

Simon Sheikh  
**It's After the  
End of the  
World: A  
Zombie  
Heaven?**

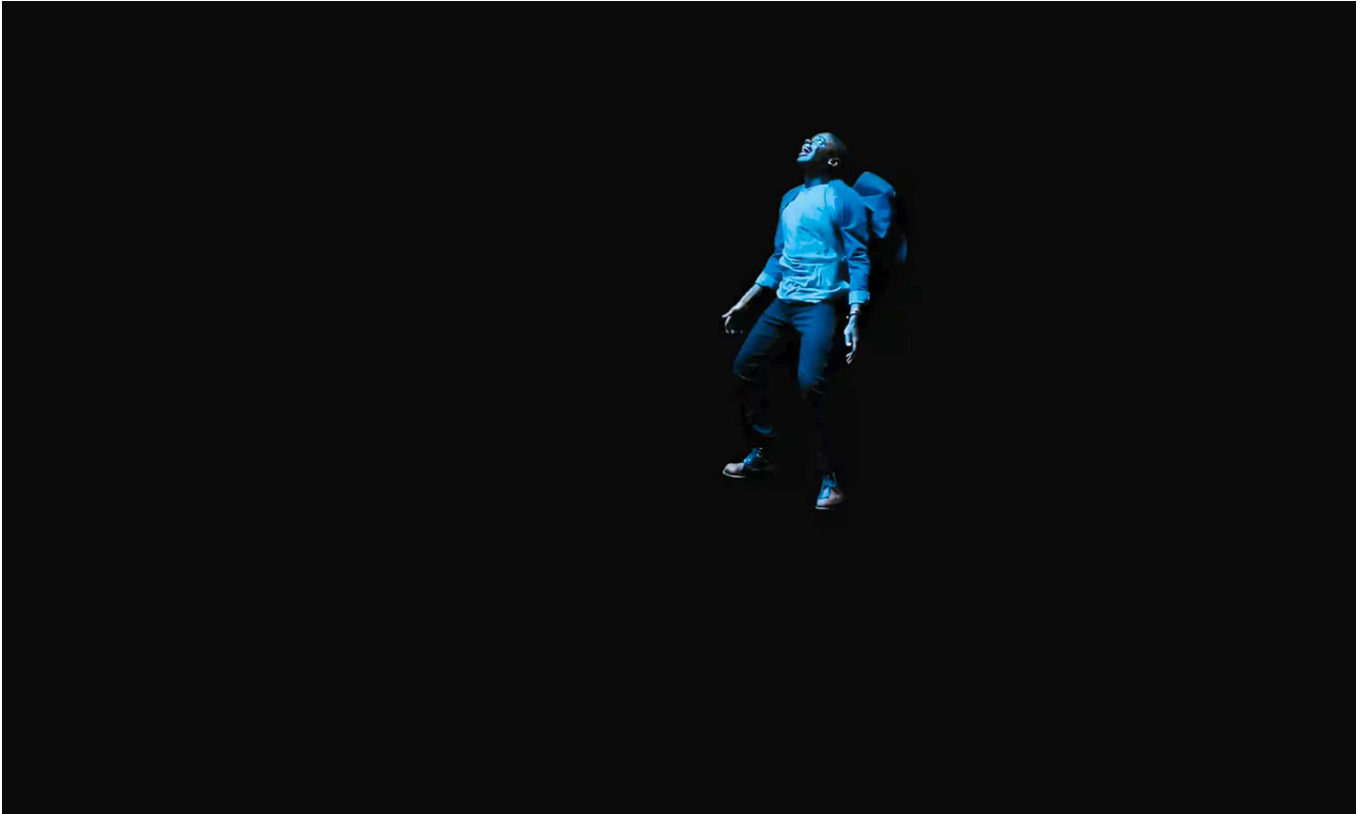
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e-flux journal #113 — november 2020 Simon Sheikh  
*It's After the End of the World: A Zombie Heaven?*

This essay borrows its title from a 1973 Sun Ra live album (*It's After the End of the World*, recorded in Germany in 1970). The phrase is employed here as a short riposte to an opening question or prompt that speculates on the possibility of art after the end of the world. Sun Ra's work, mainly records and concerts developing and defining the genre of free jazz, but which also encompasses poetry, graphics, science fiction, philosophy, and film, is nowadays viewed as constitutive of afrofuturism, imagining a speculative future for Africa beyond and without colonial intervention and violence – that is, the future that never came to be. As such, it is a way of imagining *another* world, and in the case of Sun Ra, an alternative to this world in outer space, on planets like Jupiter and Saturn, places and journeys constantly celebrated in his music. *It's After the End of World* is thus, at first glance, an anomaly in Sun Ra's catalogue in the sense that it is dystopian rather than utopian, indicating that the world has already ended. But, it does posit an *after* the end, meaning not just the end itself, or the end as final and complete, but perhaps as a beginning of something new: an afterlife or a new world, even.

It is in these ways that I will try and discuss the notion of the end, or ends, as they relate to art, theory, and cultural production, and as a way of engaging with the intriguing, if puzzling, quandary of art after the end of the world. This question was posed to me, other writers and artists, and to the public by Eketarina Degot as the discussion platform of the 1st Kyiv Biennial in 2012. The question was contextualized in relation to the global financial crisis from a few years earlier, and the politics of austerity that it brought with it, as well as the apparent lack of alternatives to these measures, resulting, in part, from the fall of real existing communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which were the endings of concrete lived experiences and specific life worlds, as we shall see. Degot posed a seemingly simple question, albeit rooted in a specific historical and indeed *art* historical time, which, in turn, added several complications: "Art is quite comfortable with the idea of the end of art. But how can art deal with the end of the world?"<sup>1</sup> In this question, there is both a presumption and a prediction at play. First of all, it assumes that through the course of modernity – with artistic avant-garde movements based in negation and deconstruction – art as we knew it has ended, and indeed contemporary art had become a sort of postmodern endgame celebrating and mourning this end of art. However, this thinking and making with the end, and with endless endings, could also potentially allow for art to consider a larger issue: not just the end of art, but the end of the world in which

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Daniel Kaluuya falls into the “sunken place” in the 2017 movie *Get Out*.

art could allow itself to end. The end of such a world could allow art to empty itself of preceding historical meanings, and this endgaming could contribute to a speculative postapocalyptic thinking beyond the confines and histories of the art world. Art, instead, could concern itself with the world, as it is now, potentially ending. This proposition hinges on two main: a) the popular motive of apocalypse has not just religious but also political significance, in the sense of growing discontent, anxiety, and even unrest – the end of the current status quo is both dreaded and demanded; b) there is a desire to not just wait for this to unfold, but rather to begin now, *before* the ending of the world, to imagine and construct the world to follow the demise of the current hegemony. In short, could the end of the world be viewed in utopian as well as dystopian ways?

### After the End and The Last Man

We shall return to how and whether contemporary art truly is comfortable with discussing and theorizing its own demise. First let us investigate the notion of art after the end of the world, and the two figures this proposition conjures up: the figure of the *post-*, something after the event; and the figure of the main event itself, the end of the world, or if you will, *the apocalypse*. If there is to be something like art after the apocalypse, this would mean that something is still present, in whatever form, or that something is still being presented and produced, and possibly made public, whether as a form of signification or de-signification. That something (i.e., art) has a meaning or being after the end of the world, whether symbolically or in actuality. Let us first investigate the latter: that the world has in fact ended, but there is still art, still cultural production. By whom is it produced if the world has ended? What could it possibly mean, moreover, to produce art and culture *after* the end of the world, and thus, presumably, *after* the end of both the natural and the cultural world, of both *bios* and *zoë*, as it were? Would there still be life, or even afterlife, at all? What would it mean to be alive after the end, either as survival or beyond death? Would such a subject still be human, or perhaps rather inhuman or even post-human? In any case, the suggestion of an art after the end of the world implies that there is *someone* around after the end, whether as producer or receiver: that there is transmission of some sort or another, intentional or unintentional.

In the popular imagination of the apocalypse of the twentieth century – from the end(s) after the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the fear of nuclear annihilation that followed during the Cold War, to

present anxieties over global pandemics and the slow violence of climate change – disaster movies are an often precise symptom of their time and current imagination of the end. However, they are also accurate synthesizers of what the popular imagination speculates will come after, i.e. the day *after* tomorrow. From twentieth-century popular imagination and culture, we know of different figures for such an (after)life. One well-known figure from Hollywood cinema is the lone survivor, as seen in the 2007 blockbuster *I Am Legend*, the third film adaptation of Richard Matheson's 1954 novel of the same name (the previous versions were *The Last Man on Earth* [1964] and *The Omega Man* [1971]). In his incisive comparative analysis of the three films, Slavoj Žižek describe the story line as “yet another fantasy of witnessing one's own absence.”<sup>2</sup> The plots of the three movies are fairly simple, albeit with different and complex endings, not just in terms of the interpretations they lend themselves to, and indeed their moralizing function, but also because each points to a different way forward after the end of the world.

In terms of what the three plots share, we begin by following this last person on earth – the last man standing, as it is indeed a *male* protagonist – as he wanders the ruins of our defunct civilization, living out his end days as the last Man. Apparently a virus, to which this man is immune, has wiped out the rest of humanity. In a sense, this is not so much the end of the world, as in the end of the planet, but rather the end of mankind – that is, the end of *our* world, and thus, our worldview. This was meant as a horror story, evidenced by the slogan of the 1964 poster: “Do you dare imagine what it would be like to be the last man on Earth ... or the last woman?” As it turns out, of course, this last man standing is never really alone, but haunted by past and present presences, first in the form of vampiric, zombie-like ghouls (the infected), and later on in the form of a mysterious woman appearing, who may or may not be human, who may or may not be trusted, and, post-Edenic as this setting is, may or may not be desired. And thus, the slogan on the 1971 movie poster, repeated in the 2007 marketing campaign: “The last man alive ... is not alone!” The hero's tasks become evident: fight off the ghouls and save the woman, and by extension mankind. But to do so means sacrificing himself. And so, the moral dilemma of this deeply Christian story and the different endings of the three films attests to what Žižek aptly calls a “gradual ideological regression.”<sup>3</sup> Crucially, in all three films, the man is a scientist, but also a warrior, who can provide a possible cure for the virus as well as almost single handedly eradicate the ghouls. In the end, he is

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Will Smith in the 2007 movie *I Am Legend*.



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CHARLTON HESTON FORSAKES costume drama for science-fiction fare in his current starring role in Warner Bros.' "The Omega Man," in which he portrays a medical researcher who believes he is the only human to survive unscathed from world-wide biological warfare which has killed most of the earth's population. Here he is seen with co-star Rosalind Cash.

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Production still distributed by Warner Bros for the movie *Omega Man*, with Charlton Heston and Rosalind Cash.

always individual, a heroic singular figure towering above all the others, and indeed *the other* as such.

However, as Žižek also points out, the endings of the films carry drastically different messages. In the first film, *The Last Man on Earth*, the roles end up reversed, as it is actually the ghouls that are human, and the last man – portrayed by Vincent Price, who mostly played villains – that is inhuman. In the second adaption, *The Omega Man* – in my view the most interesting of the three – the last man turns out to not be the end of humanity, but rather the end of the *white* man as synonymous with humanity. In a crucial and inspired example of casting, the protagonist is portrayed by an actor who was whiteness personified: Charlton Heston. Instead, the woman, whom he at first refuses to acknowledge as a fellow, is African American, played by Rosalind Cash (who spent most her career in television rather than film). In the film, Heston's character boasts of his superiority – “100 percent proof Anglo-Saxon, baby!” as he happily exclaims – and his romantic involvement with the woman (the film includes a historic interracial kiss) seems to be explicable due to the fact that they are the last man and woman alive. It can be surmised, then, that his sacrifice for the future of mankind is two-fold: giving up his own life to save the woman, and giving up his racial purity for the sake of reproduction. His sacrifice is, in opposition to the other two films, not voluntary, but rather enforced by the inhuman ghouls – eerily called The Family, echoing the contemporaneous Manson Family and their attempt to start a race war in America – who have rejected the modern science of the Omega man. As infuriating as this all was, the casting of Will Smith in the leading role of *I Am Legend* at least promised some kind of compensation, but as Žižek's analysis makes clear, the last film is the most fundamentalist and Christian, with the woman telling the protagonist – the scientist – that she is sent from God, and that he can be saved by following her to a safe haven, or more likely, a Christian sect in idyllic Vermont. In the end he is forced to sacrifice himself, Christ-like, to become the “legend” of the title, in order to pass on the cure for the virus to the woman, who will take it to Vermont so that the community there can survive and thrive while acting like missionaries to ostensibly save the rest of the infected world.

Žižek is justified in his harsh criticism of this version. But this being contemporary Hollywood, the film doesn't have just one ending, but rather, like a computer game, more possible endings. The film now circulates with two different endings. In the alternative ending, the protagonist does not actually have to sacrifice

himself, but instead acknowledges the humanity, or remnants of humanity, in the ghouls after realizing that two of them are a heterosexual couple in love. With this realization comes identification and pity. In this version, the protagonist's soul is saved not through self-sacrifice, but through showing mercy, and not blowing himself up with the barbarians (the inhuman ghouls) to save the Christians (the humans in the imagined community of Vermont). It is noticeable, though, that this alternative ending offers not only a heteronormative understanding of what it means to be human, but also an individualized rather than collective identification. The protagonist spares the ghouls only after recognizing the human-like love relation between them, rather than after any recognition of their collective agency. The lone survivor, the last man standing, remains in stark contrast and opposition to any such agency.

### Afterlives: Zombies and Ghosts

Are there also figures of collective, or even communal, survival after life? Figures of humanity in the end times who are not the last Man, masculine and individual, like the hero of an Ayn Rand novel, defined *against* the collective, the mass, or the multitude? In fact there are two well-known phantasmagoric figures of collective afterlife, although both are somewhat sinister and uncanny, perhaps as a negative metaphor for collectivity itself, like the ghouls in the above-mentioned movies. I am thinking of zombies and ghosts. Like the ghouls, zombies and ghosts are formerly human – folkloristically post-human rather than technoscientifically post-human. They are figures that succeed the human form and life span, if not the human world, which they seem to co-inhabit with us, partially and temporally, even if they are a direct threat to it. In different ways, their being – their post-humanity – is dependent on humans, as an *outcome* of our lives and after lives. But their cohabitation and codependency with humanity is a conflictual one, leading inevitably to our demise, with the zombie literally feeding off the living, and the ghost trying to scare you to death. Their relation to us is always one of destruction and dread, but their agency and their aims are different, as is the state that they are in as post-human: ghosts are in pain, and looking to avenge this pain, whereas zombies, half-disintegrated as they appear, do not seem to be in pain, but rather in ecstasy, in some sort feeding frenzy that drives them forever forward.

There are also significant differences in how these figures hunt and haunt us. Whereas the ghost comes to us in both the singular and the multiple form, the zombie is pure collective consciousness: they always travel in packs.

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Betty Gabriel in the 2017 movie *Get Out*.

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A Sketchfab scan of Robert Longo's *All You Zombies: Truth Before God* (1986/2012) by user Phil. See <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/robert-longos-all-you-zombies-truth-before-god-5ce60ccd011c49dbb8338ae3e34c3991>.



While the cultural origins of the zombie are complex, let us begin by considering them simply as a form of post-human afterlife, as they are in most pop culture depictions. As such, it is questionable whether zombies have any consciousness, since a zombie-like state of being is usually one that indicates no brain activity (although they do feed on the brains of the living, presumably). Indeed, being in a zombie-like state usually implies a dumbing down of the human intellect, sedated by junk food and trash television, no longer capable of any significant brain activity apart from reaching for the remote control or opening the fridge. Although this everyday use of the term speaks volumes about the class connotations, disgust, and struggle involved in the metaphor of the zombie, it is also grossly misleading in its indication of inaction. Zombies are anything but couch potatoes. They may not be conscious, but they are hyperactive and invasive, and if they cannot think for themselves, they are nonetheless the expression of a very single-minded collective will to destroy the living and turn everyone into zombies. So perhaps the fear of zombies is actually the fear of a collective consciousness and the general intellect. Perhaps this fear expresses a liberal fantasy – or more accurately nightmare – of the masses rising up, of a communalist revolution, but also a communist way of life, or being, which is ironically the very opposite of the metaphor of a modern consumerist zombie, even if projected onto the very same social class. This is certainly how the zombie has been employed in contemporary art, with works such as Robert Longo's monstrous and kitschy sculpture *All You Zombies: Truth Before God* (1986), and the group Bank's infamous *Zombie Golf* exhibition from a decade later. Both these works set the zombie in opposition to the idealized bourgeoisie culture of their time. Longo's work followed his "Men in the Cities" series of cavorting male bodies in business suits, usually seen as a critique of the period's Wall Street yuppies, and thus, as a premonition perhaps – one type of American psycho supplanting another, at the height of the Reaganomic reconstruction of society, not least its economic base. Similarly, Bank's 1995 installation and exhibition *Zombie Golf*, which was realized in the middle of the cool Britannica frenzy of the YBA movement, and in the transition to New Labour cementing neoliberalism as the only possible version of a UK society (or the lack thereof, as it were ...), used kitsch, pop, and violence as their particular brand of art class politics, and posited the zombie as a revolutionary subject. In this narrative and carnivalesque exhibition, viewers were presented with the scene of a golf course,

where the bourgeoisie playing on it were suddenly attacked and devoured by zombies, as a metaphor for working class revolt. The vulgarity of the zombie figure from pop culture also contaminated the pristine space of the white cube gallery. Bank wanted to bring class war to the YBA party (which was, after all, a group of artists that prided itself on its working-class roots and culture of aspiration and achievement, eerily heralding the coming of New Labour), but not only: they also wanted to spoil the party, just like zombies at a golf course.

Zombies are the monsters of mass society, at once animalistic and cannibalistic, and more body than mind. In this way, the zombie represents a kind of bodily survival or afterlife of the human form and life-form, which is no *real* survival since the brain has been eaten, and with it the soul and personality of that body, that former person. No wonder, then, that the zombie has so often been the metaphor for the abject body, especially in Hollywood cinema, in terms of disease and sexuality, but also for a collective, even communist social body that, as opposed to the liberal individual subject, has no will of its own, no private thoughts and aspirations, but only the beastly roar of the maddening crowd and mob rule. Zombies are unclean and unruly, like the working classes, and cannot be reasoned with, but only annihilated (it's them or us). It is this inherent violence that gives the figure of the zombie its symbolic power, but in a twofold sense: the rampant violence the zombie performs, but also the license to kill that this violence gives to humans (whose own violence is presented as self-defense of course). Indeed, zombie movies revel in the pleasure of performing death, of the spectacle of massacre. It should thus come as no surprise that the proliferation of the zombie has happened through popular culture rather than contemporary art (even though it has made its appearances, or cameos, here too), particularly through George A. Romero's zombie films and their many subsequent and contemporary spin-offs. Indeed, Romero's second, and breakthrough, zombie film, *Dawn of the Dead*, famously takes place within a shopping mall, thus directly connecting the carnage with consumption. Perhaps fittingly then, the zombie as a metaphor for modern culture and consumer society has by now become a global franchise. That said, it has a special place in the aesthetic and political imagination of the United States, as Mike Mariani summed up in a 2015 article:

For a brief period, the living dead served as a handy Rorschach test for America's social ills. At various times, they represented capitalism, the Vietnam War, nuclear fear,

even the tension surrounding the civil-rights movement. Today zombies are almost always linked with the end of the world via the “zombie apocalypse,” a global pandemic that turns most of the human population into beasts ravenous for the flesh of their own kind. But there’s no longer any clear metaphor.<sup>4</sup>

Mariani goes on to bemoan how the figure of the zombie has been emptied of meaning, not just in the sense that it no longer vectors current social issues and problems, but also in terms of how its Americanization (one hesitates to say zombie-fication) has all but erased its original historical meaning. This meaning emerged in the context of the slave trade and the independence struggle in Haiti, where the figure of the zombie first appeared as dead slaves not being able to leave their bodies and return to their ancestral homeland, instead doomed to wander the plantations of Hispaniola for eternity. In this origin myth of the zombie, the “brains-eating fiend was a slave not to the flesh of others but to his own,” which is altogether more brutal.<sup>5</sup> Mariani is correct in categorizing the proliferation of zombies in mass entertainment as nothing more than whitewashing. However, it’s crucial to not that his essay was written in 2015. Since then, Black Lives Matter movements have gained further traction as an undeniable political force, and we are now literally living through the kind of global pandemic fantasized in so many horror and disaster movies. This gives the figure of the zombie, zombie culture, and indeed zombie politics a renewed resonance. Romero’s very first zombie film, *Night of the Living Dead* (now a cult classic), doesn’t just end with the defeat of the zombies, but also with the police shooting an innocent African American man, the otherwise lone survivor of the zombie onslaught. This ending is more shocking than the many graphic deaths caused by the zombies, but also horrifyingly realist, then as now, giving the film a political and contemporary reverberation. Indeed, one of the most significant recent blockbuster films about race relations in the United States, Jordan Peele’s *Get Out* (2017), not only employs the horror genre, but also plays with zombie metaphors, in the film’s overtaking of bodies and the hollowing out of souls. Elderly, dead, and dying white upper-class New Englanders overtake younger able black bodies, suppressing their souls to a Sunken Place, conscious, but powerless, clearly returning to the original notion of the zombie and its relation to slavery. *Get Out* also knowingly refers to, but crucially reverses, the ending of *Night of the Living Dead*, as the protagonist, a young black man, is here *not* shot by law enforcement at the

end, but rather saved by a TSA officer, offering an intertextual and intergenerational reparation to its viewers. It also brings a reversal of a second kind: whereas *Night of the Living Dead* concluded with a sobering dose of social realism, *Get Out*, phantasmagoric as it is genre wise, ends on hopeful note, maybe, but possibly also with the most unrealistic scenario in the whole film.

To consider the reactivation of the zombie as a figure of political force, positively as well as negatively, we should also look at its multiple roots and indeed routes, as these are pertinent in the present moment of revolt and retraction – that is, public protest on the one hand, and anxiety and isolation on the other (a.k.a., social distancing). The word “zombie” was introduced into the English language in the early nineteenth century by the historian Robert Southey, who imported it from Latin American culture, but not from Haitian voodoo. He took it from Afro-Brazilian history and its fugitive communities.<sup>6</sup> Zumbi dos Palmares was born in a community of escaped slaves (a *quilombo*) in Palmares, but was captured by the Portuguese as a child. As a teenager Zumbi escaped and returned to the *quilombo* in Palmares, where he later became king and strongly opposed the Portuguese rulers of Brazil. The zombie is here a figure that haunts the white settler colonialists, and can provide us with a link to what Fred Moten has described as “the fugitive movement,” as constitutive of the concept of blackness as an always already “stolen life.” For Moten, fugitivity is “a desire for and a spirit of escape and transgression of the proper and the proposed.”<sup>7</sup> In this sense, a community of zombies is not about relentless attack, excessive consumption and destruction, or a total lack of agency and consciousness. Rather, it is a community that exists outside of the normative and the established (colonial) rule of law, but without complete liberation from this law. In the eyes of the colonizer, the former slave, as a fugitive, is a form of the living dead, in the sense of being a lost commodity. From the point of view of the fugitive, this former life as enslaved was indeed a stolen life. The fugitive now lives outside colonial rule and its laws, but is always at risk of being subjected to it again and again, and thus becoming a living dead soul once more.

As Mariani pointed out, it is thus remarkable how the zombie has become increasingly white in popular culture, as the abject bodies of white-trash hoodlums overtaking civil(ized) society, or as working-class communist revolt. The imaginary hordes of living dead terrorizing the land of the rich and the free --stems from the plague years in medieval Europe, where the infected bodies looked as if they were possibly rotting before dying, or simply

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living on after death. But my purpose here is not to recount the history of how a pandemic-devastated Europe reinvented itself through settler colonialism and the systematized slave trade. Rather, I wish to point out how the present pandemic has reversed the role of the zombie. It is remarkable how the aesthetics of Robert Longo's grotesque *All You Zombies: Truth Before God*, a bronze statue of a heavily armed man carrying the American flag and an electric guitar, have, subconsciously perhaps, influenced the attire and appearance of contemporary American anti-lockdown protesters as they attack government buildings and occupy public spaces, usually without masks, faces full of hatred, like Longo's lone warrior, ragged but right (in more senses than one) – refusing to become sick, denying that they too can carry the virus, and refusing the scientific understanding of the severity of the virus, as postmodern pandemic refuseniks, calling all zombies before the eyes of almighty God. But this is as ambiguous as the statue itself: Who are the zombies – the sculpted figure, or its opponents? And which truth is being posited in front of whose God? It is perhaps these white men who are now the zombies. Certainly the rights of freedom they claim and proclaim do not extend to protests against police authority – one instance of state control they seemingly do not oppose – but seem mostly limited to the right to go to the mall, to shop, to enjoy the zombie culture of consumption. Indeed, as Angela Mitropoulos has pointed out, the fear of contagious diseases and the rites of excessive consumption are bound up in a perverse social contract, now given another spin in an alt-right direction.<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusion: Is There A Zombie Heaven?

In discussing the monstrosities of the contemporary American political and cultural landscape, Henry A. Giroux has named our current epoch “casino capitalism,” producing a zombie culture *and* politics:

Not only do zombies portend a new aesthetic in which hyper-violence is embodied in the form of a carnival of snarling creatures engorging elements of human anatomy, but they also portend the arrival of a revolting politics that has a ravenous appetite for spreading destruction and promoting human suffering and hardship. This is a politics in which cadres of the unthinking and living dead promote civic catastrophes and harbour apocalyptic visions, focusing more on death than life. Death-dealing zombie politicians and their acolytes support modes of corporate and militarized governance

through which entire populations now become either redundant, disposable, or criminalized.<sup>9</sup>

In his damning critique of the contemporary situation, Giroux uses zombification in both a cultural and a political sense. These senses are interconnected: gory television shows and movies literally employ the zombie figure, while casino capitalism follows a zombie logic – senseless and ruthless, but nonetheless highly organized. Moreover, zombie culture and politics both activate and pacify the masses, in a specific sense: activating the masses towards a common destructive goal, and pacifying any other agency, along with any critical and reflective faculties. While zombie culture today is far from the poetic and prophetic invocation of the zombie in early Brazilian and Haitian postcoloniality, it is nonetheless about enslavement – to commodities, entertainment, corporations, and demagogues, in what may indeed be the end times in the sense of what is, arguably, the terminal phase of global capitalism. It is thus not so much a form of post-human afterlife or survival, but rather a politics of death, and an endgame for society *as social*.

While zombies, then, are *post*-human, as in no longer human, they are perhaps not a form of (human) afterlife after the end, after the apocalypse itself. Rather, maybe they are figures *leading* to the demise of humanity itself – morbid symptoms appearing as the old order is dying and a new one is not yet born. This would differentiate them from other post-humans, such as ghosts, but also from avatars and cyborgs, whose relationship to humans remains alluringly ambiguous. Indeed, zombies are wholly dependent on the living, since they can only grow by overtaking the living, feeding on live brains, as it were. The zombie a form of afterlife that is conditioned on there still being life. After all, what will the zombies feed on once there are no longer any live humans left to tear into? They can only survive as long as they kill, and when everyone has succumbed, they will, presumably, no longer be able to survive either. If there is such a thing as a zombie heaven, this is no heaven at all, but rather a living hell: our current malaise.

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See <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/34520/art-after-the-end-of-the-world/>.

2

Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (Verso, 2011), 61.

3

Žižek, *Living in the End Times*, 61.

4

Mike Mariani, "The Tragic, Forgotten History of Zombies," *The Atlantic*, October 28, 2015 <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/10/how-america-erased-the-tragic-history-of-the-zombie/412264/>.

5

Mariani, "The Tragic, Forgotten History of Zombies."

6

Robert Southey, *History of Brazil* (Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810).

7

Fred Moten, *Stolen Life* (Duke University Press, 2018), 111.

8

Angela Mitropoulos, *Contract and Contagion: From Biopolitics to Oikonomia* (Minor Compositions, 2012).

9

Henry A. Giroux, *Zombie Politics and Culture in the Age of Casino Capitalism* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2014).