

date. Although Shaun has found a way to keep Ed in his life, now Ed is chained in the shed, fulfilling one of Pete's earlier curses: "If you want to live like an animal, why don't you go live in the fucking shed!" Shaun holds in check the friend who formerly had held him back. The shed and the video games may beckon, but the rest of Shaun's life is Ed-free. By compartmentalizing the monster, Shaun is able to regain his relationship with Liz. He also manages to deconstruct the loser/hero binary. The loser who nonetheless wins in the end, the slacker who leads, he is always both.

## CHAPTER 11

### Zombie Movies and the "Millennial Generation"

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The zombie is a creature of paradox.<sup>1</sup> It is at once familiar and alien, alive and dead, human and non-human. Barely capable of negotiating a set of stairs, the shambling, slow revenant seems an unlikely iconic villain for the cusp of the third millennium. Emerging from a relatively stable form in the 1970s and early '80s, however, the zombie has adapted resiliently to a range of new media and genres (e.g., video games and online digital shorts) sometimes organically and naturally, at other times with jarring incongruity. The ways in which it has been popularly embraced in the 1990s and 2000s can provide interesting insights into some broader social attitudes among zombie audiences. In all its artistic manifestations—film, literature, video games, graphic novels, etc.—the zombie has surfaced in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century as one of the preeminent monsters of the current generation. The zombie holds evident appeal to the technologically savvy, fast-paced generation of young people in the 1990s and 2000s, and through the creature's diverse iterations and adaptations, the zombie can serve as a mirror for some of this generation's values and notions of identity.

Among the paradoxes defining the ever-transforming zombie are conflicting portrayals of its intelligence and speed. Screen zombies were originally slow of mind and of foot. Methodical, almost robotic torpor was