Hi everyone. Or … “Greetings.” I am Dr. Dave Yount, and I teach philosophy here at MCC. From my title, you might think that I’m here to ruin this whole event by overthinking fictional entities. Not necessarily, so please don’t be offended or leave yet. By the way, I was going to wear a toga for this event, as I used to do every Halloween for a while there, but then I thought you wouldn’t take me seriously, so here’s me in my Sunday best.

First confession: I’ve been discussing zombies with my students before classes, partly to make conversation, but partly to try to understand people’s understanding of zombies and why they think they’re interesting or plausible.

Second confession: I’ve only seen “Zombieland,” “World War Z,” “I Am Legend,” and “Santa Clarita Diet,” and that about covers my zombie-related entertainment experience. I almost always read non-fiction (tons of philosophy, but some science, psychology, economics, and other subjects). So while I realize that I have limited exposure to zombies, as a philosopher, I just need to examine the many statements made about them and definitions, and make my arguments based on those.

Now, it’s a fair question to ask me, “Dave, if you think zombies are so silly, why are you here to discuss them, and why did you bother to spend all that time and effort to research them?” There are three reasons why I was philosophically excited to talk to you today about zombies.

First, I’m frustrated and frankly embarrassed that the Center for Disease Control has used tax dollars to create a webpage and discuss “Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse.”¹ I understand that they used it as a ploy to get people interested in preparedness generally, and that preparedness is important. But I think they should spend more time telling Americans about the Zika virus, Ebola, and what we should do about those real diseases.

Second, I’m also sad and concerned that, according to the History Channel:

… in 2011, the U.S. Department of Defense released a strategy to combat a potential zombie apocalypse. While the potential opponents might be fictional, the military took it seriously. In fact, the first line of the Counter-Zombie Dominance Plan, or “CONPLAN 8888-11,” states, “This plan was not actually designed as a joke.”²

I have a one word reaction: Ugh.

Third, and much to my initial philosophical annoyance, in a survey of 1972 professional philosophers,³ as you can see here, 23.3% of them thought that zombies are metaphysically possible. Here are the options they could vote on related to zombies and the results:

Conceivable but not metaphysically possible: 35.6%
Metaphysically possible: 23.3%
Inconceivable: 16.0%
Other: 25.1%.

As I already hinted, initially I was annoyed by that response, but thanks to preparing for this talk, I think I now understand how and why they might be metaphysically possible, under a certain definition. More on that later.

¹ https://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2011/05/preparedness-101-zombie-apocalypse/
² https://www.history.com/news/are-you-prepared-for-a-zombie-apocalypse-the-u-s-government-is
Thus, while I realize that I am about to criticize fictional/mythological entities, hopefully you can now see why I felt motivated to do this.

To where are we ambling or sauntering? First, I will define what a zombie is, and delineate eight different major types of zombies. Then I will define what logical impossibility is and argue that zombies are logically impossible. Following that, I will also discuss why certain claims about zombies are physically impossible. (Prepare yourselves Stoker fans: I’m even going to criticize his view therein.) Next, I will discuss important philosophical issues related to zombies, including the notion of a philosophical zombie, and the definitions of death, life, and the criteria(?) of consciousness. After that, I will argue that all eight zombie archetypes are not zombies, for one reason or another. (I know, blasphemous, right?) Lastly, if I haven’t already ruined the event, I will argue that biological entities that are claimed to be zombies are not in fact zombies. It should be ghoulishly fun!

DEFINITIONS:

Defining what a zombie is will be difficult, in part, because artist Jason Thompson has created a Map of Zombies and delineated 350 kinds of zombies. As Velma from Scooby-Doo used to say, “Jinkies!” Here is the definition of zombie from the Apple dictionary:

*A corpse said to be revivified by witchcraft [voodoo], especially in certain African and Caribbean religions.*
- (in popular fiction) a person or reanimated corpse that has been turned into a creature capable of movement but not of rational thought, which feeds on human flesh. (Apple Dictionary)

[Google dictionary synonyms: living dead, undead, walking dead, soulless corpse]

The origin of the term is Haitian French: *zombie* or Haitian Creole: *zonbi,* and the Haitian and South African zombies were made so in order to be slaves by the sorcerer. More on that later.

Here is a list of the “most common zombie archetypes,” according to TV Tropes:

**Artificial Zombie:** Reanimated by science! EX: Frankenstein's Monster: The famous creation of Dr. Frankenstein, who is common enough in pop culture to have his own trope.

**Flesh-Eating Zombie:** Zombies that eat the flesh of the living. Dead corpses that have been reanimated by either magic or other supernatural means, or if the reasons for reanimation are simply left unexplained. "Romero" zombies [i.e., the flesh-eating ghouls from Romero’s “Night of the Living Dead” movie – the first “zombie” movie] refer to this type.

**Parasite Zombie:** For when the plague comes in the form of parasites.

**Plague Zombie:** Created by a virus or other such communicable disease. Often overlaps with Flesh-Eating Zombie and/or Technically Living Zombie.

**Possessing a Dead Body:** Reanimated by an intelligent spirit—and not the soul who originally owned that body (as that would be a Revenant Zombie).

**Revenant Zombie:** A zombie that has returned for some driving purpose, retaining (to at least some degree) their living personality and memories of their previous existence.

**Technically Living Zombie:** When zombies are transformed, living victims rather than reanimated corpses. Often overlaps with Plague Zombie.

**Voodoo Zombie:** Brought back by voodoo magic to serve their master. As noted above, the original meaning of "zombie" before George Romero's Flesh-Eating Zombie concept replaced it in popular culture. (TV Tropes)

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6 [https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OurZombiesAreDifferent](https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OurZombiesAreDifferent)
I will return to these types in a while.

LOGICAL IMPOSSIBILITY:

Logical impossibility, according to philosophers, is “a condition or statement involving contradiction or absurdity”\(^7\); that is, it violates the principle of non-contradiction; namely, something cannot be \(X\) and not be \(X\) at the same time in the same respect. For instance, something cannot be a square circle, at the same time in the same respect. A square can morph or be morphed into a circle over time, and vice versa, but some one thing cannot be a square circle at the same time in the same respect.

So why are zombies logically impossible? Because something cannot be both living and dead at the same time in the same respect, so there is no such thing as the living dead. In fact, the paradigm case of a mutually exclusive pair of options is living and dead. That is: “Either I am living or I am dead. I’m not dead; therefore I’m living.”

Moreover, “undead” literally simply refers to something that is alive, or not dead, even though it is defined by the “undead” Wikipedia entry as “supernatural beings which had at one point been alive and continue to display some aspects of life after death.”\(^8\) But let’s examine the way in which Bram Stoker, the coiner of the term “undead,” defines it, through his character Van Helsing in his novel *Dracula* (1897):

> It is out of the lore and experience of the ancients and of all those who have studied the powers of the UnDead. When they become such, there comes with the change the curse of immortality. They cannot die, but must go on age after age adding new victims and multiply-ing [sic] the evils of the world. For all that die from the preying of the Undead become themselves Undead, and prey on their kind. And so the circle goes on ever widening, like as the ripples from a stone thrown in the water... But of the most blessed of all, when this now UnDead be made to rest as true dead, then the soul of the poor lady whom we love shall again be free. Instead of working wickedness by night and growing more debased in the assimilating of it by day, she shall take her place with the other Angels. So that, my friend, it will be a blessed hand for her that shall strike the blow that sets her free.\(^9\)

Sorry Stoker fans, but this passage, as written, is incoherent. Why? It states that, on one hand, the Un-Dead are cursed with “immortality,” where they “cannot die” and must add new victims; on the other hand, it describes without explanation the possibility of being made to rest as true dead, where the soul of the lady can be free. Pick one, Stoker: “immortal” and “cannot die” means “true rest” is not possible. If “true rest” is possible, then the entity is not in fact cursed with immortality.

That said, philosophers actually do discuss and argue about the way in which to properly define death and life (we’ll get to that later); but for any given organism, \(X\) is either alive or dead, and not both. In addition, we know of no dead human who can walk, so the term “walking dead” is not a coherent notion either. Sleep-walking requires a brain to move someone out of bed and down the hall, for instance. A “soulless corpse” implies that either that entity is dead, since a corpse is dead, not alive, by definition, or that a soulless entity cannot move itself, but this ignores the possibility that we might only be physical things following physical laws, so “soulless” per se is not necessarily an issue. You and I might be “soulless”; we have to know if we have souls. But the fact that a corpse is dead and doesn’t have a soul, would imply that if it moves, it must be moving due to nothing within itself or due to itself; it must move due to a physical or immaterial spirit cause outside it (otherwise it would have a soul), and therefore is itself still not living. For instance, a remote control car is not the living dead, just because it is dead/not alive but still moves around due to physical means, right?

PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY:

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\(^7\) From Word Finder: [https://findwords.info/term/logical%20impossibility](https://findwords.info/term/logical%20impossibility)


In the physical impossibility category, keeping in mind that part of the definition includes “being incapable of having rational thought,” I would argue that if a creature is able to amble or run, and perceive human flesh and differentiate that flesh from clothes, furniture, doors, cars, etc., then that creature does have some level of rational thought and understanding of the kinds of things they are encountering, not to mention deliberation about the best way in which to go about snatching someone’s body, biting them, etc. So the part of the definition (“incapable of having rational thought”) isn’t even consistent with itself. Whether or not zombies have viruses, parasites, or are moving due to voodoo or witchcraft, they need some rationality (either within themselves or from without) to move them and drive them to want to eat flesh or brains. And, if this reasoning is correct, and zombies must have a brain of some kind, then they should actually be eating each other’s brains, no? (Alas, one of the documentaries I watched … sigh … stated that zombies do not need to eat or sleep, so where do they get their energy, and why would they want something they don’t need? Why don’t they want staplers?

I have other questions: If voodoo or magic creates new zombies as zombies eat others, then why does it take any physical contact to transmit zombie-ism?

A website called Dedoimedo\(^{10}\) states that zombies cannot feel any pain, but are afraid of fire. So why would they fear something that cannot hurt them?

**IMPORTANT PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES RELATED TO ZOMBIES:**

Now that you are familiar with logical impossibility, let’s review three definitions of zombies that are logically possible:\(^{11}\)

\[\text{informal a person who is or appears lifeless, apathetic, or completely unresponsive to their surroundings.}\]

I am not questioning the logical possibility of a person who appears lifeless, apathetic, or unresponsive – I’ve raised three teenagers. Next definition:

\[\text{a computer controlled by another person without the owner's knowledge and used for sending spam or other illegal or illicit activities.}\]

I’m not questioning that a computer can be controlled by another person, so zombie computers are logically possible. Last definition for now:

\[\text{a tall mixed drink consisting of several kinds of rum, liqueur, and fruit juice.}\]

Just to prove to you how seriously that I took my research for this topic: I went to a bar and tried a zombie, and I discovered that those zombies are both logically possible, and quite tasty. \#DrinkResponsibly

On to death!

**The definitions of “death”:**

Traditionally, the definition of death was when someone stopped breathing or their heart stopped. They had what they called “the mirror test,” where they would hold a mirror to someone’s nostrils who passed out or stopped moving. If condensation appeared on the mirror, that meant the person was still breathing and therefore still alive. (WikiHow still lists it as a method to use today.\(^ {12}\)) There was a problem, however: They somehow (don’t ask) found caskets with claw marks on them, which meant that some people weren’t actually dead and were buried alive. So they started putting a string on the finger or arm of the corpse, and hooked that

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\(^{10}\) [https://www.dedoimedo.com/physics/zombies.html](https://www.dedoimedo.com/physics/zombies.html)

\(^{11}\) Apple dictionary.

\(^{12}\) [https://www.wikihow.com/Tell-if-Someone-Is-Dead](https://www.wikihow.com/Tell-if-Someone-Is-Dead)
up to a bell above ground, so if someone was buried alive, they would be able to ring the bell and gravediggers would dig them up and save them. It’s apparently where we get the phrase, “That guy is a dead ringer.” Nice.

But now patients can be in the situation where their hearts and/or lungs can be kept working by machines, but their brain is not working. Our current definition of death is whole brain death (the forebrain, midbrain, and hindbrain), where no part of the brain is functioning in any way. So, back to zombies: even if zombies’ brains are affected by a virus, just as normal humans have viruses and brains, or if my argument above that zombies must have a brain of some kind, functioning a some basic level, then zombies are not dead. By the way, this would help explain why they can usually be killed (or is that “killed”?) by blowing their brains out.

The definition of “life”:

What is life? Heck if I know, but one current definition of life is “organisms are open systems that maintain homeostasis, are composed of cells, have a life cycle, undergo metabolism, can grow, adapt to their environment, respond to stimuli, reproduce and evolve.”13 The MCC Philosophy Club that I advise wanted to cover this topic a few years back, and I was and still am unaware of philosophical arguments about what life is, so I asked the late and great Dr. Stan Kikkert, from MCC’s biotechnology program about this, and his face lit up as he went through telling me that the standard definition was just what they tell high school students and undergrads, but then mentioned lots of entities and options I had never heard of, such as prions. He said we basically just agree on the definition to make it easy on ourselves, and indeed the Wikipedia entry for “life” warned that the definition I just gave is controversial.

What I’d argue is that, however we define life, for any given organism, it is either living or dead, and cannot be both at the same time. So, if it seems like something is living and dead at the same time in the same respect, we just need to examine and fix our definitions and that will no longer be the case.

Philosophical Zombies, and the criteria(?) of “consciousness”:

And now for a conception of zombie that philosophers (I among them) take seriously, which is the last definition of zombie from Apple:

[A term in Philosophy] a hypothetical being that responds to stimulus as a person would but that does not experience consciousness.14

Of course the question here is whether this entity could lack consciousness, and still, at the very least:

- Desire anything (e.g., to eat flesh);
- have functional perception to tell the difference between flesh and other things, that doors are closed, etc.; and
- deliberate about how to open doors, climb when necessary, where to bite someone if they, say, have chainmail in places on their body but not somewhere else.

If these capabilities are programmed into an artificial entity, such as an Artificial Intelligence (AI) being, then we can still debate whether an AI being is ever or could ever be conscious. (See how fun this is? The questions never end, and these are just the questions I myself have thought of – wait till you get a bunch of philosophers in the room!)

And if the situation is analogous to a drone that is manned by someone else, then of course the entity would not be conscious, but then it’s not the living dead, is it, and it can’t be killed only by blowing its head off, because all you need to do is kill the drone programmer or cut off its power source, etc.? Oh, and it would have never been alive, to be able to be reanimated, so it still wouldn’t fit the definition of zombie.

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14 Apple dictionary definition of zombie.
So philosophical zombies are interesting and worthy of discussion, and are on their face more plausible entities to possibly exist than anything I’ve covered thus far. But I still have more zombies with which to deal, as a man playing “Whack-A-Mole,” so let’s get out the philosophical and metaphorical shot gun and shoot some more zombies in the metaphorical head:

RETURN OF THE ZOMBIE (ARCHETYPES):

Now that we have lots of definitions and ideas on the table about zombies, logical and physical impossibility, life, death, and consciousness, let’s return to the zombie archetypes from TV Tropes\(^\text{15}\) and examine them one at a time. You could call it “Return of the Zombies,” but I digress. To remind you, there are allegedly the:

**Artificial Zombie:** Reanimated by science! EX: Frankenstein's Monster: The famous creation of Dr. Frankenstein, who is common enough in pop culture to have his own trope.

From my understanding of Shelley’s Frankenstein’s Monster (1818), Dr. Frankenstein “builds the creature in his laboratory through an ambiguous method consisting of chemistry and alchemy.”\(^\text{16}\) This does not fit the definition of zombie if the “monster” was not previously alive, and alchemy isn’t real either, at least not yet. And, in Mel Brooks' movie “Young Frankenstein” (much funnier, b t dubs), he transplanted a human brain into a deceased human. That is not a zombie, as long as the brain is fully connected to the body, is able to perceive through its body’s senses, its nerves are connected so it can feel pain, etc. It is also not on a mission to eat flesh, and, at least in general and in principle, there is no reason to think that it would threaten human life. It should also not in any way be something that spreads to other people. So this kind of entity would be conscious and sentient, living, and definitely not the living dead.

**Flesh-Eating Zombie:** Zombies that eat the flesh of the living. Dead corpses that have been reanimated by either magic or other supernatural means, or if the reasons for reanimation are simply left unexplained. "Romero" zombies (i.e., the flesh-eating ghouls from Romero’s “Night of the Living Dead” movie – the first “zombie” movie) refer to this type.

If the dead corpse is reanimated by magic or supernatural means, then first, magic is only for entertainment and implies that the corpse would be being moved by some artificial, “undetected by most people” means, and would not be moving due to its brain or itself. If the means of moving the corpse is supernatural, then whatever the entity is that is moving the corpse, is what is living in some sense, or has the power of moving something. So that entity would be living, but the corpse would be dead. So in this case, the corpse is not living again per se. Questions: Wouldn’t the corpses’ brains, other organs, muscles, etc. not be liquified before the process began? So how could the supernatural force repair these entities in order to use them to move the corpse? Why do zombies need to eat anything at all if they cannot die from starvation, according to some sources, they are allegedly dead, and/or they can apparently walk or run forever without food, since nothing can kill them except having their brains blown brains out?

**Parasite Zombie:** For when the plague comes in the form of parasites.

Obviously, a parasite would be living in and/or on a living body and cannot reanimate a corpse. Why? Because, by definition,\(^\text{17}\) a parasite lives and can only live by being in, associated with, or living off of a living body, so in that case, the host would have to be living. So this is not a zombie, because it is not the

\(^{15}\) [https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OurZombiesAreDifferent](https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OurZombiesAreDifferent)

\(^{16}\) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankenstein%27s_monster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankenstein%27s_monster)

\(^{17}\) I paraphrased the Apple dictionary definition here.
living dead. The human body infected with a parasite could be made to do irrational things such as attacking people (ask Mr. Whitcomb in the next talk), but we have a word for that, and it is called a disease, be it mental or physical.

**Plague Zombie:** Created by a virus or other such communicable disease. Often overlaps with Flesh-Eating Zombie and/or Technically Living Zombie.

Let me remind you: Words mean things: A virus is defined as “an infective agent that typically consists of a nucleic acid molecule in a protein coat, is too small to be seen by light microscopy, and is able to multiply only within the living cells of a host” (Apple dictionary; my emphasis). So a “zombie” virus can only infect and affect a living human, and therefore is not the living dead. And, to my knowledge, we are not aware of viruses that reanimate corpses, even though, again, and even if those somehow exist, they would violate the definition of virus and would have to be redefined or given another name.

**Possessing a Dead Body:** Reanimated by an intelligent spirit—and not the soul who originally owned that body (as that would be a Revenant Zombie).

Again, it would be difficult to see how the spirit could just physically fix all the deterioration from decomposing and just be able to make a corpse start moving around. But setting that issue aside, if this were able to happen, then that would just be another human life, assuming that we have immaterial souls, and it would be analogous to reincarnation, even though the cause of the incarnation would be different from any religion I’m aware of. But again, it would not be the living dead: It would be something that was dead that is now alive, with a living soul that makes it do what it does. And nothing necessitates that this entity would be violent or eat flesh, etc. Also, wouldn’t the reason for the initial person’s death be that his or her body stopped functioning? So why wouldn’t the spirit trying to enter the body also be “dead,” in the sense that it wouldn’t be able to animate that body, in the same way that—if we have immortal souls—we can’t just get back in our bodies or be associated with them and then be alive again? If we could do so, souls would presumably do that all the time, right?

**Revenant Zombie:** A zombie that has returned for some driving purpose, retaining (to at least some degree) their living personality and memories of their previous existence.

I don’t have much to add to this option, given what I’ve already said about “Possessing a Dead Body,” except the problem that if someone comes back from the dead, with their living personality and memories, it’s very difficult if not impossible to understand how that entity could not be alive due to their spirit.

**Technically Living Zombie:** When zombies are transformed, living victims rather than reanimated corpses. Often overlaps with Plague Zombie.

The problem with this label is that technically living just is living. So it’s still not the living dead, and as I’ve argued above, parasite and virus zombies are, by definition, necessarily living.

**Voodoo Zombie:** Brought back by voodoo magic to serve their master. As noted above, the original meaning of "zombie" before George Romero's Flesh-Eating Zombie concept replaced it in popular culture. (TV Tropes)
Admittedly, I’m no expert in voodoo, but bringing someone back through magic is definitely questionable. This kind of “zombie” originated in Haiti or South Africa, which I will analyze in the next section.

OTHER “ZOMBIES” THAT AREN’T REALLY ZOMBIES:

There are two general categories of zombies I still want to cover; namely, cases of allegedly verified human zombies, and biological non-human animal zombies.

First, the History Channel states, “zombies have a basis in fact, and several verified cases of zombies have been reported from Haitian voodoo culture.” Here is their account:

… a Haitian man named Clairvius Narcisse entered a local hospital with severe respiratory problems in 1962. After he slipped into a coma, Narcisse was declared dead was buried shortly thereafter. But 18 years later, a man walked up to Angelina Narcisse in a village marketplace, insisting she was his sister. Doctors, townspeople and family members all identified him as Clairvius Narcisse, who claimed he had been buried alive, then dug up and put to work on a distant sugar plantation.

Obviously, the fact that a doctor declares someone dead does not always make it true. We have other accounts in America, as I said, of people being unintentionally buried alive, and then dug up and they continued living. This is not the living dead or someone who is flesh- or brain-eating, has a parasite, virus, is artificially reanimated, etc. There is nothing really magical here from what is described. In fact, National Geographic, in its “The Truth Behind Zombies,” specifically discusses these cases and states that the Haitian sorcerers (“bokors”) use hypnosis to mimic rigor mortis or they might be using a neurotoxin from a puffer fish to paralyze the “zombies,” and that Mr. Narcisse reported that he was paralyzed and watched them declare him dead and put a sheet over his head. And the bokor makes the “zombie” do what he wants, which has nothing to do with the living dead, violence, causing other zombies, and so on. Hopefully your opinion of the History Channel is not what it used to be. That’s what’s really scary, kids.

On to what I refer to as biological/nonhuman animal zombies (that aren’t zombies)! Yes, there are serious discussions in biology about organisms that cause other organisms to behave in strange ways. In fact, Mr. Sean Whitcomb will be giving a talk on the Zombie Ants of the Amazon right after me, and I hope you stick around with me to see what he says. They’re incredibly interesting, and I’m sure he has video!

So there is a fungus spore (Sean will name it) that invades certain ants, eats its insides in some ways, but leaves the brain intact, moves it up a stalk to attach itself to a leaf, and then dies, and the fungus grows out of the...
ant’s head and/or thorax and spreads its spores. A fungus is defined as a type of life that is neither an animal nor a plant, but it is more closely related to animals. But, in any case, the fungus is alive and takes over a living ant. The ant is not dead until the fungus moves it to a good spore-spreading spot, and the ant itself does not harm any other ants and is not itself able to infect or transmit the fungus to other ants. So this is not a zombie, at least according to the definitions above. But it’s still really cool and interesting and wait for the pictures!

Zombie cockroaches (produced by emerald cockroach wasp, or jewel wasp): The wasp is actually categorized as a parasite, because … wait for it: It has a neurotoxin that it injects the cockroach around its neck area, which paralyzes its front legs. Then it injects its brain, which makes the cockroach groom itself for awhile and become not afraid of the wasp. Then, while it is still alive, the wasp drags the cockroach to its nest, where it lays an egg on the side of the cockroach’s body, and when the larva grows a bit older, it eats into the side of the cockroach and feeds off of its insides while it is gestating. The cockroach remains alive for however long (presumably until its vital organs are not functioning), and then the wasp burrows its way out of the cockroach, only to go out and find another one to begin the cycle again. So it can’t live without another living thing, the cockroach. This is not a zombie—it’s a neurotoxin, so it’s paralysis, not the living dead. Stop calling them this, scientists. [Lastly, scientists in London named another wasp “Dementor,” after Harry Potter (by popular vote), describing as it sucking the soul out of the cockroach. In my opinion, this is not helpful people.]

Thus, I am not aware of any plausible cases of human or nonhuman animal zombies.

CONCLUSION:

So, by the power invested in—not me but—words, by definition and logical and physical impossibility, zombies literally do not and cannot exist, the “undead” is incoherent as originally defined, but there is an interesting philosophical question about whether an entity could behave just like a person and not be conscious. The initial title of this symposium was “How to Survive a Zombie Apocalypse,” so I’ve added my comments to the advice that the “How Zombies Work” website gives about how to survive a zombie attack:

1. Don’t panic. [Agreed… because zombies do not and cannot exist!]
2. Get away from the zombies. Most of the time, you can move faster than they can. [Steer clear of square circles too! Run for the hills! –Hint: Since you can move yourself, you are always faster than something that does not exist.]
3. Gather food, water, an emergency radio, flashlights and weapons, and retreat to a secure location. [It’s nice to have some of this stuff, but not because of zombies.]
4. If possible, retreat to a shopping mall, general retail store or other location where you’ll have easy access to food and supplies. [If zombies existed, you’d just be prolonging the inevitable, but since they don’t, only go to a mall if you like them or for a Wetzel’s pretzel.]
5. Stay away from densely populated areas, where the infestation is likely to be heaviest. [Enjoy beautiful downtown Mesa!]
6. Barricade all entrances and stay put at all costs. [Get out more and read non-fiction.]
7. Don’t get surrounded or backed into a corner or other enclosed space. […] unless you’re into that kind of thing for a non-zombie related reason.
8. Remember that anyone bitten or killed by a zombie will become a threat to you and your party. [No they won’t; worry about Ebola and the zika virus, because them’s [sic] real.]
9. Wait patiently for rescue and make long-term preparations for your survival. [If zombies existed, no one would rescue you; but try to stay alive in general, and MCC has free counseling if you’re still worried about zombies after my talk.]

23 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fungus
24 One more example: Zombie cows? One site discussed Mad Cow disease, caused by prions which destroy the cow’s brain, similar to Alzheimer’s disease in humans. This is similar to the virus zombie, in that the cow is definitely alive and, though it is acting strangely or slower than normal, it is not violent and does not itself infect other cows, etc., and so is not a zombie.
Also, avoid common mistakes like:

- Sheltering in a vehicle to which you do not have the keys [No problem, as long as it’s your vehicle, and help might come anyway if you have OnStar or emergency road service; those things are real.]
- Leaving blades, cudgels or other basic weapons out for zombies to find [... not to mention your crazy relatives?]
- Teaching zombies how to use firearms [...] but teaching unicorns is fine? (I’m asking for a friend.)
- Giving your only weapon to anyone who is hysterical [still not a good idea, disregarding zombies.]
- Retreating to a basement or cellar without taking supplies with you [You’ll be fine if you have beer.]

Right after the next three talks, spend your time on something else! I hope you enjoyed this, Happy Halloween, and thank you!

Questions?