

Zombie Ecologies: Life After Landfill
 Slideshare Script

Slide	Content
Slide One: Title Slide	<p>Zombie Ecologies: Life After Landfill</p> <p>In my presentation, I argue that current catastrophes we experience caused by anthropocentric climate change accounts for the popularity of zombies. Further, I will show how zombies figure ways our garbage tries to kill us. Just like the Walking Dead, the trash we throw out returns to us in the form of unprecedented, deadly events.</p>
Slide Two: Term definition	<p>According to Timothy Clark, the fact that humans are responsible for shaping the geological age we now inhabit is ironic because, “although named as that era in which the planet’s natural history, in which humanity becomes a decisive geological and climatological force, [anthropocene] manifests itself to us primary through the natural becoming, as it were, dangerously out of bounds, in extreme or unprecedented weather events, ecosystems being simplified, die-back, or collapse” (79).</p> <p>Dangerous weather/geological events mask the role humans play in making them, which invites feeds into the sort of skepticism that results in a lack of action to stop further environmental degradation.</p>
Slide Three: Life After Landfill	<p>Once we put our trash in the bin and that bin gets emptied into the garbage truck and the truck drives off down the street, lots of us assume that’s the end of our boxes, plastic bags and bottle, candy wrappers, packing tape, envelopes, melon rinds, and twisty-ties. The methane, emitted by decomposing trash remains, remains invisible to most people.</p>
Slide Four: Methane & Greenhouse Effect	<p>Landfill Gas: Landfills are the third largest source of methane in the US. Methane emitted by decomposing trash in landfills is partially responsible for the greenhouse effect. According to Wikipedia, “The "greenhouse effect" heats Earth because greenhouse gases absorb outgoing radiative energy, heating the atmosphere which then emits radiative energy with some of it going back towards Earth” (Wiki “Greenhouse Effect”). The greenhouse gas effect causes the average temperature of the earth to increase, which makes weather more severe (nfe.org).</p>
Slide Five: Undead Garbage	<p>Americans produce approx 220 million tons of waste each year, and like just like Zombies, the garbage we produce refuses to stay dead. In fact, the extreme weather we face as a direct result of methane, which warms the atmosphere. Not only does the methane caused extreme weather events provide the geological backdrop to our obsession with zombies, but the zombie also serves as figure of ways humans are harming themselves on a</p>

	huge scale.
Slide Six: SO WHAT?	So what if climate crisis accounts for the cultural saturation of zombies in all sorts of media? So what if zombies function as a figures or metaphors for the ways that harm humans do the environment gets revisited back on us?
Slide Seven: Already Happened	Given the extent to which zombies saturate our contemporary cultural imaginations, I argue, as Jeffrey Cohen argues, “Horror, comedy, and children’s culture reveal the same saturation. The zombie apocalypse is not to come. In our collective fantasies it has already unfolded, and we dwell in its aftermath” (401-402).
Slide Eight: Zombie Ecology	Using zombies as a figure for the ecology of trash, i.e. decomposition, methane, greenhouse effect, warming, extreme weather, dead humans, may help us face our fears about climate change. If the catastrophe already happened and the effects of our choices are part of the world we live in it can alleviate our fears of a crisis to come. Plus we can change what we value and what counts as life.
Slide Nine: Beyond Recycling	If we understood the lives of garbage as nearly infinite, we might think of cars as just one stage in a thousand year life cycle of metal. Metal that will later be crushed into cubes to build buildings in the cities of the future.
Slide Ten: The Long View	Methane Capture: The methane is captured with pipes that are dug into the landfill, similar to wells that extract gas from under the ground or ocean. Methane is then sucked down to a power station at the bottom of the dumpsite and pumped into generators to make electricity.