Abstract
Considering the amount of media created around the zombie and the sustained interest in its role in our society, we can clearly see that a cultural phenomenon is underway, and it is important for us to question this phenomenon in order to gain some understanding of how and why its appeal has stretched so far. The zombie is somehow enthralling, and it is my opinion that this is in part because the zombie is a study of what it means to be human in the postmodern world. My main purpose here is not to ask why zombies are popular or why people are enthralled by horror films of any kind. Instead I wish to investigate what zombies mean to us in our culture and society. A study of this culture offers invaluable insight into our own contemporary Western society and culture, as the zombie provides a physical form, embodying our fears and anxieties into something that is sharable and valuable to an increasing number of people. I examine the zombie’s origins within the American Gothic tradition and explore its role as a barometer for social anxieties, focusing on issues of religion in the second chapter. I step away from the traditional view of zombie origins embedded in the Haitian voodoo practice of zombification and its implied post-colonial issues, and instead focused on the zombie as a Western European and American invention, looking at its folkloric and literary heritage. I also take a new perspective of the zombie and its relation to religion in order to explore the profound way the zombie genre can address contemporary concerns. I finish the study with a chapter devoted to a close reading of the film *Shaun of the Dead* in order to show how the zombie genre has shifted in tone and purpose in the new millennium. What I hope to accomplish in this study is to facilitate a new perspective of the zombie, its origins, its uses and its role in contemporary culture and society, and I hope to contribute in some small way a deeper understanding of where the zombie came from and what it means to us in the 21st century.

Degree
MA

College and Department
Humanities; Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature

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Language
English
Set in the excesses of the late 1970s we follow the world as it has evolved with the zombie threat. The nation believes the epidemic contained, but when a virulent outbreak turns Las Vegas into a shambling graveyard, the government is forced to lock it down under quarantine. A group of unlikely survivors finds out the hard way that even with the undead, what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. And in this case it means a female punk rock zombie fetishist has to grow up in a hurry and find a way out before the living are the last morsels on the ghoul buffet. This modern horror classic delivers a p. Hell Of The Living Dead is a 1980 [[Wikipedia:horror film|horror film]] directed by Bruno Mattei. The films is also known as "Virus" (which is the original Italian title of the film), as well as "Zombie 2", "Night Of The Zombies" and "Zombie Creeping Flesh". Made at the peak of the early-eighties zombie fever, the film plays like a gory mix of the usual zombie cliches.