Return to Darkness: Representations of Africa in Resident Evil 5

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ABSTRACT

Darkest Africa, the imagining of colonial fantasy, in many ways still lives on. Popular cultural representations of Africa often draw from the rich imagery of the un-charted, un-knowable 'other' that Africa represents. When Capcom made the decision to set the latest instalment of its *Resident Evil* series in an imagined African country, it was merely looking for a new, unexplored setting, and they were therefore surprised at the controversy that surrounded its release. The 2009 game *Resident Evil 5* was accused of racially stereotyping the black zombies and the white protagonist. These allegations have largely been put to rest, as this was never the intention of Capcom in developing the game or selecting the setting. However, the underlying questions remain: How is Africa represented in the game? How does the figure of the zombie resonate within that representation? And why does this matter?

Keywords

Post-Colonial, Zombie, Africa, Game, Resident Evil 5

> "The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there – there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was as unearthly as the men were... No they were not inhuman. Well, you know that was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being inhuman." Joseph Conrad – *Heart of Darkness*

Darkest Africa, the imagining of colonial fantasy, in many ways still lives on. Popular cultural representations of Africa often draw from the rich imagery of the un-charted, un-knowable 'other' that Africa represents. When Capcom made the decision to set the latest instalment of its *Resident Evil* series in an imagined African country, it was merely looking for a new, unexplored setting, and they were therefore surprised at the controversy that surrounded its release. The 2009 game *Resident Evil 5*(Capcom, 2009) was accused of racially stereotyping the black zombies and the white protagonist. This was never the intention of Capcom in developing the game or selecting the setting. However, the underlying questions remain: How is Africa represented in the game? How does the figure of the zombie resonate within that representation?

The core of this report investigates the figure of the zombie in an African context through a close study of *Resident Evil 5* - the game itself is addressed as a completed text. Games such as *RE5* and *Far Cry 2* perpetuate the myth of the homogeneous Africa with very little differentiation made between various cultures and countries. While this is a theme to which the paper returns repeatedly, no attempt is made to offer an alternative reading to the homogenised Africa. This is a homogenising act in and of itself, but the scope of this paper would do any deeper engagement here an injustice. The zombies as presented to us in *RE5* constitute what David Chalmers terms "Hollywood Zombies", mindless, aggressive and bloodthirsty. This contradicts sharply with the ways in which zombies are represented in various African mythologies, where they are often depicted as subdued slaves, a concept widely explored as a parallel to the position of the native African under colonialism. The depiction of black Africans as the mindless mob reaches its zenith in works such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* where Conrad explores the darkness of the Dark Continent, the darkness of the treatment of the natives under colonialism, and the darkness in human cruelty (Conrad, 1988). In *RE5*, many of the stereotypes that Conrad's text explored are re-enacted. Produced a century after the Conrad text by a Japanese gaming company, Capcom, under the direction of Jun Takeuchi these echoes appear surreal. This paper argues that, while created by a Japanese company, the game addresses an assumed western gaze. Takeuchi wanted the game to have a similar feel to films like *Black Hawk Down* (qtd in Gamespot 2005), a decision that immediately bases the game on a fictional Africa, removing it from the real toward a hyperbolic cinematic tradition. The representations in the game are clichéd. It presents the player with cut outs of both Africa and the West, embodied in the American. Gender is also stereotyped, with focus overwhelmingly falling on the body and voice, easily recognisable from a hundred Hollywood films. Capcom, cloaking western stereotypes around themselves while remaining a step removed, appear in everything to be trying to represent an archetype.

When traversing the terrain of *RE5*, the player moves through the devastated relics of colonial Africa, navigating the newer yet impoverished appropriations of the post-independence era as well as the living remnants of a pre-colonial, 'traditional', life. *RE5* depicts the fictional post-independence African state as vulnerable and the placement of the Western protagonist as a saviour echoes many of the paternalistic fantasies associated with colonialism. Using the zombie as an entrance point this report engages with the manner in which the zombie genre, as played out in *Resident Evil 5*, lends itself to the myth of primitive Africa, as the zombie is, in many ways, representative of a return to the animalistic, unthinking and manipulated.

While zombie-like figures have surfaced in works as early as the Arabic *One Thousand and One Nights*, the zombie in its current incarnation stems from Haitian voodoo, and was brought to the attention of the West through works such as William B. Seabrook's 1929 *The Magic Island*. As the Haitian zombie is a figure subdued through magical means to serve its owner as a mindless

automaton, a labourer with no sense of self, it is easy to see why many analysts have focused on its conceptual links to slavery and subjugation.

Zombies are among the newest monsters to enter Western mythology, only appearing in the early twentieth century. A monster of the "new world", as Kyle Bishop points out in his 2008 article 'The Sub-Subaltern Monster: Imperialist Hegemony and the Cinematic Voodoo Zombie', the zombie reflects the fate of the colonised and the enslaved. Quoting from Joan Dayan, Bishop writes:

> No supernatural fate could echo the realities of slavery more, for ''the phantasm of the zombi [sic]—a soulless husk deprived of freedom—is the ultimate sign of loss and dispossession'' (Dayan 37). (qtd in Bishop, 2008: 145)

Bishop goes on to argue that the zombie uprising, the common theme in the Western representation of the zombie, therefore reflects the fears and phobias of the coloniser, of the master: that of revolt.

Tracing the assimilation of the Haitian zombie into Western popular culture Bishop continues:

> It did not take long for this voodoo-based monstrosity to make the jump from folklore to popular entertainment, and the first true zombie movie arrived in 1932: Victor Halperin's *White Zombie*. Based on the stylistic model of Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), this movie presents audiences with the exoticism of the Caribbean, the fear of domination and subversion, and the perpetuation of the imperialist model of cultural and racial hegemony. (Bishop, 2008: 141)

The image of the zombie has however not remained stable during its relatively short history in the West. Over the course of the century it has evolved from the Haitian 'slave' zombie, to the satirical zombie apocalypse pioneered by George Romero's 1968 work, *Night of the Living Dead*, and subsequently to its most recent incarnation as the 'scientific' zombie of disease and bio-terrorism. Here the fear of the Other has moved from being represented by the supernatural to the scientific. While the nature and origin of the zombie shift in each of these incarnations, Jon Stratton reminds us that the core premise of the zombie remains: a person in a "state that remains nearer death than life". (Stratton, 2011: 266)

Since its appearance in Seabrook's *The Magic Island* and Halperin's *White Zombie,* the figure of the zombie has never faded from view, but over the past few decades, it has increasingly flourished in popular culture. With their rising presence in cultural production, proliferating in films, novels, comics and digital games, we are also seeing an ever expanding critical interest in them. Edited volumes and conferences dedicated to the zombie are springing up and the body of theory surrounding the walking corpse is fast growing. In what Bernard Perron, calls the 'current climate' of zombie studies, the staggering undead are being theorised in a myriad of different ways. They are being examined as embodiments of the disabled, the diseased, the displaced, as symptomatic of Western fears of the breakdown of capitalism or the uprising of the disenfranchised.

For example, Kyle Bishop's article, 'The Sub-Subaltern Monster: Imperialist Hegemony and the Cinematic Voodoo Zombie', strongly and eloquently argues for the reading of the zombie as symbolic of the subaltern; individuals or entities located external to the existing power order. His analysis centres on Halperin's *White Zombie* from 1932 and closely examines the fear of domination and subversion exemplified in the spectre of Haiti, the first 'Black state', raised in the West, and the manner in which this was echoed. It also considers the perpetuation of the imperialist model that underwrites the representation of the zombie in the film.

Jon Stratton, in another case, correlates the increase in popular cultural representations of zombies to the increased anxiety in the West "over the numbers of displaced people attempting to gain entry across their borders." (Stratton, 2011: 266) Peter Dendle on the other hand ties the increasing

popularity of the zombie in the first years of the twenty-first century to the events of 9/11 and an increased fixation on the apocalyptic. (Dendle 2007: 54).

Regardless of their adaptation, it appears that zombies remain politicised figures, and in all of these analyses the core sentiment remains the same: the zombie is inextricably linked to the marginalised Other.

The zombie is a central figure in many digital games; Diane Carr argues that this is because they make the ideal enemy. (Carr, 2009: 1) As they are both human and non-human they provide a target that can at once be engaging but also avoid any moral ambiguity in the player character's actions. This is not dissimilar to the depiction of the native African in colonial fiction, the character Charles Marlow's experiences in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* again being the prime example.   This liminal nature of the zombie also assists in the eliciting of an abject response from the player: a horror which repulses and attracts simultaneously, and keeps the player engrossed. In addition, the zombie narrative also suits the gaming format, pioneered by Romero zombies horror is not conveyed through a coherent diegesis but rather though their relentless overwhelming nature. The fragmented experience of game play narrative therefore only underlines their jarring duality.

Zombies thus became a fruitful subject matter for game developers to explore and exploit. Ewan Kirkland ties the zombie's state of half-death even closer to the form of the game itself through the avatar. In Kirkland's analysis the avatar echoes the zombie; it functions as a husk that the player controls. Writing of survival horror in general he argues that:

> These games are full of dead objects – zombies, dolls, puppets – which move or display the properties of life. Uneasiness concerning the possibility of life in dead things – the corpse lunging to life, the manikin's sudden animation, the stone statues leaping from their plinth – circulate the player's own avatar, a lifeless 'object' nevertheless given direction, purpose and agency through the player's input. In fact, the zombie may be a metaphor for the process of video game engagement, representing the avatar without player, the computer-controlled figure, without the human soul to make it truly alive.
> (Kirkland, 2009: 3)

Part of the appeal of the zombie in survival horror as a genre is the idea that they are relentless and endless, they just keep coming and the protagonist survives only until they are overwhelmed. Everything in these games is geared toward focusing only on achieving the next goal, on surviving in the next encounter. To emphasise this, full control of the game space is crucial. Carr points out that game space in *RE4* is presented as a collection of mazes for the player to navigate.   To maintain the tension there can be no room for exploration in these games. Offering the player a sandbox would lessen the pace, and stem the tide of incoming foes. In many ways then traditional survival horror as presented in the *Resident Evil* series is about removing player agency, limiting player interaction only to combat.

Resident Evil 5 is set in an imagined African country, in and around the town of Kijuju, where it continues with the established *Resident Evil* storyline.

> From the ashes of old conflicts, a new terror arises. The Umbrella Corporation and its crop of lethal viruses have been destroyed and contained. But a new, more dangerous threat has emerged. Years after surviving the events in Raccoon City, Chris Redfield has been fighting the scourge of bio-organic weapons all over the world. Now a member of the Bio-terrorism Security Assessment Alliance (BSSA), Chris is sent to Africa to investigate a biological agent that is transforming the populace into aggressive and disturbing creatures. Joined by another local BSSA agent, Sheva Alomar, the two must work together to solve the truth behind the disturbing turn of events. Featuring a revolutionary new co-op mode of gameplay, Resident Evil 5 will let players experience fear together as terror moves out of the shadows and into the light of day. (Capcom, 2009)

The focus of this analysis will be on the narrative, symbolism and content of *Resident Evil 5*. It is a textual analysis in the sense that Diane Carr defines: "...structural analysis relates to game design and form, while textual analysis relates to signification and to the game as actualised in play." (Carr, 2009: 2) For the purposes of this paper gameplay is considered as the medium which delivers the content, but the game is seen as a single stable text. This decision has been made since *Resident Evil 5* is extremely linear and doesn't readily allow for plural readings. The player progresses from cut scene to cut scene through a constrained maze punctuated by combat. Unlike previous *Resident Evil* titles puzzles are minimal and player interaction is therefore severely limited. The imagery used, the narrative itself and the representations that these reflect therefore lies, disappointingly, only in the cinematics of the game. The player's agency, and therefore their relationship to the representation is entirely confined to combat.

RE5 begins with a monologue voice over by the protagonist, Chris Redfield, a white American man working for a large multinational corporation (BSAA). This provides contextual information to the player, the voice over itself sketches out the basic plot, while the African setting is emphasised by the Savannah scenery through which he is driving (see Figure 1), in conjunction with the choice of music that is playing. In this segment the protagonist raises the spectre of bio-terrorism, and speaks about the threat this poses to 'vulnerable states'.

> CHRIS REDFIELD (voice over): I should have seen it coming. It didn't take long after the fall of the Umbrella Corporation for their bio-weapons to end up in the hands of terrorists.
> CHRIS REDFIELD (voice over): A new era of bio-terrorism descended upon vulnerable countries, shifting the balance of power throughout the region. People in the destabilized areas soon feared another incident like Raccoon City was inevitable. As panic spread, governments of the world turned to the Global Pharmaceutical Consortium, which formed the anti-terrorism unit BSAA. Operatives of the BSAA were sent to infiltrate and neutralize bio-weapon hot spots, restoring safety and stability to various regions around the globe. (bibliomaniac15, 2009)

Figure 1: The opening cut scene – Chris Redfield driving through the savannah.

Several things happen here, situating the reading of the game from the outset.

Firstly, Africa is homogenised. Presented only as sub-Saharan Africa visually, and vulnerable verbally, the state that is depicted dissolves differentiation between African identities. Africa is seen as singular rather than plural, and this single imagined part comes to stand for the whole. For the zombie to function as the 'ideal enemy' the subjugated controlled mass does not have to be unique in any way. No extraneous details are required to identify them. It needs to remain simply as a faceless featureless mob, set in an equally faceless and featureless setting or geographical context.

Secondly the protagonists' voice is situated. He identifies himself through his accent as an American, and through the script as working for the Bio-terrorism Security Assessment Alliance (BSAA), a group diegetically established in the supporting cannon to have been formed by the U.S. Federal Government along with the United Nations Security Council and the fictitious Global Pharmaceutical Consortium. When the scene zooms into the Jeep he is driving he is visually shown to be a muscular, classically attractive white man. Physically he conforms to the Hollywood tradition of the action hero. From this introduction he is located firmly within a Western paradigm.

Thirdly, Africa is cast as passive. Through this fragment of contextualisation the imagined town Kijuju, symbol of the homogeneous Africa, is immediately sketched as a passive receptor for the dangerous advances of the West. Africa is acted upon, it acts out, and the West needs to intervene to restore balance. While the disenfranchised class that is infected in *Resident Evil 4* also becomes a mob of violent and unthinking zombies, the acting out of the Africans disturbingly parallels the imagined savagery of Africa. It is this constant echo of familiar representations in *RE5* that resonate uncomfortably as a non-intentional re-enactment of colonial fantasy.

Post-independence Africa is portrayed as being fundamentally incapable of taking care of itself. The player is confronted by a situation in which the government has failed to stabilise the country, leaving to the bio-terrorist militia. In addition, the country, whose financial strength is located in the internationally controlled mining industry, appears impoverished. The implication is that the shift in government has resulted in the African state being in a position to be taken advantage of by a Western corporate entity. At this stage the corporation can also remain largely featureless and faceless because it too, like the subjugated African mass, is merely generic. Its identity is only significant later in the narrative where it engages the protagonist rather than the mob.

Remaining in chapter 1, on Chris Redfield's arrival at the fictional town, Kijuju, he is greeted by a beautiful woman who appears in the cutscene with her buttocks monopolising the view, before it pans out to reveal her full figure. This fragmented introduction to the female lead, and the other playable character, immediately objectifies and characterises her. She introduces herself as Sheva Alomar, a local BSAA agent who has been assigned to Redfield:

> SHEVA ALOMAR: Welcome to Africa. My name is Sheva Alomar.
> CHRIS: Just Chris, thanks. So will you be accompanying me to the destination?
> SHEVA: Yes. Tensions are running high ever since the change in government.
> CHRIS: I'll bet. Intel says it's a haven for terrorists now.
> SHEVA: And they're not going to be happy to see an American, BSAA or not.
> That's why I'm your partner; help put them at ease.
> CHRIS: I'm sure you'll do just fine.

Figure 2: Chris and Sheva in the streets of Kijuju.

Figure 3: Sheva bribing the local militia.

The background and environment sketched in the opening voice over is fleshed out further here. The dialogue establishes a politically unstable area, which is wary of Americans. This aversion to Americans is mentioned several times in the first chapter having the effect of placing the American in diametric opposition to the local. Just as the fictitious Kijuju stands for the whole of Africa, America begins to stand for the West. Sheva, a local, is supposed to ease the tension by bridging this gap. However, if Sheva was supposed to be a link between the Western and the African her appearance, accent and social position betray her. Dan Whitehead, in his review of the game for Eurogamer perfectly highlights this where he writes: "That Sheva neatly fits the approved Hollywood model of the light-skinned black heroine, and talks more like Lara Croft than her thickly-accented foes, merely compounds the problem rather than easing it." (Whitehead, 2009) In Figures 2 and 3 the

physical contrast between Sheva and the other locals is starkly visible. Her skin tone, dress and fine features all conform, like her role as a BSAA agent, to the West.

The game moves quickly into action, and Chris and Sheva's first encounter with the zombies, working class civilians transformed into monsters called Majini through infection, soon follows. A famous cutscene from the first chapter shows the first encounter the characters have with the zombification of a civilian. Two men are holding another down on the floor, the hand of one of them can be seen forcing something into the prone man's throat. From the side the characters catch a glimpse of something inhuman. The two assailants are driven off and the man is left struggling on the ground. The figure, with his head thrown back and blood running from his eyes straddles the divide between the living and the undead, the turning point where humanity is lost. This is one of the most famous screenshots from the game, and the image has become almost emblematic of *RE5* itself (see Figure 4). Finally, when the protagonists rush to the victim in order to help him, he turns on them, a classic device use in the survival horror genre. The player is unable to affect the scene in any way, and is simply left to steer the avatar through the tightly confined script. With agency removed from the player, the horror of the zombie here exists only in as much as it is an abject creature, both dead and alive, human and monster and not in its ability to threaten or infect. As creatures infected by parasites the boundaries of the body are constantly challenged. Parasites are forced into the victim, and erupt out of the victim in an abject display. This hybrid disjuncture, the inability to situate as either subject or object, is what gives the zombie its grotesque power. Like Marlow's opinion of the native in *Heart of Darkness,* the zombie is "not inhuman. Well, you know that was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being inhuman." (Conrad, 1988: 37) The zombie in *RE5* is referred to as the Majini, a word adapted from Swahili and taken to mean 'evil spirit'. The zombies are placed as the spectre of the uncontrolled and scientific, understandable to the local inhabitants only through the supernatural.

Figure 4: The first transition.

Of the transition scenes the so called Allyson scene is one of the most controversial of the game, Dan Whitehead describes it well in his preview article, "Resident Evil 5: Hands On":

> Later on, there's a cut-scene of a white blonde woman being dragged off, screaming, by black men (sic). When you attempt to rescue her, she's been turned and must be killed. If this has any relevance to the story it's not apparent in the first three chapters, and it plays so blatantly

into the old clichés of the dangerous "dark continent" and the primitive lust of its inhabitants that you'd swear the game was written in the 1920s. (Whitehead, 2009)

Whitehead is describing the pre-release version of the scene, and while in the released version of the game the Majini in this scene are white not black, the reference to the libidinal, irrational, dark continent remains unmistakable. As can be seen in Whitehead's early commentary, issues of race stalk the game.

Figure 5: The Majini of the marshlands.

An important and highly problematic scene in which this is enacted is that of the village in the marshlands, particularly in its capacity as the site for and of, paternalistic intervention. The *RE5* website employs the following description of the villagers:

> "The Majini's of the marshlands use spears and blunt weapons to attack their enemies. Some... have fitted themselves with large masks. They use shields and spears to defend their land and attack all outsiders." (Capcom 2009)

The player enters a series of small villages in the marshlands, accessible only by boat. In this area they have to clear the settlements, searching for fragments of a tablet which unlocks the gate into the next area. The villages through which the player moves appear to be abandoned, with no sign of civilian life. Like the empty shanty town of Kijuju only the trappings remain, but in these 'traditional' villages, that consists of large masks, clay pots and zebra skins. The Majini that the player faces here are also decidedly different from those confronted in Kijuju. In the town and the mines the Majini were racially diverse, were fully dressed, albeit in rags, and used the tools of their trades in life as weapons. In the villages however the Majini appear like relics from darkest Africa. Dressed in warpaint and grass skirts, they wield spears and some appear wearing ceremonial masks. Stylistically these zombies bare all of the clichés of the faceless generalised Africa. Their existence in this imagined pre-colonial state is initially unexplained, they are presented only as another obstacle. Later in the players' explorations however, a young man's journal is found in which an attempt at an explanation is provided. This journal demonstrates many of the key issues of the representation of Africa in the game. Tellingly it is extraneous to the gameplay, no information provided in it is necessary for the player to progress. It is one of the few instances in the game where the player is

offered an experience that is not dictated through a cinematic. Reading the journal, and therefore gaining a greater understanding of the situation is left entirely to the player.

This journal presents one of the most fundamental examples of the colonial fantasies of Africa being enacted through the figure of the zombie, as such it has been reproduced here in in its entirety.

> Village Youths Diary Transcript:
> April 5
> A man who said he was the foreman of the oil plant came to visit us today. He said he wants to inoculate everyone living near the oil field against some kind of disease. In my parents' generation, they tricked our people and stole the land to turn it into their oil field. They must feel guilty about that because they are always trying to help out village now. When we couldn't get across the swamp, they built a gondola on a rope for us. Sometimes they'll even give us alcohol from foreign countries. This medicine is probably something like that. Everyone in our village is glad to receive this medicine, but I don't want it. I don't have a reason for not getting it. I just didn't like the way the foreman looks, that's all.
> April 8
> Everyone went to the oil field to get this inoculation. The village is usually never this quiet. The only thing to do today is sleep.
> April 9
> I slept too much during the day, so I couldn't sleep at night, and it was noisy outside. Everyone was talking with serious voices in the middle of the village. All of the children in the village had come down with a fever. The mothers all drew water to cool their babies, but it didn't help. By the next morning they were all dead. In the morning our leader went to the oil field. He wanted to know if the medicine they were given killed the children. When he came back to the village, he said the children died because they had the disease. He told everyone that they needed to go back for more shots. I didn't want to, but everyone in the village was worried about catching the disease. They forced me to go with them and get the shots.
> April 10
> People are fighting in the village. All the men are very angry. It might be because all the children died, but I think it's something else. The women just sit around and don't care. I wonder if the disease is spreading.
> April 11
> I couldn't sit still today. I felt like something was moving around inside me. Outside I saw a man who looked strange. He was naked and had a weapon. His entire body was covered in war paint. It wasn't even festival day. I tried to talk to him, but when he turned around, I saw his face... He didn't even look human! What is happening to the people of my village!?
> April 12
> The screaming has stopped since yesterday. The men are all dressed like our ancestors and fighting each other. Most of the women have died.
> April 13
> Head hurts. Fever... Feel angry. Saw big man outside window. Very tall. Must be vision.
> April 14
> Feel good... Screams... stop... Looks fun... Want to... Kill…
> (Capcom, 2009)

In the April 5 entry, the relationship between the 'oil plant' and the villagers is established as clearly colonial. People of the village were 'tricked' out of their land, and now rely on the colonisers to provide access to medicine, technology and alcohol. However, the villagers are betrayed and are used as test subjects leading to the death of all of the children first and then of the women, unlike in Kijuju itself where there were a few female Majini, and only the men remain. The entries from April 11 onwards detail the regression of the villagers into an animalistic state as the 'disease' progresses. First the boy sees a man in traditional dress, he comments on this, indicating that it is not the norm, but is reserved for festivals. Later, the men have become bestial, unnaturally increasing in

size, leading the boy to believe that what he sees are visions belonging to the supernatural realm. Like the word 'Majini' itself this is an example of the scientific, man-made, cause of the zombification being misread by the population and understood in terms of the spiritual. The progressive decay of the zombification process is represented here through a regression from 'civilised' into 'tribal' behaviour on the part of the men. This signals a conceptual association between the notions of the traditional African, the uncontrolled, the blood thirsty, and the zombie. The village provides the location for the breakdown of civilization which has resulted in the villagers reverting to what is depicted as a more primitive state. This reversion is accompanied by a bodily shift as well. In Kijuju the shift between the zombied and natural state was ambiguous, here the infection is accompanied by a physical mutation to the animal.

Figure 6: Jill and Westker.

A key point in the narrative of *RE5* is the reappearance of Jill Valentine. Like Chris Redfield, Jill Valentine was a playable character from the original Resident Evil (1996). Jill is thought to have died in a climactic confrontation during that game. In *RE5,* Jill is revealed to have been enslaved by Westker, the primary antagonist and kept in a zombied state (see figure 6). Jill's reappearance is significant since she is the only character that is restored from the controlling parasite, and does not need to be killed. Like the woman in *White Zombie* she is not held accountable for her actions when infected because Jill, like the Western woman in *White Zombie* is, although also essentially generic, assumed to be generically good.

In his preview of *Resident Evil 5,* which appeared on Eurogamer just prior to the game's release in 2009, Dan Whitehead pre-empted much of the discussions raised in this paper. He writes:

> There will be plenty of people who refuse to see anything untoward in this material. "It wasn't racist when the enemies were Spanish in Resident Evil 4," goes the argument, but then the Spanish don't have the baggage of being stereotyped as subhuman animals for the past two hundred years. It's perfectly possible to use Africa as the setting for a powerful and troubling horror story, but when you're applying the concept of people being turned into savage monsters onto an actual ethnic group that has long been misrepresented as savage monsters, it's hard to see how elements of race weren't going to be a factor. All it will take is for one mainstream media outlet to show the heroic Chris Redfield stamping on the face of a black

woman, splattering her skull, and the controversy over *Manhunt 2* will seem quaint by comparison. If we're going to accept this sort of imagery in games then questions are going be asked, these questions will have merit, and we're going to need a more convincing answer than "lol it's just a game." (Whitehead, 2009)

Focusing on the representations of the African zombie, through the eyes of a Western protagonist, and produced by a Japanese gaming company, *Resident Evil 5* depicts the decaying African state characterised by the ruins of colonialism. The subaltern of Africa are already seen as zombies in many ways in that they are not only regarded but also depicted as disenfranchised mobs viewed in the West only in the context of footage of protests, and civil war. From this pre-existent image of the 'Post-Independent Africa', it is a small step towards the zombied state. Discourse of the zombie has already been applied to Africa and in *RE5* it is doubly articulated.

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