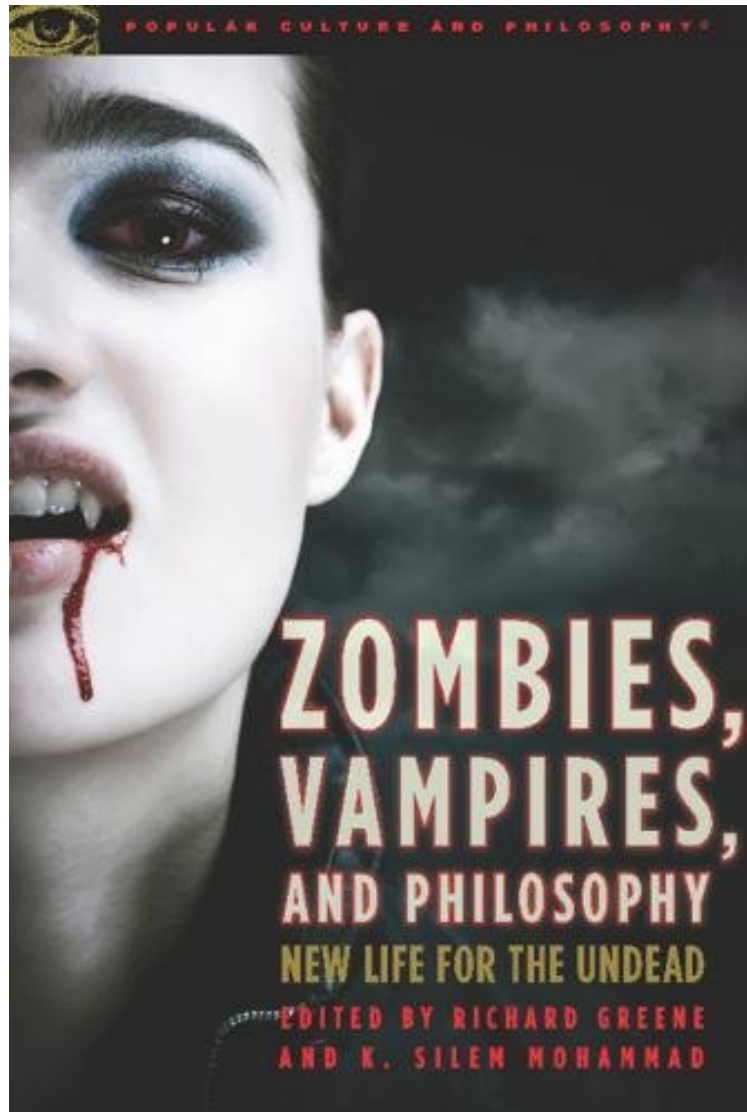


(Read now) *Zombies, Vampires, and Philosophy: New Life for the Undead (Popular Culture and Philosophy)*

## **Zombies, Vampires, and Philosophy: New Life for the Undead (Popular Culture and Philosophy)**

*William S. Larkin, Hamish Thompson, Manuel Vargas, Larry Hauser, Adam Barrows, Matthew Walker, Dale Jacquette, John Draeger, Wayne Yuen, Robert Arp*  
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**William S. Larkin, Hamish Thompson, Manuel Vargas, Larry Hauser, Adam Barrows, Matthew Walker, Dale Jacquette, John Draeger, Wayne Yuen, Robert Arp : Zombies, Vampires, and Philosophy: New Life for the Undead (Popular Culture and Philosophy)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Zombies, Vampires, and Philosophy: New Life for the Undead (Popular Culture and Philosophy)*:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. 1/3 worth reading  
By J. Aragon  
I was really excited when this book came. The genre is of interest of me and I thought the cover was the cherry on top. Overall the book is good. Some chapters are great and some are OK. The major issue or complaint for me is that the majority of the chapters were light on pop culture. The book's selections offers the reader synopses of different theorists, and then occasionally hits on the connections to popular culture. I see that my paperback copy notes a 2006 and 2010 publication dates. LJ Smith and Stephenie Meyer (if not other YA authors of Vamp genre) should have been referenced in the 2010 edition of the book. This book will have appeal to those interested in the zombie and vamp genre, but the philosophy portion will make the book more likely to be read in academe. And, this is unfortunate. This book could have done more.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Thomas Martin  
Item as described, would buy from again.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Enough meat on these bones for zombies AND vampires to feast upon - that is, if they ate at Micky D's. Boo-hoo-hoo ha-ha-ha!  
By John V. Karavitis  
This is a decent entry in Open Court's "Popular Culture and Philosophy" series. It looks at various philosophical issues related to the existence and "undeath" of zombies and vampires. Philosophical themes covered are being undead, personal identity, whether the undead are evil, the mind-body problem, the morality of the undead, hedonism, existentialism, political philosophy, and aesthetics. The essays are in general easy to read and palatable, with about half of the essays being quite good. This collection of essays is highly recommended for use in a high school/community college-level exposure course in philosophy. That is, you'll learn a fair amount, you won't need to tax your reading skills, and you'll be entertained in the process. This collection isn't stellar by any stretch of the imagination, but it is decent. If there is any single overall critique that I can give regarding this collection, it would be that it mostly looks at themes related to zombies and vampires in general. That is, it's easy to identify a "general" theme and then just talk about it "at a general level", without having to apply philosophy to a specific set of circumstances or a unique situation. Essays that did look at specific examples, e.g. Romero's zombie movies, unfortunately didn't do as good a job as would have been expected.

THE GOOD  
Richard Greene's "The Badness of Undeath" starts off the collection of essays by trying to identify the features of being undead that make it so "bad", and why undeath would be worse than death. It's a well-written essay that actually feels as though the author is "practicing" philosophy. William S. Larkin follows this with "Res Corporealis: Persons, Bodies and Zombies". Which of two competing views best describes the passage from life to undeath? Is it "res cogitans" (psychological continuity) or "res corporealis" (physical continuity)? Mr. Larkin's essay is also well-written and makes the reader feel as though one is watching a philosophical argument unfold. Hamish Thompson's "'She's Not Your Mother Anymore, She's a Zombie!': Zombies, Value, and Personal Identity" does a much better job of addressing the issue of personal identity by concluding that what distinguishes us from zombies is "our potential for brief intermittent actualizations of imaginative goal-directed action". Adam Barrows' "Heidegger the Vampire Slayer: The Undead and Fundamental Ontology" actually found a way to apply Heidegger (!) to a philosophical theme without being completely mind-numbingly boring. (This is one of the few times that I've actually enjoyed an essay that was based on a continental philosopher!) Vampires are "inauthentic" because it is the possibility of death that makes us "human". Douglas Glen Whitman's "The Political Economy of Non-Coercive Vampire Lifestyles" contrasted the differences between the libertarian and "welfarism" camps of political philosophy. By looking at a world where vampires and humans co-exist, Mr. Whitman shows how the application of each camp's philosophy of social politics results in a starkly different world. Mr. Whitman's essay invoked contemporary philosophers, and it is the gem of this collection. Well done.

THE BAD  
A number of essays were poorly-written, confusing or didn't make cogent arguments. Dale Jacquette's "Zombie Gladiators" went on and on about using "philosophical zombies" as gladiators. Instead of giving the example and developing the thesis (read: getting to the point!), Mr. Jacquette droned on and on about the imagery of (philosophical) zombie gladiators. K. Silem Mohammad's "Zombies, Rest, and Motion: Spinoza and the Speed of Undeath" was confusing and seemingly went nowhere. (I'll lay the blame at Spinoza's doorstep, if that makes you feel better.) Wayne Yuen's "The Bloody Connection between Vampires and Vegetarians" was disappointing if for no other reason than that it held that intoxication or addiction would excuse moral agency. The American legal system disagrees (drunk-driving, anyone?), as do I. Also, in the traditional canon of stories about vampires, these undead creatures absolutely must drink blood in order to survive. There is no possibility of abstaining from drinking blood without dire, "undeath-ending" consequences. In fact, I noted that at least one other essay dealing with the vampire's addiction/intoxication with blood saw this as negating moral agency. One would not attack a person's moral agency by saying that they could have given up eating, as that would be impossible. So, if one cannot act otherwise because to do so one would die, where is the moral agency?

Simon Clark's "The Undead Martyr: Sex, Death, and Revolution in George Romero's Zombie Films" stayed true to continental philosophy by championing Freud's theory of repression and applying Herbert Marcuse's ideas about the repressive effects of civilization. Very continental, and it went nowhere. I mean, HERBERT MARCUSE!! Leah Murray's "When They Aren't Eating Us, They Are Bringing Us Together: Zombies and the American Social Contract" identified a good theme, but became simply a scene-by-scene re-hash of all four of Romero's zombie movies. Rachel Robison's "True and Untrue Blood" was a rambling historical review of the importance and meaning of blood throughout history.

THE UGLY  
The real train wreck however was the last entry in

this collection. Randall E. Auxier and Eileen Townsend's "The Twilight of Infinite Desire" purported to be a series of letters, then e-mails, then text messages between a very old vampire and a recently "turned" young college co-ed. Vampires, it seems, have their own world, parallel to the human world, including their own philosophers! Not only that, but this particular old vampire has a taste for the blood of human philosophers! My my! This old vampire also had it out for philosopher Michel Foucault, whose death he ordered the recently turned co-ed to bring about! All in all, this "creative" attempt at presenting philosophical ideas was a horrific failure. It was confusing. Who would have thought that vampires would be so confusing when it came to philosophy! The LULZ was strong with this essay! To recap: The good essays were chps. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19 ; the mediocre/boring/tame/bad essays were chps. 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 20; and the train wreck was chp. 21. Decent, but tame. Count Chocula tame. Three stars. John V. Karavitis.

Since 1968's *Night of the Living Dead*, zombie culture has steadily limped and clawed its way into the center of popular culture. Today, zombies and vampires have taken over TV shows, comic books, cartoons, video games, and movies. *Zombies, Vampires, and Philosophy* drags the theories of famous philosophers like Socrates and Descartes into the territory of the undead, exploring questions like: Why do vampires and vegetarians share a similar worldview? Why is understanding zombies the key to health care reform? And what does "healthy in mind and body" mean for vampires and zombies? Answers to these questions and more await readers brave enough to make this fun, philosophical foray into the undead.

About the Author Richard Greene is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Weber State University. He is co-editor of *Popular Culture and Philosophy* volumes on the undead and *The Sopranos*. K. Silem Mohammad is Assistant Professor English and Writing at Southern Oregon University and co-editor of *The Undead and Philosophy*.