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Look at some historical examples of mass psychogenic illnesses: dancing plagues, laughing plagues, meowing nuns,

Here's a video on them: https://t.co/YNxCk7ZpEe

They are interesting, but what is more interesting to me is Culture Bound Syndrome. https://t.co/hMKaApUMZn

Basically: mass psychogenic illness, and presentation of various mental illnesses, do not occur in a vacuum. Cultures shape them.

For instance, Koro.

There have been several mass outbreaks of men completely convinced their penises are shrinking, anchoring them with string at night so they don't get sucked back inside.

Almost all in Southeast Asia.

https://t.co/fr9X1E1ayx

Here's a description of one outbreak in Hainan in 1984: https://t.co/GsXCZ70qx1

In Italy, there've been outbreaks of tarantism https://t.co/QGq9VAybjt

In which people compulsively dance until exhaustion, dehydration, and death.

Resignation syndrome among Swedish children, who go into a dissociative catatonic state https://t.co/sABPjuP4zs

Piblokto among Inuit women, deserves a mention.

It is not real. Arctic explorers invented it to justify sexually assaulting women.

Like drapetomania, it was colonizers pathologizing self preservation

https://t.co/cmq6zg9ZJ1

What it amounts to is common sense: you don't live in a vacuum. Paranoid delusions, compulsions, hallucinations, all are shaped by your culture.

You should expect there to be different presentations of various mental illnesses in different places.

Just think about night terrors over time.

150 years ago, if you had night terrors, you hallucinated monsters and fair folk trying to eat you.

After the Wright brothers, you probably hallucinated aliens abducting you.

So: culture influences presentation. It shapes the models you adopt, how you behave. This is common sense.

Which leads, of course, to zombies.

The US has had modern zombies permeate public consciousness for 52 years. Everyone knows what zombies are. They are as ingrained into culture as any folkloric demon or monster anywhere else.

If you wanted to realistically cause at least a limited zombie outbreak, you probably could do it by inducing a mass psychogenic illness in the US.

No rage virus or space radiation or 2-4-5 trioxin needed. Just stress, applied at the right points.

Basically, every recorded instance of a mass psychogenic illness occurred among people experiencing stress of some sort. Check out a list: https://t.co/LkoDVgRO5Z

William Byrd High School in 2007, multiple schools in Afghanistan in 2009, LeRoy High School in 2011, the 2016 evil clowns, etc

Stress, in the right conditions, does interesting things.

You simply need to find a small group of vulnerable, stressed people, and allow them an outlet to relieve that stress.

Schools and convents have historically been perfect breeding grounds for this.

Find that vulnerable, stressed group, your petri dish.

Get them to have zombies on their mind. Have em do zombie-related art, or marathons of zombie movies, or do papers on the ethnology of zombies.

Let that percolate.

And then, spike their stress to 11.

Somehow frustrate the everloving fuck out of them. Constrain their freedom, clamp down with your adult authority, annoy them even more than teenagers usually are annoyed.

At that critical moment of shared stress, in that vulnerable group of people who have zombies on their mind, offer them an outlet.

Have one kid pretend to bite another. Use squibs for realism, call in a favor from Tom Savini or something.

And voila. With any luck, your stressed-out little guinea pigs will relieve that stress in the most natural, intuitive way they can: acting like zombies.

If you think that's far fetched, read up on some of those historical incidents I linked above.

People have, multiple times, danced so violently for so long that they wore away the skin on their feet revealing bone before dying of dehydration.

They danced, or laughed, or meowed, or attacked their neighbors, because that was in their zeitgeist. Their culture informed the way that stress was relieved.

And in American culture, the zombie is standing right there as a perfect outlet.

In recent times, almost all such outbreaks have occurred in schools, or cramped workshops. Look up the June Bug epidemic.

What this means is, odds are you could create a local, contained zombie outbreak.

You could call it Quisling Syndrome, after the similar condition in the book World War Z.

Could you make it spread beyond your petri dish of stressed out people?

Well, look again at the 2016 evil clowns, and how one of the forgotten plotlines in 2020 was that they'd returned.

If those meowing nuns had had social media, I guarantee you every monastery and convent would have ended up with a case of the meows.

I guarantee you that your little, local outbreak would go viral on tiktok and instagram, it'd be everywhere the same way the Great Bathsalts Zombie story was.

Speaking of which: notice how readily and hungrily people ate that up? How excited they were to see it?

And that is how you easily, cheaply, and entirely realistically create a zombie outbreak without ever needing to do illegal biochemical experiments. Any jackass could do it.

If you do it, buy me some rice to thank me: https://t.co/TRTsg6UUwh