

THE WALTZING DEAD: THE MERIT OF *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES*

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May, 2013

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When Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* was published in 2009, the parody of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* that now takes place in the midst of a zombie apocalypse, few expected the novel to be more than a joke. However, it instead inspired a phenomenon that wholly consumed popular culture. The monster mashup fuses well-known classical literature with traditional horror monsters. In *PPZ*, the nineteenth-century novel of manners is introduced to the twentieth century monster of the Americas, the zombie. Through this combination, new interpretations of feminism, otherness, epidemics, and Gothic horror can be gleaned, providing a richer reading of both Austen's original text and Grahame-Smith's new text. The unusual combination of remix studies, zombie studies, and Austen studies has effectively created a monster.



THE WALTZING DEAD: THE MERIT OF *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES*

A Thesis

Presented To the Faculty of the Department of English

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

English Studies

by

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May, 2013

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my parents for their support and patience as I struggled towards finishing my degree. Words cannot express how much I love and appreciate you both. I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Anna Froula, Dr. Andrea Kitta, and Dr. Anne Mallory, for their patience, encouragement, and assistance through every step of my journey. I would not have gotten as much out of this project without all of you, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you on this project. To all of my friends, family, and every acquaintance who showed even the slightest interest in this paper, thank you for asking questions, reading drafts, letting me ramble, encouraging me, and reminding me how fun and interesting this project could be. You're all awesome. Finally, I would like to thank every coffee shop, library, and bookstore, especially the Topsy Teapot, that let me spend hours upon hours writing, drinking coffee, and not losing my mind.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction .....                    | 1  |
| CHAPTER 1: Transformative Works ..... | 8  |
| CHAPTER 2: The Strange Plague .....   | 31 |
| CHAPTER 3: A Novel of Manners .....   | 49 |
| Conclusion .....                      | 72 |
| References .....                      | 80 |

## INTRODUCTION

“Thank you, sir, but I am perfectly content being the bride of death.”

-Elizabeth Bennet, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*

"I will not say that your mulberry-trees are dead, but I am afraid they are not alive."

-Jane Austen, Letters to Cassandra 59, May 31, 1811

Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009) begins with the line, “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a zombie in possession of brains must be in want of more brains” (1). This alteration of the famous opening line of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) serves an important role: to immediately establish that Grahame-Smith's novel as a diversion from the original nineteenth-century text. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* tells the story of Elizabeth Bennet, a young woman of social status and little wealth, and Fitzwilliam Darcy, the moody, intelligent gentleman who grows to love her. In *PPZ*, their love story remains unchanged. However, their love story now occurs in the midst of a zombie apocalypse.

*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (*PPZ*) has inaugurated a new era in popular literature, namely one obsessed with reviving classic literature with monstrous new additions. This trend represents a convergence of other, more enduring trends. Sequels, prequels, and parodies of *Pride and Prejudice* are abundant, albeit not particularly popular or outstanding in the literary world<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, zombie fiction has grown in popularity gradually with novels such as *World War Z* (2006, Max Brooks). While both of these trends remain popular independently of each other, they are similar in that neither genre has consistently produced texts that gain instant

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<sup>1</sup> These derivative works include *Mr. Darcy's Daughters* (2003), the first of six novels by Elizabeth Aston; *Mr. Darcy, Vampire* (Amanda Grange, 2010); and most recently, Tessa Clayton's 2012 novel, *Fifty Shades of Mr Darcy: A Parody* (a satirical mashup of Austen's novel and E.L. James's erotic novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* [2011]).

popularity and appeal to large groups of consumers. Indeed, in the era of self-publishing and a wide number of professional book publishing companies, it is easy for new works (especially less “original” works like sequels and parodies) to become lost in the unending list of new novels. However, on the day of its release, *PPZ* was third on the New York Times Bestseller list, and has since sold over a million copies worldwide in 20 languages (Quirk Books). In order for a quirky, unconventional, niche-audience novel like *PPZ* to gain such international attention (and then adoration), it must follow that it must be particularly well-written or culturally significant. Thankfully, in Grahame-Smith’s case, both qualities seem to be true.

What sets Grahame-Smith’s novel apart from existing remakes and parodies is its seemingly universal success. *PPZ* has been enjoyed by fans of Austen’s original works and of zombie texts alike, and readers have embraced the novel for either its absurd concept, its humor, or to see how well the two elements “fit” together. The majority of disapproval or distaste for the novel comes from Austen purists who feel that the parody is disrespectful to the original work. These readers (some scholars, some simply dedicated fans) also argue against taking the novel “too seriously,” ruling out the potential research into *PPZ*’s scholarly importance and relevance. In this thesis, I argue that *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*’ popularity, success, and innovative concept give even more reason to read the novel in a scholarly light. In an academic climate that embraces popular media forms like film, television, and graphic novels, and that allows for analysis of less traditional texts (including J.K. Rowling’s fantasy *Harry Potter* series [1997-2007] and George Lucas’s original *Star Wars* trilogy [1977-1983]), it logically follows that scholars would similarly embrace a combination of canonical texts and new popular forms.

This thesis seeks not to simply promote Grahame-Smith’s novel, but instead uses it as an example of a work which can be read both critically and for entertainment purposes. Particularly

in more recent scholarship, the once definitive line between “high” culture and “low” culture blurs more readily in response to the frequent combinations of the two. Laura Grindstaff, in her article “Pretty Woman with a Gun: *La Femme Nikita* and the Textual Politics of ‘The Remake,’” states that high culture refers to a better educated, more sophisticated audience, while low culture addresses a lower class, less discerning audience. Academia has historically overlooked low, or popular, culture, deeming it a less important subject of criticism than more sophisticated works. However, around the 1950s, the new field of cultural studies began to develop, which includes – indeed, focuses on – popular works and “lower” aspects of culture. A pioneer in this field, John G. Cawelti, writes that, over the course of his studies and research, he does not “think there is such a clear difference between popular generic works and more ‘canonic’ literature” (“Introduction” xii). Cawelti continues to explain his main directions in attempting to expand and define the new field of popular culture:

One was toward finding a way to manage the formal analysis of popular culture so as to go beyond the oversimplification of the invention vs. convention or original vs. formulaic distinction without losing sight of the positive artistic qualities of popular art forms. The other was toward discovering how to use this richer and more complex idea of the forms of popular culture for the purposes of cultural or historical analysis. (“Introduction” xii)

In other words, Cawelti sought not only new ways of fairly analyzing popular culture, but also methods of incorporating popular culture into existing fields of study.

Simon Pegg, actor and co-writer of *Shaun of the Dead* (2005, Edgar Wright), also addresses this tendency to disregard studies of popular culture:

People will often cry gross over-intellectualisation when popular culture is critically addressed, as if it is somehow exempt from serious consideration because it is itself ‘non-serious,’ just a bit of fun that doesn’t require or deserve dissection. I disagree; every expression of art is a product of its environment and as such will reflect the concerns, preoccupations and neuroses of the time. Mainstream entertainment particularly, by its very nature, has to reflect the dominant modes of thinking in order to qualify as mainstream, and in that respect, mass entertainment is even more fun to pick apart. (124)

Pegg’s work, especially *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz* (2007, Edgar Wright), typically pushes the boundaries of popular culture, blending tropes and formulas self-reflexively to create films that are both imitation and parody. In this sense, Grahame-Smith is no different. His novel can be viewed as both a parody of Austen’s original work and as a genuine homage in the form of a mock-nineteenth-century work. Grahame-Smith’s work takes a liminal position between the two styles, providing insight into both realms and the points at which they converge.<sup>2</sup>

Chapter one, “Transformative Works,” addresses the forms that *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies* draws from, namely remakes, remixes, and fanfiction. Remix studies, a newer branch of scholarship, seeks to interpret these forms and provide a way to analyze and discuss them critically. To do so, remix studies takes into account the original versions of altered works, the newer styles or methods of alteration used, and the cultural climate and impact of the newly

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<sup>2</sup> The word “liminal” is a useful one, and one which will be used throughout this paper. It refers to that which is neither here nor there, but instead appeals to both sides of a divide and simultaneously bridges the division and denies its existence altogether. *PPZ* epitomizes the term in multiple ways: the zombies themselves are undead, neither dead nor living; *PPZ* is itself categorized as young adult fiction, a broad genre that is as transitional as the age demographic that it targets; and, most importantly, *PPZ* presents a liminal blend of high and low culture art. More examples will be discussed further in this paper.

created work. A similar, more traditional line of study, is that of remake studies, which focuses on remakes and adaptations of existing works. While remake studies considers many of the same aspects as remix studies, remake studies typically addresses direct adaptations or translations of works, and applies less to more dramatic alterations of existing works (for instance, remake studies would discuss a book's adaptation into film, while remix studies would be better suited to discussing a clip of film dialogue sampled in a popular song). By incorporating both remix and remake studies, it is possible to analyze *PPZ* as both a remake and a remix of *Pride and Prejudice*, taking the characteristics of both genres into account. This chapter will also discuss fanfiction, a literary genre in which (frequently amateur) authors use existing settings or characters to create new stories. Fanfiction has become a controversial topic, particularly due to its unregulated publication, largely online. Since very few authors profit from such writing, regulation mostly relies on a code of ethics and respect for the original author. Grahame-Smith's novel, which can loosely be considered fanfiction, similarly relies on respect for the author to present itself as a "true" interpretation of Austen's original story; however, since he is making a profit from his fanfiction, the rules become blurred. It is important, before examining *PPZ*'s content, to first become familiar with the preexisting literary trends which allowed for such an art form to develop.

The second chapter, "The Strange Plague," discusses the cultural history of zombies. Beginning with their roots in Haitian voodoo, the zombie has always been a figure that evokes terror. Unlike other traditional monsters, however, zombies have evolved and changed drastically throughout their history. Haitian zombies, for instance, are the products of magic and a master of sorts who controls the monsters. More recent zombie narratives use aliens, viruses, or curses to explain the creatures' existence. Because of this wide scope of variations, zombies

have become incredibly versatile elements of every text they inhabit, representing fears like foreign invasion, imprisonment, epidemic, and conformity. By examining trends in zombie texts in conjunction with other literary trends and cultural events, this chapter will explore the importance of zombies as a symbolic tool, as well as how they specifically allow the reinvention of Austen's original novel.

Chapter three, "A Novel of Manners," addresses the role that Austen's original texts play within *PPZ*. In addition to adapting the plot of the novel, Grahame-Smith also draws from the underlying themes from *Pride and Prejudice* which have been discussed and analyzed for decades, specifically feminism and gender studies, and the roles of manners and social graces. Austen's original text is a "novel of manners," a work that deals with the more civilized (and, to the reader, occasionally trivial) aspects of life. Typically in these novels, conflicts are rarely life threatening and conversations are almost always polite (or at least sophisticated). This chapter will discuss the implications of manners, as well as Grahame-Smith's subversions of traditional manners, as they apply to both *Pride and Prejudice* and *PPZ*. Additionally, this chapter will incorporate feminist and postfeminist readings of both novels. As a text laden with female characters who are frequently set at odds with men and standards of femininity, *Pride and Prejudice* cannot escape analysis through the feminist lens. *PPZ* is no different in this case; however, as with traditional manners and propriety, Grahame-Smith also seeks to subvert traditional notions of femininity and masculinity. Thus, postfeminism, a more modern school of analysis which praises female independence while also condoning aspects of traditional gender roles, is an appropriate analytical lens for both novels, particularly in comparison. This chapter also examines aspects from Austen's other writing as a method of comparing Grahame-Smith's new additions to the original novel itself. Austen's use of Gothic elements, often parodying

supernatural fiction and the fantastic into her novels, makes a monster-laden adaptation of her works almost feasible. Austen also possessed a sharp wit and a mastery of sarcasm, creating humor through her dry narration and witty dialogue. Grahame-Smith's contemporary humor, blunt and typically gross, appears to be a far cry from Austen's subtle nature; however, the two diverse styles combine in unexpected ways to both highlight the original work's comedy and create new comedic instances.

By beginning an academic conversation about a popular text like *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, I intend to call attention to the richness and unexpected complexity of the text itself, as well as its importance within the larger conversations of remix studies, zombie studies, and Austen studies. The links between these three branches of scholarship are amusing to consider, but are actually insightful and surprisingly appropriate in the context of *PPZ*. Textual analysis, as well as an open-minded approach to derivative works and lower art forms in general, allows *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* to join the ranks of parallel works that can both be viewed alongside the original work and taken seriously as a standalone piece.

## CHAPTER 1: TRANSFORMATIVE WORKS

*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is a collage of various literary genres, combining the antiquated settings and willful female characters of the Gothic, the supernatural dangers of science fiction, and the love story of the romance. In order to accurately (and fairly) discuss the novel, it is necessary to acknowledge certain aspects of all of these literary genres. However, the story's compositional elements, the aspects of various genres that are synthesized, prove to be just as important, if not more so, to interpreting and analyzing Grahame-Smith's novel. By examining these elements more closely, it becomes easy to situate *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* within remakes and remixes, the two major methods of genre-mixing from which Grahame-Smith draws. Through the use of these two genres, *PPZ* follows in the century-old tradition of published fanfiction, combined with the newer compositional techniques from remixing, and merging with the current popularity of fantasy monsters, especially zombies. The resulting genre, the literary mashup, is "a hybrid: half creative fiction in its own right, and half criticism or commentary on the original work" (Ladd). Therefore, Grahame-Smith's novel is both a product of and an influence on remix culture as a whole. This chapter situates *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* within the current scholarship surrounding remakes and remix culture. It also discusses techniques used by Grahame-Smith to transform Austen's original novel into a contemporary classic.

A remake, at its most basic level of definition, is a new text that draws from or is based on an existing text. The remake is prevalent in film and television media. Especially within these media, remakes can take on very different qualities from the original, as there are many aspects of an original text that can be altered. For instance, a remake can take place in a different setting, as shown in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), a Creole retelling of *Jane Eyre*

(1847). It might provide new perspective on existing characters, as Gregory Maguire's *Wicked* (1995) does for the two witches in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900). In some instances, the only real difference may be the language of the text itself: Jose Saramago's Portuguese novel *Blindness* (1995) was adapted as an English screenplay by Canadian Don McKellar in 2008.

Despite the obvious addition of zombies, Grahame-Smith's novel can ultimately be considered a remake of *Pride and Prejudice*. In her book *Film Remakes* (2006), Constance Verevis breaks down the remake genre further into subcategories. One such subcategory is the readaptation, an adaptation of an original text that ignores all previous adaptations of said text. For instance, Boris Sagal's *The Omega Man* (1971), Ubaldo Ragona and Sidney Salkow's *The Last Man on Earth* (1964), and Francis Lawrence's *I am Legend* (2007) are all independent adaptations of Richard Matheson's 1954 novel *I am Legend* and make no reference to each other. Another subcategory, the homage, refers to a work that seeks to direct attention to a particular text by positioning itself as a secondary, related text. An example of this appears in Will Gluck's *Easy A* (2010), as the protagonist reads Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and finds her life emulating the novel. However, *PPZ* fits best into the subcategory of the update, which acts as competition for the original work "by adopting an overtly revisionary and transformational attitude towards it" (Verevis 13). A famous example of an update is Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins's *West Side Story* (1961), a remake of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* set in modern New York City. While Shakespeare tells of the war between the Montague and Capulet families, *West Side Story* instead shows the battles between two rival gangs: the Sharks, who are Puerto Rican; and the Jets, who are white.<sup>3</sup> It is important to note

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<sup>3</sup> *West Side Story* is an especially culturally relevant text, as it was produced after the Cuban Revolution of 1959, which resulted in a mass immigration of Cuban citizens to America. Thus, by making race a central conflict, Wise and Robbins managed to introduce the subject of racial awareness through a familiar plot. Remaking an original text to give it contemporary relevance is a common practice, and one that Grahame-Smith himself uses by

that update does not always mean a modernization of the original. The term more accurately suggests an update in terms of an interpretation that is new for the original text (Verevis 13). Akira Kurosawa's 1957 film *Throne of Blood*, an update of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, is set in feudal Japan and is considered one of the most successful remakes of the original play. The film was made following the US occupation of Japan, and thus transcribes the themes of betrayal and conflict present in *Macbeth* to make them relevant in the post-World War II world.

There is continuing conflict among fans and scholars alike regarding the treatment of the original text within remakes. This conflict arises over the degree to which the new version remains faithful to the original text, and how the new version relates to the original. In the case of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, this becomes an especially sensitive subject simply because of the original novel's popularity and canonical status. Verevis points out that "a highly canonized text (film *or* novel) is not only considered more worthy of translation, but generates more concern over the accuracy of the translation" (82). In her article "Pretty Woman with a Gun: *La Femme Nikita* and the Textual Politics of 'The Remake,'" Laura Grindstaff adds that this concern also arises over the debate between high culture and low culture. *Pride and Prejudice* is considered a work of high art by most, suggesting that it holds an extra degree of value; *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, on the other hand, is a work of popular or low art, and could be deemed disrespectful to the original if written without proper regard to the original source. *AustenBlog*, a fan-run site that compiles Austen-related news, published Cynthia Kartman's scathing review of *PPZ* in the form of a letter to Grahame-Smith from Austen herself. The letter emulates Austen's own personal correspondence with friends and family, which was usually dry, witty, and elegantly worded. In this letter, "Jane" thanks Grahame-Smith for making her novel

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incorporating zombies into *Pride and Prejudice*, since zombies are both prevalent in contemporary media and capable of signifying any number of cultural fears and troubles. The cultural relevance of zombies will be explored further in chapter two.

“palatable” for a previously untapped audience but finds much room for improvement. She finds particular contention in the use of religion in the novel: “if zombies are Satan’s army, would not the Church of England have played a more active role in their defeat?” (Kartman). Kartman, also draws from Austen’s life experiences (her sisters-in-law’s deaths during childbirth and her brothers’ military service) to argue that 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain already experienced its share of gore and horror “without resorting to the undead” (Kartman).<sup>4</sup> Through her knowledge of Austen’s life and the period in which she lived, Kartman takes a strong stance against Grahame-Smith’s novel. However, through this same knowledge, she also supports Grindstaff’s description of the sophisticated audience protecting works of high culture. Grindstaff states that “the ‘integrity’ of popular sources is always less of an issue, since part of what distinguishes elite from popular culture in the first place is the latter’s ‘openness’ to appropriation and intervention. ‘High’ culture texts, on the other hand, demand a more respectful, worshipful attitude” (278). Grindstaff argues that it matters less which text is the original, but more that the text of higher “quality” is remade well.

This particular edit to Austen’s original work serves to reinforce Fredric Jameson’s conceptions of postmodernism, which suggests that it creates “a depthless sense of the present and a loss of historical understanding” (Barker 208). Some manifestations of this separation include “the cannibalization of styles from past and present; the loss of authentic artistic style in favour of pastiche; [and] the breakdown of a firm distinction between high and low culture” (Barker 208). These statutes apply directly to *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, but while Jameson uses them as negative attributes, we do not have to be viewed as thus. Indeed,

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<sup>4</sup> While the letter is a generally lighthearted piece of prose, Kartman’s Austen tends to take a condescending tone. She snidely comments that “I admit, though, that I am curious what kind of student thinks he or she can be admitted to any English grad school program without having to read at least one of my novels. I am bold enough to suspect it is one too stupid to appreciate my work anyway, and I know for a fact it is one whose grammar is appalling.”

Jameson's use of the word "cannibalization" only serves to promote the zombie-like views of remix culture that have become prominent today.<sup>5</sup> The claim that the line between high and low culture will be blurred is also false. Such blending of classes has been prevalent in many other media of mashups and remix, such as graphic novel adaptations of literary classics like *Moby Dick* and *The Scarlet Letter*, and DJ Tiesto's 2005 trance remix of Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings" (1938). Instead of attempting to bring the two to each other's levels or even them out, these works serve as an introduction to high or low culture for those unfamiliar with either. In an interview with Grahame-Smith, Tim Masters said, "I have always managed to avoid *Pride and Prejudice*, but now you've forced me to read it by stealth. That's a good thing, isn't it?" Grahame-Smith replied, "I hope there's a lot of that going on. I hope that people who've never in their life picked up that book will pick this one up" ("It's... Darcy of the Dead"). Likewise, as suggested by the number of Austen listserv members who discussed the new novel, readers who would not typically gravitate towards science fiction or horror literature are given new incentive to do so.

Caren Kaplan categorizes postmodernism as transgressive, or accepting of the change of culture and boundaries. She explains that postmodernism can be "self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining," suggesting that there is not a defined meaning for many postmodern works, but that they are open to many different cultural interpretations (Barker 210). This openness is apparent in the broad range of reactions and reviews to *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. A good number of Austen scholars seem to find the new parody problematic. Similarly, strictly zombie fans will typically not go through the effort of reading 19<sup>th</sup> century prose only to read "the zombie parts," which prove to be few and far between. One of the main

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<sup>5</sup> His language is reminiscent of the language used in reviews of *PPZ*, with such negative words as "adultery" and "attack" as discussed in chapter one.

arguments of remake theory is that not all remakes are “bad,” or less worthy of attention and discussion than the original. The battle between high and low art, while still prevalent, is somewhat lessened through the discussion of remakes as the equals of their predecessors. In *Dead Ringers: The Remake in Theory and Practice* (2001), Jennifer Forrest and Leonard R. Koos admit that a great deal of remakes are “uninspired copies of their originals,” but they continue to argue that “the existence of many critically acclaimed remakes hinders us from adopting as a general rule the widely accepted notion that all remakes are parasitical and not worth any critical consideration” (3). Grahame-Smith’s undertaking calls for a great degree of care for the original text, due to both Austen’s established popularity and her work’s sophistication. *Pride and Prejudice* has achieved international renown, selling 20 million copies worldwide, and withstood the test of time; however, in order to be fairly compared to its modern counterparts, it must be recognized as, first and foremost, a British novel from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that appealed to young ladies of the time who could relate to the novel’s dilemmas and triumphs. In Grahame-Smith’s adaptation, essentially an American novel from the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that attempts to appeal to a seemingly limitless clientele, differences automatically present themselves.

Remakes can reveal a great deal about the country and culture that produces them. This can be found especially in American remakes of foreign films. More often than not, the Americanized version will take place in a more familiar location (in this case, the United States) and will more closely reflect the values of American culture than the original work. However, they can also reveal much about the authors of the two works themselves. In “Three Takes On Motherhood, Masculinity, and Marriage: Serreau’s *Trois Hommes et un couffin*, Nimoy’s Remake, and Ardolino’s Sequel,” Carolyn A. Durham compares the French film *Trois hommes*

*et un couffin* (1985, Caroline Serreau) with its American remake, *Three Men and a Baby* (1987, Leonard Nimoy). Similar to the comparison between *Pride and Prejudice* and *PPZ*'s authors, these two films were created respectively by a European woman (French, in this case) and an American man.

In both films, three bachelors are left to care for an abandoned baby left at their doorstep. However, a number of differences arise between the films, particularly in the issues of maternity and gender roles. For instance, in the French film, female characters are portrayed as scientific and calculating, contradicting the more traditional belief that women are biologically predisposed to be more nurturing or motherly. Durham cites a scene where the men consult a professional nanny, who “defines her own competence in terms of her diplomas and her knowledge of pediatrics” (248), rather than relying on any feminine instincts. Nimoy’s adaptation, however, strives more to create a more egalitarian relationship between the sexes, reflecting a tenet of American feminism. The women in the film both assert themselves as capable caretakers and give the men in the film the opportunities (and authority) to be sufficient caretakers as well.

Another aspect that differentiates the two films is the importance of masculinity. In both films, the three male protagonists are involved in a heroin deal when the baby arrives, a decidedly non-maternal practice. In Serreau’s original, though, this thread of the narrative wraps up early in the film, while the remainder of the narrative revolves around caring for Marie. In the American adaptation, the two plots unfold simultaneously. It can be said that the French film accentuates a shift in the men’s actions, as they move from the drug plot, an arguably masculine scenario, and devote much more time to solely being “parents.” The American counterpart uses both plots throughout, suggesting that while the men can be adequate parents, it is also important

that they retain a significant amount of masculinity by keeping their pre-child jobs and, by welcoming both the baby and her mother into their home, relinquishing their roles as caregivers.

To begin to explain these differences, Durham highlights a key change between the two films: the French film's director was female, while the American film's was male. This single detail, Durham argues, helps change individual elements of the film so drastically that the completed remake has transformed from French realism to an American comedy. Such a detail is clearly important when comparing *Pride and Prejudice* (written by a British woman in the eighteenth century) and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (written by an American man in the twenty-first century). In the case of Grahame-Smith's remake, it is possible to directly contrast the sections from Austen's original text and Grahame-Smith's additions and alterations. For instance, apart from the obvious violence and gore, Grahame-Smith focuses less on the characters' thoughts and emotions and more on adding action and dialogue. Specific examples of this will be presented in chapter three, when Austen's original novel is discussed in more detail.

While remakes are well-established and easily recognized within other forms of popular culture, remixes are a much more recent development in entertainment. Remakes are typically found within film and television, whereas remixes are usually compilations from mixed mediums, primarily music. In music, remixing has traditionally meant the alteration or enhancement of an existing song in order to update it or renew its public appeal. However, a more recent use of remixing is the complete combination of two or more existing songs. More commonly referred to as "mashups," these compilations have become especially popular among budding artists and producers, eventually becoming a part of mainstream entertainment. For example, in Fox's popular television series *Glee* (2009-), the high school's glee club regularly

performs mashups. Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison), their instructor, defines the unfamiliar term: “a mashup is when you take two songs and mash them together to make an ever richer explosion of musical expression.” This description does highlight one of the main characteristics of mashups, that the two songs combined typically complement each other. Musical mashups outside of *Glee* pursue the same element of balance between the mixed components. Duke Ellington’s big band song “Harlem Airshaft” and Beyonce’s pop hit “Single Ladies,” for instance, do not seem to have much in common, but Beyonce’s syncopated rhythms fit well with the classic swing tempo. Dutch producer Oki combined the instrumentation from “Harlem Airshaft” with Beyonce’s lyrics, adding a grainy 1940’s filter to the modern vocals; the resulting mashup, “Up in the Cotton Club,” sounds like an authentic jazz era tune.

Sampling is another technique used in music to combine existing elements with new pieces of music. A sample is a short audio clip from another source that is used in place of an instrument or original lyrics. While samples are typically taken from other pieces of music, they can also be from less conventional sources like films and speeches. In the new context of the song, these sampled clips are reframed, creating new meanings and significances. A famous example of sampling is found in 2 Live Crew’s 1989 single “Me So Horny.” The song’s title is a line of dialogue from a scene in Stanley Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), in which a Vietnamese prostitute propositions a group of soldiers. In the film, the scene gives the audience a bleak picture of the squalor prevalent in Da Nang; however, in the song, it is reappropriated to convey a more flirtatious, almost humorous exchange.<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that in both uses, the

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<sup>6</sup> Some artists use sampling alone to create new works, like Australian producer Nick Bertke. Under the pseudonym Pogo, Bertke has created numerous remixes using samples from films, including *Up* (Pete Docter and Bob Peterson, 2009), the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy (Peter Jackson, 2001), and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (James Cameron, 1991). On Pogo’s Youtube channel, his songs are featured over video clips from the sampled films themselves, usually edited to play in sync with the song’s editing. Bertke’s work serve not only as a success story of sampling and remixing (even being commissioned by Disney for some of his works), but also to illustrate the bridge between

phrase is used in a misogynistic context: in *Full Metal Jacket*, the prostitute offers herself, but with no luck (even after the soldiers talk her down from fifteen dollars to ten); in the 2 Live Crew song, the rappers brag about their promiscuity and ability to find partners at a moment's notice.

The notion of reappropriation through sampling is one Grahame-Smith uses extensively in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. One could argue that, while his novel retains most qualities of a remake, his "sampling" of direct passages from the original novel make this novel more of a remix than a less inspired remake. For instance, when Mr. Collins discusses his relationship with Charlotte Lucas (who, in *PPZ*, slowly transforms into a zombie during the course of their marriage), Grahame-Smith uses Austen's original dialogue: "My dear Charlotte and I have but one mind and one way of thinking. There is in everything a most remarkable resemblance of character and ideas between us. We seem to have been designed for each other" (171). Given Mr. Collins's already undesirable character traits, comparing him to a zombie makes an otherwise unremarkable section of dialogue into an inside joke for the reader. In the third chapter, I will further discuss reappropriation in regards to Austen's original work.

Though there is not much scholarship yet on this emerging field, I argue that remixing is an undeniable trend in all branches and media of art. Just as popular culture and topics like film and hip hop rhetoric have become viable fields of study, it is only a matter of time until remix theory and studies become an established branch of scholarship. As it is becoming a more prevalent trend within art, the body of scholarship surrounding remixing is already beginning to

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types of media that remixing can illustrate, something which Grahame-Smith achieves as well though his incorporation of a traditionally cinematic monster into literary canon.

develop, albeit slowly.<sup>7</sup> There are already some who are beginning to acknowledge the remix as a powerful creative force. In his essay “Dawn of the Literary Mash-up,” John Ladd compares the trend to the concepts of collaboration and “open source” materials that computer and internet programs have introduced. In Ladd’s opinion, the popularity of mash-ups and remixes effectively creates “a post-postmodern world in which virtually anything is possible.” Instead of being told a single “correct” interpretation of a work, audiences are allowed to form their own conclusions and contribute to the conversation. The concepts of ownership and authorship is also revised in remix culture: “in the past it would have been said that a work couldn’t possibly mean a certain thing because it was outside of the author’s experience, but the author’s experience hardly matters to the reader’s perception” (Ladd). This attitude is reflected well in the application of various newer styles of criticism – particularly literary criticism – to older canonical works, such as Marxism or feminism. Specific examples of this practice follow in chapter three.

Lawrence Lessig, a founding board member of Creative Commons, an organization which provides flexible copyright licenses for creative works, is a strong advocate for remix culture. His book *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* (2008), Lessig presents an argument in support of the mashup and the remix. He does so by discussing the impacts and advantages of remixing, both in art and in other aspects of culture. By providing examples of current successful remix artists, (including SilviaO, a Colombian singer who more recently entered the world of Creative Commons production, and Söderberg, a professional video editor who has produced a series of famous people lip-synched to music or other dialogue)

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to Lawrence Lessig’s *Remix* (discussed later), this budding area of scholarship also includes Catherine G. Latterell’s *ReMix: Reading and Composing Culture* (2009), Mark Amerika’s *remixthebook* (2011), and Kirby Ferguson’s web video series *Everything is a Mashup* (2010-2012).

Lessig presents the face of remix culture as that of an innovator who seeks to create a new meaning from existing materials, not to destroy the preexisting works.

Lessig emphasizes that the importance and meaning of remixes “comes not from the content of what they say; it comes from the reference, which is expressible only if it is the original that gets used” (74). He argues that remix artists do not thrive on controversy, despite the amount that their works tend to cause. Lessig cites the example of Gregg Gillis (better known as “Girl Talk”), a digital producer who has produced five albums, all of which are composed solely from samples and remixes of popular music, as one such artist who is better known for his talent than the controversy surrounding his works. Lessig also discusses Candice Breitz, a mixed media artist from South Africa, who has constructed tributes to superstar musicians, consisting of videos of fans singing along to the artist’s music, as a similar example. Her latest installation at White Cube in London, *Working Class Hero (A Portrait of John Lennon)* (2007)<sup>8</sup>, includes twenty five videos of British John Lennon fans singing along to the entirety of *John Lennon / Plastic Ono Band*. However, Yoko Ono herself almost stopped the work from appearing due to potential copyright violation (Lessig 5-11). Breitz’s video installations would not evoke such an emotional response from the viewer if they showed fans singing along to less iconic albums. Her previous exhibits had not presented such legal problems as *Working Class Hero* had, but were nevertheless received just as well. The majority of remix artists recreate because they respect the original creation and want to pay tribute to it in their own fashion. In this regard, Seth Grahame-Smith’s use of Jane Austen’s original text is similarly well-intentioned, as he has explicitly stated that his adaptation was written with the utmost respect and adoration for *Pride and Prejudice*. As *PPZ* is upfront about its use of Austen’s

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<sup>8</sup> Not to be mistaken with *Working Class Hero: A Tribute to John Lennon* (1995), a compilation of covers of Lennon’s music.

original text, Grahame-Smith did not have to fight any copyright battles; however, Austen fans found more problematic about the work's disrespect of the original text than any potential copyright violation.

Remixing has become a controversial practice, both for legal reasons and to those who support original works. Lessig makes it clear throughout his book that he is nothing but supportive of remix culture and remix artists themselves. At the 2006 Comedies of Fair Use conference at New York University, Lessig describes his introduction to the opposition for remixing. Charles Simms, a lawyer, encouraged young artists to focus more on "original creativity" than derivative works, arguing that "this parasitic reuse ... is such a terrible diversion of young people's talent" (93). Simms lamented the "fundamental failure of imagination" of creating such works, claiming, "to encourage young people to think that instead of creating out of their own souls and their own talents to simply reuse what's available off the streets to them, is underselling the talents that young people have" (91-2). Lessig immediately counters Simms' claim, acknowledging the talent required to successfully create a remix: "anyone who think remixes and mash-ups are neither original nor creative has very little idea about how they are made and what makes them great. It takes extraordinary knowledge about a culture to remix it well" (93). Even before *PPZ*, Grahame-Smith had always displayed a keen awareness of current popular culture. His writing credits also include *The Spider-Man Handbook: The Ultimate Training Manual* (2006), *How to Survive a Horror Movie: All the Skills to Dodge the Kills* (2007), and *Pardon My President* (2008), a satirical book of apology letters from former President George W. Bush to various parties. With such topical writing credits, it is clear that Grahame-Smith's success lies in his extensive knowledge of various subjects, which thus allows him to create such solid parodies and homages.

Much of the current concern over remixing is focused primarily on music and video, mostly due to their ubiquity and history of strict copyright laws. Thus, it is understandable that little has been said or written on the literary mashup. The connections between traditional literature and the newly established remix novel are rooted in the development of the fanfiction genre. Fanfiction is a branch of literature in which writers draw existing characters directly from previous works and incorporate them into original stories that are published almost exclusively online. Fanfiction has experienced significant popularity through works such as the *Star Trek* (1966-69) and *Harry Potter* (1997-2007) series, both providing a seemingly endless array of characters and relationships to write about. Although fanfics are almost exclusively published online, some writers have achieved a great deal of success outside of the online community. Meg Cabot, author of *The Princess Diaries* (2000), admitted to writing fanfiction in college based on the novels of Anne McCaffrey, and British author Joanne Harris has spoken of writing a novel-length fanfic based on *Lost* (2004-10) (Young; Harris). As well as a starting point for their own original fiction, some writers have professionally published their fanfics. However, because this practice relies on the original work's copyright restrictions (or lack thereof), Austen's works, which now fall under public domain, are an ideal subject.

In fact, Austen's works provided the inspiration for the first published piece of fanfiction. Sybil G. Brinton's 1913 novel *Old Friends and New Fancies* incorporates the characters from all of Austen's novels and allowing them to interact with each other in order to continue their respective stories. While not a literary match for the original novels – Stephen McClarence, a British journalist, laments that Brinton “does not do wryness” and that “the result is bland and, to non-addicts..., bewildering” – it was apparent that Brinton herself was a huge fan of Austen's work. Deb Werksman, editor for Sourcebooks (an independent book publisher), admits that “the

authenticity of Brinton's English voice is very appealing. She had the advantage of writing when language was more precise and education was better" (McClarence). Brinton's novel has since been republished and, while a must-have for Austen addicts, has not been very popular. Although it has novelty on its side as the original Austen fanfic, the authentic language alone is not enough to make the book a success; as Grahame-Smith proves, it is not impossible to emulate the original's language well.

Since Brinton's novel, over a hundred novels have been published as continuations of *Pride and Prejudice*, and this trend shows no sign of disappearing. Many such novels take the perspective of Mr. Darcy (Amanda Grange's *Mr. Darcy's Diary: A Novel* [2007], Mary Street's *The Confession of Fitzwilliam Darcy* [2008], and Janet Aylmer's *Darcy's Story* [2006], to name a few); others follow the future generations of the original characters (Rebecca Ann Collins' *Pemberley Chronicles* series [2008-10] follows Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth fifty years into their marriage; Emma Tennant's 1994 novel is simply titled *An Unequal Marriage: Or Pride and Prejudice Twenty Years Later*). Ann Herendeen's *Pride/Prejudice* (2010) even reimagines the main characters as bisexuals in relationships with other characters. However, derivative works, even published ones, are already marginalized by some fan communities, especially those from the Jane Austen fandom, which is mostly comprised of fans and fewer scholars. *The Republic of Pemberley*, an Austen fan-run message board, has a page devoted to "Jane Austen Sequels" which lists derivative works, sorted by the novel on which they are based. The page also includes reviews of each sequel, allowing visitors to get a fair perspective of the works. On the other hand, *AustenBlog* vehemently designates these works as "Paraliterature," using a scholarly term to refer to works that, although professionally published, they do not regard as traditional, printed literature. Fanfics are also marginalized due to the reactions of the original authors

themselves; some authors find the imitations flattering and encourage new writers to engage in the practice, while others oppose it on grounds of copyright violation or simply personal insult. In particular, Anne Rice, author of *Interview With a Vampire* (1976), has spoken out against derivative works of her vampire novels, stating that “the characters are copyrighted. It upsets me terribly to even think about fanfiction with my characters. I advise my readers to write your own original stories with your own characters” (Rice). While Rice is entitled to feel protective of her characters, there is not much that Rice can do to stop creative works, unless fanfiction writers are making a profit from their work. This also seems unfair to fans who love her characters as much as she does. As with all other forms of remix or derivative works, fanfiction is a labor of love for writers. For fans, this type of fiction is by far the most accessible form of fan expression due to its simplicity as an art form. It does not require specialized computer programs or technical training, but simply a writing implement, allowing a broad range of people to create such works. This accessibility makes writing fanfiction easier than other art forms, but only combined with fans’ enthusiasm and their own creativity does it become just as important to fan culture. With an endless array of characters and scenarios to write about, fanfiction has become the ultimate vehicle for mashups, which are called “crossovers.” Fanfic writers are free to explore possibilities outside the established realm, or “canon” of their favorite works. For instance, one might write a story about Harry Potter’s Jedi Knight training, or about Jon Stewart as Batman.<sup>9</sup> Crossovers provide outlets for fans of multiple genres or fandoms to combine them in innovative ways and appeal to fans of either (or both) original source.

As with remixes and remakes, fanfiction is born out of a great deal of knowledge about and a passion for the original work. “Fandoms” like *Harry Potter* and *Doctor Who* (2005-)

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<sup>9</sup> Rhodes, Jed. “Harry Potter: Jedi Knight of the Republic.” Fanfiction.net. 15 Dec. 2011. Web. 15 Mar. 2012.; raysgal. “The Man With the Cape.” *Fake News Fanfiction*. 4 Sept. 2008. Web. 15 Mar. 2012.

consist of such dedicated, active followers and participants because of a love for the original, not a desire to undermine it. Just like remixing a favorite song, writing fanfiction shows a desire to be a more active part of the fan community and fosters an environment of what Lessig calls a “Read/Write” culture, where participation, rather than consumption, is the desired end result (Lessig 28-9). Werksman also reasons that Austen fans are an obvious market for fanfiction because of the desire to prolong their own experience within the fandom: “After 15 years of reading and rereading the six Austen novels, you realize there aren’t enough of them” (McClarence). The same can be said for many fanfiction subjects, such as Joss Whedon’s short-lived television series *Firefly* (2002-3), which has inspired over 6000 fanfics on fanfiction.net alone, or Stephen Moffat’s BBC miniseries *Sherlock* (2010-), which, before January of 2012, consisted of only three episodes<sup>10</sup>. Fanfiction is created when audiences simply can’t get enough.<sup>11</sup>

*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*’ publication has incited a wave of other “monster mashups” in popular fiction. Since 2009, dozens of other titles have followed, including Ben H. Winters’ *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* (2009) and *Android Karenina* (2010), Sarah Gray’s *Wuthering Bites* (2010), and Sherri Browning Erwin’s *Jane Slayre* (2010).<sup>12</sup> These all strive for the same loyalty to the original text that Grahame-Smith achieved, down to the original author’s language. Within the original works’ fan base, reviews have been generally positive.

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<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that *Sherlock* itself is a retelling of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes* original novels and short stories (1887-1927), thus enforcing the notion that some fandoms never really disappear.

<sup>11</sup> This unwillingness to let a series die is especially strong in *Firefly* fans (who call themselves Browncoats after the show’s fictional resistance front). In addition to fanfiction and other fanart, the 14-episode series has inspired dozens independent fan forums and sites. The fandom’s enthusiasm also provided the support for a film sequel to the series, *Serenity* (2005), a tabletop roleplaying game, various international conventions, a fan-made film sequel, *Browncoats: Redemption* (2010), which was authorized by Whedon himself, and even a campaign urging Nathan Fillion, the series’ star, to buy the rights to the series in order to restart it (a campaign which was quickly shut down, but not after gaining pledges for over \$1 million over a span of a few weeks).

<sup>12</sup> Grahame-Smith’s *Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter* (2010) applied the monster mashup trend to historical fiction, and found great success, even resulting in a film adaptation in 2012.

One review of *Wuthering Bites* lauded the novel, claiming that “Sarah Gray has circumvented the problem of ‘undying love’ and provided much needed answers with her mashup created from Emily Bronte’s celebrated novel” (Deltener). Similarly, *Bookalicio.us* expresses a nurturing view of mashups in reviewing Lynn Messina’s *Little Vampire Women* (2010): “We approach our retelling of *Little Women* with an open mind, an irreverent spirit, and a love for the original in our hearts” (“Little Vampire Women Preview”). While the monster trend continues to infiltrate popular literature, readers continue to branch out and read more mashups, largely due to their love of the original novels. Regardless of how well the mashup is written, one must enjoy the original in order to want to reread it, new additions or not. Mashups, apart from appealing to those who are already fans, earn their popularity through what can be called the overlying function of literary remixes: to introduce new interpretations of classic literature by creating new conflicts and relationships. These new interpretations allow for previously unapplied (or even nonexistent) criticism techniques. As Ladd observes, Grahame-Smith, through his remix novel, is “telling us that the original *Pride and Prejudice* is about zombies. Instead of proving it by traditional critical means, a mash-up shows us what a text is about by altering the text itself.” Although Ladd’s claim is somewhat radical, the “reader’s discussion guide” at the end of Grahame-Smith’s novel supports it well. One question poses that “some scholars believe that the zombies were a last-minute addition to the novel, requested by the publisher in a shameless attempt to boost sales. Others argue that the hordes of living dead are integral to Jane Austen’s plot and social commentary. What do you think? Can you imagine what this novel might be like without the violent zombie mayhem” (Grahame-Smith, 319)? The content of this question reinforces the idea that not only was the original novel actually supposed to include zombies, and that Grahame-Smith was merely clarifying this, but also that scholars have already been hard at

work studying the new version of the text, even as early as the first edition's release. However, the phrasing on the question – which refers to Austen as the true author of the text – proposes the concept that *PPZ* is actually taking the place of the original novel in literary canon.

Some like Ladd and Lessig have argued that literary remixes are a natural stage within remix culture as a whole, encouraging the growth of the remix body of work. However, not all readers have been as open-minded. Thomas Strickland argued in his review that “Grahame-Smith, seemingly, grasp[s] onto everything that is enjoyable about zombies and Regency Romances and swiftly decided to leave these items from his novel. The zombies are not scary. The romance is contrived” (Strickland). He also argues that it is practically impossible to do hand to hand combat with a zombie, let alone in a Regency style dress (Strickland). It is interesting that Strickland seems to value authenticity in regards to the novel's setting as well as its relation to the original version, something that not many other reviewers have pointed out. Despite being an admitted Austen and zombie fan, Wyatt Williams concedes that “After an earnest, failed attempt to actually read it, I have to assume that skimming for the zombie parts is kind of the point.” In one of the most scathing reviews, Brian Davey explores the novel's actual content instead of simply criticizing the novel's concept. Davey denounces the parody's “frequent, cartoonish bouts of combat,” and even points out that Grahame-Smith's use of similes is in stark contrast with Austen's original, less ornamented language (Davey). Although an unforgiving critique, it is clear that Davey has actually read the novel, even if he does not like what he sees. He takes a defensive stance of the original, similar to most professed Austen fans.

For every negative review, however, there were just as many who found the mashup inspired. The A.V. Club's review stated “Such is the accomplishment of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* that after reveling in its timeless intrigue, it's difficult to remember how Austen's

novel got along without the undead” (Bowman). Rob Bricken of Topless Robot enthusiastically promoted the book: “Short version: This book is *awesome*. Actually, it's also brilliant, and I don't think that's hyperbole – it's genuinely amazing how skillfully author Seth Grahame-Smith has inserted flesh-eating zombies into Jane Austen's literally classic, and created a book that is still utterly *Pride and Prejudice*, but is also hilarious and massively entertaining” (Bricken). Monica Hesse of the Washington Post remarks that “you gotta believe that Jane Austen-based stories wouldn't sell so well if they didn't *work*, on some intrinsic literary level” (Hesse). In her *Entertainment Weekly* review, Lisa Schwarzbaum said, “the greater achievement of the book may lie in the satisfying desire it awakens to read the remix and the original side by side. Indeed, you'll miss out if you do not, so smartly does young Mr. Grahame-Smith insert himself in the thicket of curlicued manners that is Miss Austen's real comic theme” (Schwarzbaum). It is interesting to note that many of those reviewers who enjoyed the mashup praised Grahame-Smith's consistent imitation of Austen's original prose, an attribute which, when reappropriated, become a source of humor in the new novel, regardless of the reader's prior knowledge. However, with a familiarity of Austen's language, the mashup remains more faithful to the original tone and is thus able to derive humor from it. More specific instances of this use of language will be discussed in chapter three.

The perceived importance of fidelity and respect for the original novel has also raised concerns among *PPZ*'s more discerning audience members. On one hand, some Austen scholars, such as Deidre Lynch, found the remix fun and refreshing: “It goes with the muddy petticoats and the rambling across the countryside in this unladylike way. The next step is ninja training” (Scheussler). On the other hand, the (louder) majority of this community has been much less accepting. Entries from the Austen-L listserv discussions serve to emphasize this

distaste. Before the novel's release, Teresa Rust exclaimed “I mostly resent Seth Grahame-Smith using her original text, [sic] let him make up his own! If this isn't adultery, I don't know what is. I do think Jane would resent him using her lines that she worked so hard on.” To these readers, *PPZ* has become a punchline of sorts, epitomizing a lack of research and solemnity in all things Austen. Diana Birchall, another listserv contributor, while hypothesizing the future of literary mash-ups, said “Rather than go through all the Austen books and pair them with various fabulous monsters, I believe they're planning to attack different authors and subjects.” The use of words such as “adultery” and “attack” give teeth to the accusations and critiques from the Austen fan community, demonstrating their belief that Grahame-Smith’s use of the original text was disingenuous rather than loving.

A potential reason that remixed books have proven difficult for some to swallow is the attitudes towards ownership within the written word in general. A common complaint among reviews was the amount of original text that still exists in *PPZ*; most noted that about 85% of the novel was largely unchanged. However, the written word has always seemed to fall in a grey area when it comes to use and acknowledgement of ownership. It appears that restrictions on written texts more closely resemble fair use laws than more traditional copyright laws, in that it is acceptable to use others’ material within one’s own work, as long as proper credit is given.

Lessig explains this attitude well:

Writing, in the traditional sense of words placed on paper, is the ultimate form of democratic creativity, where, again, “democratic” doesn’t mean people vote, but instead means that everyone within a society has access to the means to write. ...

We understand quoting is an essential part of that writing. It would be impossible to construct and support that practice if permission were required every time a

quote was made. The freedom to quote, and to build upon, the words of others is taken for granted by everyone who writes. (52-3)

It is counterintuitive, then, that Grahame-Smith's mashup should be criticized for "stealing" from Austen, when, in fact, Austen is listed as a co-author of the novel. By giving such treatment and acknowledgement to Austen, it seems that Grahame-Smith shows more concern with honoring the original work than taking full credit for the work and treating Austen's words as the supplement to his own.

It is worth noting that, as a mashup, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* has successfully transcended types of media as well. In addition to both prequel and sequel novels and a graphic novel adaptation, rumors of a film adaptation, with Grahame-Smith himself penning the screenplay, began in 2009. *PPZ* has also been "adapted" to a newer medium: the book trailer. Much like a film trailer, the short video portrays "scenes" from the novel with live actors. *PPZ*'s trailer, however, provides a twist even within the barely formed conventions of this medium. The trailer instead begins with a slideshow of stills from the recent film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (2005, Joe Wright), portraying Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Bennet. The text floats across the screen, reading "The same *Pride and Prejudice*..." The frame cuts to a blood-smeared, wide eyed zombie. The sentence completes itself: "...only awesome." The frame then cuts to an almost laughable image: a still of Knightley again, but this time, from *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* (2007, Gore Verbinski), showing her in warrior-like pirate regalia and brandishing a sword ("Pride and Prejudice and Zombies"). It is ironic that even the trailer for this mashup novel is itself a mashup.

Remix culture as a whole has provided many opportunities for new forms of creativity and expression, regardless of medium. In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Seth Grahame-Smith draws heavily from Austen's original novel as a way of remaining faithful to his parody's origins, not simply as an easy way out. While devout fans of *Pride and Prejudice* have spoken critically of the novel, it seems very difficult to clearly differentiate Grahame-Smith's work from that of thousands of fanfiction writers and fan artists. If fanfiction is not looked down upon as theft or disrespect, why, then, should Grahame-Smith's novel be treated thusly? Of the hundreds of parallel novels and unofficial sequels to *Pride and Prejudice*, *PPZ* is shockingly one of the truest representations of Austen's original characters and story, and has certainly not earned the disapproval it has gained in some circles. Chapter three will elaborate on the comparisons between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* more completely. For now, though, let's talk about those zombies.

## CHAPTER 2: THE STRANGE PLAGUE

In 2008, the world was in the midst of a zombie apocalypse. As Annalee Newitz of io9.com observes, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the largest spike in zombie film production in history occurred. While some of this popularity could be attributed to the sheer amount of films produced per year as opposed to previous decades, it is apparent that this wave of zombie films followed a pattern. Newitz presents a graph which shows the number of zombie movies made since 1910, as well as highlights periods of war and social unrest in America and Europe. The significant spikes in the number of zombie movies take place around such times, including the Vietnam War and the Iraq War (Newitz). By charting this pattern, Newitz introduces a hypothesis: that zombie films were created during these eras as a mechanism for coping with the dangers and fears of the world around us. The correlation reflects the cultural need to envision the same chaos and destruction happening in the actual world – acts of terrorism, political corruption, and civil unrest (both in America and across the globe) - in a more detached way. Instead of being forced to see actual people as perpetrators of this unrest, however, the blow is lessened by the threat being posed by a mindless, (mostly) faceless horde that possesses both human and monstrous qualities.

By choosing zombies as his main antagonists in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Seth Grahame-Smith is both arguing that zombies are necessary cultural objects for the twenty-first century, and that they can also be used to reinterpret the events of a novel written in the late 1700s. In this chapter, I provide background information on the zombie's history. I then examine the rhetoric and language used by various sources to describe zombies and the lore which surrounds them. Finally, I highlight some major trends in zombie symbolism, including the fears of domination, plague and epidemics, and global wars, and discuss their connections

with *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. These topics incorporate pieces of prominent scholarship within the field of zombie studies (a recent topic of scholarship which draws from various preceding traditions such as film studies, folklore studies, and political studies) and examples from older zombie narratives (such as Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* series and George Romero's famous zombie films), as well as close readings from *PPZ*.

The zombie myth was originally part of Haitian voodoo culture. In Haitian myth, the zombie is a slave to its creator, acting as it is instructed. The method by which one becomes a zombie, however, is undefined. In *American Zombie Gothic* (2010), Kyle William Bishop explains that "sometimes the zombie is created by magic, sometimes by poisoning; some zombies are employed by greedy capitalists, and others are created for revenge" (51). In any case, it is important to note that the zombie was always created deliberately.<sup>13</sup> The earliest recorded use of the term "zombie" appeared in Judge Henry Austin's 1912 essay in *New England Magazine*.<sup>14</sup> Austin talks about a Haitian poison that causes its victims to appear deceased. In the same year, Stephen Bonsal's book *The American Mediterranean* described a Haitian man "who was found tied to a tree in a zombie state days after his confirmed death and burial" (Bishop 61). These instances were most likely the introduction of the Haitian zombie to American readers, a readership which already viewed cultures like the Haitians as foreign and threatening. Therefore, it is understandable that the zombie was already being interpreted as more monstrous and exotic than the state truly was.

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<sup>13</sup> Bishop's book is a comprehensive one that provides a detailed overview of current zombie culture, as well as providing a great deal about the monster's history. Other important works of scholarship include Gregory Waller's *The Living and the Undead* (1985), which includes zombies in a complete analysis of undead beings within texts, and Jamie Russell's *Book of the Dead: The Complete History of Zombie Cinema* (2005).

<sup>14</sup> Austin, Judge Henry. "The Worship of the Snake Voodooism in Hayti Today." *New England Magazine*, Mar-Aug. 1912: 170-182.

William B. Seabrook's 1929 travelogue *The Magic Island* has provided much of the known information regarding Haitian zombies, as well as cementing the term in American vernacular. Usually, Haitian zombies were victims of mind control, cursed rather than infected, and were usually still considered to be "alive." However, there are also reported cases of resurrected corpses being used as free labor. Seabrook's chapter "Dead Men Working in the Cane Fields" documents this practice, including a first-hand description of the zombies themselves, describing them "plodding like brutes, like automatons... The eyes were the worst... They were in truth like the eyes of a dead man, not blind, but staring, unfocused, unseeing. The whole face... was vacant, as if there was nothing behind it" (Qtd. in Bishop 49). However, labor was not the only incentive to create zombies. Along with Seabrook, Zora Neale Hurston suggests in her book *Tell My Horse* (1938) that zombies were also created for revenge. Hurston tells the story of a woman who allegedly died in 1907, but was discovered in 1936, "wandering aimlessly through the Haitian countryside, naked, confused, and muttering about her father's farm" (Bishop 50). She was identified by her husband, albeit reluctantly, and returned home. Hurston's account echoes Seabrook's descriptions, as she reflects on "that blank face with those dead eyes... There was nothing that you could say to her or get from her except by looking at her, and the sight of this wreckage was too much to endure for long" (Qtd in Bishop 50). Those in the community gave no details given regarding her death or apparent resurrection, so the event remained hauntingly unexplainable.

Within fictional texts, much like many other monsters, the zombie has become a versatile symbolic icon. In her article "Prolepsis and the 'War on Terror': Zombie Pathology and the Culture of Fear in *28 Days Later...*", Anna Froula addresses some differences between zombies and other monsters that are currently experiencing resurgences in popularity. While it seems

easy to group zombie films together with vampire and werewolf movies, she argues that the monsters serve different purposes within their respective texts: “The proletariat underclass of cinematic monsters, zombies lack the sensual cunning of the vampire and the functioning human counterpart of the werewolf or serial killer. Rather, they are both victim and monster, dramatizing the horrors of brainwashing and enslavement” (196). This distinction, expounding on Gregory Waller’s descriptions of the undead, is especially important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when many different monsters are experiencing renaissances in literature. Instead of all falling into the same category of “movie monsters,” each creature serves a different purpose within their texts. Zombies, Froula argues, serve to embody cultural fears of helplessness and to provide an embodiment for “contemporary anxieties of empire” (201). Their versatility as symbolic creatures, then, makes them continually relevant in a modern world that is consistently plagued by such fears.

The language used to describe and identify zombies is typically an important aspect of the texts in which they appear. Within most fictional zombie texts, the story takes place in something of an alternate universe where zombies have never before been discussed, even in Haitian lore. Because of this, each fictional society is forced to discover and interpret the monsters in their own fashion, starting with agreeing on a name for them. This collectively established name, while chosen out of mere necessity, can offer a revealing perspective on the human culture itself rather than the monsters. This perspective not only shows the characters’ relationships with the zombies, but also provides tools with which to examine the cultural context surrounding the text itself. Froula compares the rhetoric of *28 Days Later* (2002, Danny Boyle) with the rhetoric used to describe adversaries and prisoners of war, specifically the Iraq War of the early twenty first century. Prisoners during the Iraq war, renamed “detainees” and

“enemy combatants” by the Bush administration, were (and still are) subjected to dehumanizing conditions, particularly in the Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib prisons. Under these names, society no longer has to see prisoners as human and thus does not have to empathize with them. Even when discussing conflicts further from home, Froula cites Anne McClintock, who observes that the US government “had to turn ordinary people into enemy bodies” in order to “legitimize” the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq (Qtd. in Froula 205). Froula also highlights the similarities between zombie rhetoric and language surrounding the San Domingo Revolution (1791-1802) which helped portray the uprising as a metaphoric contagion on insurrection threatening the American slavocracy as well as the commercial interests of European empires. At the start of the revolution, George Washington spoke of the importance of “crush[ing] the alarming insurrection of the Negroes of St. Domingo” before they posed a direct threat to the United States (Qtd. in Froula 201). Years later, Thomas Jefferson also spoke out against the “cannibals of the terrible republic,” arguing that the Haitians would “sweep... the globe” with “revolutionary storm” (Qtd. in Froula 201). While the spread of revolution can take on infectious qualities, it is the power of this revolution that made it such an ongoing threat to the American people, and thus made it necessary for leaders to speak out against it. The fear evoked in this rhetoric also effectively demonizes the Haitians more strongly than other phrasing could.

The language used to describe the monsters and the threats they pose has evolved throughout the monster’s history. Particularly in contemporary zombie texts, the monsters have broken their ties with magical and voodoo sources. The concept of the zombie “virus” is almost universally canonical since Romero’s introduction of it. Zombies no longer signify the threat of invasion, but instead bring the dangers of contagion, infiltration, and assimilation. It’s not enough for them to be among us; they want to make us into them as well. This change in the

accepted zombie mythos also sparks connections with disease and plague rhetoric, the language of which has evolved very little over the past few centuries.

The names used to identify zombies within fictional texts have become an interesting aspect of zombie texts, largely due to the exclusion of the most widely recognized term for the monsters themselves, “zombie.” Instead, the term is reserved for fantastic sounding titles (*Vengeance of the Zombies* [1973, León Klimovsky], *Zombie Holocaust* [1980, Marion Girolami], *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies??!* [1964, Ray Dennis Steckler] stand out as examples) and conversations outside of the texts themselves. In Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead*, the monsters are never named officially, but are instead called a variety of names by the survivors and the media, such as “thing,” “assassins,” simply “the dead,” or even “a man.”<sup>15</sup> While the threat that the zombies pose is never called into question, their humanity most certainly is. The media’s words “assassins” and “killers” relates the monsters to human serial killers, still possessing a degree of humanity but dangerous nonetheless. Ben’s (Duane Jones) “things” shows his unwillingness to accept their potential humanity. Barbara (Judith O’dea), however, uses the word “man,” a choice that evokes a sense of pity for the creatures, even after witnessing her brother’s death at the hands of a zombie. The range of names resembles coverage and discussion of America’s overseas conflicts, where a single word choice can effectively dehumanize, or even demonize an entire nation of people.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Romero himself referred to the monsters as “ghouls,” a noncommittal term that coincides with the sense of confusion and lack of a real resolution at the end of the film. The invasion simply stops and the (surviving) characters never truly figure out what happened.

<sup>16</sup> Froula specifically discusses this demonization in terms of wartime rhetoric, pointing out that while language may establish boundaries between “us” and “them,” zombies as monsters, regardless of their monikers, “negate those differences. They blur the boundary between life and death by pitting us against ourselves and by confronting us with the abject corpse we will all one day become” (196). In short, the names that societies give zombies cannot do enough to differentiate them from ourselves as human beings.

Since *Night of the Living Dead*, zombie naming trends have remained largely consistent in the sense that very few zombie narratives take place in a world that is aware of zombies, regardless of what they are called. Characters in the narrative may already have a basic understanding of voodoo practices or of the cause of the outbreak itself, be it chemical, natural, or contagion. In Dan O'Bannon's *Return of the Living Dead* (1985), the two protagonists discuss having seen the original *Night of the Living Dead*. However, as Romero's original does not use the term "zombie," the protagonists still avoid naming the monsters.

While few and far between, film settings that are aware of zombies and other zombie texts tend to take place in contemporary civilization. A particularly memorable instance appears in *Shaun of the Dead*. Before leaving their house, Ed (Nick Frost) asks Shaun (Simon Pegg), "Are there any zombies out there?" Shaun starts and grimaces.

Shaun: Don't say that!

Ed: What?

Shaun: That.

Ed: What?

Shaun: That, the... zed word. Don't say it.

Ed: Why not?

Shaun: Because it's ridiculous!

The term "zombie" holds a ludicrous connotation, even when the men are faced with the actual undead. The same can be said of *Zombieland* (2009, Ruben Fleischer), which takes place in present day America. The term is used frequently in the film, both in conversation and in voice-overs of ongoing action. The characters talk about making the "zombie kill of the week," an

imaginary award for the most inventive and effective method of killing zombies, and even use the film's title to refer to the new post-apocalyptic world.

In the world of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, the characters' lack of prior zombie knowledge is even more plausible for the reader, as in the early 1800s, zombies had yet to be introduced to the rest of the world. The novel takes place an entire century before Austin's article in *New England Magazine*, so even the word itself is foreign. As in other zombie texts, the novel's society has invented their own term to make sense of the monsters. In this case, 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain chose the term "unmentionables." The moniker is already a pun, using a euphemism for underwear from the same era. Characters also use the phrases "sorrow-stricken" and "Satan's armies," much more dignified terms than "zombie" or "monster." While it is common knowledge within the novel that the outbreak was indeed a plague, the language used by the characters is that of propriety and civility that refrains from identifying it as thus. In his narration, Grahame-Smith uses "zombie" frequently, but only for the benefit of the reader. This effectively defines the novel as more modern than its original version as, even though the novel's characters react as 18<sup>th</sup> century characters naturally would, Grahame-Smith shows explicit knowledge that his audience is contemporary and is aware of the more modern term. More comparison of Austen and Grahame-Smith's novels will appear in chapter three.

The zombie has almost always served a symbolic purpose within white culture. Even apart from the zombie legend, voodoo as a whole was viewed as a threat by white plantation and slave owners, representing a method through which the lower classes could become powerful and, as a result, control the ruling class. Voodoo "united... the common people against the central government" by providing a common ideology. Within this ideology, the danger does not come from the zombies themselves, but those who create them, powerful voodoo priests who

threaten both pagan and Christian Haitians alike. Additionally on a literal level, slave labor effectively reduced the working class to zombies. In Haitian culture, the upper class perceived much more of a threat from the powerful priests who could create zombies than the “zombies” themselves of the over-worked lower class (Bishop 52-9).

With this knowledge of the monster’s history, it is easy to see why early Hollywood zombie movies such as *White Zombie* (1932, Victor Halperin) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943, Jacques Tourneur) are so deeply rooted in Haitian and colonial island themes of challenging imperialist superiority and control. These roots make the horrors of becoming a zombie even more terrifying for white Western audiences. While the notion of becoming a living corpse is already a frightening one, being a victim at the hands of a non-white perpetrator presents a different threat, one which appeals to white audiences on a more tangible level. Bishop states that “the true horror in these movies lies in the prospect of a Westerner becoming dominated, subjugated, symbolically raped, and effectively ‘colonized’ by pagan representatives” (Bishop 66). Zombies remained firmly tied to its voodoo origins until the 1960s, as George Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) broke new ground for zombie films by disconnecting the monsters from their island setting and magical creation.

As stated previously, the first zombie movies’ frights came from the monster’s connection with colonization and island culture. In Western societies whose history relies on racial subordination and colonization, it is natural that the most striking cultural fear would be a reversal of these roles. As Bishop points out, the dangers of slave uprisings and domination of white characters by African American or Haitian antagonists hit very close to home for early twentieth century audiences. Whether or not these fears were specifically articulated within the

culture, their expression through these films allowed them to be presented in a more detached manner.

Another theme that zombies address is the fear of attack and domination, which grew in the wake of World War II and into the Cold War. This shift relied heavily on the change in societal anxieties, which, during the 1950s and 60s, included “the fear of foreign otherness and monstrous invasion,” “the technological explosion,” and “the rise of feminism, gay liberation, and African-American civil rights” (Bruhm 260-1). The zombie films of this era were more strongly indicative of the paranoia that most Western countries were experiencing. Following the atrocities of the Holocaust and the nuclear bomb, these films served as a form of release by “providing viewers much needed catharsis while revealing *and* disguising repressed fears and anxieties” (Bishop 18). This era also ushered in the threats of the hordes of zombies, instead of focusing on a handful of monsters as earlier films had done. Large-scale invasion from a foreign source is the major threat in *Invisible Invaders* (1959, Edward L. Cahn), *The Earth Dies Screaming* (1964, Terence Fisher), and, later, Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead*, as well as non-zombie horror films such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956, Don Siegel) and *The Birds* (1963, Alfred Hitchcock).

In order to interpret Grahame-Smith’s application of zombies to *Pride and Prejudice*, it is essential to discuss the cultural surroundings of both the original novel’s publication and the remake’s publication. In Austen’s era of the 1700s, Britain was still very actively colonizing in many parts of the world, including parts India and Africa. It seems natural, then, that the fears of reverse colonization and uprisings could manifest itself through such foreign, unruly monsters as zombies. However, Grahame-Smith’s zombies do not adhere to the early Haitian zombie, but instead more closely resemble later versions of plague or infection zombies as seen in *28 Days*

*Later* or the *Resident Evil* series (1996-). This seems attributable to the fact that, while British society was in a position of power across the globe, more immediate threats came from things on their own land like disease.

In the first zombie Hollywood films like *White Zombie* and *I Walked with a Zombie*, the term was still strongly associated with the zombie's native island origins, making these films more about the threats of non-white culture than the actual monsters themselves. The danger to the protagonists comes not from the zombies, but from the voodoo practitioners who control them. The zombies themselves, while frightening, are seen as victims rather than the perpetrators of violence. In *White Zombie*, as the title suggests, the zombified victim is the beautiful American, Madeleine (Madge Bellamy), who has come to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to marry her fiancé, Neil (John Harron). However, she catches the eye of Charles Beaumont (Robert Frazer), a French banker, who decides that he must possess her. Using a poison that he obtains from a plantation owner and witch doctor, Murder Legendre (Béla Lugosi), Beaumont transforms Madeleine into a zombie. After some time, Beaumont wishes to reverse the curse, but Legendre instead poisons him to keep Madeleine for himself. However, Neil soon attacks Legendre's fortress, and, in defeating him, frees Madeleine from her curse. The main source of *White Zombie*'s terror lies in the disturbing notion of the native island's influence being used to prey on a virginal, young, white woman. Even though the curse has been spread by Lugosi's character and not a more stereotypical native character, it is established that he is an inhabitant of the island, as opposed to Madeleine and Neil, who are American, and Beaumont, who is French. In addition to representing the threat of indigenous people, Legendre also represents the threat of members of the superior class working with the natives' magic.

The fear of attack, especially on the scale of a global war, effectively alters the very fabric of society and culture, as Paul Crosthwaite argues in *Trauma, Postmodernism, and the Aftermath of World War II* (2009). World War II in particular brought to light topics within literature and media including “the liability of ‘western’ culture to objectify, oppress, and eliminate its ethnic and racial ‘others,’” “capacity of political and military institutions to dominate, discipline, and control the natural environment and its human inhabitants,” and “the bloody futility of attempts to make over the world in the image of some grand, Utopian vision, whether of the right or of the left” (15). He also suggests that these topics help create texts that are connected to historical events and, by drawing doing so, these texts serve as a tool to destroy the existing meanings of the events themselves (Crosthwaite 19). Within zombie film culture, events such as the Holocaust and the slaughters of the Vietnam War are given new meanings and contexts through their subsequent interpretations.<sup>17</sup>

The most prevalent theme that zombies mediate is that of plague and epidemic. The rise of AIDS epidemic in the late 1980s contributed to a moderate spike in zombie media during which, instead of posing a brute physical opposition, the zombies stood for “the fear of contagion” which “resonated well in a world just learning about AIDS” (McIntosh 12). The retooling of zombification as a virus helped bring the monsters into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, during which concerns of biological warfare resurfaced with the threats of avian flu, SARS, and anthrax. *28 Days Later* is an important film in this movement, because, although it can be categorized as a zombie movie, the term “zombie” is not found in the film. Instead, monsters are

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<sup>17</sup> Sumiko Higashi’s article “*Night of the Living Dead: A Horror Film about the Horrors of the Vietnam Era*” (1990) discusses the film’s reflections of the Vietnam War. Higashi calls attention to the media culture of the 1970s, which had already become a less than credible source for happenings overseas. As a result, general trust in media, and thus public officials in general, decreased. This distrust is reflected in *Night of the Living Dead*’s depiction of the media as a faceless, generally ignorant voice that does little to protect their viewers. The government, too, is portrayed in a less than positive manner, presented as a backwoods hunting party rather than an organized force of control.

the “infected,” which makes the distance between human and monster less distinct than in Romero’s classic zombie films and their stark dichotomy of “us and them.”

Disease outbreaks were still not uncommon, even after major Plague epidemics ended after the 1600s. Austen’s original novel discusses disease to some extent, as Jane’s illness is a catalyst for much of her and Elizabeth’s relationships with the Bingleys and Mr. Darcy. However, the specific details are of little concern to the characters, especially since Mrs. Bennet insists, “People do not die of little trifling colds” (22). By combining the potential real threat of foreign invasion and attack with the pervasive nature of illness from this era, Grahame-Smith successfully creates zombies that maintain relevance and evoke fear in the era of Austen’s original novel.

Even after the era of major epidemics such as the Black Plague had passed, contagious disease was still continuously regarded as an eminent danger, even through Austen’s own period of the late 1700s and early 1800s and beyond. Thus, the rhetoric surrounding it typically contains elements of both fear and reassurance. Written records discussing communicable diseases emphasize the dangers facing the population, but simultaneously urge the population to trust their leaders to protect them and find a solution. This language is used heavily in government statements especially. An example of such rhetoric appears in a 1919 document from the Aden settlement, a British settlement in India. The document, entitled “Plague – Measures Against Prevention in Aden,” consists of a course of action in an attempt to stop the spread of the plague throughout the settlement. These measures include the creation of a local authority, a government appointed task force, with the power to detain persons coming from an infected area and to require removal from “any building or enclosure in which a plague case or suspicious death has occurred,” among others (“Plague”). The notion of an unrestricted

government in times of crisis is not unfamiliar, especially in an era of wars waged against ideas like “terror.” Zombie texts have reflected this sentiment as well; Paul Kaufman (Dennis Hopper) acts as the feudal leader of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in *Land of the Dead* (2005, George Romero), and the military in *28 Days Later*... is an imposing force of both protection and abuse for the film’s survivors<sup>18</sup>. Such examples show that while government control can be a source of reassurance, it can also breed corruption.

It is worth noting that the proposed measures very specifically focused on preventing the spread of disease, both within the community and to other cities. In order to preserve trade relationships with neighboring cities, Aden’s authorities focused their efforts on exterminating rats and rat fleas, the main cause of the plague’s prevalence, and monitoring those entering and leaving the city’s borders. However, the measures listed do not discuss the treatment of the disease itself. On the Aden Field Force’s medical services director’s statement that “‘prevention is better than cure’, recommendations for a rat campaign have been put forward” instead of focus on medical treatment (“Plague”). Instead, families of those infected were instructed to avoid places where the disease was prevalent. Likewise, those infected in *PPZ* can do little to cure their condition. After becoming infected, Charlotte Lucas agrees to marry Mr. Collins, largely because she can rely on him to provide a “proper Christian beheading and burial” (99). Even Elizabeth scoffs at Lady Catherine’s attempts to find a cure, believing that “trifling in plague cures was considered the last refuge of the naïve” (125). As in most zombie narratives, cures and remedies are much less important than survival and preventing infection in the first place.

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<sup>18</sup> Froula’s article “Prolepsis and the ‘War on Terror’” highlights *28 Days Later* as an especially effective allegory for government control: “Whereas the Bush administration promised a state of security in exchange for faith in its often secret methods, *28 Days Later* warns of the dangers of trusting government propaganda and martial law” (200).

The failure of major institutions is a theme in zombie texts. Government, powerful established groups, and the media all suffer following the panic of the zombie apocalypse, and the society disbands to form smaller units, whether these units consist of a single family or a city. A notable example of this failure is Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, which depicts "the almost immediate breakdown of society's infrastructure, especially those systems associated with the government and technology" (Bishop 114). *Night* takes place over the span of a single day, during which the apocalypse "appears to be in full swing within mere hours," which promotes the notion that institutional failure is inevitable and often sudden. In *PPZ*, while the military is still functioning, there is very little evidence that the military does much to protect citizens, instead leaving citizens to learn to use weapons and defend themselves. The Church of England also proves to be ineffective as well in assisting citizens. Organized religion is hardly discussed in *PPZ*, but those who practice it do not seem any better off than those who do not. Mr. Collins explains that he was "brought up for the church," and that he is uncomfortable with violence and has not prepared himself for any other profession than clergyman (77). In comparison, the Bennet sisters, who make no reference to religion or faith, appear much stronger and confident in the face of such horrors.

Another convention that becomes blurred within the zombie narrative is the conflict between "us" and "them." This subverted convention appears frequently in many contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century texts, particularly in *The Walking Dead* and *28 Days Later*. As Froula observes, the zombie is "both victim and monster" simultaneously, while the human characters also serve both roles in relation to both the zombies themselves and other human survivors. The conflicts and relationships between human characters are frequently the most important aspect of a zombie text. Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* graphic novel (2003-) and television (2010-) series

are an excellent example: most of the conflict in Kirkman's narratives takes place between the small group of human survivors, and many of their deaths are attributable to each other and not the zombies. The conflicts become particularly complicated when human members of the group are turned into zombies, especially Sophia (Madison Lintz), the 12-year-old daughter of one of the other survivors. Not only are the survivors then forced to fight their loved ones, but they are also forced to fight their fellow survivors who may feel differently about what should be done. For instance, Hershel Greene (played by Scott Wilson in the television series) begins gathering his zombified family members and neighbors, keeping them in his barn and feeding them himself in the belief that a cure would be found. When the protagonists discover this and confront Hershel, he argues that the "walkers" are still people, calling them by name and refusing to give in to the group's demands that he kill them. When he and Rick (Andrew Lincoln) attempt to "save" two of the zombies and return them to the barn, Hershel says, "There are people out there who haven't been in their right minds, people who I believe can be restored." After a beat of silence, Rick asks, "You're not talking about the walkers, are you?" When humans and zombies both act as monsters and victims, the "us vs. them" conflict always becomes complicated.<sup>19</sup>

This transformation successfully creates monsters, specifically ones whose humanity can potentially be called into question, but is generally disregarded. This motif is especially relevant within zombie narratives, when the definition between "us" and "them" must be established for the protagonists, especially in terms of who the actual "monsters" are. In *28 Days Later*, a zombie film with a strong military connection, this motif is even more clearly defined. One

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<sup>19</sup> Bishop observes that Romero's zombies act as a transitional stage between the zombie's strict otherness and its ability to be compared to humans. Romero accomplishes this by merging the traditional voodoo zombies with a combination of existing monster traditions: "almost single-handedly, Romero reinvented the subgenre, enhancing the monsters and their stories with elements drawn from classical Gothic literature, vampire tales, and science-fiction invasion narratives" (94). By making the zombie into "us," our family members, friends, neighbors, and fellow citizens, Romero shifted their symbolism from island voodoo and colonial concerns and closer to home to represent the "monsters" at home of patriarchy, misogyny, and the protests against the Vietnam War.

particular scene that Froula highlights occurs after Ben (Cillian Murphy) and the other protagonists arrive at the military base. Major West (Christopher Eccleston) introduces Ben to a soldier who has been infected. The soldier, PFC Mailer (Marvin Campbell), is kept chained in a prison courtyard for observation and, as West explains, to see how long it will take for him to starve to death. Whereas the other zombies are menacing and ferocious, Mailer instead evokes pity in the audience. While his humanity may or may not be debatable, the civility of West's choice to leave him chained up and starving certainly is.<sup>20</sup>

In *PPZ*, the human characters likewise show a surprising amount of sympathy towards the zombies, considering their extensive warrior training. Elizabeth hesitates when confronted with a zombie infant, allowing it to survive in a moment of uncharacteristic mercy. As in *The Walking Dead*, the line between human and monster blurs for those that the characters know personally, and Elizabeth's treatment of the slowly-turning Charlotte Lucas makes this apparent. Charlotte is treated with sympathy and something akin to understanding, especially apparent when Elizabeth visits her and assists her in matters of hygiene and manners. While the zombies do pose a threat, a greater threat comes from the novel's human characters, particularly Mr. Wickham and his predatory nature. In any case, the major conflicts of the novel typically involve (the majority of) the Bennet family in opposition to some threat to their reputation or physical wellbeing, either from the living or the undead.

Zombies have remained prominent monsters due to their versatility and adaptability. These traits allow them to continuously be reinvented and thus remain a relevant threat to an ever-changing audience, which Grahame-Smith effectively uses to his advantage. The threats of

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<sup>20</sup> In Steve Hockensmith's sequel, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls* (2010), the scientist Dr. Keckilpenny also keeps a captive zombie chained in his attic. Unlike the soldiers in *28 Days Later*, however, Dr. Keckilpenny intends to cure the zombie (or "re-Anglify" him, for "Mr. Smith isn't just a dead man... He's a dead *Englishman*" [231]).

domination and attack have always existed, especially in imperialist countries, and the dangers of epidemics have a long history in Britain, as well as in the rest of the world. It is not unbelievable to envision these fears being connected with zombies, particularly the newer type which has diverted from its voodoo origins and become a monster that brings infection and uprising from the masses. By drawing from the vast wealth of cultural significance that follows the zombie's literary tradition, Grahame-Smith easily transforms the zombie into a relevant antagonist for the 18<sup>th</sup> century by finding justification for its existence in the novel's world. While it is simple enough to discuss the zombie as an individual element of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, the following chapter will discuss the zombie as merely one element that can transform and redefine Austen's original novel.

### CHAPTER 3: A NOVEL OF MANNERS

*Pride and Prejudice* is arguably Austen's most famous novel. First published in 1813, the story has been adapted and readapted in two films, ten television miniseries, and a countless number of parallel novels and unauthorized sequels. In a poll by the UK *Guardian* in 2007, it was voted the number one book "you can't live without" (Ezard). When examined critically, it is easy to see why the novel has remained a favorite for so long. *Pride and Prejudice* portrays a unique dynamic between male and female characters, uses wry humor and witty dialogue, and incorporates a consciousness of social issues into a deceptively simple plot. These conventions – in addition to Austen's use of Gothic elements in her other novels – have clearly inspired Grahame-Smith's reimagining of the novel. Grahame-Smith readily admits that the idea to adapt *Pride and Prejudice* was not his, and that he had not read the book since he was 14 when approached with the idea by Quirk Books editor Jason Rekulak. At 14, he had found the novel "slow and unenjoyable," but upon rereading it, he "got the humour and how brilliantly plotted it was" (Grahame-Smith, "*Pride and Prejudice*, Now With Zombies!"; Grahame-Smith, "It's...Darcy of the Dead"). His rereading specifically sought to bring to light Austen's own brand of humor: "I think that reading her again you are struck by what a sharp wit she had and how vicious she could be in taking apart the conventions of the society in which she lived" (Grahame-Smith, "It's...Darcy of the Dead"). These conventions, particularly those of social graces and propriety, remain largely intact in Grahame-Smith's adaptation and remain important aspects of the plot by helping to shape the world from Austen's novel into one more befitting a zombie uprising. In this chapter, I compare the themes of gender relations in both novels. I also examine the use of Gothic conventions as a link between the original and revised versions of

Austen's story. Finally, I discuss some of the ways in which parody and humor are employed in Grahame-Smith's adaptation.

Overall, Grahame-Smith seems satisfied with his interpretation of Austen and her work: "I don't think she'd be rolling in her grave - or trying to claw her way out of it. I think she would smile. And then she'd sue me for a billion dollars" (Grahame-Smith, "It's...Darcy of the Dead"). While it is impossible to predict precisely how Austen might respond to the new version of her classic text, we can look to her opinions of the original novel as a basis for speculation. In *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (1990), Claudia L. Johnson remarks that a main theme of *Pride and Prejudice* is its concern with happiness and contentment in its main characters. While this is an aspect that has made the novel a favorite among readers, Austen herself was less satisfied by the cheerfulness of the novel. Johnson observes that "To her, its 'playfulness and epigrammaticism' appeared excessive and unrelieved: 'The work is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling': the novel lacked 'shade,' and required 'a long chapter of sense'" (Johnson 73).<sup>21</sup> In regards to "sense," Austen would probably still feel a deficiency. When Grahame-Smith includes jokes in the midst of the blood, brains, and vomit, he still attempts to channel Austen's own biting humor, updating it slightly but still retaining her classic sarcasm. His adaptation makes no attempt to rationalize or balance out the frivolity that surrounds many of the novel's main characters. However, he does manage to add a more serious tone to the novel through the addition of monsters and violence, and by doing so, creates a more serious world for the lighter, domestically-centered plots to occur within. As discussed previously, Grahame-Smith also finds areas in the original novel which are unexplained to contemporary readers, such as the soldiers'

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<sup>21</sup> Austen's personal letters provide many examples of her sharp wit. In one letter to her sister Cassandra, she comments on the Peninsular War, "How horrible it is to have so many people killed! And what a blessing that one cares for none of them!" In another, she mentions Cassandra's recent visit with her sister-in-law and niece, remarking not without sarcasm that "you know how interesting the purchase of a sponge-cake is to me."

occupation of Meryton or the stigma of the Bennet sisters traveling alone, and attempts to provide rationale for them with the use of zombies (“It’s...Darcy of the Dead”). In addition to these points which Austen felt were insufficient, Grahame-Smith also emphasizes and enhances the roles of feminism and femininity, aspects which Austen had already presented strongly.

Austen’s original novel began to toy with the conventions of gender roles, particularly within the contexts of social propriety and manners. Even within a novel of manners, the characters in *Pride and Prejudice* do not always follow strict social rules. Instead, they usually act with their own best interests in mind, and judged by the virtue of their intentions and not their actions themselves. When Jane’s visit to Netherfield becomes an extended (and unchaperoned) stay, Elizabeth makes the three mile trek alone to see her. While Mrs. Bennet and Bingley’s sisters loudly disapprove of her journey, though, the audience is instead encouraged to see her actions as noble and showing “an affection for her sister that is quite pleasing” (25). Mrs. Bennet, however, is delighted by Jane’s condition, even encouraging her to remain at Netherfield in an attempt to become more familiar with Mr. Bingley and his sisters. In this case, the audience is expected to criticize Mrs. Bennet’s actions, since through the narration, it is clear that her only motivation (not just in this one instance, but throughout the novel) is finding husbands for her daughters. Her delight and encouragement comes across as selfish and insensitive in the light of Jane’s condition.

Mrs. Bennet’s fickle nature reappears when Lydia runs away to elope with Mr. Wickham. While she is initially hysterical, after Lydia is tracked down and the details of the marriage are settled, Mrs. Bennet revives herself in full force and “in spirits oppressively high” (201). Her desire to have her daughters married is finally a reality, despite the impropriety of the situation. However, while the main opposition to her happiness is her husband, this line is not drawn on the

boundaries of gender. Elizabeth and Jane still find Lydia's marriage to be hasty and improper, as do "all the spiteful old ladies in Meryton" (201). In this instance especially, the characters' attitudes toward social taboos and infractions serve as no commentary on their gender, but rather presents them as targets of critique or satire. Similarly, in *PPZ*, Mrs. Bennet's fickle nature is highlighted by the fact that her attitudes have not been altered between the original novel and the adaptation. She still pushes her daughters towards marriage, lauds Lydia's irresponsibility, and worries more about appearances than practicality, a concern which is even more important since lives are at stake more often than social standing. Grahame-Smith uses her character as a constant between the two novels as she serves as a standard for stereotypically feminine (and unrealistic, regardless of her surroundings) attitudes. By retaining the same character attributes between both novels, it becomes easier for Mrs. Bennet to act as a foil for her daughters, who go against many of her notions of traditional femininity.

Austen also questioned the traditional definitions of masculinity and femininity. Discussing these definitions almost always includes the topic of feminism. Feminism encourages awareness of the treatment of women, as well as the cultural roles of masculinity and femininity. Originating in the late 1700s, most famously with Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), feminist theory is now applied to practically every vein of study, including linguistics, politics, art history, and literary theory. Especially within literary theory and criticism, a feminist reading will focus on both the condition of the characters' genders within the text and the issues and politics surrounding the author's own gender.

While her original novels possessed shades of feminism and female empowerment, Austen herself cannot quite be labeled a feminist writer. Especially since modern feminism had

not fully taken shape during her lifetime, Austen could more accurately be described as a protofeminist, or a predecessor to the theory. She still ascribed to more traditional gender roles, such as encouraging marriage and upholding certain social conventions. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen does find ways to scrutinize these conventions; Elizabeth is not exactly a traditionally feminine heroine, Charlotte Lucas is criticized for her willingness to submit to a marriage of convenience, and Mrs. Bennet's insistence that her daughters find husbands is regarded as laughable. However, by presenting this more modern view, Austen does not force her own views on the reader, but instead allows the reader to take Elizabeth's perspective.

The relevance of feminism and feminist theory can be seen most readily in Elizabeth Bennet. Throughout the novel, she is presented as a heroine driven by her own personal code of ethics rather than by the standards of society. She resists the supposedly irresistible Mr. Darcy until she deems him a worthy partner, and she fights for her family's reputation when Lydia's marriage to Wickham threatens to disgrace them. Most significantly, though, Elizabeth also places emphasis on marriage for love, an unconventional notion during a time when men still controlled financial status and property ownership. In *PPZ*, Elizabeth also resists Mr. Darcy and defends her family's honor, but does so with physical force rather than with words alone. Love is not a primary concern, but she instead values warrior skill and honor as qualities of a potential husband. Mr. Collins is immediately rejected because of his docile nature and Mr. Darcy is initially rejected due to what she believes is a lack of honor. While the ability to protect his wife is a necessary skill in the novel, in the case of Elizabeth the warrior, she is not in need of a protector, but rather an equal partner who is worthy of her respect. When Darcy clarifies his relationship with Wickham, Elizabeth can finally view him as a worthwhile match.

Recently, a popular and more modern approach to Austen's works has been postfeminism. Defining the postfeminism movement itself is a tricky task. In *Postfeminist Gothic*, Benjamin A. Brabon and Stéphanie Genz present two contrasting perspectives on the movement. A "pro-postfeminist" perspective suggests that we have progressed beyond traditional feminism, "either because it has been completed or because it has failed and is no longer valid" (Brabon and Genz 3). This perspective also generally supports the belief that feminism is a right "that no longer needs to be enforced politically" (Brabon & Genz 4). "Anti-postfeminism," on the other hand, argues that culture has regressed to where it stood before the start of the feminist movement, allying the term more closely with prefeminism. Still another interpretation, articulated by Amelia Jones in her essay "Feminism, Incorporated," describes postfeminism as a step outside of the traditional terms of feminism, those terms suggesting that the only women defended by feminism are white, Western, heterosexual, middle class women. Jones claims that postfeminism instead situates itself as "the incorporation of feminism into postmodernism" (A. Jones 325).

Vivien Jones' article "Postfeminist Austen" seeks application for postfeminism's statutes, particularly within the genre of chick lit. She compares the genre to Austen's novels of romance and social status, noting that both uphold "the post-feminist banner of a right to individual pleasures" (V. Jones 71). Laura Caldwell relates *Pride and Prejudice* to chick lit staples like *Sex and the City* and *Bridget Jones' Diary* by explaining that all three novels deal with "high-class problems," which include "the issues of buying the right dress, finding the right man, getting into the right workout groove and climbing the right corporate ladder." In these novels, "no one is starving, and many people have it oh-so-worse. But the main character does care about these [more trivial] things, and so we do, too" (Caldwell 23). Similarly, while Mrs. Bennet's efforts to

marry off her daughters may seem inconsequential to the audience, or indeed many of the novel's other characters, it is a crucial part of the story because the main characters tell us it is.

In *PPZ*, high class problems and concerns still exist; Lydia and Kitty still gossip about the soldiers at Meryton, the beaches of Brighton remain a fashionable travel destination, and almost all young women are still concerned with marrying well. However, compared to *Pride and Prejudice*, it is much more difficult to take these problems seriously in the light of the very real dangers threatening the characters. Grahame-Smith's challenge, then, became to simultaneously allow high class problems to remain prominent and create an environment that is both dangerous and mundane. In the zombie apocalypse, there are definitely those who have it "oh-so-worse," but the attacks and deaths are "regrettable" at best. During the first ball at Meryton, the scene of the first zombie attack in the novel, the guests who are "seized and feasted on" are the ones "had the misfortune of being too near the windows" (14). Postfeminism and high class problems remain important aspects of the novel because the more serious, gruesome aspects are tempered to more of an inconvenience to the characters than a real threat.

Vivien Jones describes the new woman of postfeminist literature as a blend of traditional feminine qualities and newfound feminist empowerment. The postfeminist heroine has "sexy intelligence and a heart in the right place, rather than measurable and therefore threatening accomplishments" (V. Jones 78). Any achievement is balanced by girliness and frivolity, a far cry from strictly feminist virtues that emphasize strength and practicality. This balance is demonstrated through the discussions of Elizabeth Bennet's education. When Elizabeth chooses to read rather than play cards, a more educated choice, Miss Bingley unkindly suggests that "she is a great reader and has no pleasure in anything else." Elizabeth is quick to amend the accusation, arguing "I am *not* a great reader, and I have pleasure in many things" (Austen 26).

Her dismissal shows humility and an acceptance of many pleasures, intellectual or otherwise. Jones also highlights the discussion of ladies' accomplishments at Netherfield, "in which Elizabeth mocks as unrealistic Darcy's demanding definition of an 'accomplished woman.'" She suggests that the dialogue "offers an intriguing parallel with the studied denials by both chick lit heroines and their authors of anything that might be construed as scary intellectual achievement" (V. Jones 77). By avoiding emphasis on those "scary" achievements, postfeminist writing appeals to audiences who enjoy strong female characters, but also like their heroines to have attainable desires, goals, and accomplishments. Not every woman has to be a super hero, just as not every woman is a damsel in distress. Postfeminism accepts that while feminism's goals of total gender equality may yet be unrealized, women do still have some power over men: "a right to assert their wishes...and to have them respected" (V. Jones 74).

In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Grahame-Smith merges the feminist and postfeminist perspectives to create a world in which femininity is still highly valued and encouraged, but what is defined as "feminine" has been drastically altered. *PPZ*'s women are simultaneously expected to be warriors and ladies. While artistic talent and knowledge of weaponry represent opposing spectrums of femininity, there is some middle ground at which women are encouraged to be fighters, but in a more feminine fashion. For instance, at Lady Catherine's estate at Rosings, Elizabeth is asked to demonstrate her remarkable finger strength. She does so by performing a handstand, gradually balancing herself on a single fingertip. This feat of strength is tempered by the fact that Elizabeth is still wearing a gown and thus employs the use of a "modesty string," a cord tied around her ankles to hold her dress in place. Elizabeth then spends the remainder of her visit at Rosings walking on her fingertips for the amusement of Lady Catherine and her guests (Grahame-Smith 135-8). This scene serves as a replacement for

Elizabeth's performance on the pianoforte in Austen's original text. Also in *PPZ*, at the first ball at Netherfield, the Bennet sisters are provided with an opportunity to show off their famed fighting techniques. At their father's command to perform the "Pentagram of Death," their fighting stance is described like a preparation for a formal dance:

Elizabeth immediately joined her four sisters, Jane, Mary, Catherine, and Lydia in the center of the dance floor. Each girl produced a dagger from her ankle and stood at the tip of an imaginary five-pointed star. From the center of the room, they began stepping outward in unison—each thrusting a razor-sharp dagger with one hand, the other hand modestly tucked into the small of her back. (Grahame-Smith 14)

After their display, others in attendance describe their actions as graceful and valiant, and it is suggested that the battle was a major catalyst for Mr. Bingley's pursuit of Jane. In *PPZ*, femininity no longer means docility or weakness, but instead implies a sense of composure and grace in all aspects of life, however messy or disgraceful they may be.

Just as in Austen's original, women in Grahame-Smith's world are encouraged to be accomplished. Not surprisingly, though, the accomplishments of value have changed along with the setting. While music and other arts are highly prized in both novels, *PPZ*'s accomplished lady also "must be well trained in the fighting styles of the Kyoto masters and the modern tactics and weaponry of Europe" (Grahame-Smith 34). While at Netherfield, Elizabeth argues that expecting such a variety of skills is unrealistic and, especially in *PPZ*, impractical. She claims that it would be uncommon to see "such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance... united" (Austen 27). Especially within the setting of Grahame-Smith's zombie nightmare, her

observation is reasonable, as music and drawing (while not exactly practical skills to begin with) are much less important than knowledge of defense techniques and survival skills.

In a novel like *Pride and Prejudice*, which focuses mainly on the female protagonist and her innermost thoughts, it can be easy to forget that the male characters are more than the stoic heartthrobs or conniving schemers that they appear to be. Mr. Darcy, while expressing wit and a great deal of passion, is portrayed as a dry aristocrat for much of Austen's novel. He is rarely shown partaking in masculine sports or hunting. Brabon addresses the issue of the male character within a postfeminist world. Within feminism, he states, masculinity is interchangeable between genders, allowing women to take on masculine roles and assume a "spectral phallus" (Brabon 57). He goes on to argue that "the phallus's new mobility has left men haunted by the loss of its exclusively male potential" (Brabon 57). In a particularly profeminist novel such as *Pride and Prejudice*, the male characters are not much more empowered than the females. Instead, however, the male characters' strength lies in their nobility. Darcy, while initially presented as an undesirable character, proves to be a worthy hero due to both his elevated social status and his willingness to defend others and right wrongs within his realm of influence. Wickham, on the other hand, is introduced as a victim at Darcy's hand, but still a man of some respectability despite his lower status. However, his false nobility is only dissolved when his faults are exposed, namely gambling and seducing Darcy's sister. Between the two men, however, there never any physical confrontation, regardless of trespasses; they instead handle their disagreements with words, as gentlemen are expected to do. In Austen's world, physical violence is never an option, so her male characters are forced to find alternative means to assert dominance and settle disputes.

In the postfeminist world of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, the men of the novel also assume more masculine roles; as a physical equal to the novel's female characters, Mr. Darcy is permitted to engage in his fair share of zombie slaying. The reassertion of the male character as a potentially violent creature serves to redefine the concept of male identity. Brabon laments that men of the modern era have "lost their sense of purpose," and that they have no "great war" to fight, either physical or metaphorical (Brabon 63). In postfeminism, however, men are given something to fight for. This may take the form of a revolution, an invasion, or in this case, a war on their own soil against a never-ending threat. Masculinity once again takes on the characteristics of violence and the physical. This is not to say, however, that masculinity is once again taken from women, but it is instead distributed evenly. This new equality allows Darcy and Elizabeth to compare at a physical and combative level as well as an intellectual level.

The reclamation of masculinity through violence is a prominent theme in zombie texts. Especially in narratives in which the zombie threat is well established (*I Am Legend*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Land of the Dead*), hunting the undead becomes a respected activity, and a patently masculine one. In *I Am Legend*, the protagonist finds a comforting routine in his daily undead hunt, so much so that it becomes enjoyable. Waller describes this willingness as an attempt to "repossess the world through violence" (261). Similarly, the characters in *PPZ* resort to violence in order to survive, and thus maintain their control over their environment. There is great virtue in being a skilled zombie hunter, and Mr. Darcy is well-known for his talents. By thusly establishing himself (instead of by virtue of money and possessions alone), Darcy remains part of what can still be considered the upper class.

As stated previously, Austen herself was a master of parody. This is most apparent in her novel *Northanger Abbey*, which plays upon the conventions of the Gothic novel. The typical

Gothic novel takes place in an antiquated space, a setting from the past that has a potentially dark history. These spaces often take the form of castles or abbeys, within which, Jerrold Hogle writes, “are hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main time of the story” (“Introduction” 2). Gothic tales also typically include an innocent female protagonist and male antagonists in positions of power. In this way, the Gothic convention and tradition serves as a stepping stone between Austen’s quieter, romantic setting and the violent, frightening realm of zombies.

One reason behind Austen’s seamless fusion with the supernatural comes from its roots in Gothic tradition. For fans of Austen’s other works, this connection is unsurprising. *Northanger Abbey*, published posthumously in 1817, features a female protagonist who is obsessed with Gothic novels. Catherine imagines herself to be the heroine of such a novel and, at 17, with such little world experience, her desires for romance and danger are very real to her, while laughable to the reader. Austen, clearly familiar with traditional Gothic works, draws well from them, both through her imitation of the style and her references to existing Gothic novels (most notable, Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*). As Laurel Ann of the *Austenprose* blog writes, a horror reimagining of Austen’s work should not be as appalling as it seems to be to many Janeites: “So that leaves the rest of us. Those loyal and devoted members of The Gentle Reprove and Witty Banter Society who, like Jane Austen, enjoy a good campy and gory Gothic novel, recognize tongue-in-cheek humor, and have been happily doing so for over 200 hundred years” (Ann).

Dr. Allen Grove, a professor of English at Alfred University, provided the afterword for *PPZ*’s deluxe heirloom edition. Therein, he discusses the Gothic tradition of Austen’s time. He

argues that “in some ways, the central gimmick of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is true to the spirit of the horror novels of Austen’s day” (355). Grove introduces the example of the 1794 novel *The Cavern of Death* by Mary Anne Burges. While the novel’s title is the epitome of Gothic style, Grove reveals that titles can be misleading; while presented as an original work, Burges’ novel is based heavily on Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*. In Burges’ novel, “The cavern itself is a gratuitous addition to the novel, employed in the final scene just long enough for two men to enter the cave and be crushed to a bloody pulp by a huge falling fragment of rock” (Grove 356). According to Grove, the lack of commitment to the task of creating a true Gothic novel – a tale that is suspenseful, eerie, and romantic – is Burges’ downfall.

Similarly, if Grahame-Smith’s version had shown such little commitment, it too would be easily dismissed as imitative and unoriginal. Luckily, however, this is not the case. Unlike Burges and her deadly cavern, a *deus ex machina* of sorts rather than an integral part of the novel, Grahame-Smith utilizes the Gothic element throughout the story. From the opening sentence, it is obvious that he is not “working up” to the zombie parts; instead, the zombies are just as prevalent as any of the original main characters, and are suggested to be just as important to the plot. As previously discussed, the zombies are not necessarily always threatening, but they do create suspense throughout the plot. Even for those familiar with Austen’s original novel, it is hard to anticipate when and where the undead will strike during the course of the novel.

In terms of a Gothic antagonist, zombies are an unconventional choice. The monster itself contradicts the necessity for antiquity, with its roots in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, they are not altogether incompatible with the genre. They portray the Gothic ambiguity between the supernatural and the ordinary; even when explained in terms of science and disease, they remain

improbably and scary, even in the world of the novel. In addition, the zombies do not pose a primary threat to the characters. The main conflicts still occur between humans, with the zombies as a backdrop for the narrative. Similarly, the ghosts of a haunted castle may not be as menacing or dangerous as the owner of the castle himself.<sup>22</sup>

*Pride and Prejudice* also relates very closely to the Female Gothic, a subgenre which typically includes an innocent female protagonist, a powerful male antagonist, and a story which voices women's "deep-rooted fears about their own powerlessness and imprisonment within patriarchy" (Brabon & Genz 5). These stories, when viewed through a postfeminist lens, can contain strong-willed, independent, and capable heroines within their fragile protagonists. These women are typically quick-witted and opinionated, as well as actively involved in their own stories. Elizabeth embodies the postfeminist Gothic heroine perfectly, with her idealistic nature and assertiveness. The ability to identify Gothic traits within Austen's original characters allows them to adapt more easily to a new setting that includes the monstrous.

In *PPZ*, despite her warrior training and considerable education, Elizabeth is still a relatively innocent protagonist. She lives for honor, obeying the rules of both proper British society and the Chinese warrior culture, and only uses violence to fight the Unmentionables or in simple demonstrations. However, the events of the novel inspire a change in her character which Genz later describes. She points out the "paradoxical contemporary femininity that retains its outer trappings and looks but opens up a new line of signification to make it 'monstrous'" (Genz 69). "Monstrous," in this case, means that Elizabeth is not the average British lady, or Gothic heroine for that matter. When faced with Mr. Darcy and his unexpected confession of love, she stops accepting her place as a blameless heroine and starts fighting back, quite literally. This

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<sup>22</sup> In *American Zombie Gothic*, Kyle Bishop notes George Romero's use of the Gothic antiquated space in *Night of the Living Dead*. This space, in this case, is the farmhouse where Ben and Barbra seek refuge, which becomes the setting of instances of safety, human conflicts, and zombie battles over the course of the night (Bishop 121).

conflict with Darcy, her first human-to-human battle, serves as a turning-point in Elizabeth's story. No longer does she harness her physical talents solely for battle and demonstrations; her violent tendencies increase along with her newly realized attraction for Mr. Darcy. She boldly takes on Lady Catherine to a duel, and even envisions slicing off her sister Lydia's head with her katana.<sup>23</sup> These urges, hardly those characteristic of a Gothic heroine, ally themselves much more strongly with a postfeminist reading, allowing Elizabeth to simultaneously embody both archetypes.

Indeed, the challenges that face Elizabeth throughout *PPZ* are enough to drive a weaker woman mad. While she remains sane, however, she does exhibit moments of "femininity" when her emotions overtake her rationality. In one particular instance, she finds herself unable to fire her musket when faced with a zombie mother and infant. Elizabeth herself is unsure why, but she feels that "there was a strange force at work, a feeling she faintly recalled from her earliest days, before she had first traveled to Shaolin" (Grahame-Smith 92). She later wonders, "Could there be honor in mercy," a foreign concept to her after her training (Grahame-Smith 92). It is interesting to note that in her most feminine of moments, in this case a possible maternal instinct, Elizabeth acknowledges but does not recognize her own emotions. Claire Knowles cites the sensible heroine's emotionality as one of her biggest assets, serving as a motivator to "challenge perceived limitations" (146). This indeed proves true for Elizabeth, whose emotions temper her more automated reactions from her Shaolin training. When Mr. Darcy confesses his feelings for her, Elizabeth initially listens with both mannered grace and warrior passion: "In spite of her deeply rooted bloodlust, she could not be insensible to the compliment of such a man's affection, and though her intention of killing him did not vary for an instant, she was somewhat sorry for

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<sup>23</sup> After imagining beheading Lydia, she remarks, "I beg you all forgive me, but I could stand her prattling no longer" (176). This scene is portrayed humorously by means of a dream sequence of sorts. This section is particularly memorable, as the literary convention is never used by Austen herself.

the pain he was to receive” (149). Although the two begin to brawl immediately after his confession, Elizabeth’s ability to control her rage until she has heard Darcy’s statement is almost remarkable.

Even in Austen’s original *Pride and Prejudice*, themes from traditional Gothic literature can be found. One of these themes is the pursuit of a heroine, “a virtuous and idealistic (and usually poetically inclined) young woman by a villain, normally portrayed as a wicked, older but still potent aristocrat” (Thomson). This convention appears in many Gothic novels, but is epitomized in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Emily, the novel’s female protagonist, is sensitive, feminine, and emotional. Her father’s death leaves her in the care of Madame Cheron, who soon marries the villainous Montoni, an Italian aristocrat. After Madame Cheron (now Montoni) dies “as a result of neglect and starvation at the hands of her husband,” however, Emily is left as her sole heir (Knowles 144). When Montoni attempts to force Emily to sign over her inheritance to him, however, she refuses. She remains in the castle, tormented both by Montoni himself and her own “wild imaginings and terrors which threaten to overwhelm her” (Howard viii). She finally escapes with her sanity and inheritance intact.

While Emily and *PPZ*’s Elizabeth are starkly contrasting characters, both possess qualities of the Gothic heroine. Emily’s defining characteristic is her sensibility, a term which here means “the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering” (qtd. in Knowles 142-3). While this can be a positive quality, in Emily’s case, it leads to vulnerability and a fragility that is exacerbated by her surroundings: Montoni’s “gloomy, mouldering castle” (Howard viii). Claire Knowles points out that “Radcliffe’s Gothic heroines, possessing an abundance of sensibility and subjected to numerous trials and tribulations, can often walk a thin line between rationality and insanity” (144).

Georgiana and Elizabeth could both be considered Gothic heroines, but in their own rights.<sup>24</sup>

Georgiana is portrayed as fragile and sensitive, and while she is not a major character in the novel, she is described as completely passive. For instance, in Darcy's letter to Elizabeth, he dismisses her actions: "[Wickham] so far recommended himself to Georgiana, whose affectionate heart retained a strong impression of his kindness to her as a child, that she was persuaded to believe herself in love, and to consent to an elopement" (133). Darcy goes on to make excuses for her, explaining "she was then but fifteen, which must be her excuse" (133). Georgiana's sensibility is clearly to blame for her succumbing to Wickham. In *PPZ*, however, it is notable that she, while of poor health and fragile nature, is a trained warrior. By supplying her with strength and weakness, both physical and emotional, Grahame-Smith transforms Georgiana into a character who possesses both traditionally feminine and masculine qualities simultaneously.

Elizabeth, however, displays a stronger facet of sensibility. Instead of being seduced by Wickham's charms or past kindness, she is taken with his character and noble qualities, or at least in comparison to Darcy's. However, once Wickham is exposed, Elizabeth is in no need of rescue. Instead, she takes it upon herself to renounce all affection for him, and later serve as a disapproving force against him when he seduces Lydia. Elizabeth draws from the Gothic heroine's emotional nature, empowering her to "challenge perceived limitations," but her fierce emotions are slightly tempered by her rationality (Knowles 146). It is arguable that Austen's characters, and Elizabeth especially, only needed minor alterations for them to thrive during a zombie outbreak.

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<sup>24</sup> The pursuit of the heroine, another Gothic convention, is reflected well in Wickham's pursuit of Georgiana Darcy, then of Elizabeth (and finally Lydia). Wickham's noble persona successfully wins over the women, and he only loses Georgiana and Elizabeth after he is exposed as less than noble, both in lineage and in intentions.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen draws humor from her characters and dialogue by incorporating inside jokes for the reader by means of her narrative descriptions and word choices. Her characters embody a variety of undesirable traits, such as rudeness, silliness, and general awkwardness. Mrs. Bennet provides the most obvious source of humor, with her sole-minded desire for her daughters to marry and her high-strung nature. When Lydia elopes with Mr. Wickham, Mrs. Bennet becomes inconsolable and assaults her family with “tears and lamentations of regret, invectives against the villainous conduct of Wickham, and complaints of her own suffering and ill usage, blaming every body but the person to whose ill judging indulgence the errors of her daughter must be principally owing” (186). Here, even the narration acknowledges that Mrs. Bennet herself is a negative influence on her daughters, and comically so in her ignorance of the fact. Lydia’s silliness, including flirting with officers at every opportunity and dressing a servant in women’s clothing for her amusement and his embarrassment, prevails as a consistent source of humor. As her father remarks, “Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public place or other” (151). This silliness becomes a legitimate cause of concern for her family when she elopes with Mr. Wickham. However, Lydia is so oblivious of her danger and enthusiastic about her new married life that she remains a continuous source of humor for the reader. Her letter to Mrs. Forster demonstrates this well, as she writes “You need not send them word at Longbourn of my going, if you do not like it, for it will make the surprise the greater, when I write to them, and sign my name Lydia Wickham. What a good joke it will be! I can hardly write for laughing” (189). The letter’s lightheartedness, in contrast with the Bennet family’s concern and panic, becomes absurdly funny.

Grahame-Smith captures a similar comedic element in his adaptation by using character traits described by Austen to his advantage. Mrs. Bennet is already a rather unrealistic character, to the point of being ridiculous at times. To retain the same standards and views in the midst of a war against the living dead, though, is beyond absurd. After receiving word that Lydia would marry Wickham, Mrs. Bennet is still overjoyed, despite the fact that Wickham has become a paralyzed invalid. In *PPZ*, however, Grahame-Smith does attempt to treat Mrs. Bennet with some degree of respect. While she is still a laughable character, he provides logic behind her actions, reasoning that, to mentally cope with the terrors of the undead, “she sought solace in the comfort of the traditions which now seemed mere trifles to others” (8). Instead of leaving the readers to make assumptions about the reasons behind her behavior, Grahame-Smith explicitly states these reasons.<sup>25</sup> However, this new knowledge changes very little about her character. While she now shows some concern for Jane as she leaves for Netherfield (“You had better go on horseback, because it seems likely to rain; and they spring so easily from the wet earth”), she is just as unfazed by Jane’s need to remain there overnight (“People do not die of cuts and bruises”) (25-6). While Mrs. Bennet does become a slightly more sympathetic character by acknowledging the dangers facing her daughters, she maintains the same carelessness and misguided optimism from Austen’s original.

As previously defined, *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel of manners, a work that deals with the more civilized aspects of life. There are very few life threatening dangers in such novels, and Austen strictly follows this convention. The biggest dangers that the characters face are dishonor or ridicule. Even Jane’s illness at Netherfield is regarded lightly, and Lydia’s elopement causes more concern for shame on her family than for her physical safety. Grahame-Smith also

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<sup>25</sup> This narrative choice may reflect partially on Grahame-Smith’s lack of faith in contemporary audiences (particularly those more interested in zombies than *Pride and Prejudice*) to reach this conclusion on their own. In any case, his explanation does effectively contextualize Mr. and Mrs. Bennet within the new novel.

manages to subvert this genre's conventions by redefining the concept of manners themselves. When Elizabeth visits Jane at Netherfield, she, Kitty, and Lydia leave home together, "armed only with their ankle daggers. Muskets and Katana swords were a more effective means of protecting one's self, but they were considered unladylike; and, having no saddle in which to conceal them, the three sisters yielded to modesty" (27). Through changes such as these, Grahame-Smith effectively creates a novel of manners for a postmodern era rather than the pre-Victorian era of the original. This is especially significant because, as stated in chapter two, zombies do not lend themselves to stories of propriety and manners. Grahame-Smith, unable to make the zombies themselves more polite, reconfigures the world in which zombies exist and allows it to remain dignified.

Another way that Grahame-Smith derives humor from Austen's work is with the treatment of segments that remain unaltered from their original state. When reframed with a new setting or context, a particular scene or portion of dialogue may take on an entirely different meaning. An excellent example of this is Charlotte Lucas's marriage to Mr. Collins. In Austen's original novel, Mr. Collins's ignorance is a subject of much ridicule; when Charlotte agrees to marry him, he remains unaware that she is merely marrying him for the sake of marriage and not for affection or love. In Grahame-Smith's novel, Charlotte similarly wishes to have a husband for her remaining time as a human, as she has been bitten by a zombie. She confides to Elizabeth that "All I ask is that my final months be happy ones, and that I be permitted a husband who will see to my proper Christian beheading and burial (Grahame-Smith 99)." Charlotte's zombification process is described with a dark humor, and goes unnoticed by everyone except Elizabeth. With this new reframing, the largely unchanged dialogue from the chapters regarding Charlotte becomes ironic, including the aforementioned passage in which Mr.

Collins states that he and Charlotte “have but one mind.” Considering the distaste we hold for Mr. Collins, the humor in his ability to compare intellectually with a zombie is easily identified. Monica Hesse remarks on this change to the original story: “The beauty of this side plot is that it's exactly true to Charlotte's resigned character. Austen drew her so completely that we know she would bear her zombitude with quiet grace. We are similarly sure that the idiot Mr. Collins would miss it entirely” (Hesse). Grahame-Smith’s lack of alterations, not only in dialogue, but also in major character attributes, allow instances such as these to be reframed easily.

Hesse continues to point out specific instances that would not have seemed out of place in the original novel, such as Elizabeth's merciless “smack-down” of Mr. Collins' marriage proposal, and how well it translates to her merciless treatment of zombies (Hesse). In Austen’s original text, this exchange is already rather adamant on Elizabeth’s part, and yet still polite, as she insists, “I am perfectly serious in my refusal.—You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so” (73). However, without the defining characteristics of a zombie slayer, Elizabeth is forced to explain more completely and openly. Instead of emphasizing her training and experience, she insists that she is a “rational creature speaking the truth from her heart” (75). However, in *PPZ*, she cites her warrior status as reason enough for Collins to take her rejection seriously. By this point in the book, just as we have already witnessed Elizabeth’s rationality in the original, we are already very aware of her physical strength and training.

In addition to embellishments on Austen’s original text, Grahame-Smith also derives humor from postmodern elements, particularly pastiche. If zombies, a traditionally twentieth and twenty-first century monster, do not add enough anachronistic detail to Grahame-Smith’s adaptation, the use of modern humor and less-than-subtle puns certainly do. Because of this,

*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is a clear example of a postmodern work. One of the main characteristics which promotes this interpretation is the blending of high and low cultures within the novel. Grahame-Smith manages to merge Austen's recognizable style of prose, contemporary monsters, and a healthy dose of modern humor. Readers familiar with the original work will remember the ball at Netherfield where the Bennet sisters and Mr. Bingham and Mr. Darcy become more acquainted. Elizabeth flirts a bit more openly with Mr. Darcy, more so than in the original version. Darcy remarks to her that "Perhaps by and by I may observe that private balls are much pleasanter than public ones." To this, Elizabeth replies, "On the contrary, I find that balls are much more enjoyable when they cease to remain private" (Grahame-Smith 73). While Austen herself was skilled at inserting sexual puns into her writing, none were as blatant as the numerous "ball" jokes scattered throughout the adaptation. These jokes add little to the text, apart from providing instances of comic relief during the text between "zombie parts," keeping readers who are less interested in Austen's original novel engaged.

There is still a clear definition in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* between the sections lifted directly from Austen's original work and Grahame-Smith's new additions, despite attempts to blend the two levels of art. Grahame-Smith even unabashedly admits that his own writing style frequently came through in his imitation of Austen's style: "As you read the book, you can tell where it was getting late—just look for the vomit gags and 'ball' innuendos" (Grahame-Smith, "Preface"). However, the majority of the humor is subtle and characteristic of Austen's original prose.

Many reviewers have commented on how remarkably Austen's world adapts to a zombie apocalypse, and by examining existing themes from Austen's original novel, it is clear that the adaptation works thematically as well as aesthetically. Existing Gothic elements in both

Austen's writing and zombie narratives provide a bridge between the two; Grahame-Smith, however, also strives to apply the more traditional elements of feminism and manners to the strange, grotesque world he has created. The fusion of horror and nineteenth-century British elements has allowed *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* to stand out as a creative, innovative, and surprisingly cohesive example of the remix novel.

## CONCLUSION

When *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* was published, there was no way of knowing how successful the novel would become. While parallel novels have never quite waned in popularity, zombie literature was a practically unknown genre and this fresh take on a traditional story threatened to push the limit of acceptability a bit too far. Luckily for Grahame-Smith (and readers everywhere), the novel became a success and gained an instant fan base. The aftermath of this wave of popularity, however, has ushered popular culture into a new era entirely.

While the classical literature and historical monster mashups are currently decreasing in popularity, a new cinematic trend has emerged in the past few years. The combination of monsters with traditional fairy tales has yielded such titles as *Hansel and Gretel, Witch Hunters* (Tommy Wirkola, 2013) and *Jack the Giant Slayer* (Bryan Singer, 2013), and the television series *Grimm* (2011-) and *Once Upon a Time* (2011-). These new texts provide a new, typically supernatural, take on a classical fairy tale, appealing to a broader audience than earlier mashups which required knowledge of literature or history to be entertaining. It is possible that this new trend grew from an attempt to draw from the now waning popularity of the earlier mashups.

Zombies themselves have taken a new turn within culture. The monster's oversaturation in popular culture has forced an evolution, spawning more parodies and other narratives that cast the zombie in new roles. Jonathan Levine's 2013 film *Warm Bodies* displays a dramatic turning point. In the film, not only is a zombie the main protagonist and narrator, but he is also the romantic lead. This characterization is a drastic change from the previous dichotomy between the asexuality (Romero's *Dead* series) and over-sexualization of the zombie (*Zombie Strippers* [Jay Lee, 2008] or *Dead Girl* [Marcel Sermiento and Gadi Harel, 2008]). *Warm Bodies* allows

the zombie to be almost a traditional character in the narrative, and not an antagonist or a part of the environment.

Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* recently completed its third season, but fans have argued that the show focuses too much on the human survivors and not enough on the zombies. Indeed, the show has been deemed "a family drama with zombies," suggesting that the zombies are more a part of the environment than actual participants in the show's story. The current season's conflict pits Rick Grimes and his group of survivors against the Governor (David Morrissey), the leader of a nearby settlement with a vicious nature, in a battle for power and resources. The conflict is strictly human based, with zombies appearing as weapons or obstacles rather than opponents. The story remains compelling and the characters have developed greatly throughout the show's three seasons, but those viewers who hope to see zombie attacks and extensive battles will be disappointed.

Max Brooks' well-loved novel, *World War Z*, has been adapted into a film starring Brad Pitt, which is scheduled to be released in June, 2013. However, the film's trailer does little to establish a connection with the book. The explosions and scenes of destruction are more reminiscent of a natural disaster movie than that of a zombie movie. Even the themes of infection and invasion are downplayed, focusing more on Brad Pitt's struggle to save his family from whatever horrors they face. Apart from the title, the film is undistinguishable as an adaptation. This departure from the original text shows a shift of focus from monsters and zombies to more generalized panic. Some may argue that by focusing on a single group of survivors, the film attempts to simplify the novel's format or multiple storylines, perspectives, and intertwining experiences. In an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, Pitt revealed that numerous rewrites and reshoots went into the film's production, in an attempt to keep the film a

“very intricate puzzle” that stays as true as possible to the novel. If the film does well, it will reportedly become the first in a trilogy, creating an opportunity to build on the novel’s original text even more and hopefully create what fans will deem a worthy adaptation of the novel.

It is unclear which monster will replace the zombie in popularity next. Vampires still remain a strong presence, with films like *Dark Shadows* (Tim Burton, 2012), *Priest* (Scott Stewart, 2011), *Daybreakers* (Michael and Peter Spierig, 2009), and the film adaptation of Grahame-Smith’s historical mashup, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*. The final film of Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* series was released in 2012, completing the saga and providing resolution for the ravenous fans. Television series such as *True Blood* (2008-) and *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-) have continued to attract a younger audience to the vampire narrative.

Werewolves, too, have seen more popularity with television, with shows like *Teen Wolf* (2011-) and *Being Human* (2008-) which are directed towards younger audiences as well. “Paranormal teen romance” has budded as a literary subgenre, building on the *Twilight* novels’ popularity, and while the novels do sometimes include ghosts, angels, werewolves, or even zombies, the vampire remains the most popular subject.

At this current cultural point, the zombie fan must face the realization that zombies have become more active in parodies than in true horror films. The few remaining texts provide some spooks and some food for thought, but as fictional beings, zombies carry less and less threat. Indeed, very few recent monster texts portray them as villains, but more frequently as protagonists. The texts are typically romantic or comical, and the real dangers come from other humans instead of the monsters. Even without a clear successor, zombies are no longer the most influential monster.

Where zombies still remain a symbol of fear, however, is in the realm of reality. To many, having a “zombie preparedness plan” is just as important as preparing for a hurricane or tornado. Reminiscent of the terrorist attack plans that many made following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, these plans usually include a stash of survival supplies, a few weapons, and a location that offers protection. While many regard these plans as a joke, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued their own “Zombie Preparedness” guidelines. In following the guidelines for the “tongue in cheek campaign,” citizens can also effectively prepare themselves for a “hurricane, pandemic, earthquake, or terrorist attack” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). The plan suggests having supplies like non-perishable food, water, and first aid supplies, and creating a family emergency plan that establishes a meeting place, emergency contacts, and an evacuation route. The CDC also assures the reader that in case of a real zombie outbreak, they would immediately conduct an investigation of the disease and provide aid while working towards a cure.

Even before the CDC acknowledged the practicality of such plans, many others had begun their own large-scale preparations. In 2009, KWK Promes, a Polish architectural firm, completed an impenetrable safe house made of concrete, equipped with sliding walls to turn the house into a sealed cube. The house features a second story entrance via drawbridge, and a one story wall surrounding the property’s entire perimeter. While marketed solely as a safe house, the structure has been dubbed “the First Zombie Proof House” (All That Is Interesting). Christina Geros and Matt Jordan, both University of Tennessee alumni, won the 2011 Zombie Safe House design competition with a medieval-inspired house complete with drawbridge and underground canal with an escape boat. Whether in design or real application, the perceived

practicality of zombie-proof structures makes the threat seem like much more realistic (“When the Dead Start to Walk…”).

A group of students from the University of Ottawa took realistic thinking a step further by designing a mathematical model that charts the spread of a zombie virus infection. In their paper, *When Zombies Attack!*, Philip Munz, Ioan Hudea, Joe Imad, and Robert J. Smith provide a mathematical model of a zombie infection outbreak. The model provides formulas for multiple scenarios, including charting the outbreak once a cure has been discovered and charting the outbreak while assuming a massive eradication of the zombies. While the students acknowledge that their models may not be perfect, they stress the importance of creating some sort of model once a zombie outbreak does occur (Munz et al).

In the past year, the threat of actual zombie attacks has become shockingly real. 2012 experienced a strange rash of incidents where citizens engaged in behaviors more befitting of zombies than of humans. Most famously, in Miami, Florida, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Rudy Eugene assaulted another man and chewed off over half of his face. When police finally arrived on the scene, Eugene did not stop, but instead growled at police and continued attacking. An officer shot Eugene once, then shot him four more times when Eugene turned to attack the officer instead. Eugene became known as the “Miami Zombie” or “Miami Cannibal,” immediately sparking conversation and fears about an impending apocalypse (Tienabeso). A few months later, also in Florida, a man broke into a residence while intoxicated, and bit the homeowner’s arm, tearing a chunk out of it. As with Eugene, the man was difficult to subdue, as police were forced to tase him three times before they were able to handcuff him (Caulfield). While most of these incidents have been attributed to drugs (most commonly “bath salts,” or substitute

cathinodes that produces similar effects to amphetamine or cocaine), the spread of a zombie virus remains a popular theory.<sup>26</sup>

In the wake of this dramatic shift (in meaning, but certainly not in popularity), it is still unclear what this means for the zombie. Luckily for zombies (and all other literary and cinematic monster), depending on their context and the world around them, they can always mean something different every time they are studied. Zombies have represented fears of racial tension, foreign invasion, contagion, and conformity, to name a few. Every wave of the zombie zeitgeist has been rooted in different cultural fears, and the next wave, whenever it may rise, will be rooted in a new conflict as well. As long as monsters appear in texts, there will always be a new way of interpreting them, which allows them to remain immortalized.

*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* has almost ridden out its wave of popularity. The once much discussed film adaptation is still forthcoming, but with less star-power (Lily Collins is now due to star in the adaptation, instead of Natalie Portman as previously reported) and much less audience anticipation. The sequel and prequel novels were released with little anticipation and even less praise. Grahame-Smith has since moved on to other projects, including writing the screenplays for both Tim Burton's *Dark Shadows* and the film adaptation of his own *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*. The novel's title itself still raises some eyebrows and gets some laughs, but it has become simply one of many in the monster mashup fad.

Despite this, it would be unfair to declare that *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is no longer an important work. The novel was at the roots of the monster mashup novel fad, and brought considerable attention to both zombie literature and *Pride and Prejudice* remixes from readers who might not be attracted to both (or either) genre, one of Grahame-Smith's major

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<sup>26</sup> This explanation, however, was enough to inspire the film *Bath Salt Zombies* (Dustin Mills, 2013), a low-budget film that uses a strain of the drug as the source of a zombie outbreak.

original goals in writing the novel. *PPZ* also helped to validate and popularize fanfiction as a published literary form, not solely as an underground art form (paving the way for other successful fan works like the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy). While the path for research may be unclear for now, it is far from complete, and will more than likely be revisited in order to explore other future texts. Parallel novels show no sign of disappearing, and it is possible that another will spark as much attention and discussion as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* has.

As Annalee Newitz observes, the popularity of zombie films follows a distinct cultural pattern. Without this knowledge of previous surges, it would be impossible to identify such patterns, and thus to predict future patterns that follow the same formula. The threats facing the Western world have evolved in the past few years, and while wars rage around the globe and civil rights are challenged daily, the climate of outright terror has subsided. In a changing climate such as this, the terror posed by zombies has evolved as well. While the zombie remains a popular monster in culture, it does not convey the same dangers as it has in years past. Through its versatility, the zombie repeatedly proves that it is always capable of retaining its relevance in whatever way possible.

Perhaps *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* has worn out its welcome and can now be allowed to melt back into obscurity. Perhaps its film adaptation will never be produced. Perhaps the monster mashup novel will return to its roots in online publication. Whatever the effects, it is undeniable that Seth Grahame-Smith sparked a new literary trend, inspiring other writers to do the same and fostering an era of derivative works and adaptations that were enjoyable, with or without knowledge of the original work. There is plenty more research that is still unexplored regarding mashups and derivative works, and the sheer success of *PPZ* suggests that further research may still be done in the future. However, the cultural climate has reached a point where

the literary zombie, the monster mashup trend, and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* itself can finally be allowed to die. For now.

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