

**Call for Papers for an Edited Collection**  
**Dead or Alive: The Futures of Zombie Studies**

Edited by Marlon Lieber and Tim Lanzendörfer

We are inviting abstract submissions for an edited collection entitled *Dead or Alive: The Future of Zombie Studies*. The proposed volume is intended to situate research into the zombie, and the figure of the zombie itself, in the wake of its apparent decline of cultural currency. If, about a decade or so ago, a large number of commentators could and did claim a “global explosion of zombie mania” (Hubner et al. 2015, 3), things have become noticeably more quiet in the 2020s. We understand this as an occasion to take stock of zombie studies and to think about what it will and can do in the future. In asking about the state of zombie studies, we ask both about the state of *zombie* studies and of *zombie studies*: both about the ostensible object and the potential disciplinary formation.

We are looking for essays that ask the question of what the specific state of studying the zombie as a cultural figure is across media and across disciplines, how it is used now, in what contexts, what it promises for the future, and how it is related to other figures of cultural importance. These essays should go beyond individual readings of zombie fictions, even if they might well be grounded in them, and discuss the ways in which studying this singular figure offers disciplinarily relevant insights. What is the state of the zombie as a cultural figure in the first place, in a globalized cultural space where its appearances range from Korean and Senegalese cinema to Western European and American literature to globally-played videogames?

We are looking for essays that specifically hone in on the question of what it means, and will mean, to think about the work on zombies as zombie studies. These essays should pursue the possibility and desirability of institutional frameworks for the study of zombie, perhaps especially as read against (conservative) political backlash against degree programs with unconventional foci. What kinds of disciplinary locations or transdisciplinary utility exist for zombie studies? How, for that matter, might the “zombie” in “zombie studies” permit us to ask questions about the larger horizon of the danger facing the humanities (who is undead here?)? How are “zombie studies” received in public? What theoretical frameworks exist or need to be produced for zombie studies?

The proposed collection thus will intervene notably both in the presumed field of zombie studies as well as in larger constellations of thinking about the humanities. While considerable work exists reflecting on aspects of this project, the vast majority of discussions of the zombie have reflected on its cultural historical significance and meaning. Actual theoretical interventions have been rare, with a lack up until now of a truly synthetic and encompassing take on zombie studies. The proposed collection will be potentially field defining: it will set out both an agenda and a set of potential avenues forward for zombie studies, even as it critically examines the assumptions under which zombie studies are meaningful.

We are soliciting 350-400 word abstracts (plus a short biographical sketch) by **February 15, 2024**. We will select contributors by March 1. The currently intended publisher for this collection, if accepted, is Rutgers UP, which has already expressed an interest in seeing a submission. Full contributions **should be available no later than September 15, 2024**.

Please send abstracts to [tlanzend@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:tlanzend@em.uni-frankfurt.de) and / or [lieber@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:lieber@em.uni-frankfurt.de).