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The notion of the zombie emerges from multiple cultural histories. The corporality of death, risen and changed – and often markedly subservient to some other force – witches, the figure of the ‘mad’ scientist, or simply to those innate urges the living suppress – extreme violence and of course an insatiable hunger for brains. The vampire, the zombie’s far more elegant undead cousin, shares a similarly diverse cultural history. Often portrayed as far more urbane, the vampire’s violence is much more directed, or focused perhaps. Unlike the hoard horror of the zombie, the vampire seduces you to your own death, with victims often portrayed as willing participants to their own demise. While there is a treatise to be written here on rape culture in popular media, I digress. We’re supposed to be talking about the Internet.

I suppose my analogy, or flight of fantasy more like, between the death of the Internet and undead monsters in popular culture, falls apart when it comes to questions of circulation. By definition death marks an end of circulation, but Hito Steyerl isn’t really talking about death is she? She’s rather making a comment on possibility, potency and the image. Image as catalyst rather than document, image as active agent rather than passive object, in a time when image has overwhelmed reality, or perhaps created too many layers of reality to comprehend. The map has exceeded the territory. Abstraction becomes lost in between the layers. Competing realities battle for our attention.

“On Exactitude in Science,” the micro-fiction by Jorge Luis Borges referenced by Steyerl, elaborates on a concept in Lewis Carroll’s *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* – the map on a 1:1 scale. Admitting to the practical difficulties of such a map, Carroll’s character Mein Herr administers, “It has never been spread out, yet.... The farmers objected: they said it would cover the whole country, and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself, as its own map, and I assure you it does nearly as well.”

In the early-ish days of the broader consumption of the internet I made a website. I was “sick” for about 6 weeks of grade 9, and by “sick” I mean extremely bored. Or perhaps clinically depressed. This extreme boredom and depression manifested as general malaise, and my hypochondriac mother let me stay home from school for almost two months, spending exorbitant amounts of money on naturopath appointments and sugar-pills of a dubious nature. Which were perhaps extra ironic because the naturopath’s only suggestion other than the sugar-pills was to eat less sugar.

During this respite from social studies and English class, I taught myself how to code html, and built myself a website on angelfire. “The Moon Palace” was a gloriously terrible Sailor Moon fan-site filled with stolen images and GIFs, and a quiz people could fill out to test their knowledge of Naoko Takeuchi’s magical girl masterpiece. The official English language version of the animated series had stalled out part way through the second season the previous year, as if the networks and production companies had finally looked ahead and seen the queer gender fluid characters featured in later seasons and hit the e-brake. This sudden halt in production led to an intense desire for more, and fans were in a frenzy creating their own fan-subbed versions of the show. With the general lack of representation of female protagonists in media aimed at young people in the early 90s, Sailor Moon became a cult hit instantaneously.

I eagerly joined many “web rings,” chains of links which connected related sites before web search functionality allowed for a simple input into google. You could click the embedded links at the bottom of each page, and navigate a ring of pages that ultimately lead back to its beginning. A 1:1 map of fan culture, when such a thing was possible. Before the internet became undead.

So which is it? Is the undead Internet a zombie or a vampire? Does it bludgeon you with its own arm, trying to eat your brain? Does it seduce you to forsake all others, leading you willingly to your own demise? I suppose in either case if it bites you, you’re dead too – as either fallen victim or part of the hoard. Death spread virally from tooth to flesh.