted that both the authors are medically based. Therefore their dialogues on the zombi body are eminently physical and medical, rather than considering the symbolic force of the enslaved body
34 See P. Haining. Zombie! Stories of the Walking Dead
Endnotes: Chapter 3

3 G. Seldes. The Years of the Locust (Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1933) p 3
4 D. J. Skal. The Monster Show p 115
7 Leni would be asked to direct Dracula by Kohn and hinted that he would have used Conrad Veidt – Cesare from Caligari – to fulfil the role of the vampire.
8 Such as Henry S. Whitehead’s Jumbee (1930) and August Derleth’s (the founder of Arkham House publishing) The House in the Magnolias, in Strange Tales July 1932
10 Webb attempted to sell the rights of his play for filming, and later sued the Halperins for breach of copyright. As his play had failed and the Zombie as a concept was not copyrighted to anyone, he lost the case. For further details on Webb and Garnett, see P. Haining. Zombie! Stories of the Walking Dead pp 12-14; B. Senn. Drums of Terror: Voodoo in the Cinema (Baltimore: Midnight Marquee Press. 1998) p 19, and J. Russell. The Book of the Dead (Godalming: FAB Press. 2005) pp 19-20
11 The Halperins success in the silent films hampered their acclimatisation to dialogue in the sound era. Their films are discussed as relying on “Pantomime-style” performances, with dialogue coming second to the appearance of the actors. However, their earlier experience in background sound meant that the soundtrack to films was decidedly polished in using sound levels to connote unease and high emotion – the scene in the mill in White Zombie, for example.
13 Ibid. p 39
14 There seems to be no definitive record of the budget available for this particular film
15 Ibid. Lugosi was also claimed to have re-shot some scenes, indicating the problematic nature of ascribing production influences.
20 Ibid
24 Ibid p 54
25 N/Author. “Chillers Warm U Till with $10,000,000 Net” Variety (July 24 1944)
27 B. Senn. Drums of Terror: Voodoo in the Cinema p 49
31 B. Senn. Drums of Terror: Voodoo in the Cinema p 49
33 S. S Prawer. Caligari’s Children: The Film as Tale of Terror p 40
35 T. Weaver. Poverty Row Horrors! Monogram, PRC and Republic Horror Films of the Forties pp 134-135
36 Ibid p 139
37 V. Di Fate. “The Magic of Menzies” Filmfax (106, 1 April 2005) p 56
38 T. Weaver. Poverty Row Horrors! Monogram, PRC and Republic Horror Films of the Forties pp xiv-xv
40 D. J Skal. The Monster Show pp 251
41 Such as H. P Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Ray Bradbury and Robert Bloch amongst others.
42 J. G Betancourt. Best of Weird Tales (New York: Barnes and Noble Inc.1995) p vii

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See A. Nyberg. Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code (Jackson, Miss: University of Mississippi Press. 1998) pp 17-103


V. Sobchack. Screening Space p 37

S. Sontag. “The Imagination of Disaster” Commentary (40, October 1965) p 48


V. Di Fate. “The Magic of Menzies” p 58

Ibid, p 55

V. Sobchack. Screening Space p121


Ibid, pp 55-56

D. J. Skal. The Monster Show pp 251

C. Clarens. Horror Movies: An Illustrated Survey p 13

N/Author. “Creature With The Atom Brain” Monthly Film Bulletin (23: 271, 01 August 1956) p 103

N/Author. “Creature With the Atom Brain” Variety (9, 22 June 1955)


V. Sobchack. Screening Space p 45


G. Turner. “A Case For Insomnia” American Cinematographer (78: 3, 1 March 1997) p 77


G. Turner. “A Case For Insomnia” p 78-9


A. LaValley, (Ed.) Introduction in Invasion of the Body Snatchers p 4


C. Clarens. Horror Movies: An Illustrated Study p196

D. Siegel. Quoted In S. S Prawer. Caligari’s Children: The Film as Tale of Terror p 272


P. Dendle. The Zombie Movie Encyclopedia p 91Dendle makes the interesting point that it is this Zombie film above all others that pre dates and inspires Romero's concept of the mass Zombie invasion/plague from Night of the Living Dead (1968)
82 Though *I Eat...* was unreleased until 1970 as part of a double bill. K. Thomas. “I Eat Your Skin”. *Filmfacts* (14:5, 1 March 1971) p 96-97
84 Though the film *The Cape Canaveral Monsters* (1960, Phil Tucker) makes use of alien saboteurs possessing the bodies of a recently deceased couple.
86 S. S Prawer. *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror* p 188
87 M. Jancovich. *Rational Fears: American horror in the 1950s* p 130
88 The *Monthly Film Bulletin* clearly states the victims are “vampire-like zombies”. “The Last Man on Earth” *Monthly Film Bulletin* (34:397, 1 Feb 1967) pp 27-28

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Ebert later reassessed "Night of the Living Dead" (1968).


BFI Publishing. 1992) pp 23

William Castle, with an insurance policy of $50,000 for anyone who died from fright while watching the film. See J. R. Atkins.


Promotional posters for the later release of Night make space for the comments of Marie Torre; a commentator for KDKA TV who claimed the film was “More Terrifying than Hitchcock’s Psycho!” The original marketing was more in line with the gimmick strategy of William Castle, with an insurance policy of $50,000 for anyone who died from fright while watching the film. See J. Russo. The Complete Night of the Living Dead Film Book pp 76-77. Tony Williams equates this conflict of presentation and intent within Night as part of Romero’s “cinematic development of American literary naturalist tradition”. T. Williams. The Cinema of George A Romero: Knight of the Living Dead p 5


A narrative device jettisoned in the following sequels. The cause of the Zombie invasion is never established, and in terms of the events depicted is unimportant.

Don Siegel recalls Invasion’s special effects budget at $15,000, S. Kaminsky. “Invasion of the Body Snatchers: A Subtle Classic” in T. Atkins. Science Fiction Films (New York: Monarch Press. 1976) p 77. There are seemingly no similar recollections for Night, given its weekend shooting schedules and varied financial contributions. A local butcher (and investor in the film) supplied the intestines for the entrail scene, and all the crew handled make-up and special effects. See P.R. Gagne. The Zombies that ate Pittsburgh pp 31-34

Stuart Kaminsky makes the point that Invasion bears parallels with Howard Hawks’ The Thing, and that Night of the Living Dead is a descendant of the “emotionless vegetable creature ... that lived off humans”. S. Kaminsky. “Invasion of the Body Snatchers: A Subtle Classic” in T. Atkins. Science Fiction Films pp 81-82

Promotional posters for the later release of Night make space for the comments of Marie Torre; a commentator for KDKA TV who claimed the film was “More Terrifying than Hitchcock’s Psycho!” The original marketing was more in line with the gimmick strategy of William Castle, with an insurance policy of $50,000 for anyone who died from fright while watching the film. See J. Russo. The Complete Night of the Living Dead Film Book pp 26, 51


“Roger was band-wagoning in that first article. It was less the case that he was critical of the film than he was advocating parental guidance”. G. Romero. Interviewed in R. Porton. “Blue Collar Monsters” p 3

26 “Night of the Living Dead” Daily Variety (15th October 1968)


28 M. Pye. “Almost everybody dies, the rest are dead already” The Scotsman (1/9/1970)

29 Ibid


34 G. A. Surmacz. “Anatomy of a Horror Film” Cinefantastique (4: 1, September 1975) p 18

35 The working group of The Latent Image formed for Night did not last after There’s Always Vanilla. Latent entered a period of financial insecurity, hindered by an ongoing court case with Walter Reade over the returns from Night of The Living Dead. Romero’s partnership with Richard Rubinstein in the Laurel Company would last until June 1985, when he became a freelance director again, but with amicable ties to Laurel. See G.Surmacz. “Anatomy of a Horror Film” Cinefantastique pp 15-26: P. R. Gagne. The Zombies that ate Pittsburgh pp 45-46: 57-69: 167-169


37 G. Surmacz. “Anatomy of a Horror Film” pp 15-16: 24-26


39 T. Williams. The Cinema of George A Romero: Knight of the Living Dead pp 171-177

40 K. Paffenroth. Gospel of The Living Dead pp 21-22


43 Ibid pp 66-67


45 John Carpenter praises Romero in terms of the visual gore and shock the Dead films instigated: “George revolutionized that. He made the horror movie something to contend with. His work has influenced every major director in the horror genre since 1968”. In P.R. Gagne. The Zombies that ate Pittsburgh p 21

46 A significant portrayal of a child as inherently evil started with Rosemary’s Baby. The narrative use of the demonic child, either as “the monster or it’s medium” within the context of the monstrous family – was itself a narrative development of the American horror film in the 1960s, according to A. Britton, R. Lippe, T. Williams and R. Wood. American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film (Toronto: Festival of Festivals. 1979) pp 11, 17

Notes on the Living Dead” in A. Britton, R. Lippe, T. Williams and R. Wood. *American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film* p 95


49 B. K Grant. “‘Taking Back Night of the Living Dead: George Romero, Feminism and the Horror Film’” p 72

50 In terms of horror narratives, the emergence of the practical heroine allows for slightly more scope in character portrayal and assumed audience identification: traits that Romero arguably used before more modern and more sexualised Zombie film heroines. For a discussion of this emergence of the female ‘Hardbody’, see J. Brown. “Gender and the Action Heroine: Hardbodies and the ‘Point of No Return’” *Cinema Journal*. (35: 3, Spring 1996) pp 52-71


52 G. Romero. Interviewed in R. Porton. “‘Blue Collar Monsters’” pp 2, 4


55 While again Romero is following in the footsteps of Herschell Gordon Lewis, the extreme gore in *Dawn* meant his work received criticism yet again for his bloody portrayals. Stephen King in *Danse Macabre* relates how a journalist questioned the social morality of *Dawn*, to which Romero questioned the social morality of the DC-10 engine mount assembly. (London: Futura.1982) p 442

56 T. Williams. *The Cinema of George A Romero: Knight of the Living Dead* pp 114-127


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2 Prints of his shorts that Méliès had sent for American exhibition were illegally copied and distributed, losing him a small fortune. This piracy meant that not only were his works distributed beyond their original intention and to larger potential audiences, but also the copyright process preserved many prints that would otherwise have been lost. *Ibid* p 20

3 This film is also credited as the first fiction film to include authentic war footage. Many of the real soldiers he used in the risen dead sequences were later killed in the war. See J. Wakeman (Ed.) *World Film Directors, Volume One, 1890-1945* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1987) pp 371-385; D. Kalat. “French Revolution: The Secret History of Gallic Horror Movies” In S. J Schneider (Ed.) *Fear Without Frontiers: Horror Cinema from across the Globe* (Godalming: FAB Press. 2003) pp 269-270


There are records of another film made in 1934 that can also be tentatively titled a Zombie film. The Scotland Yard Mystery (Thomas Bentley) was as J. Rigby terms it “suggestively retitled” The Living Dead for the American release in 1936. The narrative seems to revolve around the use of toxins to kill and revive victims by the title character. At that point I have been unable to locate a copy for analysis. See J. Rigby. English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema p 29: J. Russell. Book of the Dead (Gdalming: FAB Press. 2005) p 28

T. Bergfelder. “Surface and distraction: Style and Genre at Gainsborough in the late 1920s and 1930s” In P. Cook (Ed.) Gainsborough Pictures (London: Cassell.1997) p 45

P. Hutchings. Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film (Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1993) p 25


Ibid pp 78-95

S. S. Prawer. Caligari’s Children: The Film as Tale of Terror (New York: Da Capo Press. 1980) p 247


A. Pixley. Quatermass Viewing Notes p 44 These figures rose to 5 million for the final episode, in comparison to the estimated 22 million who viewed the coronation that year. The finale of the concluding episode of The Quatermass Experiment takes place inside Westminster Abbey, an ironic twist on the space codified as ceremonial in the coronation earlier that year. See also J. Coe. “Hammer’s Cosy Violence” Sight and Sound (6, August 1996) p 10


W. Kinsey. Hammer films: The Bray Studios Years p 59

P. Hutchings. Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film p 65


N/ Author. “The Earth Dies Screaming” Monthly Film Bulletin (32:381, 1 October 1965) p 150


N/Author. “The Plague of the Zombies” Monthly Film Bulletin (33: 385, 1 February 1966) p 26
36 The authoritarian backlash against Horror Comics that saw the gradual retirement of Horror titles in America also took place in Britain in the 1950s, as another example of fears of juvenile delinquency and “Americanisation” of British culture translated into repressive censorship. See M. Barker. A Haunt of Fears: The Strange History of the British Horror Comics Campaign (London: Pluto Press. 1984)
37 P. Hutchings. The Horror Film (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited. 2004) pp 179-180
39 Ibid pp 196-198
41 P. Hutchings. Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film p 159
43 S. Chibnall. “Pete Walker and Gothic Revisionism” In S. Chibnall and J. Petley (Eds.) British Horror Cinema p159 Noteworthy Films as a production company had previously released one other horror/ comedy/ sex film, Secrets of Sex in 1970. This text’s high camp treatment seems similarly extended in Horror Hospital.
44 As a production company, the final two productions Tyburn created were G’olé! (1982), the official film of the World Cup Finals, narrated by Sean Connery, and Peter Cushing: A One-Way Ticket to Hollywood (1989), a made for television documentary and biography
46 S. Chibnall and J. Petley (Eds.) British Horror Cinema pp 6-7
55 Ibid p 141
56 Ibid p141

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<td>60</td>
<td>A. Jones. “Joe Dante remembers the genius of Mario Bava” Shivers (83, 1 October 2000) p 19 However, Samuel Z. Arkoff, who was initially impressed by his viewing of Bava’s Black Sunday in Italy before acquiring it, also took care that the film was carefully cut: “anything that was suggestive of playing around – forniciating a corpse, you know what I’m saying? – We wouldn’t stand for it.” S. Arkoff quoted in T. Lucas. “Black Sunday: Reinventing the Mask of Satan” Metro (110, 1 May 1997) p 47</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>Joe D’Amato was one of several aliases under which Massacesi made films. The IMDb lists over 50. In this Massacesi was both protecting his later career from early efforts that he wished to distance himself from, and like many other directors, to improve his chances for co-productions and international releases. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001090/">http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001090/</a>. On 11/12/2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>G. Bertellini (Ed.) The Cinema of Italy p 7</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>J. Slater (Ed.) Eaten Alive! Italian Cannibal and Zombie Movies pp 14 -15</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>Dubbed as “walking flowerpots”, the Zombie cast were comprised mainly of homeless men, their faces smeared with layers of red clay. De Rossi was also the make-up artist for Fulci’s next three Zombie films. A. Jones. “Morti Viventi” In A. Bryce (Ed.) Zombie pp 19-20: D. Totaro. “The Italian zombie film: from derivation to reinvention” In S. J. Schneider (Ed.) Fear Without Frontiers: Horror Cinema Across The Globe (Godalming: FAB Press. 2003) pp 162</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>S. Salvati. Quoted In H. Berger. “Shedding Light on Italian Zombies” Fangoria (165, 1 August 1997) p 56</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>Ibid p 122</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>The mini-series was later edited and presented as a cinematic release. See A. Jones. “Enchanter of the Dark: Director Pupi Avati” Shivers (80, 1 August 2000) p 26</td>
</tr>
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</table>
J. Petley. “The Living Dead at The Manchester Morgue” in J. Slater (Ed.) Zombie Movie Encyclopaedia (pp 203-205)


A. Lázaro-Reboll. “La Noche De Walpurgis/ Shadow of the Werewolf” in A. Mira (Ed.) The Cinema of Spain and Portugal (pp 129-130)


Both P. Dendle in The Zombie Movie Encyclopaedia (p 181) and J. Russell in Book of the Dead (p 296) repeat this claim, although no evidence is offered.


M. Hodges. “Amando de Ossorio: Farewell to Spain’s Knight of Horror” Shivers (pp 19-20)

A. Lázaro-Reboll. “La Noche De Walpurgis/ Shadow of the Werewolf” in A. Mira (Ed.) The Cinema of Spain and Portugal (pp 129-130)

A. Lázaro-Reboll and A. Willis (Eds.) Spanish Popular Cinema (pp 13) As A. Lázaro-Reboll notes in his discussion of Shadow of the Werewolf (1970) Paul Naschy was also involved in many of the horror productions as a scriptwriter, and later as a director. See A. Lázaro-Reboll. “La Noche De Walpurgis/ Shadow of the Werewolf” in A. Mira (Ed.) The Cinema of Spain and Portugal (pp 129-130)

Ibid (p 131)

P. Dendle. The Zombie Movie Encyclopaedia (pp 176)

D. Kowalsky. “Rated S: softcore pornography and the Spanish transition to democracy 1977-82” In A. Lázaro-Reboll and A. Willis (Eds.) Spanish Popular Cinema (pp 55-56)


J. Gru Interviewed by C. Botting. In J. Slater (Ed.) Eaten Alive! Italian Cannibal and Zombie Movies (p 58)

N. Burrell. “Hippies Shouldn’t Play with Dead Things” In A. Bryce (Ed.) Zombie (pp 122-127)


D. Kowalsky. “Rated S: softcore pornography and the Spanish transition to democracy 1977-82” In A. Lázaro-Reboll and A. Willis (Eds.) Spanish Popular Cinema

97 Ibid p 67


101 Ibid p 26

102 P. Blumenstock. “Interview: Jean Rollin has risen from the Grave!” *Video Watchdog* (31, 1 November 1995) p 53


104 P. Blumenstock. “Interview: Jean Rollin has risen from the Grave!” *Video Watchdog* (31, 1 November 1995) p 54


106 C. Clarens. *Horror Movies: An Illustrated Survey* pp 37-43


108 Ibid p 45


111 R. Halle. “Unification Horror: Queer Desire and Uncanny Visions” In R. Halle and M. McCarthy (Eds.) *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective* p 285

112 S.O.V: An abbreviation for Shot-On-Video J. Russell. *Book of the Dead* p 166

113 R. Halle. “Unification Horror: Queer Desire and Uncanny Visions” In R. Halle and M. McCarthy (Eds.) *Light Motives: German Popular Film in Perspective* pp 286-297

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3 Ibid pp 243-247


The group making Plaga Zombie and its sequels are credited with over 100 independent short features to their name. However, distribution of their work is limited to brief showings within Latin America, though they are negotiating distribution with a Spanish film company. A. Barcinski. “Plaga Zombie: Guerrilla Ghouls” Fangoria (247, 1 October 2005) pp 60-63


G. D Rhodes. “Fantasmas del cine Mexicano: the 1930s horror film cycle of Mexico” In S. J. Schneider (Ed.) Fear Without Frontiers: Horror Cinema Across The Globe p 103

K. Crocker. “Mexi-Monsters on the March”


S. Rhodes. “And In This Corner…El Santo: El Mascarado De Plata” Filmfax (49, March/ April 1995) p 46


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Ibid pp 13-26

Ibid p 31
35 S. Derndory and E. Jacka. The Screening of Australia: Anatomy of a National Cinema: Volume 2 p 51
36 J. Russell. Book of the Dead p 301
37 N/Author. “Zombie Brigade” Variety (May 25, 1998) p 30
38 Michael Spierig places the budget at under 1 million U.S dollars. See M. Helms. “Undead and Loving It” Fangoria (227, October 2003) pp 43-44
44 L. McDonald. “A Critique of the Judgement of Bad Taste or: Beyond Braindead Criticism” Illusions (21/22, 1 July 1993) p 11
45 Ibid p 13
49 A. Jones. “Braindead” Cinefantastique (23:6, 1 April 1993) p 51
50 N/Author. “Blood and Guts” Starburst (178, 1 June 1993) p 6
54 Ibid p 17
57 C. Shih-lun. “Dressed to Kill – Taiwan’s New Wave of Horror Films” Taiwan Panorama (February 2006) p 92
58 A. L Huang. “New Horror Genre: The Taiwan box office miracle” Fountain (1, June 2006) p 86
60 A. Yue. “Preposterous Hong Kong Horror” In K. Gelder (Ed.) The Horror Reader p 365
61 Ibid p 219
62 A. Yue. “Preposterous Hong Kong Horror” In K. Gelder (Ed.) The Horror Reader p 365
63 S. Teo. Hong Kong Cinema: The Extra Dimensions p 224-225, Geung si sin sang/ Mr. Vampire proved popular with audiences, leading to at least 7 follow-up films using the term “Mr Vampire” and countless imitations and parodies.
64 Ibid pp 224-225
74 Reviews and synopsis available of the film indicate a version of the classic cautionary tale The Monkey’s Paw by W. W Jacobs. The website for Kagbeni also offers an indication of independent filmmakers attempts to reach wider audiences through small distribution deals: See http://www.kagbeni.com.np/
77 J. Russell. Book of the Dead p 257
79 Patrick Galloway uncritically repeats the assertion that 1997 is the key year for Korean horror film production, ignoring previous texts. See P. Galloway. Asia Shock p 17
82 Ibid p 22 The character of Sadako in the popular horror film Ringu (Nakata Hideo, 1998) is a direct visual and thematic return to the portrayal of Oiwa, which also should include it within the remakes of Yotsuya Kaidan.
84 Ibid p 42
Both short films are reproduced on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaQm2YhPAFc.


D. W. Davis. “Japan: Cause for (Cautious) Optimism” In A. Ciecko (Ed) *Contemporary Asian Cinema* p 19


P. Galloway, *Asia Shock* p 11

L. Bush, *Asian Horror Encyclopedia* p V


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2 S. Wloszczyna. “Back Amongst the Dead” *USA Today* (20/06/2005)
Ibid


5 N/ Author. “Let’s Scare Jessica to Death” Filmfacts (14: 19, 1 October 1971) p 481

6 M. Kerbel. “Let’s Scare Jessica To Death” Village Voice (14 October 1971)

7 R. Combs. “Dead Of Night” Monthly Film Bulletin (44:526, 1 November 1977) p 230

8 D Kaye. “Living Their Deathdream” Fangoria (No.233, 1 June 2004) pp 56-58


10 Ibid p 264

11 N/ Author. “Sugar Hill” Variety (6 February 1974) p 33


16 D. Cronenberg in C. Rodley (Ed.) Cronenberg on Cronenberg (London: Faber and Faber. 1997) p 60

17 J. Stommel. “Pity Poor Flesh” Bright Lights Film Journal (56, May 2007) p 6

18 D. Cronenberg in C. Rodley (Ed.) Cronenberg on Cronenberg p 80


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25 W. Graebner. “America’s Poseidon Adventure: A Nation In Existential Despair” In B. Bailey and D. Farber (Eds.) America in the Seventies (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas. 2004) p 168


28 Ibid p 12


30 See D. J. Skal. The Monster Show pp 315-320 for a discussion of Thriller in relation to special effects and Jackson’s own plastic surgery.


32 See R. Worland. The Horror Film: An Introduction pp 243-252

33 The result of the dissolution meant that Romero’s films after Night use the words “the Dead”, while Streiner et al used the words ‘Living Dead’ for their intended projects. See P. Gagne. The Zombies That Ate Pittsburgh (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co. 1987) pp 165-167: J. Russo. The Complete Night of The Living Dead Filmbook (Pittsburgh: Imagine, Inc. 1985) pp 105,107

34 The Internet Movie Database lists 36 films made from Stephen King’s source material directly, and 25 television shows/episodes. 7 films are, at the time of writing, in pre-production or rights negotiations. See http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000175/

35 M. Jancovich. Horror p 98
70 D. Pagano. “The Space of Apocalypse in Zombie Cinema” In S. MacIntosh and M. Leverette (Eds.) Zombie Culture: Autopsies of the Living Dead pp 75
73 The film Pathogen (Emily Hagins, 2006) is widely reported as a positive example of community filmmaking, leading to other filmmakers documenting her work in the documentary film Zombie Girl: The Movie (Justin Johnson, Aaron Marshall, and Erik Mauck, currently in post-production). See I was a Teenage Horror Film Director: Emily Hagins Retrieved from http://www.pretty-scary.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=680 on 12/12/2007:
75 G. Romero. Quoted in Ibid
82 K West. A Concert for Hurricane Relief (United States: NBC Universal Television Group. Broadcast on 02/08/05)

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J. Ibáñez, (Director) La Muerte Viviente/ Snake People (Mexico/USA: Filmica Vegara/ Azteca/ Columbia, 1968)

O. Ittenbach, (Director) Premutos: Lord of the Living Dead (Germany: IMAS Filmproduktion, 1997)

O. Ittenbach, (Director) Legion of the Dead (Germany: X-Vision Filmproduktion GmbH & Co. KG., 2000)
P. Jackson, (Director) *Bad Taste* (New Zealand: New Zealand Film Commission/WingNut Films, 1987)

P. Jackson, (Director) *Meet the Feebles* (New Zealand: WingNut Films, 1990)

P. Jackson, (Director) *Braindead* (New Zealand: Avalon/NFU Studios/New Zealand Film Commission/WingNut Films, 1992)

M. Kalmanowicz, (Director) *The Children* (USA: Albright Films Inc., 1980)


B. Kang, (Director) *Goeshi/ Strange Dead Bodies* (S. Korea: Hanrim Films, 1981)

L. Kar-Leong, (Director) *Mao Shan Jianshi Quan/ The Spiritual Boxer Part 2* (Hong Kong: Shaw Brothers, 1979)


J. King, (Director) *Black Sheep* (New Zealand: Live Stock Films/New Zealand Film Commission, 2006).

R. Kitamura, (Director) *Down to Hell* (Japan: napalm FiLMS, 1996)

R. Kitamura, (Director) *Versus* (Japan: KSS/Suplex/WEVCO Produce Company/napalm FiLMS, 2000)

L. Klimovsky, (Director) *La noche de Walpurgis/Shadow of the Werewolf* (Spain/Germany: Plata Films S.A., 1970)

L. Klimovsky, (Director) *La rebelión de las muertos/ Vengeance of the Zombies* (Spain/Italy: Profilmes/Promofilms, 1972)

M. Kobayashi, (Director) *Kwaidan* (Japan: Bungei/Ninjin Club/Toho Company/Toyo Kogyo Kabushiki Kaisha, 1964)

K. Komizu, (Director) *Batoru Garu/ Battle Girl/Living Dead in Tokyo Bay* (Japan: Synapse Films (Distributor), 1992)


K. Kurosawa, (Director) *Kairo/Pulse* (Japan: Daiei Eiga, 2001)
B. LaBruce, (Director) *Otto; or up with Dead People* (Germany: Jürgen Brüning Filmproduktion/ New Real Films, 2008)

M. Lamata, (Director) *Una De Zombis* (Spain: Aldea Films, 2003)

M. Lambert, (Director) *Pet Sematary* (USA: Paramount Pictures, 1989)

C. Lattanzi, (Director) *Raptors* (Italy: Filmirage/ Flora Film, 1988)

R. Lau, (Director) *Geung si sin sang/ Mr. Vampire* (Hong Kong: Bo Ho Film Company Ltd./Golden Harvest Company, 1985)

B. Launois, (Director) *Il Était une fois le diable/ Devil Story* (France: Condor Films Productions, 1985)

F. Lawrence, (Director) *I Am Legend* (USA: Warner Bros. Pictures/ Weed Road Pictures/ Overbrook Entertainment/3 Arts Entertainment/Heyday Films/Original Film, 2007)


J. Lee, (Director) *Zombie Strippers!* (USA: Production Headquarters, 2008)


P. Leni, (Director) *The Cat and the Canary* (USA: Universal, 1927)


U. Lenzi, (Director) *Incubo sulla città contaminata/ City of the Walking Dead* (Italy/ Spain: Dialchi Films/Lotus International Film, 1980)

U. Lenzi, (Director) *Demoni 3* (Italy: Filmakers, 1991)

B. Leonard, (Director) *The Dead Pit* (USA: Cornerstone Production, 1989)

M. Leutwyler, (Director) *Dead and Breakfast* (USA: Ambush Entertainment/Goal Line Productions, 2004)

H. G. Lewis, (Director) *Blood Feast* (USA: Friedman-Lewis Productions Inc., 1963)

H. G. Lewis, (Director) *Two Thousand Maniacs* (USA: Friedman-Lewis Productions Inc., 1964)

P. Lewnes, (Director) *Redneck Zombies* (USA: Full Moon Pictures, 1987)

J. Liebermann, (Director) *Blue Sunshine* (USA: Ellanby Films, 1977)
C. Lindbergh, (Director) *Shadows of the Dead* (USA: Horizon Motion Pictures Ltd./No One Cares Productions, 2004)

R. Link, (Director) *Zombie High* (USA: Priest Hill Productions, 1987)

W. Lustig, (Director) *Maniac Cop* (USA: Shapiro-Glickenhaus Home Video, 1988)

M. Mahon, (Director) *The Dead One* (USA: Mardi Gras Productions Inc., 1961)

R. Mamoulian, (Director) *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (USA: Paramount, 1932)

A. Margheriti, (Director) *Apocalypse domain/Cannibal Apocalypse* (Italy: Edmondo Amati presents/José Frade Producciones Cinematográficas S.A./New Fida, 1980)

J. Mojica Marins, (Director) *A Meia-Noite Levarei Sua Alma/At Midnight I’ll take your Soul* (Brazil: Indústria Cinematográfica Apolo, 1963)

E. Martin, (Director) *Pánico en el transiberio/Horror Express* (Britain/Spain: Granada Films/ Benmar Productions, 1972)

G. Marshall, (Director) *The Ghost Breakers* (USA: Paramount Pictures, 1940)

G. Marshall, (Director) *Scared Stiff* (USA: Wallis Hazen/ Paramount, 1953)

P. Maslansky, (Director) *Sugar Hill* (USA: American International Pictures, 1974)

A. Massaccesi, (Director) *Le notti Erotiche dei morti viventi/Erotic Nights of the Living Dead* (Italy: Stefano Film, 1979)


R. Matsutani, (Director) *Nur über meine Leiche/Over My Dead Body* (Germany: Arnold & Richter Cine Technik (ARRI)/Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR)/Engram Pictures/TiMe Medienvertriebs GmbH., 1995)

B. Mattei, (Director) *Inferno dei morti viventi/Night of the Zombies* (Italy/Spain: Beatrice Films/ Film Dara, 1981)

S. McCrae, (Director) *Shatter Dead* (USA: Seeing Eye Dog Productions, 1993)

C. McCrann, (Director) *The Bloodeaters* (USA: CM Productions, 1979)

R. McDougall, (Director) *The World, The Flesh and The Devil* (USA: HarBel Productions, 1959)
C. McMahon, (Director) *Dead Meat* (Ireland: Three Way Productions, 2003)

G. Melford, (Director) *Drácula* (USA: Universal Pictures, 1931)

F. Méndez, (Director) *Ladroń de Cadaveres/The Body Snatcher* (Mexico: Internacional Cinematográfica, 1957)

F. Méndez, (Director) *Misterios de Ultratumba/The Black Pit of Dr. M* (Mexico: Alameda Films, 1959)

H. Meng-Hua, (Director) *Revenge of the Zombies* (Hong Kong: World Northal, 1981)

W.C. Menzies, (Director) *Invaders From Mars* (USA: National Pictures Corporation, 1953)

J. Merino, (Director) *La orgia de los muertos/ Return of the Zombies* (Spain/Italy: Petruka/ Prodimex, 1972)\(^1\)

J. Michalakis, (Director) *I Was A Teenage Zombie* (USA: Periclean Motion Pictures, 1986)

T. Miike, (Director) *Katakuri-ke No Koufuku/ The Happiness of the Katakuris* (Japan: Katakuri-ke no Kōfuku Seisaku Iinkai/Shochiku Company, 2001)


J. Mostow, (Director) *Beverly Hills BodySnatchers* (USA: Busybody Productions, 1989)

N. Mount, (Director) *Trepanator* (France: NM International Films Inc., 1991)

R. Mulcahy, (Director) *Resident Evil: Extinction* (France/ Australia /Germany /UK /USA: Resident Evil Productions/ Constantin Film Produktion/Davis-Films/Impact Pictures, 2007)

F.W Murnau, (Director) *Nosferatu* (Germany: Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal/ Prana-Film GmbH., 1922)

A. Muroga, (Director) *Shiryō-gari/Junk* (Japan: Japan Home Video (JHV), 1999)

C. Musca, (Director) *Zombie Brigade* (Australia: CM Productions/ Seaflower Holdings Pty. Ltd./Smart Egg Productions, 1988)


H. Nakata, (Director) *Ringu 2* (Japan: Kadokawa Shoten Publishing Co. Ltd./Ring 2 Production Group/Asmik Ace Entertainment/ Oz Productions, 1999)

**H. Nakata, (Director) Ringu 0: Bâsudei (Japan: Ring 0: Birthday Seisaku Inkkai, 2000)**

T. Novaro, (Director) *El Castillo de las Momias de Guanajuato*/*Castle of the Mummies of Guanajuato* (Mexico: Producciones Fílmicas Agrasánchez, 1973)

D. Nuse, (Director) *The Chilling* (USA: Trans-Bay Pictures, 1989)

C. Nyby, (Director) *The Thing From Another World* (USA: Winchester Pictures Corporation, 1951)

D. O’Bannon, (Director) *Return of the Living Dead* (USA: Hemdale/ Fox/Orion, 1985)

A. de Ossorio, (Director) *La Noche del terror ciego/Tombs of the Blind Dead* (Spain/ Portugal: Plata Films/Interfilme, 1971) 12

A. de Ossorio, (Director) *El ataque de los muertos sin Ojos/Return of the Evil Dead* (Spain: Ancla Films, 1973)

A. de Ossorio, (Director) *La noche de los brujos/Night of the Sorcerors* (Spain: Profilmes/Hesperia, 1973)

A. de Ossorio, (Director) *El buque maladito/Horror of the Zombies* (Spain: Ancla Century/ Belen Films, 1974)

A. de Ossorio, (Director) *La noche de los gaviotas/Night of the Seagulls* (Spain: Profilme/Ancla Century, 1975)

J. B. Oro, (Director) *Dos Monjes/The Two Monks* (Mexico: Proa Films, 1934)

J. B. Oro, (Director) *Misterio del Rostro pálido/Mystery of the Ghastly Face* (Mexico: Producciones Alcayde, 1935)


D. Parker, (Director) *The Dead Hate The Living* (USA: Force Entertainment, 2006)

A. Parkinson, (Director) *Dead Creatures* (Britain: Long Pig, 2001)

T. Parkinson, (Director) *Disciple of Death* (Britain: AVCO Embassy Pictures, 1972)

D. Passmore, K. Vetter, (Directors) *Corpse Eaters* (Canada: Maniac Productions, 1974)

S. Peckinpah, (Director) *The Wild Bunch* (USA: Warner Brothers/Seven Arts, 1969)

A. Penn, (Director) *Bonnie and Clyde* (USA: Tatira-Hiller Productions/Warner Brothers/Seven Arts, 1967)

R. Peón, (Director) *La Llorona/The Crying Woman* (Mexico: Eco Films, 1933)


M. Pupillo, (Director) *Cinque tombe per un medium/Terror Creatures From the Grave* (Italy/USA: MBS Cinematografica/ GIA Cinematografica/ International Entertainment Pictures, 1966)

S. Raimi, (Director) *The Evil Dead* (USA: Renaissance Pictures, 1982)

S. Raimi, (Director) *The Evil Dead II* (USA: De Laurentiis Entertainment Group (DEG)/Renaissance Pictures, 1987)

S. Raimi, (Director) *Army of Darkness* (USA: Dino De Laurentiis Company/Renaissance Pictures/Introvision International/Universal Pictures, 1992)

T. Ramsay, (Director) *Do Gaz Zameen ke Neeche/Two Yards Underground* (India: Ramsay Bros., 1972)

T. Ramsay, (Director) *Children of the Living Dead* (USA: Westwood Artists International Inc., 2001)

F. O. Ray, (Director) *The Alien Dead* (USA: Firebird Pictures, 1980)

P. Regan, (Director) *Kiss Daddy Goodbye* (USA: Pendragon Film, 1981)

J. Reiff, (Director) *Requiem der Teufel* (Germany, 1993)

P. Reinhard, (Director) *La Revanche des mortes Vivantes/ The Revenge of the Living Dead Girls* (France: Samouraï Films, 1987)

T. Reynolds, (Director) *Living A Zombie Dream* (USA: Borderline, 1966)


J. Rollin, (Director) *La Morte Vivante/ The Living Dead Girl* (France: Films A.B.C, 1982)

G. Romero, (Director) *Night of the Living Dead* (USA: Image Ten, 1968)

G. Romero, (Director) *The Crazies* (USA: Pittsburgh Films, 1973)

G. Romero, (Director) *Dawn of the Dead* (USA: Laurel Group Productions, 1978)

G. Romero, (Director) *Creepshow* (USA: Laurel Show/ Warner Bros., 1982)

G. Romero, (Director) *Day of the Dead* (USA: Laurel Productions, 1985)


G. Romero, (Director) *Diary of the Dead* (USA: Arftire Films/ Romero-Grunwald Productions, 2007)

T. Rose, (Director) *Mutation* (Germany: SIO Film Entertainment, 1999)

T. Rose, (Director) *Midnight’s Calling* (Germany: SIO Film Entertainment, 2000)

N. Rossati, (Director) *Io Zombo, Tu Zombi, Lei Zomba/ I Zombie, You Zombie, She Zombies* (Italy: TV Cine 77, 1979)

M. Roush, (Director) *Hot Wax Zombies on Wheels* (USA:Wax Rhapsodic LLC, 1999)

R. Ru-Tar, (Director) *Ginseng King* (Thailand, 1989)

S. Salkow, U. Ragona, (Directors) *The Last Man on Earth* (Italy/USA: AIP/Alta Vista Productions, 1964)

S. Sato, (Director) *Tokyo Zombie* (Japan: Tōkyō Zonbi Seisaku Inkai, 2005)

C. Saunders, (Director) *Womaneater* (Britain: Fortress Films, 1957)
T. Savini, (Director) *Night of the Living Dead* (USA: Twenty-First Century Productions, 1990)

C. Schlingensief, (Director) *Das deutsche Kettensägen Massaker/The German Chainsaw Massacre* (Germany: Albatros Film, 1990)

A. Schnaas, (Director) *Zombie '90: Extreme Pestilence* (Germany: Blood Pictures/ Reel Gore, 1990)

A. Schnaas, (Director) *Demonium* (Italy/Germany: Orange S.N.C./Schnaas Film GmbH, 2001)

R. Scott, (Director) *The Video Dead* (USA: Interstate 5/ Highlight Productions, 1987)

S. Sekely, (Director) *Revenge of the Zombies* (USA: Monogram, 1943)

S. Sekely, (Director) *The Day of the Triffids* (Britain: Security Pictures Ltd., 1962)

D. Sharp, (Director) *Psychomania* (Britain: Benmar Productions, 1972)

T. Sheets, (Director) *Zombie Rampage* (USA: Trustinus Productions, 1991)

T. Sheets, (Director) *Zombie Bloodbath* (USA: Trustinus Productions, 1993)

T. Sheets, (Director) *Zombie Bloodbath II: Rage of the Undead* (USA: Trustinus Productions, 1994)


G. Sherman, (Director) *Dead and Buried* (USA: Avco Embassy, 1981)

S. Sherman, (Director) *Raiders of the Living Dead* (USA: Independent International, 1985)


K. Shindô, (Director) *Onibaba* (Japan: Kindai Eiga Kyokai/Tokyo Eiga Co Ltd., 1964)

D. Siegel, (Director) *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (USA: Allied Artists, 1956)

C. Siu-Tung, (Director) *Sinnui Yauwan/A Chinese Ghost Story* (Hong Kong: Cinema City Film Productions/Film Workshop, 1987)
J. D. Smith, (Director) *Zombie Campout* (USA: Latetalk Productions, 2002)

Z. Snyder, (Director) *Dawn of the Dead* (USA: Strike Entertainment, 2004)

M. Soavi, (Director) *Dellamorte, Dellamore* (France/Italy: Audifilm/Urania Film, 1994)

G. Solares, (Director) *El mundo de los muertos/The Land of the Dead* (Mexico: Sotomayor, 1969)

G. Solares, (Director) *Santo y Blue Demon contra los monstruos/Santo and Blue Demon Against the Monsters* (Mexico: Churubusco-Azteca, 1969)

S. Somtow, (Director) *The Laughing Dead* (USA: Archaeopteryx/Tercel, 1989)

S. Sono, (Director) *Jisatsu Sākuru Suicide Club* (Japan: For Peace Co.Ltd./Omega Project, 2002)

S. Spielberg, (Director) *Jaws* (USA: Universal Studios, 1975)


R. Steckler, (Director) *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Crazy Mixed-Up Zombies* (USA: Morgan/Steckler Productions, 1964)

B. Steinbeck, M.J Asquith, (Directors) *Zombie Movie* (New Zealand: Valve, 2005)

H. L. Strock, (Director) *I Was A Teenage Frankenstein* (USA: AIP, 1957)

S. Stutler, (Director) *Dead At The Box Office* (USA: Throbbing Temple Productions, 2005)

B. Sykes, (Director) *Zombie Chronicles* (USA: Razor Entertainment, 2001)

T. Takeuchi, (Director) *Wild Zero* (Japan: Dragon Pictures/GAGA Communications/Takeuchi Entertainment, 1999)

D. Tenney, (Director) *The Horror of Party Beach* (USA: Inzom, 1963)

D. Tenney, (Director) *I Eat Your Skin* (USA: Del Tenney Productions, 1964)

S. Thomas, (Director) *Flight of the Living Dead* (USA: Imageworks Entertainment International/Pacific Entertainment Group, 2006)

N. Tomomatsu, (Director) *Stacy* (Japan: GAGA Communications/Gensou haikyuu-sha Ltd., 2001)

J. Tourneur, (Director) *Cat People* (USA: RKO Radio Pictures, 1942)
J. Tourneur, (Director) *I Walked With a Zombie* (USA: RKO Radio Pictures, 1943)

P. Tucker, (Director) *Cape Canaveral Monsters* (USA: Compagnia Cinematografica Montoro (CCM), 1960)

C. Urueta, (Director) *El Monstruo Resucitado/Doctor Crimen* (Mexico: Internacional Cinematográfica, 1953)

G. Vari, (Director) *Roma contra Roma/ War of the Zombies* (Italy/USA: AIP/Galatea Films, 1963)

R. Voskanian, (Director) *The Child* (USA: Panorama Films, 1977)

D. Wan, (Director) *Shadow: Dead Riot* (USA: Fever Dreams/Media Blasters, 2005)

T. Wantha, (Director) *Khun krabii hiiroh/ SARS Wars* (Thailand: Charlermthai Studio, 2004)

R. Ward Baker, (Director) *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* (Hong Kong/UK: Hammer/Shaw, 1973)

R. Ward Baker, (Director) *The Vault of Horror* (Britain: Amicus Productions, 1973)

J. Warren, (Director) *Teenage Zombies* (USA: Governor, 1957)

D. Wascavage, (Director) *Zombies By Design* (USA: Troubled Moon Films, 2006)

M. Watt, (Director) *The Resurrection Game* (USA: Happy Cloud Pictures, 2001)

P. Wegener, H. Galeen, (Directors) *The Golem* (Germany: Deutsche Bioscop GmbH., 1914)

P. Wegener, (Director) *Der Golem und die Tänzerin* (Germany: Deutsche Bioscop GmbH., 1917)

P. Wegener, C. Boese, (Directors) *The Golem* (USA: Projektions-AG Union (PAGU), 1920)

P. Weir, (Director) *The Cars That Ate Paris* (Australia: The Australian Film Development Corporation/Royce Smeal Film Productions/Salt-Pan, 1974)

B. Werner, (Director) *The Revenge of Bloody Bill* (USA: The Asylum, 2004)

J. Whale, (Director) *The Old Dark House* (USA: Universal Pictures, 1932)
J. Whale, (Director) *The Invisible Man* (USA: Universal, 1933)

K Wiederhorn, (Director) *Return of the Living Dead Part II* (USA: Lorimar, 1987)

K Wiederhorn, (Director) *Shock Waves* (USA: Laurence Friedricks Enterprises, 1977)

R. Wiene, (Director) *Das Cabinet des Dr Caligari.* (Germany: UFA, 1919)

A. Witt, (Director) *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (Britain/Canada/France/USA: Constantin Film Produktion/Screen Gems/Davis-Films/Impact Pictures/Constantin Film Ltd., 2004)

J. Woelfel, (Director) *Ghost Lake* (USA: Young Wolf Productions, 2004)

A. Wong, (Director) *Baat sin faan dim ji yan yuk cha siu baau/The Untold Story* (Hong Kong: Cinema City Film Productions, 1993)

E. Wood Jr., (Director) *Plan Nine From Outer Space* (USA: Reynolds Pictures, 1958)

E. Wright, (Director) *Shaun of the Dead* (Britain/France: Studio Canal/Working Title Films/WT2 Productions/Big Talk Productions/Inside Track 2/ FilmFour, 2004)

Y. Yamiguchi, (Director) *Jigoku kôshien/Battlefield Baseball* (Japan: Klock Worx Co./Media Suits/napalm FiLMS, 2003)

J. Yarbrough, (Director) *King of The Zombies* (USA: Monogram, 1941)

H. Yau, (Director) *Yi boh laai beng duk/Ebola Syndrome* (Hong Kong: Jing's Production, 1996)


W. Yip, (Director) *Sang dut sau shut/Bio-Zombie* (Hong Kong: Brilliant Idea Group 1998)

B. Yuzna, (Director) *Bride of Re-Animator* (USA: Wildstreet Pictures, 1991)

B. Yuzna, (Director) *Return of the Living Dead Part III* (USA: Trimark Pictures, 1993)

B. Yuzna, (Director) *Beyond Re-Animator* (USA/Spain: Castelao Producciones/Filmax/Vía Digital, 2003)
Videography


D. Argento, (Producer, Editor) *La porta sul buio/Doors to Darkness* (Television Series) (Italy: SEDA Shows, 1972)

R. Bolognino, J. Jenkin, P. Musilli, S. Sohl, B. Spitzer, (Editors) K. West (Performer) *A Concert for Hurricane Relief* (Television Fundraiser) (United States: NBC Universal Television Group, broadcast on 02/08/05)


C. Carter, (Creator) K. Manners, (Director) V. Gilligan, (Writer) “Folie a Deux” (Television Episode) *The X Files* (USA: Ten Thirteen Productions/ 20th Century Fox Television, 10/05/1998)

R. Cartier, (Director, Producer) N. Kneale, (Writer) *The Quatermass Experiment.* (Television Series) (Britain: BBC, 1953)

R. Cartier, (Director, Producer) N. Kneale, (Writer) *Quatermass II.* (Television Series) (Britain: BBC, 1955)


J. P. Fajardo, (Director) *El Ataque de los Zombies adolescentes/Attack of the Teenage Zombies* (Animation Short) (Spain: Dexiderius Producciones Audiovisuales S.L., 2001)
C. Faliszek, (Project Lead) *Left 4 Dead* (Video Game) (USA: Valve Corporation, 2008)

R. Florey, (Director) W. Frye (Producer) “The Incredible Dr Marksam” (Television Episode) *Thriller* (USA: Hubbell Robinson Productions, 26/02/1962)


Y. Kawano, (Director/ Designer) K. Inafune, (Producer/Designer) *Dead Rising* (Video Game)(Japan: Capcom, 2006)

J. Landis, (Director) *Thriller* (Music Video) (USA: Optimum Productions, 1983)


S. Mikami, (Creator) T. Fujiwara, (Producer) *Biohazard/ Resident Evil* (Video Game) (Japan: Capcom, 1996)

S. Mikami, (Creator) H. Kamiya, (Designer) *Biohazard/ Resident Evil 2* (Video Game) (Japan: Capcom, 1998)

D. Misch, (Director) B. Siegler (Producer) “My Zombie Lover” (Television Episode) *Monsters* (USA: Laurel Productions, 1988)


J. Newland, (Director) W. Frye, (Producer) “Pigeons From Hell” (Television Episode) *Thriller* (USA: Hubbell Robinson Productions, 06/06/1961)

G. Oswald, (Director) O. Borsten, (Writer) “Corpus Earthling” (Television Episode) *The Outer Limits* (USA: Villa Di Stefano/Daystar Productions/United Artists Television, 18/11/1963)

G. Oswald, (Director) J. Stefano, (Writer) “The Invisibles” (Television Episode) *The Outer Limits* (USA: Villa Di Stefano/Daystar Productions/United Artists Television, 03/02/1964)

T. Parker, M. Stone, (Creators/ Producers) “Pink Eye” (Television Episode) *South Park* (USA: Comedy Central, 1997)

T. Post, (Director) R. Serling, (Writer/ Producer) “Mr Garrity and the Graves” (Television Episode) *The Twilight Zone* (USA: Cayuga Productions/ CBS Television, 08/05/1963)


C. Selby, (Director) *Tales from the Crypt: From Comic Books to Television* (TV Documentary) (US: CS Films, 2004)


S. White, (Creator/ Developer) *Zombie Zombie* (Video Game) (Britain: Quicksilva Ltd., 1984)
Footnotes to Filmography/ Videography

1 A. Brown is another of J. Franco’s working names.
2 AKA: DeathDream/ The Night Andy Came Home
3 AKA: The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue
4 AKA: Flesheater
5 G. Ho is credited as Charles Lee
6 AKA: Dead People/ Return of the Dead
7 AKA: Blood of the Zombie
8 A. Margheriti is another name for B. Mattei. Film Title: AKA: Apocalipsis cannibal/ Zombie Creeping Flesh
9 Massacesi is another name for J. D’Amato
10 AKA: Toxic Zombies
11 AKA: Beyond The Living Dead
12 Ossorio’s Zombie films are collectively known (in English) as the Blind Dead series
13 A complete listing of Directors, Producers and Writers for The Twilight Zone is too large to include here. Please see the online listings available from http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0052520/, or M. S. Zicree, The Twilight Zone Companion (Beverley Hills, CA: Sillman-James Press, 1982)