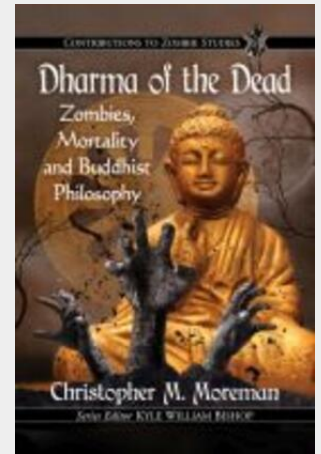


Moreman

Dharma of the Dead

Zombies, Mortality and Buddhist Philosophy

Zombies have gained phenomenal popularity over the last two decades, but have been a mainstay of horror fiction for decades. Originating in Haitian folklore inspired by the real-life experiences of slavery and oppression, the zombie has followed a long and winding road through the American popular imagination. George A. Romero is credited with adapting the zombie myth to modern sensibilities, establishing the core "rules" of zombiedom in 1968's *Night of the Living Dead*. With the increased popularity of the zombie, many scholars have begun to consider just why it has captured the attention of audiences today. In this text, the zombie can be viewed as a meditation on death, a memento mori that can help us learn to live with the fact of our own individual mortality. America has long been described as a death-denying culture, but the zombie forces us to confront death not only by its threat but by its very form—the rotting, decaying, shambling corpse. In looking to the zombie as a sign for guidance, the author has found Buddhist philosophy to be especially relevant. *Dharma of the Dead* is the first book to examine the zombie through the lens of Buddhist thought and to describe it as a thing not to fear but to consider, just as we ought not fear death but instead seek to accept it as a fact of human experience. That so many other scholars have viewed the zombie in terms of social critique—sometimes it is seen to embody consumerism run amok, the effects of racism, or the fear of terrorism—also point to the fact that the zombie, like recognizing our own mortality, can help us to learn how to live without selfish fears of death.



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