

**Zombies at Work:  
The Undead Face of Organizational Subjectivity**

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and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis will argue that the zombie as a metaphor poses a forceful critique in the examination of formal organizations. It seeks to introduce a new trope into the study of organizations-- the zombie--based on George A. Romero's *Dead Series* films. The principle element to be examined will be that of the false dichotomy constructed between the organizational structures and their organizational subjects of the bureaucracy (Organization Man) and the enterprise (Entrepreneur) based on the sociological literature of the 1950s. Through a metaphor analysis methodology, the construction of seemingly separate and distinct organizational structures, which are often viewed as vastly different, are found in fact to be very similar. This thesis will show how the working subjects' relation to their work has changed, find whether the entrepreneur has become the solution to the zombification of the bureaucratic worker, and discover whether working subjects, in either organizational model, escape the metaphorical zombie apocalypse.

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# Chapter 1: “Zombies? Organizations? What Exactly is Going On Here?”

## *Introduction*

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, ideas about the end of the world changed. Knowledge that the world may end at any time became part of the climate of fear since the Cold War; the apocalypse modernized. While the idea of biblical apocalypse is not altogether dispelled, other scenarios have come to take its place within the secular apocalyptic imagery. A common recurring eschatological image is that of the zombie. From its roots in Haitian Voodoo, to the films of George A. Romero, to its presence in videogames, the zombie has been gaining in popularity becoming a widespread part of Western culture. This paper will use the zombie as a critical metaphor to examine a modern institution, the formal organization.

Zombies are corporeal monsters with corporeal consequences; they eat flesh in primitive fashion, by tooth and nail, they dig into their victims, and their victims are destined to the same fate. The zombie’s teeth act as a means by which matter is transformed; healthy individuals become contaminated through a process of inscribing the body. There is simply the inevitability of the event. Everyone who is bitten by a zombie is destined to become a zombie themselves. That is, if there is anything left to be turned into after what can only be called in some cases, a blood buffet.

The zombie can be used as a tool of critique; it appears when ‘disorganization’ occurs in the world, when things are not going well, when there is a problem that needs a question. In films and books they have been used in a variety of ways to critique capitalism, science and even narrative. The zombie image becomes a metaphor of

modernity by incorporating within itself several sociological concerns: alienation, anomie, loss of identity, conformity, and over regulation (Thompson 2006; Loudermilk 2003; Ritzer 2003; Lauro and Embry 2008). Jamie Russell states that “the [zombie] genre has coincided with a historical moment that the zombie seems more suited to than vampires, werewolves, serial killers or any of the other usual horror monsters” (Russell 2006:192). Zombie metaphors incorporate a plethora of fears such as xenophobia, chemical weapons, viruses and disease vectors. These have become prevalent fears in late capitalist society. The zombie can be your neighbour, your loved one, “Neighbours are scary enough when they are alive” Romero told *Wired* magazine in an interview (Savage 2010). This fear of the neighbour is evidenced in all of Romero’s films, where the person next to you is as much a threat as any of the living dead. This fear has become a common thread throughout much of the zombie genre. Be it in movies, books or video games, for example the main antagonists in the *Walking Dead* series of graphic novels are fellow survivors, the same can be said for the video game *Dead Rising* wherein the “boss fights” are against non-zombified humans. George A. Romero’s *Dead* film series (*Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Day of the Dead*, and *Land of the Dead*) will serve as the basis for moving the zombie from apocalyptic image to critical metaphor.

The zombie metaphor as constructed through the films of George A. Romero, and developed in this thesis consists of five key facets: 1) they have a hungering desire for human flesh; a drive external to the zombie but affecting their activity, 2) their activity occurs in groups or more often masses, 3) they can only be killed by the removal or destruction of the brain, 4) they are able to turn all those bitten by them into zombies themselves (processes of translation), and 5) they are uncanny and they suffer a loss of

'humanity' (memory, speech, morality) associated with their loss of instrumental motives. The zombies are metaphorically, large-scale, all-consuming, virologically replicating, non-human, non-moral entities which are difficult to kill.

There is a stream of thought in American culture in which the modern individual is metaphorically compared to a zombie. The critique is centered on the ways in which labour is organized and managed in the U.S. In the 1950s, this critique is embodied in sociological literature that decries the bureaucratization of the labouring subject and implies that a more entrepreneurial, independent subject would be superior. In more contemporary times, this critique is picked up by business writers who map out the entrepreneurial subject as an ideal type, but, lo and behold, this worker is also a zombie; they are simply zombified through different means. The point is that, from the American perspective, the modern organizational subject can never escape zombieism--it is built into the managerial systems that are essential to modernity.

The organization is a commonly analyzed entity within the field of sociology, since the discipline's origins. In his work on power, for instance, Max Weber wrote an article entitled "Bureaucracy" (1946:196-244), which set out the ideal type for bureaucracy, a heuristic device for the study and application of efficiency of organization. Today, this ideal type (to use Weber's words) has come into conflict with a new, more ideal, ideal type, that of the entrepreneurial organization. These two forms have become the battleground on which contemporary organizational research is couched. The consequences of this dichotomy are wide-ranging. Specifically, to decide how people are to work and how they are to be put into association with each other is the very basis of managerial science and political economy. The extremes of the critiques of these two

organizational forms emphasize the depth of their importance. The zombie as metaphor can serve as a critical tool in the excising of the problematic view of the bureaucratic/entrepreneurial divide in organizational culture in post-war North America. In order to emphasize the similarities, the zombie metaphor will be used to show how the organizational subjects within these two structures are closely linked.

The problem arising from this bureaucratic/entrepreneurial dichotomy is a shift from the Organization Man to the Entrepreneur. William Whyte's, *Organization Man* (1956), is an individual who is consumed by the organization and becomes part of an absorbent mass where they are taught to resign themselves to false collectivization rather than individual merit. Thus the Organization Man effectively is indoctrinated and becomes part of the bureaucracy. Theodore Caplow suggests that this conflict occurs because the socialization of individuals within the organization requires that competing commitments arise from the intersection of personal and work spheres (1964:170). On the other hand, the Entrepreneurial Man is, in essence, the inversion of the Organization Man; they are individualists within false collectivization and are more often associated with the managerial aspects of organization. They have been defined by Joseph Schumpeter (1934) "as an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purposes of profit and growth. The entrepreneur is characterized principally by innovative behaviour and will employ strategic management practices in the business" (158). In both cases it is the structure which leads the "Man" down the path to zombiesm.

As stated by Charles Francis Adams

As one of the evil effects of corporate organization we shall have, in place of the independent business men of today, each gaining his livelihood by his success in a wide range of thought and action, a body of clerklike functionaries, each of whom will do a certain limited kind of work at the command of his superiors

(quoted in Caplow 1964:230).

The purpose of this thesis is to argue that the zombie poses a critique of another social site as well, that of the formal organization. What this thesis seeks to accomplish is to introduce a new trope into the study of organizations, that of the zombie, by which the very structure of organization studies can be tested for fault lines. The principle fault line to be examined will be that of the contemporary false dichotomy constructed between the organizational structures of the bureaucracy (Organization Man) and the enterprise (Entrepreneur), which many view as vastly different structures, when in fact they are very similar.

The zombie metaphor by itself is not a standalone idea, but must be used in tandem with the ideas of the survivor and the enclave, two additional elements of the zombie genre. As will be shown in this thesis, the survivor trope is composed of individuals with the singular goal of survival. But because of the exceptional circumstances in which they find themselves, survivors are mistrusting individuals constantly seeking to escape the zombie threat through isolationism, such as the survivors in Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) seeking refuge in an isolated farm house, the survivors in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) seeking to get away from the city and finding themselves in Monroeville Mall, the survivors of *Day of the Dead* (1985) who have isolated themselves in an army silo, or Riley in *Land of the Dead* (2005) who is seeking to escape the city and find isolation in Canada. Their isolationism is a means of avoiding the reality of their situation, through the creation of enclaves. Survivors are also fierce individualists, egotists and have self-destructive tendencies. These tendencies often lead to their being devoured and themselves becoming zombies. All of these elements help to

display the zombie metaphor's usefulness as a means of organizational critique and it will be used as a lens to examine the creation of the organizational subject in entrepreneurial and bureaucratic structures.

To further extend the zombie *qua* critique within previously existing literature this thesis turns to three major authors within the 1950's sociological literature on organization David Reisman, C. Wright Mills and William Whyte. The purpose of reading this literature through the frame of the zombie is to tell us about the structures evolving out of the changing American character, most specifically the Enterprise in its contrast to the Bureaucracy of an apparently by-gone age. More specifically, social science and management literature established a perspective on work that shares characteristics with the zombie thereby making it useful as a metaphor for understanding cultural representations of organizations and their workers.

While the literature of the 1950s can help to situate the zombie in bureaucratic culture, to map the evolution of the organizational subject from bureaucratic Organization Man to Entrepreneur, examination of Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982[2006]), on how the best run companies achieve success as well as 1990's management guru Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline* (2006) will be taken up in order to show that the zombie exists in enterprise culture.

What this thesis seeks to locate is *how* the organizational subject finds itself in the organization and whether these two different organizational structures deserve to be treated separately at all levels of analysis. Through the metaphors of the zombie genre, I am seeking to add to the discussion surrounding 20<sup>th</sup> century organizational subjectivity from its origins in 1950s sociological literature. With the rise of the Organization Man in

the 1950s and its replacement by the entrepreneur, this thesis will show 1) how the working subjects' relation to their work has changed, 2) to find whether the entrepreneur has become the solution to the zombification of the bureaucratic worker, and 3) to discover whether working subjects, in either organizational model, escape the metaphorical zombie apocalypse unscathed or are consumed by them.

### *A Brief History of the Cinematic Zombie in Western Culture*

The zombie trope is a fractured one; the reason for this is due to the many people who have had their hand in the creation of the cinematic zombie. Unlike other cinematic monsters discussed herein, the zombie is not derived from a textual canon, but rather was born out of Haitian oral history and only later evolved on celluloid. The zombie was first brought to 'the West' by way of myths from Haiti involving black magic and revenge in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Russell 2005:15-17). The zombie and the Vodoun society which spawned it was rediscovered in the mid-1980s through a well written if perhaps, "Indiana Jones-esque", account of the Haitian zombie can be found in ethnobiologist Wade Davis' book *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1985), (which was later made into a film). Davis helped to clarify many interesting cultural aspects of Vodoun or Voodoo society, and to elucidate the magic and biochemistry involved in the creation of "zombie powder".

The North American imagination was first taken in a more fantastical direction in a tale by journalist and amateur anthropologist Lofcadio Hearn in an 1889 article for *Harper's Magazine* entitled "The Country of the Comers-Back" (Russell 2006:9). What is of most interest for our purpose is a quote given by a little girl to Hearn during his time in Haiti describing the nature of the zombie; "Zombie? It is something that causes disorder in the night" (Hearn in Russell 2006:9). While it is convenient that the zombie performs this duty of creating disorder, or the illusion of disorder, it must be let loose

upon the world before devouring it. While there is a rich history as to the origins of the zombie and its translation into North American popular culture, such an exploration is beyond the scope of this paper.

The zombie is also a creature of modern social critique. Its early iterations in films such as the oft cited “first” zombie film, Victor and Edward Halperin’s *White Zombie* (1932) dealt with ideas surrounding race and colonialism<sup>1</sup>. Much of the action in *White Zombie* is relegated to Haiti. Haiti is of particular significance because of its status of the first independent country run by blacks in the Western world, which was a source of anxiety for other nations (Farmer 1992:164). That anxiety was followed by a curiosity of Haitian Voodoo culture. While in search of a zombie powder, Wade Davis, the ethnobiologist discusses the origins of the zombie myth in Haitian society and the articulation of this myth and its power within the individual.

As a Haitian peasant he had been socialized since childhood to believe in the reality of the living dead. This conviction had been enforced throughout his life by both a complex body of folklore and more, importantly, the direct testimony of friends and family... Zombis [sic] do not speak, cannot fend for themselves, do not even know their names. Their fate is enslavement. Yet given the availability of cheap labor, there would seem to be no economic incentive to create a force of indentured service. Rather, given the colonial history, the concept of enslavement implies that the peasant fears and the zombie suffers a fate that is literally worse than death—the loss of physical liberty that is slavery, and the sacrifice of personal autonomy implied by the loss of identity...The fear is not of being harmed by zombis, but rather becoming one (Davis 1984:139).

The Haitian zombie is orally transmitted to the populace from a young age; children grow up with the understanding of what it is to be a zombie, but more

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<sup>1</sup> Race is also present in George A. Romero’s films, most especially in his 1968 film *Night of the Living Dead*. Many other films of late 1960’s and early 1970’s also showcased the problematic issues of race and colonialism albeit not always with the same critical force as *White Zombie*.

importantly what it means to be a zombie; to become a body without a soul, without desire, working only for a domineering master. The zombie in Haitian society is the greatest sanction one can impose onto another human being; it is a fate worse than death.

The zombie truly made its way to American shores during the U.S. occupation of Haiti and was further reinforced with the publication of *The Magic Island* by William Seabrooke in 1929 (Russell 2006:16-17). In addition Lauro and Embry suggest that “with deep association of having played a role in the Haitian Revolution (thus simultaneously resonant with the categories of slave and slave rebellion)...the zombie...has morphed into a convenient bogeyman representing various social concerns” (2008:87). These elements, along with a climate of anxiety in relation to the unknown Haitian culture contributed in embedding the zombie in the American psyche.

#### *The Rise in Popularity of the Zombie*

The zombie as an object of analysis has come into vogue as of late. Zombie writing ranges from works of pop-philosophy such as *The Undead and Philosophy: Chicken Soup for the Soulless* (Greene and Mohammad 2006), to literature such as Max Brooks’ satirical *Zombie Survival Guide* (2003) and *World War Z* (2008), which have made him a cult literature favourite. The zombie phenomenon has even come to the point where giants of literature are becoming zombified such is the case of Jane Austen’s 1813 novel *Pride and Prejudice* becoming metamorphosed into *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* by Seth Grahame-Smith (co-authored by Jane Austin) in 2009. The zombie now finds itself in virtually every form of media, from comic books such as *The Walking Dead*, to the *Marvel Zombies* series in which many of Marvel Comics favourite characters become superhuman zombies. Zombie themes continue to be a force in the realm of video games with titles such as *Left 4 Dead* (2008), *Left 4 Dead 2* (2009), *Dead*

*Rising* (2006), and the *Resident Evil* series (1996-2009). Russell states that *Resident Evil* (originally titled *Biohazard* in Japan) (1996) “single-handedly established the template for a new genre of video game quickly dubbed “survival horror” by industry commentators” (2006:171). The survival horror genre immerses the player by bringing him or her into the game. The attraction of the survival horror genre, especially for smaller indie game designers is that it is a low cost alternative with growing appeal<sup>2</sup>. Survival horror games require no story line are easy to code and engage the player.

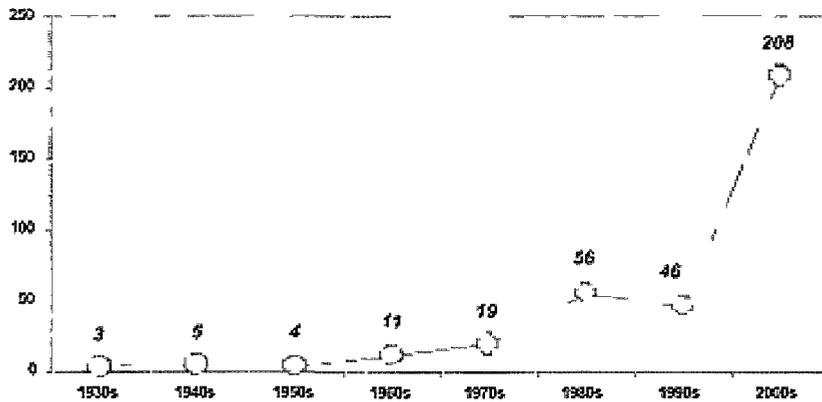
Zombies even made their leading role television series debut in 2008 with the UK’s *Dead Set*, and will be making their North American television debut on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010 with the television version of Robert Kirkman’s graphic novel series *The Walking Dead* (2003), and have even gone to street theatre with the emergence of zombie walks in 2001<sup>3</sup> (Subisatti 2008:27-28). Zombies seem to be everywhere. Paul Waldman (2009) found that in the last decade the genre has exploded with 208 zombie films being made, this up from only 46 in the 1990s and 56 in the 1980s a time when

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<sup>2</sup> Many of the indie games are independently made by fans and are free to play at sites such as <http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/search/title/zombie>, or <http://www.zombiegames.net/>

<sup>3</sup> Zombie walks are annual events which are “The purpose of such walks varies by participant; some walk for fun, others to recreate the irony of brainless mobs stumbling through malls, as depicted in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978). Some even include a philanthropic component, such as raising money for charity or a blood drive” (Subisatti 2008:28)

George A. Romero was fully engaged in the cinematic industry, as reflected in the chart



below.

### Zombie Movies by Decade

(source: [http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the\\_left\\_and\\_the\\_living\\_dead](http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_left_and_the_living_dead))

Author Max Brooks, who attained cult status after penning *The Zombie Survival Guide* (2003), stated in an interview that zombies are so omnipresent because they are “a safe apocalyptic”, by allowing the exploration of very serious issues in a fun way (Groves 2009). Dr. Kim Paffenroth, author of *Gospel of the Living Dead: George Romero’s Visions of Hell on Earth*, offers an examination of Romero’s films through the lens of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, suggesting that zombies will remain a potent analytical analogy,

...zombie movies have kept their edge and relevance for nearly forty years, outliving the Cold War, Soviet Communism, “free love,” the reactionary regimes of Reagan and Thatcher, and any number of other useless, ugly, inhumane things that people have foolishly created and invested with value. Zombie movies are not a fad, and they are not sheer escapism (Paffenroth 2006:133).

The question then is why now? Certainly zombies have been present in popular culture and especially film, for a long time, although they lack a literary antecedent as in the case of vampires, in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897[1993]). Cinematic fears form around a kernel of anxiety situated within the general social context around which the

film was created. For example, Kevin Heffernan argues that in films of the 1950's "a crucial component of 1950's horror in both fiction and film is the fear of the increasing top-down management of both economic and psychic life in rationalized, postwar America" (Heffernan 2002:56). Often the main villainous figure was that of a "scheming or misguided psychiatrist" (Heffernan 2002:56), although others claim that the emphasis of 1950's horror was on themes concerning the extra-terrestrial and outer-space (Jancovich 1996:22). In the late 1970's and early 1980's the slasher became the villain of the screen beginning in 1974, with Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. In 1978 John Carpenter released the first *Halloween* film featuring a knife-wielding psychotic named Michael Meyers. In his article on slasher films, Pat Gill makes a laundry list of the characteristics of this leitmotif:

Contemporary horror plays out many of the defining characteristics of the gothic: defenseless heroines; suppressed passions; unspeakable desires; fearful landscapes and haunted, uncanny interiors; untrustworthy and suspicious relations and relationships; terrifying uncertainty and stifling knowledge; familial secrets and their dreadful exposure; and jarring juxtapositions of the moral and the monstrous, the sexual and the grotesque the virtuous and the violent (Gill 2002:16).

But when looking at this substantial list of criteria, the zombie film does not really seem to hold too many of these criteria. In fact zombies, as imagined by George A. Romero, distinguish themselves in a variety of ways from other cinematic monsters and villains. While *Night of the Living Dead* more closely follows the classic leitmotif, his other work more often take on the form of an allegorical lay critique rather than Gill's view of contemporary horror. Romero's films touch upon untrustworthiness, but also turn it on its head by forcing survivors to depend on each other.

The message to be taken away is that there is a resurgence of the zombie<sup>4</sup>. Much of the credit for the resurgence of the zombie genre is credited to the video game series *Resident Evil* (Russell 2006:117). In addition films such as *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), the remake of *Dawn of the Dead* (2004), and *28 Days Later* (2002)<sup>5</sup>, have helped to rejuvenate interest in the zombie in the realm of the cinematic. Moreover this has led to the expansion of the zombie genre through the creation of films like *Fido* (2006), *28 Weeks Later* (2007), *Planet Terror* (2007), and *Pontypool* (2008) to name a few. Also contributing to the cinematic sub-genre of “gore-no” are films such as *Zombie Strippers* (2008). In brief, the zombie has had an explosion in popularity in the new millennium and not simply in cinema, but also in comic books, novels, and video games.

#### *Analysis of the Zombie in Academia*

There is currently an undead vogue happening in academia, where the term undead and zombie are appearing more frequently and are often deemed synonyms. The zombie in current academic usage is broken up into constituent pieces. In philosophy the focus is on the mental state of individuals which are referred to as philosophical zombies or p-zombies. P-zombies are individuals who look and act just like humans, but lack consciousness (Jacquette 2006:107-8). This philosophical approach to the zombie is far more focused on the early iterations of the Haitian vodoun zombie. The usefulness of

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<sup>4</sup> For a fun, yet unscientific look at trends in zombie cinema in association with social upheaval see: <http://io9.com/5070243/war-and-social-upheaval-cause-spikes-in-zombie-movie-production>

<sup>5</sup> Albeit not technically a zombie film as those within the film are not undead individuals come back to life, but rather the new breed of zombie called ‘infected’. While the infected follow many of the same characteristics of the more familiar zombie the most prevalent difference is that since the infected are not composed of necrotic flesh their speed is much faster than the traditional zombie.

such a creature is limited to those having to do with ideas surrounding consciousness. The bloodlust and gnashing teeth of the cinematic zombies are altogether absent. According to Meghan Sutherland the cinematic zombie as critique was based on ideological structures, relating to consumerism, religion, conformity, militarism, the family (Sutherland 2007:69).

A recent addition to the undead dialogue has been George Ritzer's academic concept dubbed "islands of the living dead" (2003) which focuses much more on the idea of the dichotomous concept of living-death within a context of human geography rather than the zombie. Ritzer synthesizes Weber's "iron cage" with Michel Foucault's "carceral archipelago", into a unitary concept called "islands of the living dead", which he defines as "[conveying] a sense of relatively individual, even isolated, rationalized systems with great gaps—the relatively free and open "seas"—between them" (2000:122). Ritzer focuses on how McDonaldization has crept into the formation of human geographies creating "islands of the living dead", areas surrounded by sea (life), filled with people (alive), but ultimately dead (2003:124). Death for Ritzer is the absence of risk, and the lack of evil (2003:128-129). Within these communities life becomes simulated and the structures of life are replaced with dead structures. Ritzer states that "Entrepreneurs and managers are interested in creating dead structures because such structures are easier to control and, perhaps more important, they tend to make those who inhabit these structures easier to manage" (2003:132). The problem with Ritzer's examination is that death is not "death", but rather death is treated as "not-living". By not-living it is meant that it is a subdued, rationalized, risk-free structure, which in

essence, is a more active form of undeath. “Undeath” is a failure of truly experiencing life rather than an actual or metaphorical death.

The zombie as a voracious, non-instrumental, disease vector is not altogether lost in these attempts to locate the zombie as an object of critical analysis. In mathematics Munz *et al.* in their paper “When Zombies Attack!: Mathematical Modelling of an Outbreak of Zombie Infection” (2009) mapped a zombie outbreak following Jacobian and SIZR mathematical models in analyzing the spread of infectious diseases. Zombies do not spread in the same manner as a disease, although this is the only mathematical model that could be followed without experiencing a full scale zombie apocalypse. One must also be careful not to overly emphasize the infectious nature of the zombie as it is different from a disease in its means of contamination, spread and eradication, which need to be accounted for in the model which Munz *et al.* have established.

While the representation of the zombie in its various iterations presented above touches upon many aspects of the zombie metaphor which is being constructed herein, each of the authors miss key aspects which are critical to the functioning of such a trope. As a result of their non-encompassing treatment of the zombie, the trope becomes flat and non-descript. Thus the zombie as a figure of critique is often under-theorized.

There are several other sources of zombie literature spanning the spectrum of academia, Stephen Harper’s “Night of the Living Dead: Reappraising an Undead Classic” (2005) is a discussion of Romero’s classic film, praising it for its “engagement with the politics of race, gender, and violence” (2). Sarah Juliet Lauro and Karen Embry’s “A Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism” (2008), discuss the use of the zombie, both the Haitian slave zombie and cinematic

zombie, as the ontic/hauntic figure of a new posthumanism prefaced on an expansion of Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto", in which the irreconcilability of the zombie body raises questions about "the insufficiency of the dialectical model (subject/object)" (87). In his paper on "Living Dead Networks" (2010) Eugene Thacker makes reference to the zombie as an agent of contagion (2), but no reference to the monster beyond that as his paper is more concerned with contagion with respect to security of information networks and not zombies. Paul Teusner's "Resident Evil: Horror Film and the Construction of Religious Identity in Contemporary Media Culture" (2002) examines, from the perspective of divinity studies, how horror films tell stories of good and evil, and how the church should join the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century in their use of audio-visual media (33). However, his examination of the 2002 film *Resident Evil*, focuses more on the Red Queen and Alice (the antagonist and protagonist of the film), than on the zombies roaming around in Raccoon City. Elizabeth MacLean Kent's "Zombie as Parody: The Misuses of Science and the Nonhuman Condition in Postmodern Society" (2009) uses the image of the zombie as a means of examining the misuses of science as evil within the context of the postmodern satirical world of apocalyptic zombie fiction. Finally, there is Margaret Twohy's "From Voodoo to Viruses: The Evolution of the Zombie in Twentieth Century Popular Culture" (2008) which traces the rise in popularity of the zombie in film, from Victor Halperin to present, to video games and eventually to print suggesting that the continued popularity of the zombie acts as a feedback loop as "The zombie's ability to permeate so many aspects of popular culture media is directly connected to its versatility as well as the constant inspiration filmmakers, authors, game designers (and so on) gather from one another" (58), leading to a cannibalistic zombie media evolution.

While Ritzer's "Islands of the Living dead" (2003), which examines dead structures and the creation of manageable environments, and Thacker's (2005) examination of the blurring of contagion and transmission in information networks could be used in the context of organization studies and metaphorical analysis of the zombie figure, they are not used as a primary source in the examination of organizational structures and the zombie metaphor in this thesis. Lauro and Embry view the zombie from a post-humanist perspective which views workers as "real-life" zombies (2008:92), and the movement from zombi the Haitian slave made from the power of a bokor (a voodoo shaman) to the American cinematic zombie created as a modern-day reflection of consumer society (2008:99) to the Posthuman zombii<sup>6</sup> "which rejects both subject and object categories, and is irreducible, anticathartic, antiresolution, and working in the mode of negative dialectics" (95). While there is discussion of the zombie metaphor in academia there is no direct or parallel discussion of the zombie figure relating to organizational subjectivity as proposed in this thesis.

#### *Articulation of the Zombie Metaphor*

The fifth aspect of the zombie in Romero's canon, as described in this thesis, is non-instrumental motives, that is, motives "that cannot be explained by appeal to other beliefs or desires that [they] have. [They] just have them" (Vargas 2006:47). A zombie's desire to eat you is no different than being left in a room with a hungry dog and wondering why it is baring its teeth, it is simply instinct. As it is shown in Romero's *Day of the Dead* (1985) zombies do not require flesh for sustenance. They are not even driven by the idea of survival, which is even less than can be said for the dog. In essence, a

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<sup>6</sup> The term zombii is used by Lauro and Embry in order to distinguish the post-human zombii, from the Haitian zombi and the cinematic zombie.

zombie has roughly the same capacity for empathy as a force of nature. The same cannot be said of other cinematic ghouls.

Other monsters choose their victims, such as Dracula's choice of Mina Harker, or the Mummy's choice of Abbott and Costello, there is an instrumental logic situated within these monsters. Surely any person would do well for a meal, but Dracula specifically chooses Harker and despite resistance from Jonathan Harker and Professor Van Helsing he is hellbent on making her a meal. John Draeger (2006) has written an essay comparing Bram Stoker's literary vampire and Francis Ford Coppola's cinematic representation of Dracula, and while Draeger has no qualms about morally condemning Coppola's Dracula, he seems hesitant to judge Stoker's vampire in the same way because of Dracula's narcissism, which is more an inability to empathize with others than a removal of instrumental motives. This very aspect of zombies may in fact be one of their saving graces as the new cinematic leitmotif. There is no need to explain anything, no character to develop, relatively no back story, no 'method behind the madness'. It is a "plug and play" monster. This is not to say that other monsters do not have their own place in the examination of various social phenomena but rather that the zombie is the best fit for the purposes of examining organization because of its unconsciousness and the amount of zombies involved.

In terms of origination, the zombie acts in a very similar manner in which the enterprise/bureaucracy deploys the working subject; they have no origin pertinent to their position; they are plug-and-play, and interchangeable, just as the zombie. Meghan Sutherland makes the claim that zombies makes its way back into the cinematic, mostly through the process of remakes, because they have cult status, are low-budget and have a

high return yield (2007:65). The zombie film itself acts, metaphorically like a zombie. It returns at times of uncertainty, when cinema, as an industry is lacking both financially and imaginatively. Heather Hendershot states that zombies

[are] imbued with varying levels of consciousness and desire, and unlike Dracula and Frankenstein, they don't require heavy back stories, they can't be sexy or develop a boring love interest, and they have no hope of achieving any kind of happiness. These undead, decaying bodies are potent ciphers by virtue of their uncanniness (Hendershot 2006 quoted in Sutherland 2007:66)

While there have been zombie films dealing with zombie sexuality, both in loving (*Fido* 2005) and pseudo-pornographic (*Zombie Strippers* 2008) representations, Heather Hendershot and Meghan Sutherland's view of the zombie film does transpose much of itself into the very nature of the zombie itself, the unconscious desiring subject, the decay, the process through which it can infect others and "remake" itself inside of another. All of these aspects move towards creating a more generative zombie metaphor. When examining the zombie, certain characteristics return time and again, but never are they codified to create a fixed representation. Sutherland uses the idea of reproduction, decay, unconscious desiring (Sutherland 2007). Loudermilk (2003) examines the ideas of "Pure motorized instinct" (85), cannibalism and the idea of a liminal state between human and inhuman. This state is more often referred to as uncanny. "The uncanny concerns the anxieties that, reminding us of death and danger as well as of our own bodily and mental vulnerability, impurity and incompleteness, haunt us, not so much as external threats, but...by the threat of their return" (Thanem 2006:170).

This zombie is no different from a typhoon or poison ivy in terms of lacking maliciousness due to its non-instrumental motives. This mindlessness in the genre is juxtaposed with a focus on the brain as the central aspect of being. Zombies are simple,

there is no machination required in plotting their demise. Get something heavy and blunt, something that is sharp and cuts, or get a gun and aim for the head.

The brain is central to the zombie genre, whether it be in the *Return of the Living Dead* series in which zombies actually ask for brains, or Romero's zombies where blunt force trauma to the head is the only means to force them to 'stay dead'. The refrain in Romero on proper zombie destruction is by "Destroying the brain or removing the head from the body" (*Dawn of the Dead* 1978). In humans, the brain is figured as the center of reason, rationality, and intellect. It is quite odd that the zombie, a being without such 'human' capacities, is so innately tied to the brain. In critical writing however, the zombie and the centrality of the brain is a question of failure of rationality in the human; the zombie acts as an *unheimlich*, an uncanny for humanity, "...something that ought to have remained hidden but has come to light" (Freud 1964:241).

The idea of the zombie as an uncanny was popularized by Masahiro Mori (1970:33) who demonstrated that the zombie exemplifies the depths of the 'uncanny valley', where things that are less familiar, but more human cause revulsion. Other forms of the monstrous lack the uncanny qualities of the zombie; werewolves do not look similar enough to humans, while vampires often do not look different enough. Falling on either side of the valley, either they seem to be real and cannot be significantly differentiated from 'us' or are so different that they are too far from 'us' to truly be a 'them'. What is critical to the zombie's uncanniness is its ambivalence towards belonging. They do not try to pass, or walk as wolves in sheep's clothing. They simply are and that is all they will ever be. Indifference to humanity, other than as an apparent source of sustenance, which they do not require, is their *modus operandi*.

The final truly differentiating aspect of the zombie itself is the way in which they move; zombies move *en masse*. They are like a great rotting tide moving forward devouring whatever warm flesh is nearby. This is the truly distinguishing trait of the zombie genre. It should be noted that the idea of mass was inspired by suspense/horror films of previous eras (most notably *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) and *The Last Man on Earth* (1964)). Other filmic monsters have not truly taken to the idea of the mass in a manner such as the zombie<sup>7</sup>.

The setting in zombie cinema, especially for Romero, is the everyday. *Night of the Living Dead* takes place in a farmhouse, *Dawn of the Dead* in a shopping mall, *Day of the Dead* in a subterranean military compound, and *Land of the Dead* in a decrepit city and its surroundings. While most could identify with at least two of these locales, the subterranean military compound is somewhat off the beaten track for most people. However, what gives familiarity are the relationships within these more remote places. Dealing with people that you feel are lazy or simply outright hate such as is the case in *Day of the Dead*, or dealing with a crippling sense of nihilism while the rich get richer and seeking to reclaim your class consciousness and escape, zombie cinema is set in the familiar.

#### *Organizational Subjectivity and Zombies*

The organizational subject has been trained to become part of the institution. Michel Foucault's examination of the penitentiary *Discipline and Punish* (1979) examines the means by which the subject is created, through a series of techniques.

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<sup>7</sup> Although this trend has been changing as of late, notably in the realm of vampire films such as *30 Days of Night* (2007), and *I Am Legend* (2007) (based on a novel by the same name) in which vampires move in broods rather than as individuals.

Through these techniques the individual is placed inside a network of relations which “links the singular and the multiple. It allows both the characterization of the individual as individual and the ordering of a given multiplicity” (1979:149). The purpose of these techniques is to arrange the subject in such a way as to generate the most efficient “machinery”. The primary technique being examined by Foucault is that of discipline which, “‘trains’ the moving, confused, useless multitudes of bodies and forces into a multiplicity of individual elements...These are humble modalities, minor procedures, as compared with the majestic rituals of sovereignty or the great apparatuses of the state” (170). Through the techniques of discipline the individual can become a subject anywhere, and because of discipline an individual can be made a subject through the application of these techniques through a normalizing social body such as work.

A clear example of the transformation from individual to subject is the figure of the zombie. The zombie metaphor used in this thesis has been constructed from the films of George A. Romero, the father of the modern zombie film (Bishop 2006: 200, Russell 2006:70). The logic of choosing one auteur instead of creating a patchwork zombie metaphor using aspects of various filmmakers such as Lucio Fulci or Amando de Ossorio, is that the Romero zombie is *the* exemplary zombie to which all modern iterations are compared. While the works of Fulci and de Ossorio were cinematically unique contributions to the genre, their works are isolated from the North American audience and cultural industry machine of the United States. As such the successes of the works of George A. Romero are the genesis of the zombie as it is known today (Harper 2005, Russell 2006:70-71, Paffenroth 2006:1). While this thesis will be using the zombie as imagined by Romero, the ideas which fashioned the fear of zombie in Haiti are not

altogether absent in its filmic representation. The zombie as a modern means of critique and as metaphor allows us to get inside notions of the organizational culture. As a critical metaphor the zombie is placed inside this context to create chaos and see if the structures built up begin to waver or crack. Much like the sociology of the 1950s, the fears presented were not simply the harms of the new institutions growing up around individuals, but rather of becoming part of those institutions and not being able to get away.

The zombie has never been a creature separate from critique, from its inception in Haiti to its Hollywood revival. With the zombie, or the new breed of zombie called ‘infected’ wreaking havoc throughout the current cinematic landscape, it is important to locate the origin of this contemporary version of the zombie in its earliest representations. The metaphor of the zombie as represented by Romero will be used in order to examine the organizational subject. This thesis seeks not to evaluate the failings or gains of the organizational models of the bureaucracy or the enterprise, but rather to explore the productivity of using the zombie as a lens through which to interpret the nature and place of the modern working subject as depicted in academic and managerial representations in the newly forming organizational structures in the age of the organization “man”<sup>8</sup>. While William Whyte’s book, *The Organization Man* (1956), was published twelve years before the release of *Night of the Living Dead* in 1968, *Night* was the start of a new breed of film based in an era in which the Organization Man had had time to establish himself, at a time when America was in a protracted war, where the President of the United States

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<sup>8</sup> In using the gendered term “man” here, I am employing a term derived from the title of William H. Whyte’s book, “The Organization Man”.

had been assassinated, where antipathy, conformity, homogeneity, and the loss of individuality were becoming part and parcel of middle-class life in America. “Whyte summed up such fears in his warnings about the rise of the Organization Man, a living dead worker whose place in the economy was guaranteed “only in exchange for his soul”” (Russell 2006:51).

This thesis will examine critiques of the 1950s organizational subject through the use of the zombie trope in order to show that the entrepreneurial “remedy” does not in fact remedy the organizational subject from the concerns of the zombie critique. While the discourse surrounding the entrepreneur may attempt to reinforce the survivor metaphor as the driving force behind the enterprise, the practice of the enterprise simply creates zombies as defined in this thesis.

Chapter two will examine the methodology of metaphor analysis and construct the zombie trope as well as provide a brief introduction to George A. Romero’s *Dead* series. The third chapter will be a look at the works of three major sociological authors of the 1950’s C. Wright Mills, David Riesman and William Whyte and follow the development of the new American character in 1950’s American society. The fourth chapter will compare and contrast the two large scale organizational structures which arose from the changes created by the new American character, the bureaucracy and the enterprise and see how the zombie metaphor functions within these two organizational structures. Finally the fifth chapter will summarize the findings and offer suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 2: Methodological Position

### *Metaphor and Narrative*

The use of narrative, fiction and metaphor analyses have an important role in the field of organization studies. One of the primary writers on the subject, Barbara Czarniawska, examined the practical application of narrative in organizational analysis. Czarniawska sees text as being no different from many 'established' methods of data collection such as anthropological fieldwork. She states that "meaningful action shares constitutive features of the text: It becomes objectified by inscription which frees it from its agents" (Czarniawska 1998:4). As such, writers inside of organization studies argue that "(organization) science is just as fictional as science fiction, Voodoo, or Chinese medicine. Or just as true, which amounts to saying the same thing" (Parker *et al.* 1999:585). The world is made up of truths inside of language, and in order to make sense of these narrative truths metaphors are created to make the narratives we create more easily understood. As such, "The boundaries between narrative knowledge (in the form of myths and stories) and scientific knowledge (the 'facts') are artificial because scientific knowledge can only be represented through narrative knowledge" (De Cock 2000:591).

There are of course limitations to using this methodology as "Metaphors are framing devices, bringing certain things into focus and hiding others" (Hatch and Yanow 2008:36). Organizations are not as pristine as they may seem never quite so solid; they are in fact quite messy once you get inside them. Because of this, a metaphor is often the best means of delving into much of the organizational world. As such, organizations have been broken down into ideal types, since the works of Weber, because of ontological

difficulties in situating their fundamental character. Organizations embody a multiplicity of identities none of which are “central and distinctive”, but also none of which is entirely imaginary (Hatch and Yanow 2008:34). Metaphor functions on the basis of synecdoche; much like ideal types it “denotes a class of tropes, all of which rest on a shared characteristic: the projection of equivalence of some sort (including parts representing wholes, or the equivalence that underlies exchange)” (Hatch and Yanow 2008:25).

What needs to be clarified is that metaphor analysis *is not* discourse analysis, but follows a much more structured approach. As Cornelissen *et al.* state “Metaphor analysis differentiates itself from discourse theory and discourse analysis ‘which emphasizes the indexical or situated nature of social categories in linguistic interaction’—versus metaphor which focus on the culturally shared repertoires” (2008:12). Metaphors come before discourse, they are “central to discourse and understanding” (Cornelissen *et al.* 2008:8).

The methodology espoused here is one in which “the intellectual dandyism of cultural studies collides with the grey functionality of management science” (Case 1999:579). Embracing plurality is critical when dealing with boundary creatures such as zombies since they themselves are an embodiment of plurality, living and dead. To follow Case drawing upon Paul Feyerabend “intellectual creativity is very often stifled by accepting restrictive versions of what counts as science, and what kinds of knowing are useful” (1999:583). It is within this analytic of organizational science in which a critique of organization studies can begin from the perspective of cinematic representations. Such a device was propositioned by Karl Weick, and summarized by Joep Cornelissen.

“According to Weick, conceptual advances come about when instead of scouting out old

ground for neglected gems, we cover new ground by examining empirical context previously overlooked but potentially illuminating of large-scale human organizations (Weick 1993, 1999a) and by conceptually associating ideas that were not previously related, let alone associated with one another (Weick 1998, 1999a)” (Cornelissen 2006:1583).

The metaphor is a necessarily incomplete means of examining phenomena. It is used to elucidate some qualities of a phenomenon while hiding others. The zombie metaphor does the same. The zombie metaphor is being used as a lens in order to understand the history of the organizational subject. This is in respect to the change in the American character which began in the post-World War II period the current trend within organizational literature has been that of fragmentations along dichotomous entities, the bureau and the enterprise. The zombie as a metaphor works against this dichotomous separation by embracing its dualities, by admitting to the ability to be a dualistic entity, a being both living and dead. In this regard, this thesis limits its examination to the worker within bureaucratic and enterprising organizations, with respect to the five zombie characteristics described in chapter one. Thus, policies, management and other frameworks are not considered within this body of work.

Metaphor analysis is pre-discursive. It creates reality by creating the terminology required to have a discourse. The usefulness of metaphor analysis is found in its ability to focus on those aspects which are under analysis while concealing other, less relevant aspects of the phenomenon under examination. Metaphor analysis makes complex things understandable by breaking down a phenomenon into its basic elements. Since this examination is focused on the character of organizational structures and its workers,

metaphor analysis is a good fit since other aspects of organization which confuse the question can be bracketed as they are not part of the metaphor being used. For George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) metaphors are already in existence within language. They are culturally imbued with meaning, the process of metaphor analysis is to bring these metaphors into focus and remind the culture of the use of the metaphors in making the world more comprehensible. This thesis seeks to bring to the fore a new metaphor into organizational studies in order to create a new discourse surrounding the structures of bureaucracies and enterprises. The zombie metaphor is a sub-cultural metaphor based in horror film culture. The aim is to bring this zombie metaphor from sub-culture to organization culture and allowing discourse to follow.

#### *What is a Metaphor?*

In their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), Lakoff and Johnson suggest that “*The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:5, emphasis in original). As such, metaphor is a means of examining the conceptual world. They argue that conceptual systems are largely metaphorical claiming that “the way we think, what we experience and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (3). Lakoff and Johnson explain that “Because so many of the concepts that are important to us are either abstract or not clearly delineated in our experience (the emotions, ideas, time, etc.), we need to get a grasp on them by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms (spatial orientations, objects, etc.)” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:115). Because our world is constructed from so many abstract concepts, metaphors are essential to the way in which we navigate the world.

Metaphors break down complex meaning making activity into simpler and simpler elements. The purpose of a metaphor is to make a conceptual structure more easily understood; Lakoff and Johnson state, “Human purposes typically require us to impose artificial boundaries that make physical phenomena discrete just as we are: entities bounded by a surface” (25). Unbounded phenomenon are simply too complex to be effectively analysed through metaphors, most especially because these phenomenon are themselves often layered by metaphors.

The same things that make metaphors useful are the same things that limit them. Metaphors break down conceptual reality to make it more easily understood, but they also make conceptual reality less complete. “So when we say that a concept is structured by a metaphor, we mean that it is partially structured and that it can be extended in some ways but not others” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:13). What Lakoff and Johnson mean by this is that metaphors are not all encompassing gestalts, but rather they take certain aspects of the conceptual realm and repurpose them in order to make them more easily understood. Therefore, the purpose of metaphor is to understand an *aspect* of a concept (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:97). The purpose of metaphor is to limit the analysis in such a way as to make it understandable; it relays concepts into the manner in which Lakoff and Johnson claim we already experience. According to Rudolph Schmitt it is the homology of thought and speech which allowed for the possibility of metaphor in the social sciences (2005:366).

Lakoff and Johnson reduced the concept of the metaphor to five key principles. The first two principles of metaphor are “First, the metaphor highlights certain features [of the phenomenon under investigation] while suppressing others” and “Second, the

metaphor does not merely entail another concept...but it entails very specific *aspects* of these concepts” (1980:141, emphasis in original). Metaphors are by their nature incomplete and partial explanations. A metaphor can help to quantify what one is attempting to express by highlighting particular aspects of an abstract concept, such as an emotion. For example saying one is “happy as a clam” while lacking a quantifiable observable reality, helps to convey how happy one is, while saying “happy as a pig in shit” conveys a very different conceptualization of happiness. The third aspect of the metaphors is that they can “acquire the status of a truth...the metaphor can have a feedback effect, guiding our future actions in accordance with the metaphor” (142). The fourth aspect of metaphor “can thus be appropriate because they sanction actions, justify inferences, and help us set goals” (142), as such, metaphors attempt to create narratives of experiential life and the more they become a part of language the truer they appear to become. Individuals begin to identify with the metaphors and to shape their conceptual world according to them, or try to fit their experience into the metaphorical structure which they are able to understand. The final principle of a metaphor that Lakoff and Johnson discuss is the cultural specificity of metaphors, “the meaning of a metaphor will have for me will be partly culturally determined and partly tied to my past experiences. The cultural differences can be enormous because each of the concepts in the metaphor under discussion...can vary widely from culture to culture” (142). While metaphors are not universally accepted, or even universally understood their ability to elucidate the conceptual world can make them more easily understood cultural specificity. Joep Cornelissen states that metaphor analysis should be seen as working within the realm of

heuristics because of its “capacity to open new ways of understanding and to lay out the groundwork for extended theorizing and research” (2005:753).

The means of using metaphor analysis in this thesis is by describing a process and then presenting results. This is different from other uses of metaphor analysis as described by Rudolph Schmitt (2005: 360-366) which include: metaphor as a therapeutic tool, metaphor as describing the research process, searching for a specific metaphor, eliciting explicit metaphors from research participants or “reconstruction of research participants’ metaphorical points of view and of cultural phenomena”.

I argue that the metaphor of the zombie may be used to further elucidate the change in American character in the post-war era and how these changes in character influenced the eventual reformation of the organizational structures of the work environment, specifically the bureaucracy and the enterprise.

#### *How One “Does” Metaphor Analysis*

Lakoff and Johnson did not set out explicit criteria on how to perform metaphor analysis. Cornelissen, on the other hand, suggests that in order to perform metaphor analysis one must maintain a “structural analogy drawn between concepts in their respective domains, followed by an emergent meaning through a further blending of the concepts involved” (2005:757). In order to perform this task Cornelissen (2005: 758) suggests three phases for metaphor analysis, development of a generic structure, development and elaboration of the blend, and finally create emergent meaning.

Cornelissen describes his process as follows

[O]n encountering a metaphor, its terms are encoded, the relevant domains are inferred, the structures to be seen as parallel are found and the correspondences between these structures are mapped...After a generic structure is constructed, further instance-specific information is transferred from the target and source concepts and is elaborated upon...finally, the meaning (ideas and conjectures) that

emerges from the blend is linked and translated back to the input target concept (2005:758).

In this thesis, the zombie metaphor will be constructed by drawing out the central features of the zombie as portrayed in the films of the godfather of the zombie, George A. Romero. The metaphorical connections of Romero's zombie will then be compared to critiques of the organizational subject of the 1950s, as portrayed in the sociological literature. Using the metaphor of the zombie and contrasting it to the Organization Man (the bureaucratic subject) and the Entrepreneur (the enterprising subject) will give insight into the contradictions and dysfunctions of discourses of the self in late modernity. In order to fully appreciate the central features of the zombie, it is necessary to understand how zombies are portrayed in Romero's work.

#### *George A. Romero and his Zombies*

On October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1968, George A. Romero's film *Night of the Living Dead* made its theatrical debut. The film was released in a very auspicious year, the film regulatory board the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA), risen from the ashes of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) in 1966, had finally established the age restriction criteria with which we are so familiar today (Black 1977:231-232) and with this, the onus on censorship moved from the industry to the individual. However, *Night of the Living Dead* was not released with the new age restriction certification, something which is now considered box-office suicide. As such small children were being admitted to a film dubbed by film industry paper, *Variety* as an "unrelieved orgy of sadism" (*Variety* 1968:6 in Russell 2006:65). Jamie Russell goes on to describe the critical revilement of the film, most especially by heralded critic Roger Ebert describing the fear being felt by nine year old children in the theatre. "A little girl

across the aisle from me, maybe nine years old, was sitting very still in her seat and crying” (Ebert 1968 in Russell 2006:66). While *Night* may be viewed as rather tame or even *avant-garde* by today’s standards, the film made a massive impact in the late 1960’s and set the stage for all future zombie films (Sutherland 2007:64).

Following up on the box-office success of *Night of the Living Dead*, Romero released his most famous work, *Dawn of the Dead*, in 1978. Once again the film was released as unrated as the MPAA would have designated the film as being X rated (Russell 2006:95). The critical reception of the film was still split, while Roger Ebert and many others extolled its virtues, *Variety* still found the film to be lacking in artistry (Russell 2006:95). The box office success of the film and the cult status made Romero the master of the zombie genre. However, what makes Romero the maestro of the zombie is the means by which his films have come to define the genre, and their living dead subject.

Romero’s films made several critical contributions to the zombie as a subject. Romero has infused the zombie with one the most important shift in zombie lore since its movement from Haitian Vodoun—cannibalism. While the *Zombies of Mora Tau* (1957) originated the first zombie “swarm”, Romero took this to a whole new level through his love of gore. In addition to cannibalism, Romero also helped to pioneer a critical shift in the role of the destruction of the zombie—“shoot them in the head”. Motor function, rather than rationalism became the norm within the genre; the mute, shuffling zombies, only occasionally moaning, became the new paradigm. Dr. Logan, a.k.a. Dr. Frankenstein, in *Day of the Dead* (1985) described the creatures as such: “They are us. They are the extensions of us. They are the same animal, simply functioning less

perfectly”. As will be illustrated through an analysis of Romero’s films, the zombie metaphor consists of a five key facets: 1) a hungering desire for human flesh (a drive external to the individual but affecting their activity (beyond simply socialization)), 2) activity occurs in groups or more often masses, 3) an ability to be killed only by the removal or destruction of the brain, 4) the ability to turn all those bitten by them into zombies themselves (processes of translation), and 5) the uncanny and the loss of ‘humanity’ (memory, speech, morality) associated with a loss of instrumental motives. Zombies are a non-cultural, extra-discursive, non-political mass which is ever expanding and ever de-individualizing.

The reason for focusing the analysis through Romero’s films is because of the importance of his films in the establishment of this zombie form. It is in his work that the dominant trope of the zombie was produced. While others have made changes to the creatures—namely their speed—it is Romero’s zombie which has catalyzed the “class of tropes” of the zombie subject. So revered is Romero that many directors making zombie films will ask him for his opinion or for his blessing after making their film<sup>9</sup>. However, a film simply consisting of zombies would not be terribly interesting—there must be prey. Romero’s films helped to establish the metaphor of the survivors in zombie films, and even moreso, the notion of the survivor enclave.

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<sup>9</sup> This was the case with Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg after finishing their film *Shaun of the Dead* (2004) (Russell 2006:183) and Danny Boyle for his film *28 Days Later* (2002) (albeit Boyle’s film is not technically a zombie film, it is often considered as part of the ‘new canon’).

*Synopsis: Night of the Living Dead*

The first movie in Romero's "Dead" series was *Night of the Living Dead* which was released in 1968. The story of *Night of the Living Dead* revolves around a group of survivors attempting to stave off an undead invasion while barricaded in a small isolated farmhouse. However, their survival is jeopardized by a power struggle within the farmhouse between Ben, the African American protagonist of the film, and Mr. Harry Cooper, a lecherous and cowardly white businessman. Romero's *Night* can be viewed as a condemnation of the family home as a sanctuary and the start of the collapse of mediating structures of America.

*Night* opens on a brother and sister, John and Barbara, driving far out of their way to visit a family grave. John mocks the idea of visiting the grave for their mother stating, "You think I want to blow Sunday on a scene like this? We're gonna either have to move mother out there or move the grave to Pittsburgh". John begins to harass Barbara as she lays a bouquet of flowers on their father's grave. He attempts to frighten her by claiming that ghouls are after her, which as it ends up, is true, as a zombie appears from nowhere and attacks John. John is bitten by a zombie and Barbara makes a dramatic escape, and eventually finds herself in a farmhouse. The owners of the farmhouse are all deceased and Barbara is isolated and alone. Shortly after her arrival a truck pulls up to the farmhouse, Ben enters the farmhouse, and he begins to barricade the house. During the barricading, Barbara pleads with Ben to go and save her brother. After Barbara has a fit Ben knocks her unconscious and then turns on the radio and completes his barricade preparations, finding a rifle and some ammunition in the process.

Once the barricades are completed, the remaining survivors, who had been hiding from the zombies in the basement, are revealed: Mr. Cooper, his wife Helen, as well as

their injured child Kyra, and an adolescent couple Tom and Judy. Once upstairs, the survivors watch a television broadcast. The viewers are informed that the best course of action is to make their way to military checkpoints held by National Guardsmen and that the “epidemic of mass murder” may be caused by radiation from a Venus probe which has crashed on Earth. The news broadcast details that the individuals infected are dead yet alive, and that all those dying should be set ablaze immediately after dying, since they will otherwise soon reanimate and wish to feed on human flesh.

An argument erupts between Ben and the newly emerged Cooper over the best means of survival in the house. Ben lays claim to the top portion of the house and Cooper the basement, each believing his plan to be superior. A power struggle erupts between the two men’s competing views on the optimal means of survival. Eventually, a plan is hatched to get all the survivors to a rescue station nearby. Before this can be done the survivors must get gasoline for the trucks from a pump near the farmhouse which has been locked. Tom and Ben take on the mission of driving over to the pump to gas up the truck, however, when Judy sees Tom is in danger she rushes out to be at his side. As they reach the pumps Tom spills petrol all over the side of the truck and the torch Ben was carrying sets the truck ablaze. Tom and Judy drive the truck away from the pumps and are caught in an explosion that kills them both. Ben is now left to fight his way back to the farm house through a throng of zombie assailants. However, the cowardly Mr. Cooper has locked Ben out as he arrives at the farm house. Ben is forced to kick the door open thus leaving the front door susceptible to zombie attack. In an act of self-preservation Cooper helps Ben to board the door shut. The task completed Ben begins to strike Cooper. Outside the zombies feed on the charred remains of Tom and Judy.

After a one sided fight between Ben and Mr. Cooper, Helen comes up from the cellar and reveals that Kyra had been bitten by one of the zombies. At 3 o'clock another news report airs on television describing a search and destroy mission headed up by a local sheriff indicating that in order to destroy the zombies the brain must be destroyed and the body incinerated.

Once the newscast ends the final assault on the farm house takes place. Ben, attempting to hold off the attack, drops the gun which is then picked up by Cooper. He threatens Ben and commands his wife to make her way to the cellar. Ben leaves the barricaded window and in a *melée* takes the gun away from Cooper, cocks it and shoots Cooper in the chest. Wounded, Cooper stumbles into the cellar as Helen is being clawed at by the zombies outside. In a burst of consciousness Barbara rushes over to aid Helen. Saved, Helen rushes to the cellar only to find her daughter feasting on the body of Cooper. Kyra then makes her way over to Helen and stabs her repeatedly with a trowel.

Upstairs Ben and Barbara continue to fight off the zombie invaders. Johnny, Barbara's brother and now a zombie, enters the farm house and drags her out into the mass of undead bodies waiting outside. Alone and outnumbered Ben makes his way to the cellar fighting off the reanimated Kyra. In the cellar Ben finds the bodies of Helen and Cooper which are now reanimating. He summarily executes them with the rifle and waits out the zombies, gun in hand.

Morning comes and a search and destroy team is seen making its way toward the farm house. The search and rescue team dispatches the zombies roaming the grounds and once they see Ben, who has ventured up from the cellar, in the farm house gun in hand

they shoot him unceremoniously from the distance and drag him out of the farm house with meat hooks and set him ablaze.

The family unit in *Night* completely dissolves, John devours Barbara, Kyra stabs her mother with a spade, and even the farmhouse itself, a symbol of the American family, is not safe. With *Night* Romero has brought an uncanny enemy into the very fabric of American family life. Life inside the farmhouse has fallen apart, with everyone alienated from each other both through physical and emotional separation, and even separation from consciousness, which is the reason for their failure to survive the danger both inside and outside their enclave. Life outside has become alienated as well, everyone outside is left mindless and searching for answers. There is no basis for the social inside or outside and eventually, the mass unconsciousness enters into the farmhouse absorbs them, or devours them entirely. Only Ben survives the mass, a person on the margins of society, but he is eliminated as a matter of course by the reorganized survivors from the outside by traditional institutions of power.

*Synopsis: Dawn of the Dead*

*Dawn of the Dead* opens in a newsroom in pandemonium. A broadcast is being filmed in which a doctor is arguing with the host about the situation taking place outside. A series of rescue station locations are being flashed on screen. The heroine of the film, Fran, tells the technician in charge to remove the announcements from the screen as they are out of date. The producer, still hungry for ratings claims and questions the decision to pull the supers (super-imposed lettering on television screens) from the screen because “Without those rescue stations on screen every minute people won’t watch us. They’ll tune out”.

Meanwhile elsewhere in the city at an apartment building, a S.W.A.T. team is laying siege to an apartment building housing primarily Hispanics and African Americans. Eventually two members of the team, Peter and Roger, make their way to the cellar where the bodies of the deceased are being held. The pair of soon to be survivors encounter a one-legged priest who makes prophetic statements “When the dead walk *Senores*, we must stop the killing or lose the war”. They then destroy the mass of zombies being held in the cellar upon the priest’s confirmation that they have received their last rites.

Fran and Stephen, Fran’s boyfriend and a news helicopter pilot, await the arrival of Roger at a helicopter launching pad. The duo is then greeted by Roger and Peter who have returned from their mission at the apartments in order to escape on Stephen’s helicopter. Before liftoff they are approached by a police officer looking for cigarettes, the group deny having any, but light up as soon as they lift off acknowledging the scarcity of such goods in the near future. After a long flight the survivors need to find supplies and a place to rest as Stephen, the pilot, has been falling asleep and the group eventually lands on the roof of the Monroeville Mall.

As Stephen sleeps, Peter and Roger make an excursion into the mall in order to stockpile goods. Peter claiming “There’s an awful lot of stuff down there we could use”. Peter and Roger make a supply run, outmanoeuvring the slow-moving zombies, and locking themselves inside a department store. After trapping themselves inside the department store the pair exemplifies Romero’s critique of consumerism as Roger exclaims “Well, we’re in now. How the hell do we get back?” to which Peter replies “Who the hell cares? Let’s go shopping first!” In order to escape their self-imposed exile

the pair uses themselves as bait luring the creatures towards another entrance on the bottom level of the department store and escape out the door from which they entered. Peter reunites with Stephen after hearing gunshots as Stephen is in the midst of a confrontation with a group of zombies Peter then tells Stephen to make his way to the department store where Roger is waiting. Once inside Stephen unveils a map of the mall and the trio escape through the duct system. Meanwhile, one of the zombies has made its way to the survivors' living quarters where Fran was left alone by the men. Roger, Peter and Stephen arrive just in time to save her from the zombie with the booty they've accumulated from downstairs. Fran goes in to a mild shock and Stephen tries to calm her down by talking about all the material things they've got in the mall. "This is a terrific place Frannie. This is perfect. We got it made in here Frannie."

The survivors listen to a radio broadcast about the situation and we are introduced to the fact that Fran is 3 or 4 months pregnant. Peter offers Stephen the opportunity to abort the baby claiming "It's not too late, and I know how". In circumstances such as those presented by Romero, the thought of bringing another life into the world is seen as problematic. While the survivors are surrounded by wealth they lack the privilege of having children or family *qua* family.

A television program explaining the sociological and anthropological characteristics of the zombies plays over a montage of zombies milling about inside and outside the mall. Meanwhile, Peter, Roger and Stephen develop a plan to seal off the mall by blocking the entrances with 18-wheelers. Fran feeling excluded since the men have discovered her pregnancy gives the men a list of demands claiming, "I'm not gonna be den mother to you guys". She states that she wishes to be included in the planning, wants

to be taught to fly the helicopter and always wants to be left with a gun. Peter agrees with her demands, while Stephen acts churlishly, slamming a rifle and cartridges next to her. The men then leave Fran alone in order to seal off the mall. However, during the mission Roger is bitten by zombies and he falls ill.

After sealing off the entrances the survivors decide to seal themselves in by locking all the doors in the mall and once that is accomplished eliminating any more zombies left inside. Peter and Stephen also make plans to create a fake wall so that no one will be able to find them should they get inside.

Once the mall is cleared of any zombie threat the survivors enjoy their newfound riches: eating the fine foods in the mall, playing videogames, ice skating, and wearing extravagant clothing such as fur coats. With this life of luxury come various tensions within the survivor group. Roger is bitten and according to Peter will die within three days and the lines of communication within the group are becoming frayed. They seem to lose themselves in idle excess and instead find meaning in things rather than each other. This is exemplified by a scene in which Peter, Fran and Stephen are eating dinner. Fran tells Stephen to turn off the television set since there have been no broadcasts in three days, and in the middle of the dinner slams her silverware down and walks over to shut it off. As Fran takes her seat Stephen immediately turns the television back on. Peter sits silently observing. In response to the scenario Fran exclaims “What have we done to ourselves”.

Eventually a group of marauding bikers find the survivors living in the mall and raid it. The raiders destroy the barriers surrounding the mall and a flood of undead enters along with the bikers. Everything is going smoothly for the bikers as they simply take

what they want. However Stephen makes claim to the mall and its contents. “It’s ours, we took it. It’s ours” and opens fire on the marauders and all anarchy breaks loose. Peter makes his way back into the duct system picking off bikers with his gun while Stephen becomes trapped in an elevator shaft in the infested mall below.

As Stephen attempts to make his way up the elevator and into the duct system he is dragged down and turned into a zombie. Stephen leads the other zombies to the fake partition and leads them towards the survivor’s hideout. Fran makes her way up to the helicopter. Meanwhile, Peter claims that he does not wish to leave and barricades himself in a bedroom with a pistol held to his head. Once the zombies’ breakthrough he runs up to the helicopter and he and Fran escape. Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead* takes place after the zombie infection has reached a critical state; the mediating structures of society “*those institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life*” (Berger and Neuhaus 1977:2, emphasis in original) have been laid to waste. As a result the individuals attempt to find solace in the world of things and materialistic excess, all the while eliminating any form of human connection to each other. They are living in an anomic enclave where the rules are not fully understood. They are being driven solely by consumption, for the survivors it is materialistic consumption and for the zombies it is the eternal desiring for flesh, what Loudermilk calls “desire gone virally awry” (2003:88).

*Synopsis: Day of the Dead*

Romero’s *Day of the Dead* can be viewed as a critique of the enterprise of science and the military establishment. Romero tries to show that science goes against the process of life; it is obsessed with death and contributes only facts and figures rather than true

experience. In *Day* zombies play the role of scientific subjects, being surgically dissected and reprogrammed.

The film opens with the protagonist Sarah sitting in a windowless room furnished with nothing but a calendar turned to October with all the days crossed out. As she approaches the calendar dozens of zombified hands reach through the wall and grab her, with that she is startled from her sleep and is seated in a helicopter somewhere in Florida. She and three other survivors, John, the helicopter pilot, McDermott an electrician, and Private Salazar (Sarah's *beau*) land the helicopter in an abandoned area. They begin transmitting evacuation details through the helicopter's radio and shout announcements from a bull horn, but the city is populated only by zombies (and an alligator).

After their unsuccessful attempt to find survivors they land in a gated military compound, where they find a fresh grave has been dug. The new grave belongs to the previous commanding officer, Major Cooper, leaving twelve survivors in the compound. The four helicopter passengers descend into a cave complex where they are greeted by two other survivors, Privates Steele and Rickles, two chauvinistic, racist and macho members of the military team, indicating they have to get two more "dumbfucks", their designation for zombies, for Dr. Logan A.K.A., Dr. Frankenstein, for use in his scientific experiments.

Later we are shown into the doctor's laboratory where he is performing a variety of physiological experiments on zombies. He removes their organs, and excises their heads leaving nothing but the brain and the stem to examine the neural pathology of the creatures. His proudest discovery chained to the wall, Bub, a zombie that he has begun to pacify in an attempt to domesticate him/it. Frankenstein explains that "They are the same

animal, simply functioning less perfectly. They can be fooled, you see? They can be tricked into being good little girls and boys, the same way we were tricked into it on the promise of some reward to come”. Eventually, Sarah discovers that one of the zombies upon which Frankenstein is performing experiments is the remains of Major Cooper, the previous commanding officer.

Rhodes, the new commanding officer, calls a meeting in order for everyone to update each other on their progress on their respective tasks. The meeting quickly devolves into childish antics and when Sarah attempts to leave the meeting Rhodes threatens to have Steele shoot her unless she returns to her chair. Frankenstein, arriving late to the meeting, attempts to pacify the situation by rationalizing the situation for Rhodes and by making his and Sarah’s scientific endeavours seem absolutely necessary for their survival. After the meeting, John explains to Sarah that he and McDermott are more than likely safe from Rhodes because they are indispensable, but that she and everyone else should be wary. Sarah once again asks for cooperation.

After having a fight with Salazar, Sarah leaves her room to calm down. As she does the military men break out of a room and begin fighting with each other with Sarah caught in the middle. McDermott saves Sarah from the *melée* and brings her out to a trailer set outside the main compound where he and John reside, which they have dubbed “The Ritz”. McDermott and John have created a pseudo-island paradise in the ‘backyard’ using rattan furniture and tropical wallpaper. Sitting in the backyard Sarah tells John and McDermott that they are not helping around the compound, to which John replies “We don’t believe in what you’re doin’ here, Sarah”. He reveals that buried in the compound are records, microfiche, and microfilm of all the disasters, wars, companies of the United

States. He views it as a “14-mile tombstone”. John’s monologue is the epitome of the anti-scientific critique working its way throughout *Day*.

The next day Dr. Frankenstein finds Sarah and Fisher and brings them to meet “Bub”, his prized zombie. Frankenstein demonstrates that Bub has memories of using toothbrushes, razors, books, telephones, and pistols. He even salutes Rhodes when he comes in to the laboratory. The experiments Frankenstein has been performing on Bub are reminiscent of those of Ivan Pavlov. When given the pistol, emptied of bullets of course, Bub points it at Rhodes and ‘fires’ the empty chamber at him.

After the events of Frankenstein’s lab, a group of military personnel including Steele and Salazar and accompanied by Sarah, go to collect more zombies from the pen. The bindings on the pole that Salazar uses to hold a zombie break and the zombie attacks a member of the military team ripping out his throat. In his death rattle he fires off his automatic rifle killing another member of the military team. Salazar then loses his cool and attempts to attack the zombie and is bitten in the process.

Sarah and McDermott make their way to Frankenstein’s lab to find supplies, where they find that Frankenstein, losing his grip on reality, is feeding Bub the remains of one of Rhodes’ men. Once Rhodes realizes what has occurred, he kills Frankenstein and disarms Sarah, McDermott and the hapless Fisher who had just come in to the laboratory at the sound of the gunfire.

Holding Sarah, McDermott and Fisher as hostages, Rhodes goes to find John in order to take him and his men away from the place on the helicopter. When John says that the helicopter will not hold everyone Rhodes kills Fisher and throws Sarah and McDermott into the zombie corral.

As Sarah and McDermott fight to stay alive in the corral, John ambushes Rhodes knocking him out and taking his pistols to go after the two. Bub has unleashed his shackles and finding Frankenstein's body flies into a rage, arming himself with the research team's discarded pistols. Salazar sacrifices himself allowing the zombies into the gated area and sending them down into the complex via the elevator, all the while being torn apart by the zombies.

McDermott, John and Sarah make their way out of the complex and to the helicopter. Rhodes is confronted by a newly armed Bub who disables him by shooting Rhodes in the shoulder and the leg, eventually sealing his fate by shooting him in the belly and leaving him for a pack of hungry zombies. The movie closes with Sarah, John and McDermott residing on a sunny beach, pursuing the true purpose of life, the enjoyment of oneself, not the scientific experiments and strict rules of a military life. The use of science as management is an underlying theme which is beginning to be developed by Romero, the idea of learning making its way into his films. *Day of the Dead* is really a commentary on the brain, the authority of knowledge. Rhodes and his troops, represent the authority of the state, with Frankenstein and Sarah representing science our dominant form of knowledge. Both represent forms of knowledge and power we rely on for modern social organization and both of them show themselves to be completely untrustworthy, manipulative, and immoral. Everyone is out for themselves, including those charged with managing society.

*Synopsis: Land of the Dead*

*Land of the Dead* is Romero's least veiled commentary on the class structure. The world is divided into poor, rich and zombies. The rich live in Fiddler's Green<sup>10</sup> a giant glass structure in the center of the city. The Green is run by Kaufmann, a businessman whose reach finds itself in all activity within the Green and outside of it, from gambling and games for the poor to keep them from realizing their plight to raiding the surrounding towns and cities for supplies. Kaufmann is the embodiment of Romero's critique of the corporate mentality.

*Land* begins by establishing that the zombie apocalypse has already occurred, and that it has become a global phenomenon. In response to this, humans have developed outpost cities and perform raids on abandoned towns and cities to collect supplies. We are then shown one of the abandoned zombie cities; unlike previous incarnations these zombies seem to have an extended instinctual memory. A zombie band attempts to play on a bandstand, a zombie couple shuffles along hand in hand, a bell rings and a zombie gas attendant (known as Big Daddy according to his outfit) looks for a car to fill up. Spying on the zombies is Riley, the protagonist and leader of one of the raiding parties.

We are then introduced to Cholo, a reckless raider who has aspirations of becoming one of the elite of the fortified city, and who is embroiled in a war of egos with Riley. Riley and Cholo have an exchange in which Riley indicates that the zombies are becoming more intelligent and that caution should be taken; however, Cholo has other plans for the raid wishing to collect vast sums of money by bringing back non-essential supplies such as liquor and cigars for the city's kingpin, Kaufmann. The raiders fire

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<sup>10</sup> Fiddler's Green was an ancient form of pirate heaven since they would have been unable to enter a Christian heaven because of their piracy.

fireworks, which they named “skyflowers”, into the sky, by means of a massive vehicle named Dead Reckoning, in order to distract the zombies during the raids. While the zombies are distracted by the skyflowers, the raiders run through the town massacring them and taking supplies. However, on this day one zombie, Big Daddy, no longer seems to be distracted by the skyflowers.

Coming back from the raid an advertisement for Fiddler’s Green, apartment complex for the elite, is playing. The advertisement suggests a return to normality waits in Fiddler’s Green “Where Life Goes On”. Cholo makes clear his ambition to move into the Green by way of Kaufmann. Riley, on the other hand, knows that those are mistaken notions claiming, “You’re dreaming, Cholo. They’d never let me in. They’ll never let you in. We’re the wrong kind.” Both Cholo and Riley are done with being raiders but have differing opinions on how they are going to escape that life. Cholo wishes to join the elite of the Green and Riley wishes to escape the city altogether, and while there are some who challenge the authority of Kaufmann, in the guise of a proletarian uprising, Riley has no interest in their plight either. Riley goes to collect his car in order to leave the city. However, he finds it has gone missing and is forced to go looking for a man called Chihuahua to find out what has happened to his car.

Two zombies are shown to be attacking a woman. However, we see that they are chained up and discover that it is in fact a photo booth. Strippers, gambling, drugs, zombie paintball, the place is full of vice and exploitation of every colour. The most extreme type of gambling is then introduced as two zombies have their teeth spray painted and an ex-prostitute called Slack is deposited into an arena as patrons wager on which zombie, red or black, will get her first. Riley executes the zombies in the arena

saving Slack. As the patrons flee from the gunfire, Chihuahua attempts to kill Riley and his unsolicited bodyguard, the disfigured and dimwitted sharpshooter, Charlie. Once the smoke clears, Chihuahua is dead and Riley, Charlie and Slack are arrested. We then discover that Slack was sent down to the arena by Kaufmann because it was discovered that she was helping the proletarian uprising.

As the zombies are making their way toward the city, Cholo is inside the Green speaking with Kaufmann about having collected enough money to get his own place in the Green. Kaufmann informs Cholo that there is no room in the Green for him and has Cholo escorted out stating "I won't be needing this man anymore". As the zombies make their way into the holding area, Cholo and his crew escape from the city in Dead Reckoning refusing to help the hapless guards by sending up skyflowers.

Once Cholo's crew escapes, Cholo radios Kaufmann indicating that he has control of Dead Reckoning and that unless Kaufmann gives him five million dollars he is going to destroy the Green. To counter this, Kaufmann releases Riley from prison and sends him out on an operation to stop Cholo. As Riley prepares for his operation Kaufmann sends three of his own troops to escort him, Manolete, Mo-town and Pillsbury. Meanwhile inside Fiddler's Green, Kaufmann is making arrangements to escape the city should it be required. Kaufmann sees himself as the person responsible for the people, but is also capable of shirking his responsibility through escaping the city and leaving the masses to the zombies. As Cholo makes preparations to shell the Green, Big Daddy and the zombie horde make their way across the river and continue their march towards the city.

Riley meets up with Cholo's crew and is taken hostage by Cholo. However, Riley has had the foresight to rig a control device to override Dead Reckoning's controls and has ceased the shelling operation. A fight breaks out as Cholo tries to get Riley to reinstate the rockets. After the fight is over, Riley and Charlie take over Dead Reckoning, with Pillsbury who has defected over to Riley's side and Slack (Mo-town was bitten and then executed by Slack during the fight). Riley calls Kaufmann to tell him that he has taken back Dead Reckoning, but as the city burns Kaufmann believes that Riley has failed. However, Riley indicates that it is the zombies that are causing the havoc in the city and not Cholo. Riley decides to go back and save the people of the city, but the soldiers have either abandoned their positions or have been eaten. As such the reinforcements which were built to keep the zombies out are now penning the people in. As Riley decides to go back to the city Cholo decides to take Riley's car and make his way to an outpost. After being bitten, Cholo claims "Always wanted to see how the other half lives" and he is deposited at the outskirts of the city.

The citizens of the city make their way to the electric fence and are penned in. Meanwhile Riley drops one of the bridges and attempts to make his way into the city. As he makes his approach he sends up skyflowers. However, they no longer hold the zombie's attention. As the zombies continue to rampage inside the Green, Kaufmann makes his way to his limousine followed by Big Daddy, who after pouring fuel into the front of the car feels his duty is accomplished and walks away. Kaufmann exits the car and is attacked by another zombie, this time a zombified Cholo.

Riley and his team make it back to the city, but they are too late. The entire city has been consumed by the zombie horde. Riley then fires Dead Reckoning's rockets on

the mass of people claiming “They’re all dead”. Once the smoke clears the revolutionaries appear claiming that they will rebuild the city. Spying Big Daddy Riley decides not to fire on them, “They’re just looking for a place to go. Same as us”. Riley and his crew leave for Canada in *Dead Reckoning* firing off the remaining skyflowers. The zombie evolution has been a uniting force for both the zombies and the humans. As the zombies have realized it is not the whole of humanity who is their enemy and likewise the humans have recognized that it is not the zombies which are ensnaring them in their enclave, but rather it is the upper-class, which have created “islands of the living dead” in the most literal sense. It is through the collective action of the zombies that the power structure has been reduced to ash.

#### *Romero and the Characteristics of the Metaphorical Zombie*

The films of Romero solidified what a zombie was meant to be, an uncanny cannibalistic, virologically perpetuated mass, lacking instrumental motives and killed only by the removal of the brain. The radio announcer from *Night of the Living Dead* declares that

There is an epidemic of mass murder being committed by a virtual army of unidentified assassins. The murders are taking place in villages and cities, in rural homes and suburbs with no apparent pattern nor reason for the slayings. It seems to be a sudden general explosion of mass homicide. We have some descriptions of the assassins. Eyewitnesses say they are ordinary-looking people. Some say they appear to be in a kind of trance. Others describe them as being misshapen monsters.

He later adds that

Consistent reports from witnesses to the effect that people who acted as if they were in a kind of trance were killing and eating their victims prompted authorities to examine the bodies of some of the victims. Medical authorities in Cumberland have concluded that in all cases, the killers are eating the flesh of the people they kill.

This establishes their cannibalism, their movement in masses and their uncanny. In addition, Johnny's return from the dead and Kyra's transformation from bed-ridden child to murderous spade-wielding maniac establishes their bite as being the means through which the "disease" is perpetuated. These five characteristics are consistent within all of Romero's *Dead* series.

*Night of the Living Dead* sets up the idea of the failure of the American dream, the outside world is no longer safe, and neither is the farmhouse or the family as most characters are murdered by those closest to them. *Dawn of the Dead* sets forth the capitalistic critique of an unabated desiring for consumption, leading to empty misguided lives within the palatial Monroeville Mall. *Day of the Dead*, is a critique on the knowledge with which we are presented, both scientific and political, and questions the very validity of the "14 mile tombstone", the last bastion of knowledge production, in which the survivors find themselves, signifying the death of the brain. *Land of the Dead* is a focus on the lack of humanity that one has for another, Kaufmann being a prime example of the abandonment of humanity, through his cowardice, greed, and distaste for others. These metaphorical characteristics of the zombie will be used in examining to the modern working subject in the next chapter.

#### *Survivors and Enclaves*

In Romero's *Dead* series a common theme is that of the survivor enclave. The survivors in these films make their way to enclosed areas and barricade themselves. *Night* features a farmhouse (subdivided into a cellar and a main floor as separate enclaves), *Dawn* features the Monroeville mall, *Day* features the underground military installation and *Land* features the unnamed city and Fiddler's Green. Drawing upon Robin Wood, Jamie Russell claims that "...the reason why the characters of zombie movies spend most

of their time barricading themselves away inside houses, cellars and attics is that they're terrified of coming face to face with that which they previously refused to acknowledge" (Russell 2006:69).

The survivor is an individual made to work with other individuals for the purpose of achieving a goal, specifically survival. Survivors are constantly struggling for solidarity; however, this solidarity is always forced. They *must* act together because there is no other choice. The survivors are typified as mistrusting individuals constantly seeking to escape the zombie threat through isolationism. Survivors are enterprising individuals, but this is not always what is required, they are also fierce individualists, egotists and self-destructive which often leads to their getting devoured or becoming zombies themselves.

The survivors themselves take up a wide range of characteristics, but what is most common among them is their inability to truly work together, factions develop in each of Romero's films among the survivors, *Night* features the battle for dominance between Cooper and Ben, *Dawn* has the male/female divide as well as the biker army and mall dwellers, *Day* has the military and scientist teams battling for supremacy over the means of correctly dealing with crisis and who's knowledge is most correct, and *Land* features a commentary on social status and race as well as authority derived from these social factors. The films of Romero will be viewed with particular emphasis on the means through which the post-apocalyptic, zombie-filled world is structured, both in terms of how zombies are within the world and how the survivors attempt to shape the world this analysis will help to elucidate the shifts in organizational subjectivity.

## *Conclusion*

This chapter has examined the theory and process of metaphor analysis as well as a brief overview of the *Dead* series of films by George A. Romero. In addition, this chapter has established the zombie metaphor and its satellite metaphors of the survivor and the enclave for the purpose of further analysis.

The organizational literature up to this point has been set upon creating a science of organization, a linear methodology. The zombie metaphor is the product of this methodology, similar to the culture of managerialism; it is an entity whose purpose is clear. The zombie is exorcised of those things which make humans unpredictable. Romero's films show that the zombie acts in a particular manner; such is the means by which the survivors can indeed survive the apocalypse which surrounds them. The most destructive force within the films of Romero is not the zombies, but rather destruction is wrought by humanity.

The metaphor of the zombie will be used to examine the change in American character in the 1950s and follow this by entering into the very organizations for which they work. The zombie functions as an infectious disease vector and as such it should carry its characteristics into those areas of life in which it is allowed to shamble. As such, the zombie will be brought into the work environment of those who have been reshaped by the change in the American character; more specifically it will be brought into the ideal type structures of the bureaucracy and enterprise. It is the assumption of this thesis that there has been no attempt made to remove the zombie from these organizations, but rather the organizations have instead attempted to find a means by which to control the zombie, to manage it.

## Chapter 3: The Devouring of American Character

### *The Death of Mediation and Moderation*

This chapter will examine the change in American character as discussed by C. Wright Mills, William Whyte and David Reisman. They focus on ideas of alienation, mass, conformity, rationalization, and anomie as well as concepts surrounding identity and the failure of mediating structures. The striking resemblances between the zombie as a figure portrayed by Romero and the American character arise in similar timeframes and as such each may help elucidate the other. This chapter focuses on the zombification of the American character and how the changes in the new American character required a movement towards new organizational structures, those of the enterprise and the bureaucracy.

C. Wright Mills begins his book *White Collar* (1956) with a mystery, “The white-collar people slipped quietly into modern society. Whatever history they have had is a history without events; whatever common interests they have do not lead to unity; whatever future they have will not be of their own making” (ix). The white collar is a non-political, absorbent mass without a sense of meaning. The white-collar is an illusory group; its members are alienated from everything, their history, each other and even their future. The reason behind this mystery of the white-collar’s appearing from nowhere, much like Romero’s zombies, is that the white-collar is a disparate group of people sharing a vocational categorization which is not necessarily a means of binding individuals together. The white-collar is a collective of lost individuals. What is critical though is that the white-collar, for Mills, derailed the historical process which was expected to have occurred. “The white-collar people upset the nineteenth-century

expectation that society would be divided between entrepreneurs and wage workers” (1956:ix).

Throughout his work Mills differentiates between big business and small business. What differentiates these two is that big business takes on many more of the properties of bureaucratic management while it is within small business that the true entrepreneurial spirit exists (1956:50). In the later literature on the subject, it seems that this distinction becomes blurred if not altogether removed. Big business becomes entrepreneurial, small business is simply not accounted for.

The idea of the entrepreneur in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is vastly different from the idea of the nineteenth-century entrepreneur. When speaking of the free entrepreneur in its originary form, Mills (1956:13) states that its decline began when the small entrepreneur was swallowed up by the larger businesses. They lost their status as figures to which others would aspire. The mid-to-late nineteenth century was the death rattle of this form of entrepreneurial spirit, but it is the term which is the crux of their ontology, to be entrepreneurial is the spirit which is to be evoked by the independent individual. As such, the original entrepreneurs, the proprietors of that time, were driven to near obsolescence and the new entrepreneurs took over. Perhaps it is the difficulty in finding another term which evokes the same pride and spirit which they wished to arouse. Perhaps it is marketing making a meme which is easy to pronounce, easier than the enterprising individual, perhaps because they are not really individuals at all but rather large collectives. As such the term was simply transferred from the small business to the big business and with that the entrepreneur became corporatized.

The principle cause leading to the change in American character was the failure to sustain any kind of mediating structures. Mills states that:

The uneasiness, the malaise of our time, is due to this root fact: in our politics and economy, in family life and religion—in practically every sphere of our existence—the certainties of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have disintegrated or been destroyed and at the same time, no new sanctions or justifications for the new routines we live, and must live, have taken hold (Mills 1956:xvi).

The uncertainty created by the dissolution of the mediating structures formed a lacuna, which needed to be filled. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the connection of the individual to their production was severed. They were no longer self-managed and the hierarchical separations in society began to shift. A person's status was no longer democratically assigned and was no longer seen as a product of one's own work and personal character as was the case in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Mills 1956:9). What changed for Mills was the way in which property was distributed, moving away from the democratic distribution of property of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century to the class distribution of property of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where individuals were no longer tied to their means of production. "The right of man 'to be free and rooted in work that is his own' is denied by the transformation of property; he cannot realize himself in his work, for work is now a set of skills sold to another rather than something mixed with his own property" (Mills 1956:14). As ownership of property began to change, production also became something altogether alien through the transformation of the class system into a three tiered system, those possessing large amounts of property, those with small amounts of property and wage workers who worked for the large propertied class (Mills 1956:14).

The broad linkage of enterprise and property, the cradle-condition of classic democracy, no longer exists in America. This is no society of small

entrepreneurs—now they are one stratum among others: above them is the big money; below them, the alienated employee; before them, the fate of politically dependent relics; behind them, their world (Mills 1956:59).

As such “The centralization of property has thus ended the union of property and work as a basis of man’s essential freedom, and the severance of the individual from an independent means of livelihood has changed the basis of his life-plan and the psychological rhythm of planning” (Mills 1956:14). This was in essence the critical change required for the alteration of the American character from one composed of independent individualists towards an organizational existence. The processes of modern capitalism are the root cause of the zombie epidemic.

In the age of democratic property people were given the title of entrepreneurs. In the age of class property those who could not afford to maintain an independent existence became employees who would be altered greatly by the changing economic underpinnings of the American character. Being an employee meant a loss of independence and an increasing amount of transferral of personal well-being to something outside of one’s ken. With the change in American character the most critical aspect of becoming an employee was becoming dependent on one’s employer, “Many whips are inside men, who do not know how they got there, or indeed that they are there” (Mills 1956:110). As such, the shackling of the employee to the employer was the critical change required to finally bury the ideal of democratic property. The idea of working for someone often seemed to be, if not the safest choice, the only choice as “the basis for economic security [shifted] from property ownership to job holding” (Mills 58:1956).

Not only does the worker not understand that they are being guided, they do not even understand that the whips go beyond work into the realm of consumption. The

worker *cum* consumer is unwittingly guided, much like the zombies in *Dawn of the Dead*, to follow “[s]ome kind of instinct. Memory...of what they used to do,” the worker becomes shackled to their position, both in the culture of work and the culture at large.

As the class of propertied grows smaller in number and larger in assets, the wage labour class becomes larger and larger in number, and from there comes the middle-class, the white-collar, the bureaucrat. The purpose of these individuals is to help manage work, to oversee. They are inserted into the production stream as instruments of rationalization rather than doing anything wage-workers would call labour. “They are expert at dealing with people transiently and impersonally; they are masters of the commercial, professional, and technical relationship” (Mills 1956:65). However, this new class of people is not vastly different from the wage-worker, but rather ascribe to themselves a prestige with not having to work with ones’ own hands, making their living through guile; this changes the very nature of the competition within the work force. Just as the zombies are corralled in *Day of the Dead* and called dumb-fucks by their overseers, such is the view from the position of the white-collar. The focus becomes people rather than things, the process and not the product. With Mills’ view on how the economic base helped to change American character we now turn to David Riesman to see how these changes occurred and how they have been absorbed by their subjects.

While Mills focussed on material changes, David Riesman’s book *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) focuses on the changes occurring at the level of socialization of the individual. The American character which he speaks of in terms of “social character” is seen as “the product of social forms; in that sense, man is made by his society” (Riesman 1950:3) and such social character is also “clearly generalized in a society, permits us to

speaking elliptically but meaningfully of the character of classes, groups, regions and nations” (Riesman 1950:4), although he makes a clear distinction that “character” is a typology not to be confused with “personality”. Personality, for Riesman, is a far more nuanced and evasive term which “denotes the total self, with its inherited temperament and talents, its biological as well as psychological components, its evanescent as well as more or less permanent attributes”( Riesman 1950:4). While there are analytical problems with using social character as a basis for an examination of any sort, this is a return to the problem of reflexivity as described by Nelson Phillips and Stelios Zyglidopoulos (1999). Using social character rather than personality is a means of getting at the structuring basis of later personality formation.

Riesman divides social character into three categories: traditional-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed. Of these Riesman only really focuses on the latter two. In each of his categorizations of social character Riesman prefaces them with the pseudo-suffix “directed”. An explanation for the use of direction in all of these terms is the critical aspect of direction for Riesman in which “if human beings lived at random—in an inconceivable pure contingency—their drives could not be harnessed to perform the culturally required task” (1950:5). Riesman states that:

Since the social function of character is to insure or permit conformity, it appears that the various types of social character can be defined most appropriately in terms of the modes of conformity that are developed in them. Finally, any prevalent mode of conformity may itself be used as an index to characterize a whole society (1950:6).

And while society creates social character and social character shapes society, a feedback loop is created instilling a dynamic process which in order to be explicated must be pinned down more firmly in historical precedents as its trajectory is non-linear. While

Riesman tries to make scientific the progression of the stages of direction through the use of demographics studies (Riesman 1950:7-8) this methodology is extraneous for the purposes of this examination. Riesman's analysis is concerned with the shift from inner-directedness to other-directedness in the social character of America. Riesman typifies the inner-directed social character as "*the source of direction for the individual is "inner" in the sense that it is implanted early in life by the elders and directed toward generalized but nonetheless inescapably destined goals*" (1950:15, emphasis in original). Not only is the inner-directed individual given a set of predestined goals, but according to Riesman they are sanctioned by feelings of guilt (1950:25) which guides them inextricably towards their goals. The inner-directed are concerned with the means of production both material and personal, i.e. identity, being constructed through strength of character and competence associated with work as their primary means of identification., "The inner-directed person is not only chained to the endless demands of the production sphere; he must also spend his entire life in the internal production of his own character" (Riesman 1950:130). The inner-directed are strong individualists who attain personal gain through work, their primary means of accomplishing their goals. In contrast to these self-made people, the other-directed are seen as assemblages created outside of the individual. Riesman finds the emergence of the other-directed individual as problematic since "These relatively stable and individualistic pursuits [of the individual] are today being replaced by the fluctuating tastes which the other-directed person accepts from his peer-group" (1950:80). Riesman, with this form, describes an anomic situation since the mediating structures of the goal matrix aligned for the inner-directed individual are lacking. The idea of conformity changes drastically when mediating structures are

dissolved. The other-directed conform through their bonds to others and not to ideals.

Riesman writes,

*What is common to all other-directed is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual—either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media. This source is of course “internalized” in the sense that dependence on it for guidance in life is implanted early. The goals toward which the other-directed person strives shift with that guidance: it is only the process of striving itself and the process of paying close attention to the signals from others that remain unaltered throughout life (1950:22, italics in original).*

The other-directed individual is sanctioned through feelings of anxiety (Riesman 1950:26). The anxiety generated in the other-directed is natural since their world is constantly in flux and they cannot pin down exactly where everyone stands at any given time, just as the survivors in Romero’s films are sanctioned through their anxieties, be they generated by the zombies or the survivors surrounding them.

Conformity within an inner-directed framework is simple; it is based on a series of points which act as benchmarks. The other-directed have changing goals. Because as their peer group changes so do their goals. Riesman views the inability to locate firm goals within a society as a catalyst for creating apathetic individuals (1950:4). However, for everyone to lose their goal orientation is improbable. The far more likely scenario is that there would be a select few who would have goal orientations and the remaining mass would simply follow those individuals or be lost within the lacunae created by the death of mediation. In the films of Romero there are always individuals with goals, the survivors. These individuals would fall into Reisman’s category of inner-directed, and it is those who have goals who survive the zombies, if not always each other. As an example we can view the difference between Cholo and Riley in *Land of the Dead*. While

Cholo and Riley both have goals, they are necessarily contradictory. In order to return to a state of equilibrium either Cholo or Riley must become zombified. As such only once Cholo's ambitions are thwarted can he be bitten by a zombie and turned. The idea of goal frustration leading to zombification is a constant theme within the films of Romero. The potential for this process of zombification is also found in Riesman's other-directed individual. Because of the other-directed individual's inability to establish firm goals, due to the constant shifting of their goal matrix with respect to their peer group, the very fabric of their society becomes a mangle of intersecting goals situated at undetermined interstices.

This creates a vacuum of centralized authority within society, a loss of those mediating structures which traditionally guided the individual in society such as family and religion. These institutions are too static for the inner-directed individual "The frontiers for the other-directed man are people; he is people minded. Hence both work and pleasure are felt as activities involving people" (1950:130). The problem is that it is unclear why mediating structures lose much of their authority. For example, in youth there is a shift from the family as the key mediating structure to the peer-group. The idea of scientific measurement of peer-group influence would never achieve a full understanding because of the experiential nature of the phenomenon; as such the only means of truly understanding these peer-group influences would be through narrative knowledge, although it is questionable that the group would fully understand how they were being influenced. This occurs in spite of the fact that the peer-group is still too disparate, changing and chaotic to become a mediating structure. Both of these institutions are composed of people, yet they do not take over the previous role of the

early mediating structures. There are too many complex interactions all occurring at the same time to tease them all out. If one were to follow each thread individually all the while hoping to reunite them with a sociological Ariadne they will leave naught but a corpse of unanswered questions. However, there may be something, an institution of sorts which has taken the place of these disappearing mediating structures. Caplow sees these mediating structures, such as religious organizations as becoming more like corporations taking on quasi-industrial forms (1964:230).

In the post-WW II era there was a great deal of prosperity, but there was also a large vacuum left in many people's social organization. While Mills discusses the material shift as a root cause in the change in the American character and Riesman expands this into social typologies, there is something which eludes both of these analyses. Thus, the next analysis to be discussed is that of the William Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956). Death as a result of WW II had a large hand in re-shaping American society in the post-war era. Families left without fathers, and brothers. Women, widowed and left alone with offspring, the structure of the family surely changed. The transformation of the mediating structures of American society would certainly be altered by death and its incarnations and repercussions. Certainly this is not the only time a family has been left fatherless, but it is the first time that such a large quantity of families would have been left in such a condition since the American Civil War. The change in family structure which no doubt occurred is not the sole mediating structure which could have been dealt a large blow from the effects of death. Certainly people's faith would have been rattled by the events occurring during this period; the effects of these would not be immediate but would percolate and eventually be inscribed as a change in

character and socialization practices. The void being left by the seeming failure of these mediating structures would need to be filled, that void was filled by The Organization.

William Whyte's book *The Organization Man* (1956) suggests that the flourishing of other-directed individuals (while not written in Riesman's terminology) seeking to find a mediating structure find themselves seeking stability and as such they are inextricably drawn to The Organization, which is defined by Caplow as "a *social system* that has an *unequivocal collective identity*, an *exact roster of members*, a *program of activity*, and *procedures for replacing members*" (1964:1, italics in original). According to Caplow's definition The Organization is a definite structure, with boundaries and criteria for inclusion, with mechanisms designed to allow it to proliferate.

In his book, Whyte discusses the progression of a new social ethic, the previous ethic having been described by Max Weber in his work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1958). Weber's thesis was that capitalism had taken hold in Protestant societies more rapidly than in Catholic areas. The reason for this Weber postulated was due to what is called the Protestant Ethic, heavily based on individualism and materialism, by which salvation could be determined by one's material circumstances. This is not to say that Protestant societies preceded capitalism but that those of a Protestant character were more likely to buy in to a capitalist mode of production. Whyte's book, on the other hand, suggests that a new ethic has taken hold, the Social Ethic.

The Social Ethic, according to Whyte, "rationalizes the organization's demands for fealty and gives those who offer it wholeheartedly a sense of dedication in doing so" (Whyte 1956:6). The Organization creates the illusion of stability for its members; it

presents itself as a means of calming the chaos, a safe haven from the world outside of itself, its own bubble of sanity. Through this The Organization has posited itself as being the panacea for the liquidity outside its doors. The Organization positions itself to be the new mediating structure. Of course, this is all simply an elaborate ruse. The family, religion and all of those mediating structures from the past, they too were organized. However, they were simply of a different character than what Whyte calls The Organization.

The Social Ethic is “that contemporary body of thought which makes morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual. Its major propositions are three: “[i] a belief in the group as the source of creativity; [ii] a belief in “belongingness” as the ultimate need of the individual; and [iii] a belief in the application of science to achieve the belongingness” (Whyte 1956:7). Whyte feels that the Social Ethic is the *zeitgeist* of the Organization Man, but this is his great failing as well. In the Social Ethic, Whyte does not find any means to avoid becoming assimilated into the Organization, while he does believe that we must “co-operate with The Organization but, more than ever, so do we need to know how to resist it” (1956:12). Whyte does not feel The Organization is problematic, as much as it is the Social Ethic which makes The Organization so primary in individual lives which is problematic. In his work Whyte is speaking against the Social Ethic, but this does not mean that he is extolling the Protestant Ethic. The idea is to seek a middle path, a permeable organization skin, which is similar enough and tied together, but distant enough from each other in space and time as to create a separation in the person/ethic/organization triumvirate. What Whyte wishes to emphasise is how to negotiate the Social Ethic while still maintaining individuality.

The problem with the maintenance of individuality organizationally is that through the process of scientism the processes of individualization are dulled. People who are not pre-moulded to fit within what the organizational ideals are to be are cast off. This is emphasized by Whyte through his examination of personality testing in organizational settings (Whyte 1956:405-410). Scientism is the wish of the Social Ethic to create a science of man (Whyte 1956:23), although as discussed by Phillips and Zyglidopolous this is a problematic endeavour. In fact it is impossible. People are not commodities in the same manner as all other forms because they cannot be forced to act, but they are also not sufficiently independent to act alone (Whyte 1956:42). Strength in numbers and commonality are democratic and sometimes tyrannical but it is still strength beyond the pall of a single individual, hence the rise of the Organization man.

The Organization Man and the Social Ethic grew out of a failure of the American Dream, and the shackling of people to work for others. The Organization Man is not without delusion; his delusions are simply of a more manageable size. It is the recognition of strength in numbers, but none truly know why. Certainly when viewing it from the standpoint of a trade union or other such collective unit it is simply a question of power dynamics at work in society. But, with these dynamics there are several unanswered questions. By packing people into an organizational framework you somehow amplify the power, but there is a need for this framework. Numbers themselves are not enough to create power; there needs to be a united will of some sort. Even if that united will is shallow and unclear, it is in some cases necessary to give up oneself to The Organization.

In practice, those who most eagerly subscribe to the Social Ethic worry little over the long-range problems of society. It is not that they don't care but rather that

they tend to assume that the ends of organization and morality coincide, and on such matters as social welfare they give their proxy to the organization (Whyte 1956:8).

The Social Ethic which is shaped by Organization Men is for the purpose of shaping future Organization Men.

Whyte argues that no group will ever have a totalizing effect on creating belongingness in the individual. There are simply too many groups in the world (family, church, school, community, business) and too few areas in the psyche to allow for one to dominate the rest (1956:45). However, we are still trapped within the dialectic between the Social Ethic and the Protestant Ethic. If what Whyte says is true then how are some to make sense of the world if they never *truly* belong to anything? Certainly such a morose and existential view of the problem is gloomy in its view, but this is the problem. The Social Ethic is being extolled in the world. The mass has become greater than the individual. It is the Gestalt view of humanity. It is utilitarianism reengineered. But all is not lost for Whyte. "The Organization Man is not yet so indoctrinated that he does not chafe at the pressures of his independence, and sometimes he even suspects that the group may be as much a tyrant as the despot it has replaced" (1956:49). Yet at the same time, the Social Ethic dampens these warnings within the individual.

What then occurs within the Social Ethic is a great deal of alienation from the self and from production. The very idea of what is being produced is often confused. For many there is no tangible object at the end, no package that is delivered or explored but rather ephemeral vapours of ideas, or training or other such non-tangibles. "The complaint is characteristic. In one variation or another executives make the point that when one's job is inextricably involved with others, the sense of individual creativity and

the satisfaction of being able to deliver a tied-up package of achievement is hard to come by” (Whyte 1956:152). Through collectivization people are forced to give up ownership of their work. The Social Ethic claims that working together is the means of accomplishing goals, but Whyte sees this as false collectivization. People do not work in groups; they do not create in groups. Groups are simply a means of information transfer rather than a unit of productive power. He states, “The central fallacy, I believe, lies in what can be called false collectivization. When are people in a group? Too often, we insist on treating a person—or ourselves—as a unit of a group when association with the particular group is not vital to the task in question, or may even be repressive” (Whyte 1956:49). It is this repressive aspect of the group that Whyte and Riesman are advocating against, not groups per se. It is The Organization which is pushing towards the group, and it is the tyranny of the group which is tearing the individual out of their own social space and into The Organization. Exile through Othering is an easy thing to accomplish when groups are made. Those who belong and those who do not is extremely evident to those members of the group.

Group thinking through false collectivization creates a set of parameters, a uniformity of thought which is antithetical to the idea of creative exploration. “All creative advances are essentially a departure from agreed-upon ways of looking at things, and to over-emphasize the agreed-upon is to further legitimize the hostility to that creativity upon which we all ultimately depend” (Whyte 1956:58). While the group within The Organization struggles to find its role within the structure, the individual is being absorbed into the Organization. There is, therefore, antimony between those who

compose the organization and the Organization Man, a person who feels more akin to The Organization, than to the Social Ethic which has helped to make it a possibility.

The Organization Man belongs to the organization. The organization becomes a signifier of the worth of other things. It is a great new mediating structure since it can actually be measured against when compared to other previous mediating structures such as religion and the family. How much work you can get done can be recorded as a number of hours. The same cannot be said of how much prayer can be achieved, or at least not in the same manner. While both of these can be given a temporal value, that temporal value does not transfer as well when compared against a separate venture. “Work then is dominant. Everything else is subordinate and the executive is unable to compartmentalize his life. Whatever the segment of it—leisure, home, friends—he instinctively measures it in terms of how well it meshes with his work” (Whyte 1956:146). The worker and his work become objectified, and consume the executive. The world outside of business is marginal to the interests of the executive—family, friends, culture, everything is of interest only in relation to its connection to the operation of business dealings.

The great irony here is that the Organization Man sees the Social Ethic as a negative, as does Whyte, yet the Organization Man is specifically capable of accomplishing their frantic work because of the Social Ethic, because of the increased interconnectedness of The Organization. This is because the Social Ethic is not a means of conformity, but a moral imperative (Whyte 1956:394). The Organization Man requires the Social Ethic to give him an external drive just as the zombie requires its hunger. To quote Dr. Logan: “They are us. They are extensions of us. They are the same animal

simply functioning less perfectly”, but a less perfect union with its strength in numbers will not always falter at the sight of a unified perfection. The Social Ethic is more deeply ingrained than simple conformity and drives more strongly. Even those who are disenfranchised by mainstream society feel the strain of the Social Ethic. People still want to be liked and accepted by other people.

### *The New American Character*

The new American character is a psychological trap. It imprisons the individual by working against the entrepreneurial spirit which developed out of the demise of feudalism. The movement of American character is away from that of the entrepreneurial individual towards a much more linear character type. While claiming that an individual who is constantly in flux is linear may seem contrary to the ideas put forth by Mills, Riesman and Whyte, it is also the point toward which they are headed. The new American character is one who lives in isolation, alienated and anomic, surrounded by other equally alienated and anomic individuals. There is a constant metamorphosis occurring. The individual clings onto any level of certainty that can be grasped in their uncertain world. This is the real death of the previous American character; the idea that all the great thoughts have been thought, the great deeds done, the great inventions invented, leaves them with little to compare to those titans of industry who preceded them. Instead they look for a living end in the morass of the unsatisfying and un-noteworthy lumpen-bourgeoisie. When interviewing a group of students in 1949, Whyte found that compromises were required of this new group of individuals going into the world of work. The search was not for the next great fortune, but for the stability which could be offered by a company: “I don’t think A T & T is very exciting,” one senior put

it, “but that’s the company I’d like to join. If a depression comes there will always be an A T & T” (Whyte 1956:71).

The new mediating structures had become not those which could feed the soul or one’s social life, rather, the one that could pay most reliably. The Organization Man loses his sense of meaning; he becomes driven by a consumption imperative coming out of a post-war context where the idea of surplus and lack was vividly in the imagination of the individual. This is not to say that money became a primary incentive. It was long term stability which drew those graduates from the class of ’49. While the country was in a post-war economic boom, there was still an air of the chaotic lingering in the minds of those entering the world of work. The idea of venturing alone was no longer as palatable as it had once been, only a few generations earlier.

According to the discourses of Mills, Riesman and Whyte the metaphorical construction of the new American character is a product of the death of the entrepreneurial spirit, the development of a Social Ethic, and the move from inner-directedness to other-directedness. Each of these developments moves the individual away from self-negotiated individuality to an assemblage of intersecting social relations, a networked tangential individuality.

### *Zombies and Survivors*

By reading the zombie metaphor into the organizational literature we find that the zombie begins to embody the fears concerning the reshaping of American character. When compared to the five characteristics of the zombie metaphor we see that this new figure emerging in America takes on many similar attributes.

The zombie has a desire for human flesh, just as the organization needs more flesh and capitalism needs more bodies in order to propagate. While this may not be

completely accurate when talking about the emerging American character as a pack of rabid cannibalistic humans, it does articulate itself in other ways, namely, the need for increasingly mindless consumables. While consumption is simply a part of everyday life, it is the hunger which differentiates this from other forms of desire; it is a compulsion. The idea of a standard of living or even a standardized living becomes predominant. “As far as social values are concerned, suburbia is the ultimate expression of the interchangeability so sought by the organization” (Whyte 1956:298). With the eruption of suburban communities being one example of this coalescing of, at least the veneer, of similar living standards, the suburbs according to Whyte create classlessness (1952:298-312), because of the monotony of the suburban landscape, the “pulling of rank” becomes very difficult without connection to social value outside of the suburb. All zombies thirst for the same thing. While making this blanket statement is problematic in the various permutations in which these individuals may express their sameness, it is sameness nonetheless. Zombies resemble their prey so much that individuals can easily be fooled as is evidenced by part of the radio broadcast from *Night of the Living Dead*

There is an epidemic of mass murder being committed by a virtual army of unidentified assassins. The murders are taking place in villages and cities, in rural homes and suburbs with no apparent pattern nor reason for the slayings. It seems to be a sudden general explosion of mass homicide. We have some descriptions of the assassins. Eyewitnesses say they are ordinary-looking people. Some say they appear to be in a kind of trance. Others describe them as being misshapen monsters. At this point, there's no really authentic way for us to say who or what to look for and guard yourself against.

Equally, there is something quite disturbing about sameness. It leads to what Freud called ‘the uncanny’, “...something that ought to have remained hidden but has come to light” (Freud 1964:241). What is being brought to light is the death of the American entrepreneurial spirit, both as it relates to the public (work) and private (individual)

spheres, as it has been subsumed by the mass, forcing them to lose their individuality and their connection to their goals (their inner-directedness) and those mediating structures around them.

The interconnectedness of people has taken over the pedestal of the unique genius in the new American character. This returns us to the problem posed by Whyte about the idea of the group as being central to creativity. However, groups do not think, and of course, neither do zombies. The essence of the entrepreneurial spirit, for Whyte, was found in the individual's creativity, the ability to dream of something bigger and better. Those dreams of largesse have disappeared with the resurgence of the dream of living comfortably, to join the mass. This has ramifications in terms of the associations which are created and maintained. The organization man associates with those related to his organization, or those who have some benefit to the organization man in relation to the organization. The process of zombification does not always take place at the interpersonal level, but rather at the structural level.

The creation of non-instrumental motives created by the new American character is prosaically stated by C. Wright Mills "Many whips are inside men, who do not know how they got there, or indeed that they are there." (1956:110). While Mills stated this in terms of discussing the near-parasitic development of employer/employee relationships, the aphorism exemplifies the state of the motives and desires of the new American character. Individuals are constrained by the very structure of the society *not* to want to become a titan of industry, *not* to be an entrepreneur, although certainly some will follow that path, but the reasons for their actions are clear. Their ambitions are clear. For the mass, these ambitions are not clear but they do have direction. Whyte, speaking about

those following the Social Ethic, states that “No specific goal, then, is necessary to give them a sense of continuity” (Whyte 1956:130) just as the zombies in *Dawn of the Dead* being drawn to the mall because it was place of importance to them in life, where all they can do is shamle about aimlessly. The directionality of the desires of the new American character is towards predictability and safety and away from the chaotic which surrounds them; away from the city, the noise, the risk. The other-directedness and the Social Ethic instruct them to move away from these things, to where the people are. While certainly there are many people who live in the city, these people are anonymous; there is no more sanctioning body in the city. There is no religion in the city, these cathedrals of steel and metal. There is no family in the city. There are no mediating structures there, only work. Certainly all of these things are in fact false; you can find all of these things anywhere there are people. Perhaps, it is a changing view of land as a means of production which moves many people away from the city, into conformist-oriented, cost-oriented suburbia. It is the view that people, not things, are what will make organizations work. The whips instilled in men are numerous, and not only do they not know that they are there, but they do not know what they do at all. This is the problem that Mills, Riesman and Whyte have with the new American character. Subjects/Workers/Citizens are simply cattle being herded about by some unknown force, and never with enough force to stampede.

Romero instructs us that the only means by which a zombie can be killed is by the removal or destruction of the brain. While this may seem as already having come to pass in regards to the non-instrumental motives, whereby individuals simply act and do not think, the idea is that there is a need to exorcise the very ideological basis of the new American character from the individual, to reform them. However, the reasons and

directionality of this change are obfuscated. Certainly, the anomie and alienation found in becoming other-directed may seem a heavy price to pay for a sense of stability; one must keep in mind, that these individuals have become in essence zombies, the living-dead, often knowing no better just as the zombies in *Land of the Dead* continue to act as they did in their past lives, attempting to pump gas, or playing on the bandstand.

The alternative course of being is the survivor. Survivors are forced to work with others. While the zombie simply works with others, the survivors find this to be a hindrance to their personal development and goals. While they will work alongside others, they are often at odds with each other. They are political, driven, and self-aware individualists. They are the enterprising individual. In an exchange between Sarah and John in *Day of the Dead*, the division between survivors is emphasized. Sarah states “Maybe if we tried working together, we could ease some of the tensions. We’re all pulling in different directions”, to which John responds, “That’s the trouble, Sarah. People got different ideas concerning what they want out of life”.

There are two means through which the zombie/survivor divide can be read. Either the zombies are the large organizational structures, namely corporations, decimating the small entrepreneurs of the 1940s in which two-thirds of the entrepreneurial populace was wiped out (Mills 1956:32) or the zombies are the slow, shambling bureaucratic organization and the survivors act as the quick, nimble and free-thinking entrepreneurs. Survivors are inner-directed and manifest the Protestant Ethic. They are individuals, unlike the zombie mass. There is, as a result, a clear power-structure (or power struggle) in the survivor camps, emphasized by Ben’s declaration in *Night of the Living Dead* “Now get the hell down in the cellar. You can be the boss down

there, but I'm boss up here!" Zombies on the other hand are an amorphous entity. Power undulates and spreads throughout its ranks. Riesman states that amorphous power is something which people fear because there is an inability to remove power when one cannot verify where it resides. "[I]f someone has power, one can always imagine taking it away from him" (1950:255). Conversely when power is radiated throughout a mass, the ability to stop the mass, no longer lies within the power structure of the individuals making up the mass, but at a higher level of delegation. When the survivors attempt to destroy the zombie threat, the only means is through methodical seek and destroy methods, such as the hunting parties in *Night of the Living Dead*, but even then, what happens when you become overwhelmed by sheer numbers as is the case in *Day of the Dead* as stated by Dr. Frankenstein when Rhodes threatens to leave the scientists to rot "Where will you go, captain? You can destroy my specimens, but what about the millions more that are waiting to greet you outside? Do you really think you can "blow the piss" out of them? All of them? They have you in a hopeless situation strategically". Even then, however, until the phenomenon is fully understood, it will simply return, this being the focus of Dr. Frankenstein and Sarah's research. There is a need for an absolute upheaval in order to change the foundation upon which the zombie can come into being, but as a non-originary creature such an event is untenable, much like the new American character.

### *Conclusion*

The Romero view of the archetypical zombie comes out of the postwar period as a critique of the emerging suburban, white-collar, other-directed, Organization Man with his Social Ethic. As more and more individuals come to the realization that safety comes in the form of larger and larger collectivities, new organizational structures are required

to manage these collectivities. These newly minted organizational structures are the bureaucracy and the enterprise. While both of these institutions were in existence long before the development of the new American character, their scope has drastically changed at this time. The developmental changes in these structures perpetuated the changed American character; they helped to create the white-collar working class.

The key organizational principle is that the collective is fast becoming imperative to the operation of a venture; the time of the family run business is in slow decline. “The power of larger businesses is such that, even though many small businesses remain independent, they become in reality agents of larger businesses. The important point is that the small businessman has been deprived of his old entrepreneurial function” (Mills 1956:26). With this Mills is stating that small businesses are slowly simply becoming satellites of larger corporate entities. Much like zombie disease vectors, small family run businesses are selling the products of these large corporations for meagre profits. The reason they are capable of accomplishing this is because of collectivization, the pooling of various resources, but most importantly through the collecting of human beings.

While Mills has focussed on how the entrepreneur has been subsumed by the larger organization and the movement towards the white collar, rather than trying to retain the entrepreneurial spirit, Reisman has concentrated on the change in the means in which the individual manages himself. Moving from inner-directed, which bears similarity to the survivor metaphor, to other-directed, which takes on aspects of the zombie metaphor, through what Reisman calls the Social Ethic. This has shaped the direction in which individuals are to align themselves to the social, through collectivization which requires the individual to give up their creativity to the group in

order to share in its belongingness. But the individual must also give up their thoughts to science, which now does their thinking for them.

Whyte's analysis has brought to the fore the term of the "Organization Man" an individual consumed by the organization who is directed and that it is the group which matters, not the individual. Although this may seem a noble endeavour in times of crisis, what this has truly accomplished is the collapse of the great mediating structures of religion and family and replaced them with the Organization. The purpose of these changes is to create "deadness" within the world of the worker. In Ritzer's terminology this has created "Islands of the living dead", whereby workers are more easily managed. They lack "life-ness" and creates unconscious, compliant individuals focussed on becoming a part of something bigger than themselves.

This chapter examined the literature concerning the changing American character of the 1950s and how it can be seen as contributing to the usage of the zombie trope in an exploration of the world of work and organization. It has been shown that in conjunction with the rise of the Social Ethic, the other-directed, and the white-collar worker there has also been dissolution of societal mediating structures, such as family and religion, and work has taken the place of these mediating structures. However, work is not an appropriate mediating structure and this will be the focus of the next chapter through an examination of how not only individuals themselves are becoming zombified, but that the structures themselves are, in essence, zombies.

## **Chapter 4: Zombies Everywhere: In the Office, in the Boardroom**

### *The Rising Tide*

The previous chapter established a connection between the discourse surrounding the changing American character of the 1950's and the rise of the zombie as a metaphorical leitmotif. This fourth chapter will introduce the bureaucracy and enterprise and how these two ideal types attempt to embody their metaphorical identities as they have come to be, a genealogy of sorts, and how each of these organizational identities creates a zombified organizational subject. In this section the origins of the bureaucracy will be discussed and the means through which the bureaucracy has become a target of criticism by those championing the enterprise. The concept of the zombie will be used to outline various aspects of the two organizational structures as well as their basic functioning for, "The organizational reason for the expansion of the white-collar occupations is the rise of big business and big government and the consequent trend of modern social structure, the steady growth of bureaucracy" (Mills 1956:68). In addition the individuals within these two structures will be examined through the metaphor of the zombie in order to bring to light a more balanced understanding of bureaucratic and entrepreneurial practices.

As discussed in the sociological literature of the 1950s the emergence of the other-directed individual, and the Organization Man required a change in the organizational structure of work. These organizational changes occurred most drastically in the form of the creation of larger entities to govern working individuals. The two ideal forms of these large governance entities are the bureaucracy and the enterprise. The need

for these larger structures was primarily economic. Mills gives the example of chain stores as a means of creating a large volume of turnover, “and the additional advantage of being able to bring salaried experts for every department of the business. They are more efficient and cheaper. In them the entrepreneurial flair is replaced by a standardized procedure” (Mills 1956:27-28). An additional advantage not examined by Mills is the ability to create larger market share. With chains certain stores can run at a loss in order to create for themselves a larger portion of market share and those costs could be off-set by the gains made from other chain locations, which allows the chain to maintain viability in markets in scenarios in which independently run operations could not.

All of these components add up to what Whyte’s graduates of the class of ’49 saw as optimal for their future, the idea of stability. Large companies can absorb costs smaller companies cannot, adding to their viability as a potential employer. Mills saw this as the secondary form of exploitation (Mills 1956:15) by which individuals became accustomed to working for others rather than for themselves and from these beginnings the collective would grow.

#### *The Bureaucracy: Where Forms Are King*

In his work “bureaucracy”, from his collected essays *From Max Weber* (1946), Max Weber set out the ideal type for the bureaucratic endeavour. A bureaucracy, according to Weber, is guided by what he calls the bureaucratic authority, and any institution or organizations adhering to the principles of bureaucratic authority is a bureaucracy whether it be called ‘private’ or ‘public’ (1946:196-7). The components of bureaucratic authority are three-fold:

1. Regular activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure are distributed in a fixed way as official duties.

2. The authority to give the commands required for the discharge of these duties is distributed in a stable way and is strictly delimited by rules concerning the coercive means, physical, sacerdotal, or otherwise, which may be placed at the disposal of officials.
3. Methodical provisions are made for the regular and continuous fulfillment of these duties and for the execution of the corresponding rights; only persons who have generally regulated qualifications to serve are employed (Weber 1946:196).

The bureaucracy is focussed on fixity and stability. In a bureaucracy everything is accountable. The actions of an individual are to be formulaic and predictable. Emotion is to be excised from the bureaucratic process. “[T]he more the bureaucracy is ‘dehumanized,’ the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from its official business love, hate, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation” (Weber 1946:216). The focuses of the bureaucracy are set upon rational-legalistic virtues and its technical superiority contra other, forms of organizational structuring. Weber states

The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organization. The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration, and especially in its monocratic form (1946:214).

Bureaucracy is an organizational structure which is created in order to level every aspect of human existence, to make everyone equal in the eyes of the bureaucratic authority, an apolitical absorbent mass, much like Romero’s zombie hordes. According to Weber the over-arching principle of the bureaucracy is the idea of *sine ira ac studio* (Weber 1946:215), which translates as “without anger or bias”. Bureaucracies function so well under the ideal of *sine ira ac studio* that it does not even matter who is in control of the bureaucratic authority. “A rationally ordered system of officials continues to function

smoothly after the enemy has occupied the area; he merely needs to change the top officials” (Weber 1946:229). *Sine ira ac studio* removes the ‘human’ elements of the bureaucratic subject creating an uncanny which lacks instrumental motives.

Bureaucracies are purposely created with releases and redundancies for these very reasons. The links in the chain are more deeply networked. While not all nodes are touching, they can all eventually connect to each other, unlike other organizational models where there is a series of hubs connected by a disparate connection of nodes, many of which are under lock and key. Each node connected to the bureaucracy must then comply with the bureaucratic institutional methodology and those nodes become translated into bureaucracies themselves, much like a zombie’s bite turns a survivor into a zombie. “Once it is established, bureaucracy is among those social structures which are the hardest to destroy, because it is an absorbent mass there is no single will, and even destroying the assumed ‘brain’ will not destroy the organization as something will simply take its place. Bureaucracy is *the* means of carrying ‘community action’ over into rationally ordered ‘societal action’” (Weber 1946:228). As such bureaucracies are stabilizing agents. They do not remove chaos per se, but can function within chaos.

The reinterpretations of the work of Weber have reduced bureaucracy to two simple modalities which have become the epitome of the understanding of bureaucracy: hierarchy and rule-bound behaviour (Kallinikos 2004:16). Kallinikos views the latter as “expressed in an elaborate social edifice of *rules, routines and formal role systems* stipulating job positions, duties and jurisdictions and regulating interaction patterns” (2004:16-17, emphasis in original) and it is precisely this bureaucratic activity which has created such a backlash towards this organizational form. “The popular and the artistic

distaste for bureaucracy derives by and large from this alleged depersonalized functioning of formal organization” (2004:17). A most prominent example of this artistic distaste with the bureaucratic would be the works of Franz Kafka, or Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil* (1985). Kallinikos goes on to expand the idea of rule-bound behaviour to role-bound behaviour, “The role, not the person, constitutes the fundamental structural and behavioural element of modern formal organizing. Organizations are not made of individuals distributed over a complex landscape of job positions but of patterns built by those abstract operational requirements we call roles” (2004:21).

In the bureaucracy, individuals are not people but roles. They begin to stop functioning as people and begin to operate in terms of a mechanical function. This dehumanization, which Weber posited as the ideal type of this form of organization, has become central to the criticisms of bureaucracy as the production of zombies.

#### *Bureaucracy: Criticisms and Refutation*

While Weber extolled the efficiency of bureaucracy and its rigid rule-based structure, some critics have found these characteristics to be problematic. Zygmunt Bauman illustrated his distaste for the modern institution of bureaucracy. In his book *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), he views the bureau as a meticulous institution which dehumanises everything placed in its ‘care’ (102), as a place where technical responsibility replaces moral responsibility (98), stating “It has been perhaps the unique achievement of modern civilization to enable ordinary folks, ‘just good workers’, to contribute to the killing--and to make that killing more comprehensive and thorough, cleaner, and morally antiseptic and efficient as never before” (248). Paul Du Gay comes to the defence of the bureaucratic with his book, *In Praise of Bureaucracy* (2000), as a rebuttal to the very heavy charges laid against it by Bauman.

Du Gay begins his book with bureaucracy's "'charge sheet'... from the relatively banal—procrastination, obfuscation, circumlocution and other 'typical products' of a 'red tape' mentality—to the truly heinous—genocide, totalitarianism, despotism" (Du Gay 2000:1). However, this has created a Janus in the popular bureaucratic identity. One side is idle and lazy and the other is evil (Du Gay 2001:1-2). In his article "Managers as Androids" Nidhi Srinivas suggests a third perspective that bureaucracies are adiaphoric, or morally indifferent (1999:611). Here is where the criticisms of bureaucracy start becoming problematic. Srinivas states that "... because it is unconditional and purposeless, morality is a source of unpredictability to bureaucratic organizations. Through instrumental rationality, organizations displace the gratuity of moral drives into the spheres of law and self-interest" (1999:611). The problem is that these activities are not bureaucratic in character and the spheres of law and self-interest should not be viewed as so closely coupled. One sphere is legal-rationalistic, which is the more bureaucratic exigency, while the sphere of self-interest is a personalized sphere of activity, which is not specifically rule-bound and role-bound as is bureaucratic activity. In any case, these two spheres of activity are incommensurable in the manner in which Srinivas is attempting to use them. The sphere of self-interest is a far more emotional and reactive sphere than is the legal sphere. This criticism of the anti-bureaucratic is not a defence of bureaucracy *per se*, but rather it is an admonition of the removal of vast swathes of the concept under study to be able to make *a priori* judgements seem justified. This is not a defence of bureaucracy but the identification of a problem in organization studies of the manner in which bureaucracy is treated. The problem is fast becoming that of the extension of negative modality in which we can no longer trace the

origin of these criticisms without them simply being taken as 'fact' through repetition. While taking a single article of the organizational literature as a test case is problematic, this is simply being used as an example of what is occurring in the field of organization studies as acceptable practice. Srinvas is critiquing the bureaucratic by attempting to conflate two incommensurate things, emotion and legalism. Srinvas attempts to make the incommensurability of these two spheres the lynchpin for his argument while never taking into account that these two spheres have separate intentions and means of operating.

The principle critique of bureaucracy from Bauman's standpoint is that "modernity similarly focuses on the role of science and rational-legal bureaucracy in undermining the capacity for individual 'moral' action and responsibility" (Du Gay 2000:36). The bureaucracy's lack of moral compass, Du Gay explains, is the result of "a violent 'split' into the individual subjective and social being. The instrumental 'spirit of bureaucracy' makes fragmented and anomic that which should be organic and 'whole'" (2000:3). In essence Bauman zombies the bureaucracy. However, in the view taken in this thesis, the bureaucracy does not have an 'instrumental spirit'; rather it has a 'non-instrumental spirit'. The difference between these two is based on the foundation of intent. Bureaucracies, as they are popularly understood, are governmental agencies and as such they do not have a will of their own. They continue to function despite who is in control. It is for this reason that Weber saw the bureaucracy as such an effective governance tool. Bureaucratic morality, as the critics of bureaucracy have put it, is not at all bureaucratic morality, but political will made corporeal. The bureaucratic, through critiques such as Bauman's has been removed from the messiness of the humans which

participate within their operation. This has made the bureaucracy seem as though it were an entity separate from the people within it, the people who make the decisions which guide the actions of the bureau.

Through distancing and division of labour, individuals are taken away from the reality of their actions, “According to Bauman, dehumanization is an inescapable aspect of the functioning of all bureaucracies...Because the bureau discharges its business, as Weber has it, ‘objectively’ and without ‘regard to persons’, it must by its very nature disregard the essential humanity of its human objects...” (Du Gay 2000:40). The problem with this critique is that Bauman is taking part in the very process which he admonishes. The hypostatization of the bureaucracy becomes a fundamental operating principle of Bauman’s critique removing the human element from his analysis, where employees do not see the task at hand as something evil, but as something done in the line of duty, much like death row executioners (Bauman 1989:245-247). While he can claim distancing as a means of removing the individual from their actions in the real, there is still someone who must take it upon themselves to perform the actions proposed by the bureaucracy. It is not simply a question of rationality, nor of distance, but also one of authority. Logic, like morality, does not follow a singular path. Bauman has taken the bureaucracy and compartmentalized it to such an extent that the human face of the bureaucracy is no longer visible. Decisions become structural. Decisions need not always follow strict bureaucratic rules. Bauman’s bureau is a metaphor which has been abstracted to the point that organizational subjects no longer exist within its walls.

The question of morality is a complicated endeavour, as it never comes value-free and is laden with many inherent paradoxes. While there is no disagreement with Bauman

as to the evil of the actions undertaken by the Third Reich, the invocation of the Holocaust as the peak of bureaucratic malfeasance is a difficult claim to dispute because of its moral implications. The strength of Bauman's argument rests on its means of silencing critics through the threat of future *ad hominem* attacks. However, Bauman's critique of bureaucracy rests upon the level of morality and not functionality. In terms of functionality the bureaucracy in fact worked exceptionally, as disturbing as that may seem, but this brings up even greater questions. How is it that a bureaucracy was capable of facilitating such devastation and has since never been able to perform an act of compassion?

The failure of bureaucracy as proposed by Bauman is in fact a failure of humans, not of structures. Bureaucracies operate slowly and must be cajoled into acting appropriately. There is no desire in the bureau. It is an abject world where the 'carrot/stick' method of management does not produce the desired results, because of its failure the bureaucracy has been demonized and its replacement has been found:

Put simply, bureaucratic government is represented as the 'paradigm that failed' in large part because the forms of organizational and personal conduct it gave rise to and fostered—adherence to procedure and precedent, abnegation of personal moral enthusiasms and so forth—are regarded as fundamentally unsuited to the exigencies of contemporary economic, social, political and cultural environments. In an era of constant and profound change, a new paradigm is required for the public sector if that sector is to survive at all. Entrepreneurial governance is represented as just such a paradigm (Du Gay 2000:6).

The problem is that the enterprise is not far enough removed from the bureaucracy. In its original iteration the enterprise was an office; a private bureaucracy. Weber made this distinction in his work on bureaucracy. For Weber it "[did] not matter for the character of bureaucracy whether its authority is called 'private' or 'public'"

(1942:197). For Weber the distinction between the enterprise and bureaucracy ended at its signification, ‘the bureau’ for the public bureaucracy and ‘the office’ for the private enterprise (1942:197). However, for critics of the bureaucracy what must happen is that the bureau must become an office. In Jon Stokes and Stewart Clegg’s (2002) examination of the debate around the bureaucracy versus the enterprise, they found that the those who critique the bureaucracy found that “the bureaucracy must be reformed through the introduction of market influences to empower consumers and create vitalized leaders at the helm of new agencies” (225), and that “bureaucracies are failing in their purposes and an alternative form of organization, premised on contemporary liberal norms of market-driven responsibility, is envisioned” (225). This re-envisioned organizational form is the enterprise. While the work of Weber has been used as the touchstone of scholarly investigation into the bureaucratic, such a canonical text is lacking in the realm of the enterprise.

*The Enterprise: Where Everything Operates Hand Over Fist*

The enterprise is an elusive structure; it has not been made into a concrete unified concept because of its disparate character from enterprise to enterprise. Despite this, it is constantly used in the literature in contrast to the bureaucracy as its superior anti-thesis. The enterprise is defined in contrast to its bureaucratic Other. It is described as “flexible, decentered,” as opposed to the rigidly hierarchical and rule-bound world of the bureaucracy (Du Gay 2000:61). The enterprise is “premiered on contemporary liberal norms of market-driven responsibility” and is innovative, instead of premiered on stale rational-legalistic functionality (Stokes and Clegg 2002:252). An enterprise is therefore a market-driven capitalist venture which is not limited by strict functionality of a bureaucratic endeavour, but rather focuses on innovation and pecuniary gain. A capitalist

enterprise requires stability, the end of fluctuation, or inversely craves instability to profit from fluctuation, but not all enterprises enjoy the benefits of both equally, chaos for the enterprise is chaotic, unlike the bureaucratic, which can function despite chaos.

The enterprise functions within a for-profit environment where risks are part and parcel of the functioning of the organization. Enterprises are composed of experts. According to Weber, the experts within these private economic interest groups are of an even higher calibre than those of the bureaucracy (Weber 1942:235). This is because of the market-driven aspects of the enterprise. It has money to spend, to increase their capacity, to create incentives to find the most audacious individuals, to buy expertise, but the flow of money is constantly in flux. Money can drive the enterprise. It can shape it make it work faster, more efficiently, but the problem is that when times of crisis occur, or when occasions of reorganization occur, what is of importance becomes confused, according to Stokes and Clegg (2002): “Efficiency has been narrowly defined and sometimes confused with effectiveness and the economy” (226). This of course is not of great surprise as the enterprise is market-driven and its success or failure is measured in dollars.

However, this is where problems begin to emerge in strictly defining what an enterprise is. In essence, the enterprise is an apolitical absolved mass with a drive made external through its need to situate itself within a market economy, much like a zombie situating itself in the apocalypse. Bureaucracies are alienating, and impersonal, but whether the same can be said of an enterprise is unclear. Certainly some can be, while others can be open, but the distinction is difficult to identify. In addition these distinctions are very much related to how one is situated in relation to the enterprise. An individual’s

power has much more sway in relation to an enterprise than it does against a bureaucracy. The problem, however, is that the enterprise's structural strengths accompany its structural weaknesses.

The problems that plague enterprises and the problems that plague bureaucracy are both related to the same basic premise. The economic framework upon which they are situated determines the functioning of the organization. The bureaucracy is premised on a pre-budgeted economic model in which everything is budgeted ahead of time and there are no surprises, but there is also no risk taking. The world of the bureaucracy is a world which is frozen; its future is predetermined according to budgetary constraints. If something breaks, and it is not taken in to account early on, then it has to wait. The bureaucracy does not enjoy the catastrophic; it organizes itself despite chaos, much like a zombie horde.

In the popular imagination, the bureaucracy takes upon itself the psychological aspects of the zombie trope, the mindlessness, the single-minded shuffling about; however, the zombie is the only entity which truly survives a zombie apocalypse. However, it is the enterprise which takes upon the corporeal aspects of the zombie, while both seemingly enjoy the cultural aspects of the zombie trope. The bureaucracy and the enterprise, much like the zombie, are apolitical absorbent masses which is ever expanding and ever de-individualizing. Using the zombie metaphor, the dichotomous relationship between the enterprise and the bureaucracy seems to be divided as well. At first glance one would assume that the enterprise is in effect the survivor and the bureaucracy is the zombie. However, when both the institutions are dissected, both are in fact zombies. It is that the 'survivors' do not quite know it just yet.

The bureaucratic and entrepreneurial worlds are not truly anomic entities because they are steadfast in their application of rationalization. The Durkheimian theory of anomie was based on the idea that the norms and values of society were changing too rapidly for certain individuals to maintain their ontological security (1951:241-276). However, in the bureaucracy the state of anomie as proposed by Durkheim does not really stand the test of rapid change. If anything the steady pace of bureaucratic life is a means of thwarting the anomic process. As such anomie is much more likely to arise in the more corporate and supposedly more fast-paced world of the enterprise such as was witnessed by the mass suicides of the Great Depression. The bureaucracy is an insular entity largely due to its prebendal nature. Both of course must pay the cost for the construction of the characteristics of their organizations in the manner in which anomie is dealt with. The bureaucracy must maintain its rationalized, rules-based approach otherwise cracks may form allowing anomie in; while the bureaucratic may be alienating it is not normless. In contrast enterprise, in its search for profit, must always allow the possibility of anomie in order to be more adaptable in a business-for-profit environment.

In exchange for its many promising attributes, the enterprise must however suffer many obstacles. It must be competitive, always, and it must always be in competition, with something or someone. The enterprise is constantly feeding, seeking new blood. However, the enterprise does not necessarily require expansion, but expansion, of market share, of locations, of profits, is always a paramount concern. Even when the coffers are filled, the enterprises must seek for more, they are like the zombies dissected by Dr. Frankenstein, "See, it wants me. It wants food, but it has no stomach. It

can take no nourishment from what it ingests. It's working on instinct, a deep, dark, primordial instinct" (*Day of the Dead* 1983).

The attributes of the enterprise are not simply 'attributes' but necessities for the environment in which it is made to operate. They are an evolution of organization for a specific environment, and the environment is more Spencerian (survival of the fittest) than Darwinian (naturally selective). For all of its strength the enterprise must allow anomie to reign over it. It must operate chaotically within chaos, attempting to reign in order. In contrast, the bureaucracy operates in an orderly fashion within chaos which makes it slower-moving but denser. The enterprise takes chaos upon itself and seeks to profit from its movement. It is a classic conundrum: who wins in a fight between an immovable object and an unstoppable force?

However, as observed by Yiannis Gabriel (2005) when re-evaluating Weber's concept of the iron cage, the enterprise is made of glass. This means that the shift from the modern to the post-modern condition was a transition from a state of being to a state of becoming. New values are constructed in this new environment. Those are the values of glass—flux, fluidity and flow—glass is a highly viscous fluid. It can be remade, shattered, disassembled and reassembled, unlike the concrete which came before.

Proponents of enterprise make their plea by focusing on the one thing that enterprises are good at, which is also the one thing the bureaucracy never really laid claim to, and that is the realm of business dealings. Bureaucracies are not businesses (in its popular understanding). They are organizations of administration—typically governmental. The very economic underpinnings of a bureaucracy are so disparate from those of an enterprise that a comparison between the two over questions of their

efficiency in relation to profits are in such opposition to each other that they begin to become disrupted. Bureaucracies are organizations dedicated to issues of governance while enterprises are organizations dedicated to issues of commerce. Nonetheless, these are issues being raised in the organization studies literature.

*Zombies, Shaman, and Gurus: The Trajectory of the Entrepreneurial*

The literature of entrepreneurial management is a tangle of narratives, vision statements and corporate culture paradigm shifts, or of financial forecasting. However, there is one figure which rises above espousing these shifts, one figure which is held in reverence, the guru.

In their article on Guru Theory, “Telling Tales: Management Gurus Narratives and the Construction of Managerial Identity” (1998), Clark and Salaman examine what they call ‘Guru Theory’. The guru is someone within the managerial field who offers a:

presentation of ambitious claims to transform managerial practice, organizational structures and cultures and, crucially, organizational performance, through the recommendation of a fundamental almost magical cure or transformation that rejects the past, and reinvents the organization, its employees, their relationships, attitudes and behaviour (Clark and Salaman 1998:138).

The reason guru theory is such an important division of management culture is because of its influence on management philosophy in organizational culture. There are a number of reasons why guru theory is so influential. Management gurus and business schools are both competing to convince the management audience that they are at the forefront of management innovation. If the ideas developed and disseminated by business schools are perceived to be less valid than those of management gurus then they will increasingly become seen as peripheral institutions (139). As such, management gurus are extremely influential, and are in effect the primary means of management innovations outside of scholasticism within the field of management. However, the acceptance of guru theory is

often taken unreservedly by managers because the guru is an icon to managers. Gurus are a charismatic movement designed to combine charismatic and rational-legal administration for organizations.

Clark and Salaman found three reasons why examining the guru phenomenon was critical to the understanding of management: 1) “Few people in employment will not currently be experiencing the consequences of some guru-led or initiated programme whether it be BPR, TQM, the learning organization, etc...” (138), 2) Guru Theory is suspicious as there are “doubts about the efficacy of the core ideas” (138). There are questions as to the originality of the ideas being espoused (138), and 3) “guru-led programmes are characterized by high rates of failure” (138), and the ideas of gurus may do more harm than good (138-139). As such, Clark and Salaman found that gurus do not succeed in disseminating their ideas because of their efficacy, but rather due to their personal charisma; “...gurus display high levels of public mastery of the social qualities and attributes which managers themselves admire” (143). The purpose of gurus is to redirect the world of the entrepreneur. “The guru shows a way back to true, basic values and proper practices, enabling us to recognize how and where we have gone astray” (Clark and Salaman 1998:145). An early exemplar of this form of guru writing is Peters and Waterman’s *In Search of Excellence* (2006).

Management gurus Peters and Waterman first reinforced the need to return to “true basic values and proper practices” in the 1980’s through their observation that American management practices had fallen from grace and that Japanese management had become the new dominant management paradigm (2006:xx). They examined America’s best run companies from 3M to Wal-Mart focusing on eight basic principles

which, with varying degrees on intensity, they argued, would help to recreate the robust American corporation: 1) A bias for action, 2) Staying close to the customer, 3) Autonomy and entrepreneurship, 4) Productivity through people, 5) Hands-on, value driven, 6) Stick to the knitting, 7) Simple form, lean staff and 8) Simultaneous loose-tight properties (2006: 13-16). They focus on how managers manage the values of the organization as a means of remedying organizational problems (2006:26). Peters and Waterman, examine the charismatic leadership of the CEO and his effect on corporate culture, and specifically how the CEO inscribes the culture of a particular organization into its employees, thus making them part of the organization, and attaching them to the legacy of that organization. Peters and Waterman's approach is that of integration of the individual into the existing structure, to make people care about their work, not necessarily to become "champions...competitive bands of pragmatic bureaucracy-beaters the source of much innovation" (2006:xvi) as they dub them, but to make people part of the organization – to subsume one into the other, thereby showing traits of zombification.

For Peters and Waterman, the hero worker is constantly working out a desire external to themselves (zombie trait 1), they are working for the company, having become so deeply entrenched in the organization that they no longer see the distinction between them, and their employer, which Peters and Waterman recognize as "men willingly shackle themselves to the nine-to-five if only the cause is perceived in some great sense", such as self-perpetuation (Peters and Waterman 2006:xxi). The activity of the organization necessarily requires groups or masses (zombie trait 2), the organization and the people within them could be destroyed through the removal of the brain, the CEO the person who's charge is to "harness the social forces in the organization, to shape and

guide values” (Peters and Waterman 2006:6) (zombie trait 3), because without this figurehead, creating the external drive of self-perpetuation there is an inability to for organization to properly function, and the leaders create these drives through information transmission *cum* contagion (zombie trait 4), as explained by Thacker (2005), through “*the promotion and protection of values*” (Peters and Waterman 2006:85, italics in original). Peters and Waterman’s promotion of a new American management style does not resolve the problems faced by American management, and through their use of 1970’s psychological research and theory they wish to return to the management style of the 1950’s, i.e: a return to the Organization Man.

This point of “showing a way back to true, basic values and proper practices” has been more recently reinforced in the 1990’s by the guru of the learning organization, Peter Senge, in his book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (2006). Senge’s book is incredibly important to the guru theory movement because of the impact it has had in the business world. In 1997, the Harvard Business Review stated that Senge’s book has been the most important piece of management literature in the past 75 years (back cover).

When discussing the characteristics of the entrepreneur Senge notes that “Whereas once the morals of the marketplace seemed to require a level of morality in business that was lower than in other activities, quoting Bill O’Brien former president of Hanover Insurance: “We believe there is no fundamental tradeoff between the higher virtues in life and economic success. We believe we can have both. In fact, we believe that, over the long term, the more we practice the higher virtues of life, the more economic success we will have” (133). However, higher morals are not the sole concern

of Senge, rather he seeks to remedy the failings of the organization by advocating the organizational model of the learning organization.

The learning organization for Senge is based on the premise of wholeness. Senge states that “we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world. This apparently makes complex tasks and subjects more manageable, but we pay a hidden, enormous price. We can no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of connection to a larger whole” (Senge 2006:3). In order to counteract this movement towards simplistic thinking Senge advocates “The Fifth Discipline”.

Based on the contemporary nature of Senge’s work I examine how his learning organization functions and where the zombie sneaks in to grab a bite. There are five disciplines for Senge’s learning organization the most important of which is systems thinking. “Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed over the past fifty years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively” (Senge 2006:7). In essence, systems’ thinking is the ability to view a situation from all angles and making the appropriate decision taking into account the numerous actors involved. It is the paragon of decision making. The second discipline of the Learning Organization is “personal mastery”, which is a constant drive instilled within the individual to continue learning throughout their lives (Senge 2006:7-8). Personal mastery places the onus on each individual within the organization to continue their personal learning in order to benefit the organization and themselves. The third discipline of the Learning Organization is mental models, which are “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (Senge 2006:8). The

fourth discipline of the learning organization is building shared vision. “[S]hared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared “pictures of the future” that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance” (Senge 2006:9). The final discipline of the learning organization is team learning. Senge feels that “the intelligence of the team exceeds the intelligence of the individuals in the team, and where teams develop extraordinary capacities for coordinated action” (Senge 2006:9). While altogether the concept of the fifth discipline sounds very promising, there are obvious flaws which cannot be accounted for, no matter the skill of the manager, the greatest of which is utopianism. Senge’s learning organization attempts to fulfill the promise of management theory, to create a management psychohistory, “the ultimate modernist metanarrative, [capable of] explaining and predicting human collective activity over very long periods of time” (Phillips and Zyglidopoulos 1999:592).

Senge’s learning organization wishes to fulfill the transformation of the individual into the organization man, and his discourse acts as a disease vector to accomplish that goal. The five disciplines each seek to create individuals who are more adept at working in groups. However, there are paradoxes built in to virtually every discipline, paradoxes which would inevitably cause them to fail. The whole of the learning organization is predicated on the idea of being a mass of individuals, or an individual/mass. The whole organizational structure that Senge’s learning organization wishes to create is predicated upon the dissolution of the problem of zombification. However, the metaphor of the zombie can never be removed from the learning organization because the learning organization thrives on creating a fragmented organization premised on an intrinsic need for its employees to willingly create their own work environment, despite being shackled

by their workplace's organizational structure and directives. Allowing them such freedom does not create unity through a common cause, but creates anomie. Unless the problem of the zombie in the organization can be corrected, treated—decapitated, the learning organization will never reach its potential. This is because the organizational structure of the bureaucracy and the enterprise are not different enough to be able to apply guru theory to the enterprise if it could not also be applied to the bureaucracy. The problem with Guru theory is that it is simply a series of narratives and not a scientific reality, which is the level of “truth” they claim to be able to deliver.

...gurus *do not* possess and *cannot* deploy a body of formal, authoritative theoretical professional knowledge to underpin their work, because there is no such knowledge. The ‘knowledge’ of gurus cannot be defined on a neutral, formal, theoretical basis, for not only are the results of guru knowledge and work ambiguous but also it is ambiguous what role knowledge plays at all (Clark and Salaman 1998:147).

The learning organization advocates the personal mastery of the individual to help contribute to the organization. The reality is that in order for the learning organization to succeed it requires the zombification of the individual, but it requires them to be managed, rather than to be led by a rational-legalistic framework. The learning organization does not pay heed to the desires of individuals, to individuals who may hate their job—to resistance. The metaphor of the zombie does not need to be “onboard” it simply needs to be and the hunger will guide the zombies from then on.

The learning organization does not take in to account the idea of frustrated goals, or even of frustrated individuals. There is a focus on desire which it tries to channel without taking in to account the ideas of power and will and most especially no concept of rebellion. To the learning organization there is no Salazar who will lead the zombies in, no stand-off between Ben and Mr. Cooper, or even more complicated power struggles

such as those between various interests such as Kaufmann-Cholo-Riley. Every power struggle for Senge is seen as equally valid, but workable. While Senge recognizes that “It’s important to note that the goal in practicing the discipline of mental models is not necessarily agreement or convergence. Many mental models can exist at once. Some models may disagree” (2006:187), but there is no acknowledgement as to how these models are to coexist. There is an assumption that reason and self-interest would naturally force people to work together, but this is not always the case. Romero’s survivors work towards a specific goal, survival. The problem arises when the means of achieving this goal incorporates many different contrarian ideas of how to best achieve survival. This is something explored in all of Romero’s films. The survivors are always at odds on the best way to survive. In *Night of the Living Dead* there is disagreement between Mr. Cooper and Ben leading to Cooper’s eventual demise, *Dawn of the Dead* shows the tension of living a cloistered life and the apathy which comes with it leading to their eventual demise, *Day of the Dead* portrays a disagreement between the military and the scientists, and *Land of the Dead* centres on the power struggle between Riley, Cholo and Kaufman. The failure of the survivors to sort how to best achieve their goals leads to zombification, this is the same in the corporate structure. Losers will be zombified.

Within the world of the metaphorical zombie, there is no coexistence and the same can be said for structures such as the learning organization. While Senge believes in the Utopian notion that “Visions spread because of a reinforcing process of increasing clarity, enthusiasm, communication and commitment. As people talk, the vision grows clearer. As it gets clearer, enthusiasm for its benefits builds” (Senge 2006:211). He never takes in to account the dynamics of power, but simply the power of enrolment.

The reality of the corporate lifestyle is that workers will either become Organization Men and dissolve themselves in their work, or become cynical and resistant to the corporate ideology. Senge labels these as “possible attitudes towards a vision” (2006:203-204). However, Peter Fleming and Andre Spicer view these “possible attitudes towards a vision” as being inherent in the structure of work. While “Cynicism is a way of escaping the encroaching logic of managerialism and provides an inner ‘free space’ for workers when other avenues for opposition have dried up” (2003:16) the reality is that “some forms of resistance have the unintended consequence of maintaining domination because it is articulated in a way that undermines more meaningful and effective strategies of opposition” (2003:162). Senge’s learning organization attempts to change individuals’ attitudes instead of taking the working reality that there will always be rogues, over-achievers, charlatans, and traitors among the flock. The problem with Senge’s guru theory is that in attempting to create what is in essence an Organization Man he does not take into account the idea of zombification. The proper functioning of Senge’s learning organization requires that the zombie metaphor be absent from the institutional discourse while simultaneously establishing the structures required to infect the workers with zombification.

Senge’s learning organization embodies the Social Ethic and seeks to create the Organization Man. His focus on the group or “team” in his parlance, as the center of organizational learning runs contra the sociological organization literature of the 1950s and embodies all those organizational aspects of which Mills, Whyte and Riesman attempted to warn us.

The capitalist spirit, Werner Sombart has written, combines a spirit of adventure, a desire for gain, and the middle-class virtues of the respectable citizen. Among

those smaller bourgeois, the desire for gain now seems uppermost; it becomes the focus of virtue, and as the adventurous spirit is replaced by a search for the sure fix, the very norms of respectability become psychological traps and sources of guilt. The calculation for gain spreads into the whole social life, as the lumpen-bourgeois man thinks of his social universe, including the members of his family, as factors in his struggle, a struggle in which he is often as unsuccessful as he is ambitious (Mills 1956:32).

Guru theory is predicated on the idea that the enterprise is an organization which is destined to fail. Senge notes the failures of the enterprise to maintain itself, "In 1983, a Royal Dutch/Shell study found that one-third of the firms that had been in the Fortune "500" in 1970 had vanished. Shell estimated that the average lifetime of the largest industrial enterprises is less than forty years, roughly half the lifetime of a human being!" (2006:17). Gurus attempt to repair the failures of the enterprise, the problem of the zombified worker. The problem is that the guru, instead of creating structures which facilitate the zombie within the work context, acts in two ways to enhance the process of organizational zombification. The guru on the one hand wishes to tame them, much like Dr. Frankenstein, the wish is to transform the zombie (bureaucrat) in order to make them more useful and productive (entrepreneurial), while never truly getting to the root of the problem and, on the other hand, the guru attempts to implant into the individual those traits which were derided by sociologists of the 1950s such as Whyte, Riesman and Mills.

### *Enter the Undead*

The organization man, the other-directed individual, the new entrepreneur, the bureaucrat (as it is portrayed today) and the zombie did not all arise at the same time, but rather they arose out of the same context. The new entrepreneur and the bureaucrat came to prominence in a particular time in American history. The change in American character allowed these organizations to solidify their ideal types, just as Romero helped to solidify the zombie trope. While the zombie was around since the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century, the popularization of the creature through the works of Romero did not occur until mid-century. There were other monsters, other fears which were prevalent during the same time but none of them became a distinct trope. None took precedence over another. Films such as *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which influenced Romero, were around and also set off alarms as to the conformity which was viewed as segregating the free-thinking individual, the creative individual. However, it was the zombie which brought all of these various aspects of the monstrous in society into a single entity. The zombie was the vessel in which the fears of the era were congealed into a trope and provided a focal point for the comparison of fears within the social. This process is similar to that of the glass cages described by Gabriel (2005:11), where personal fears and anxieties are made public and the spaces between personal and public become problematized.

When examining the characteristics of the bureaucracy and the enterprise in conjunction with those of the zombie there is a similar transposition as when the trope is laid over the new American character. The enterprise in essence functions as an uncanny of the bureaucracy.

In an attempt to correct the weaknesses of the bureaucracy, the enterprise was brought in to drive innovation or so it would seem. However there is a failure to acknowledge that these two organizational structures are different and as such their focus is different. The bureaucracy is focused on administration and is based on a prebendal economic model, while the enterprise is focused on innovation which is based on a market driven economic model. Just as the living dead fill the niche between the two poles of life and death so does the enterprise fill niches within the capitalist landscape,

this can be attributed to its flexibility, but over time the enterprise grows from being entrepreneurial to corporate, and it no longer fills niches but attempts to reshape the landscape. With over a third of the largest enterprises having a lifespan of less than forty years (Senge 2006:17), it would appear that there is something in the very nature of the enterprise which causes its end, very likely this is cannibalism. The enterprise begins to overdevelop itself in the attempt to create a lasting effect, but just as would be the case with the zombie, if all the humans were to die, if all the flesh were to be stripped clean from their bones, there is nothing left to sustain them, as is the case with the enterprise. Either they create their own competition and cannibalize their niche together, or they simply begin to devour themselves.

Senge is attempting to create an entrepreneurial subject that does not exist. According to Campbell Jones and Andre Spicer there is no such thing as “the entrepreneur” (2005:235), and that these individuals are simply interpolated into those positions of being entrepreneurial by being part of an enterprise, which would in essence make them Organization Men. As such both structures fail to create a working environment which is free from zombification.

### *Conclusion*

The zombie is a shuffling, slow moving, non-human, non-thinking, non-feeling, non-political, absolved mass, and some might reserve the very same descriptors for a bureaucracy. The concept of organization studies was to create a science of management. Although they are separate streams now one based in Weber the other in Foucault, the idea that most readily transposes the idea of the zombie into the organization is not theoretical, but practical application of management theory. The process of zombification has not only become instilled within the very structure of the organization, as it displaces

other mediating structures, but has become part of the practice of organizational thinking, or rather organizational non-thinking.

The learning organization, for example, attempts to create a process which requires an inner-directed individual to obey the role of an other-directed individual. The employee must be survivor and zombie all at once and it is this embodiment of dichotomy which weakens Senge's position. While commentators such as Senge and Bauman have criticized the modern institution of the bureaucracy, a return to the canonical works of the 1950s shows that the separation which they are attempting to create never truly existed. The trope of the zombie exists in every megastructure, whether it is an ideal type of structure or not. This is not because of a failure of the structure itself, but it is an indication that attempting to resolve the problem of managing an entity which is eternally malleable is never going to achieve the status of a science. The dream of managerial psychohistory imagined by Frederick Taylor in the 1930s (Peters and Waterman 2006:5) is an impossible one and the trope of the zombie is simply one means of making this apparent.

## **Chapter 5: Beyond the Organization and Beyond Romero**

### *Conclusion*

Sociologists Mills, Riesman and Whyte noted that there was a sea change in the American character occurring in the post-war era. The American character was no longer comprised of the rugged individualist as it had once been but towards something more affected by the world around them, the other-directed individual, where the group has come to hold sway over the actions of the individual. The consequences of this change in American character had a symbiotic relationship with the world of work. The world of work was being shaped by the change in American character and the change in American character was being hastened by the changes in the world of work. The result was a decline in the entrepreneurial spirit of days past and the rise of bureaucratic and enterprising rationalities.

The private sphere, the mediating structures of religion, family, and community organization are no longer set upon the lines of the protestant ethic, but rather along lines of sameness and similarity; e.g. the white picket fence, 2.5 children, suburban living. Simulated living was the goal of the period, essentially non-living, undead. Evolving from this change in American character was a change in the fears of Americans, most specifically those relating to the monstrous figure of the zombie, an organic, decomposing, carnivorous, apolitical entity, unlike any of the monstrous figures of the past. The contemporary view of the zombie, which evolved from a very real threat in Haiti, has become a metaphor through which to understand our relationship to work.

The immersion into simulated lives and dead structures was a mirror of what was taking place in the world of work. Dead structures are more easily controlled, and the people situated within them more easily managed. The organization as a structure follows the zombie trope, not only in terms of those individuals working for the organization, but the organizations themselves have zombie like characteristics. Individuals within organizations had lost their individual goals, and they had come to assume the goals of the organization. The problem is that these goals do not necessarily coincide. Much like the zombies working towards a common goal in Romero's films, the zombie's great carnivorous gusto is driven not by personal profit, but rather by simply acting in accordance of their structure, a slow progression towards a goal which is not necessarily understood, in effect; a non-instrumental movement towards a non-rationalized goal. The working subject follows goals not because it is in their best interest, but because it is in the best interest of the organization. The films of Romero presented these concerns of becoming part of this institution in the form of a zombie, the fear of neighbours to whom we do not connect, everyone trapped in their own world, free from mediating structures, a world of dead structures.

The large organizations have failed in applying the ideals of the Enlightenment. Workers who may work towards a goal or profits do not do so rationally. However, these massive organizational structures arose for a reason. One cannot govern a metropolis with city hall meetings, and there is a need for these massive structures.

There is a necessary contradiction within all of this. While deriding guru theory, there is a need for such a thing. There is a need to change the way business is conducted and how governing is done, but the truth is no one will ever agree on the best means to

accomplish these. What needs to be addressed is which metaphors and analogies are being applied to work and investigate how these function within the structure of organizations. As stated by Nancy Leys Stepan “How particular metaphors or analogies in science are related to the social production of science, why certain analogies are selected and not others and why certain analogies are accepted by the scientific community are all issues that need investigation” (1993:362). The false dichotomy of the bureau and the enterprise has become a sticking point for commentators such as Bauman and for Gurus such as Senge, Peters and Waterman. This is because the dichotomy which they are railing against never truly existed. This is not because of a failure of the structures themselves, rather it is due to the complexity introduced by adding human beings into the equation which has truly uncovered the organization as a means of creating absorbent masses resigned to false collectivization, leading to the inevitable failure of any managerial psychohistory, and the zombie is a metaphor through which this is made apparent.

The goal of this project has been an attempt to establish a newer, fuller analogical device in which to view the world of work from the standpoint of organization theory and the cultural relationship between the private fears and public performance of individuals, be they human or corporate. The point is that, from the American perspective, the modern subject can never escape zombieism—it is built into the managerial systems and the work structures that are essential to modernity. The implications for the working subject are that large scale business practices necessarily require zombification in order to sustain their practices, requiring people to work together towards a collective external goal, within a largely rule based non-instrumental structure. For survivors trapped within

zombifying systems, there is an ability to maintain ones individuality for a time, but eventually the system will infect the survivor and bring them into the zombie mass. No one within a large-scale organization is irreplaceable, not even the CEO, despite the lauding of praise which they receive within management literature. One way to avoid zombification there must be a return of the entrepreneurial spirit, and the small, independent, flexible business entities (i.e: mom and pop businesses).

#### *Areas of Future Research: The New Canon*

Since Romero, there has been an influx of new zombie horror films establishing a new leitmotif for the zombie genre. These include, albeit not officially, *Resident Evil* (2002), *28 Days Later* (2002), *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), and the remake of the Romero classic *Dawn of the Dead* (2004) directed by Zack Snyder. There has been one major change which has occurred in the realm of zombie films because of the new canon as two of these films, *28 Days Later* and the remake of *Dawn of the Dead*, have drastically altered the speed at which the zombie moves, pointing to a critique of hypermodernity as a source of anxiety. While K. Silem Mohammad (2006) has written on the drastic change in speed of the zombie, there is still much to be examined in terms of the cultural change in the speed of life as it relates to late capitalist society. While speed has become part of the new criterion for fear, this increase in speed has endangered the pre-eminence of Romero's zombies as the leitmotif monster in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This change in the speed of the zombie genre has been introduced through Danny Boyle's film *28 Days Later*. Although these individuals are not technically zombies, they share many similar attributes, save for cannibalism (although they do bite other humans, they

do not eat them) and their aforementioned speed. Boyle's "infected" have influenced the zombie genre, most notably in Zack Snyder's remake of *Dawn of the Dead*.

What speed introduces to the genre is that instead of falling to a mass of slow-moving monsters, a person can be turned by a singular ghoul. The individualization of this threat has created an atmosphere of competition between the individual and the monster, and can be examined as a metaphor for accelerated modernity and the changing pace of late modernity.

The zombie trope was an ideal model to compare 1950's organizational structures. However, the first age of the zombie may be coming to an end, at least cinematically with respect to current management structures. The traditional view of the vampire popularized by Bram Stoker as a wealthy, churlish and parasitic creature feeding on the weak and ignorant may be more appropriate representation of contemporary organizational fears. The CEOs of organizations would be the most apt figure to follow this trope as the position has become demonized in recent times. Of course, the monsters must necessarily be part of the cultural psyche otherwise their projections fail to make the necessary impact on the public as a form of cultural critique. While the zombie's time as leitmotif may be coming to an end, just as it did in the late 1970s, the revolution in cinematic fears is a relatively short one and the zombie will no doubt re-emerge from its slumber summoned up by a shamanistic cultural shift.

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