



# Generation Z and Zombies

## Culture, Education, and the New Human

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An evolutionary diagnosis of social anxiety and the post-human future.

Based on the essay collection *Generation Z: Zombies, Popular Culture and Educating Youth* | Editors: Victoria Carrington, Jennifer Rowsell, Esther Priyadharshini



**ZOMBIE**

**Economic  
Recession**

**Pandemics**

**Social  
Collapse**

# The Zombie as a Thermometer of Social Anxiety

An analysis of collective fear symbols in the modern era

- **Crisis and Emergence:** The return of zombies spikes during times of economic recession and pandemics as a mechanism to process collective fears.
- **Uncertainty:** Zombie narratives provide a safe, contained space to face the “end of the world” in an era of accelerating, overwhelming communication.

**The monster we have  
chosen is the zombie.**

# Evolution of the Monster: From Slavery to Consumerism



## 1930s (Haiti): The Slave Zombie

Fear of colonization and forced labor.  
A body without a soul.



## 1960s/70s (Romero): The Consumer Zombie

Critique of capitalism and endless shopping.  
A body without a brain.

## The Era of Survival: From Marching to Fleeing

- **Shift in Interaction:** Pop culture has moved from the slow “zombie march” (representing mass solidarity) to the frantic “zombie run” (representing individual survival).
- **The Logic of Neoliberalism:** A “survival of the fittest” mentality. The societal goal is no longer coexistence, but outpacing the weak.
- **The Consequence:** Society focuses entirely on individual disaster preparedness rather than fighting for the common good.



# 'WALKING DEAD' INSTITUTIONS

School

Family

Class

**ZOMBIE CATEGORIES**  
مقولات زامبی

School

Family

Class

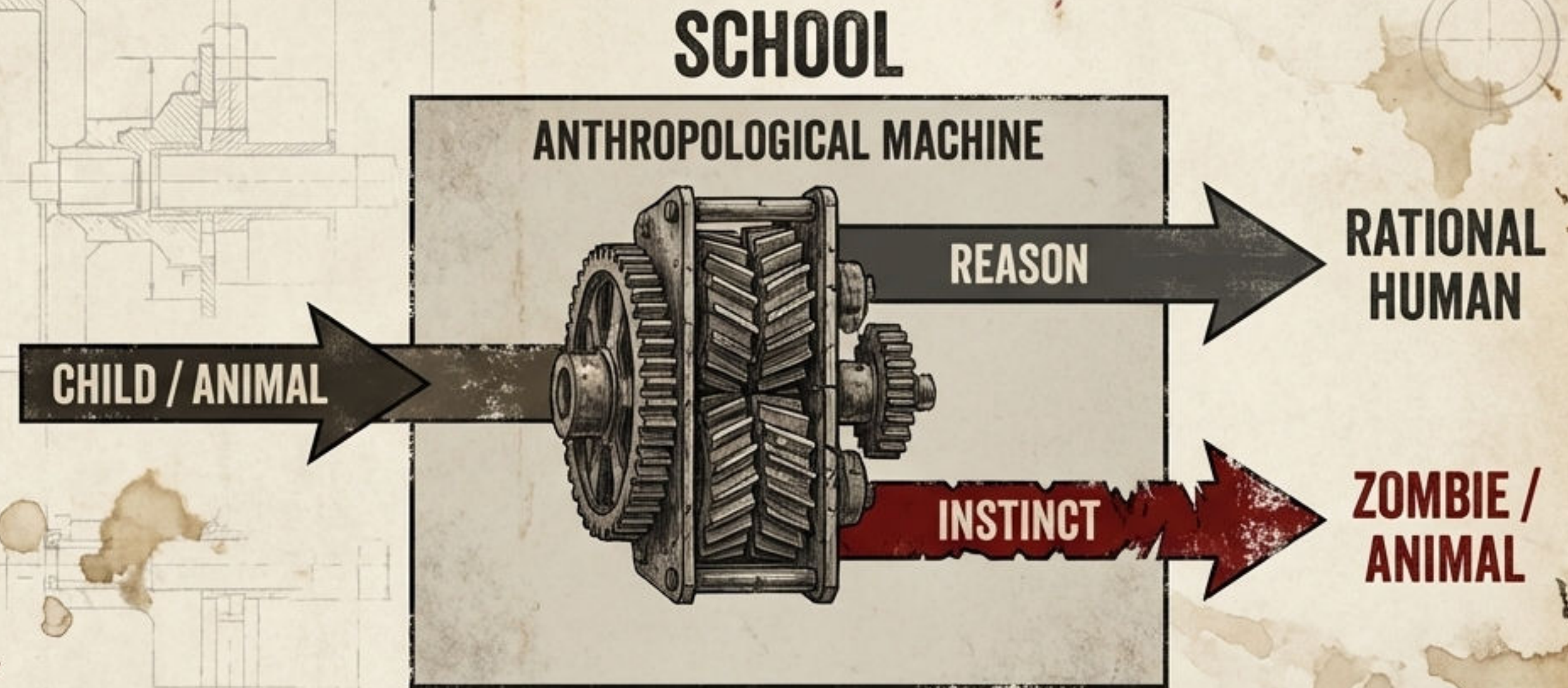
## **Zombie Politics (Henry Giroux):**

Neoliberalism relies on dead ideas that are still somehow moving forward.

## **Zombie Categories (Ulrich Beck):**

Traditional institutions that appear alive on the outside but are completely dead inside. They no longer function or explain the actual reality of young people's lives today.

# SCHOOL AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL MACHINE



Education attempts to aggressively separate the 'animal' from the 'human'. The zombie is terrifying because it threatens and blurs this strict boundary.

# ZOMBIFICATION OF THE STUDENT



**Control Mechanisms:** Turning vibrant students into passive, compliant bodies through relentless standardized testing.



**Medicalization:** The use of pharmaceuticals (like Ritalin) to artificially suppress natural “animal” energy and enforce classroom order.



**Result:** The production of an obedient, numb body, completely devoid of “self”.



**“KILLING THE INNER ANIMAL FOR THE BIRTH OF THE CIVILIZED CITIZEN.”**

# GENDER, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE MALE GAZE



Analysis of Diary of the Dead:

- **Technological Power:** Men position themselves as the 'controllers' safely hidden behind the lens of the camera.
- **Passive Subject:** Women are consistently framed as the frantic 'victims' in front of the camera.
- **Conclusion:** Even in the collapse of civilization, society immediately reproduces traditional, oppressive gender hierarchies.

# THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL IN CHAOS

The attempt to document **the apocalypse** is a fundamentally **masculine** attempt to **forcefully** impose order onto pure chaos.



**Technological Failure:**  
Our digital tools and screens are **entirely** powerless against the raw forces of nature and “the other”.

The camera lens cannot save us from systemic collapse.

# WE ARE ALL INFECTED: THE POST-HUMAN TURN

The Myth of the Pure Human: We are not discrete entities separate from nature. We are a deeply **symbiotic assemblage** of bacteria, viruses, and technology.

**Dark Ecology:** Zombies force us to confront our unavoidable, uncomfortable biological truth.

We do not have a singular, isolated identity.  
We are an **ecosystem**.

# THE RISE OF THE "SMART ZOMBIE"

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## Dossier Checkpoints

- ⚙️ **Paradigm Shift:** The zombie has evolved. It is no longer an apex monster, but the protagonist of the story.
- ⚙️ **Characteristics:** Possesses complex emotions, critical thoughts, and the capacity for continuous learning.
- ⚙️ **Cultural Examples:** The character "R" in Warm Bodies, and the inclusive cast of Monster High.
- ⚙️ **Significance:** Represents a societal shift moving away from inevitable destruction toward radical adaptation.



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# Gen Z: “The Next People”

Youth are actively adapting to the broken, hostile world we have left them (climate change, economic collapse).

They are not “infected.” They are “evolved.”

Like Melanie in *The Girl with All the Gifts*, they represent “The Next People” — the generation specifically equipped to inherit a ruined Earth.

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# Zombie Pedagogy: Education for the End of the World

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## 1. Acceptance of the Monster

Education must radically accept differences and mutations, rather than medicating or suppressing them.



## 2. Symbiosis over Mastery

Curriculums must focus on learning to live alongside technology and the collapsing environment, abandoning the myth of human domination over nature.



## 3. Realism

We must prepare youth for harsh, undeniable ecological realities, rather than sheltering them with the fantasies of the past.

## Conclusion: Surviving the Apocalypse

The necessary journey is moving from “fear of the other” to “recognizing the other in ourselves.”

The duty of educators is not to cure Generation Z.

Our duty is to protect, nurture, and learn from “The Next People,” even if they are fundamentally different from us.

The future belongs to those who have evolved.

# References and Sources

**Book:** *Generation Z: Zombies, Popular Culture and Educating Youth* (2016)

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Rebecca Westrup

**Publisher:** Springer

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## Key Chapters

- ★ **Preface:** Zombies Today (Sarah Juliet Lauro)
- ★ **Chapter 3:** The 'Next People' (Victoria Carrington)
- ★ **Chapter 4:** Gender and Technology (William Patrick Bingham)
- ★ **Chapter 5:** Zombie Pedagogy (Jason J. Wallin)

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