

global network player authority Power Die Die guilt god Let's Play andel lndead wri Authentic me uratiz tion Skill contest  
game rule system gameplay avatar WoW blessing noob kills memor face body fight pop spe ingame PST rdi discussion digital  
religion game analysis representation healing Loreig o-scaps Soul diablo class tradition experience with rebirth genesis 360PVE  
simulation ludology The Last of Us death resurrection funeral runes immersion community symbol salvation image Xbox 360PVE  
narrative







provides readers from all walks of life (or death) fresh insight into not only zombie games but representations and manifestations of zombies in other media, as well. This review will consider both the merits and the shortcomings of the book as a resource not only for scholars in game studies, but also for readers who are dead curious, per se, about zombie literature.

### Outline of the Volume

To begin with, Webley traces the etymological and folkloric history of zombie culture and asks how the modern zombie entered our popular consciousness. This, he argues, evolved from the birth of the popularity of the Haitian zombie in Western stories through to George Romero’s reinvention of the zombie as a “perfect ideological vessel” (2020, 262) in the cult classic *Dawn of the Dead* (1978). The point of his introduction, however, is to encourage readers to ponder what underpins our intrigue in zombie video games. Chapter 1 thus begins with Matthew Barr examining the appeal of zombie antagonists in game design based on three major aspects – storytelling, gameplay and utility. Barr (2020, 18) essentially suggests that utilizing zombies is convenient and cost-effective for designers and the idea of zombies as a narratively convenient foe is largely due to the notion that their slaughter is morally justified. To follow, in Matthew Barton’s analyses of *Resident Evil* (1996) and *Alone in the Dark* (1992), he argues that the resurrection of “supposedly obsolete software and hardware can provide deeper immersion and affective interaction than is found in many modern games” (2020, 30), adding that this stems from the use of cinematic techniques (derived from comic books and classic Hollywood cinema).

In a dramatic shift, Adam Chapman (2020, 54) then explores the Nazi Zombie trope which has grown in popularity in recent years and the way in which it “soothes our

fears and [...] expresses our anxieties.” Similarly, Penny de Byl also discusses the zombie trope and how it may have influenced the loss of mythology through the process of game design. Michael Epp follows by examining the idea of violent labor in zombie video games produced in a late capitalist context. Returning to *Resident Evil* and rather timely in the context of the Covid-19 outbreak of 2020, Christina Fawcett and Alan McGreevy (2020, 85) demonstrate how “the medicalised zombie” in *Resident Evil* triggers both personal and social fears, and is “not itself the menace; the infection is.” In the next chapter, Vanessa L. Haddad (2020, 110) borrows from Freud’s notions of Eros (the life drive) and Thanatos (the death drive) to analyze *The Walking Dead* (2012) games and how players can “playfully explore and channel the energy of their life and death drives, in a healthy, socially acceptable manner.”

Remaining on the topic of gameplay and gratifications, Madelon Hoedt (2020, 119) examines how *Siren: Blood Curse* (2008) shows players the game world “through different human and monstrous viewpoints”, and uniquely blurs the boundaries between the player-character and the corpse people enemies. Released around the same time as *Siren: Blood Curse*, the open-world game *Dead Rising* (2006) – and particularly its game world interface and the way its zombies can be interacted with in a non-violent and a violent way – is thereafter analyzed by Kristine Jørgensen. In a similar vein to Hoedt and Jørgensen, Olkusz, Dwulecki, and Maj’s (2020, 182) co-written chapter concerns interactivity in *The Walking Dead* and the way in which players shape relationships with characters and try to improve their likelihood of survival by communicating personal opinions, ideological beliefs, and emotions. Perron’s (2020, 197) chapter on gameplay involving “video game zombies” focuses on the predictability of player-character and zombie interactions based on game algorithms, spatial factors, and the pace and numbers of zombies. Interestingly, the trend of fast zombies is also discussed.

Chapter 10 once again features *Resident Evil* as well as *Call of Duty* (2008, 2016) as Brandon Kempner (2020, 148) argues that zombie games chart new paths of resistance “by empowering players through gameplay mechanics to encounter both zombies and capitalism in a new fashion.” To follow, Mitchell C. Lilly (2020, 161) returns to the subject of zombie tropes and demonstrates that while zombies in *Red Dead Redemption* (2010) follow familiar conventions of modern zombie fiction and gaming, they also subvert “the rational flow of story and play and beget the decay of ludonarrative coherence” insofar they create a sense of uncertainty for players. Still on the subject of tropes and in one of the few chapters that covers identity, Esther MacCallum-Stewart explores both typical and atypical representations of female protagonists (and *final girls*) in zombie games. Another chapter that covers identity is Sihvonen’s “Queering the Zombie” in which she argues that the “playable zombie can be regarded as a ‘hybrid,’ queer figure that transgresses several boundaries in addition to negotiating the line between life and death” and offers us the possibility of “transcending the human condition” (2020, 242). The remaining few chapters include Timothy A. Wiseman’s discussion on how the lack of copyright protection for *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) fostered the boom in zombie video games; and Eugen Pfister’s (2020, 217) piece on zombie games as a source for a contemporary history of political ideas and our “rising disenchantment” with our democratic governments. Finally, to close the volume, Webley resumes his discussion on Romero and suggests that the truly subversive (and therefore meaningful) zombie narratives in video games are, like Romero’s films, only found in games with relatively smaller commercial budgets and lower production values.





