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Subversive Liminality and Ideological Warfare: The Zombie Mash-Up as Resistance to Hypermasculine Revenge Narratives Post-9/11

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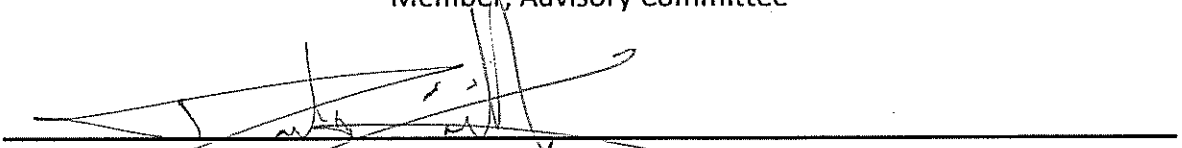

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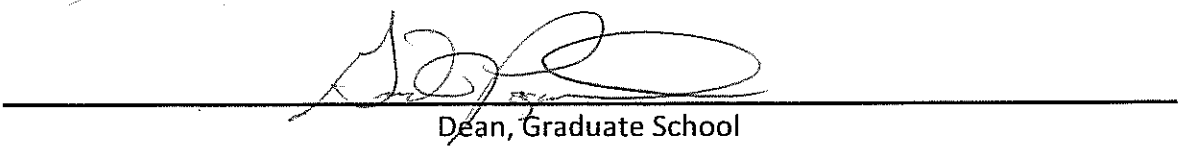

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family.

The living and the dead.

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I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Lisa Day, along with my other committee members, Dr. Deb Core and Derek Nikitas, for their never-ending guidance, support, and general willingness to get academically weird with me. I would also like to thank my loving and supportive family members, spread out all over greater Appalachia, including Ron and Judy Cooper, Vanessa and Dave Seeger, my Aunts Jenny, Jan, and Joyce and Uncle Marty. I thank Amie Storms for her impressive ability to live with me throughout the process of this project and her accommodation of my zombie-infested world. Lastly, I'd like to thank the zombies—those I know and those I haven't met yet—for following me around and yet having the grace not to bite.

ABSTRACT

This project plots the coincidence of the "zombie renaissance" and system-justifying nationalist rhetoric post-9/11. The project discusses this cultural cross-section with zombie mash-up fiction, using masculinity and trauma theories, in an attempt to illuminate the motives of “us vs. them” rhetoric and hypermasculine revenge narratives in the post-9/11 decade. First, I use *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Zombie Jim* (2009) to examine liminality as subversive counter-discourse to the masculine hegemony post-9/11. Second, I use *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*(2009) to look at the effects of revenge culture and how non-emphasized femininity and hegemonic (hyper)masculinity co-construct each other.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Monstrosity, Oppression, and Subversion

The concept of monstrosity is an old one. The Latin word *monstrum* denotes a physical manifestation of divine displeasure via aberration from the natural order (Cicero 102), and comes from the same root as "monitor," meaning a thing to be watched. From its beginning, monstrosity has been a concept loaded with marginality, due to its use as a representation of all that does not conform or that is dangerous. In classical mythology, liminal, half-breed monsters such as the Minotaur and the Gorgon tormented the Greeks with their suggestion of demented humanity. As Kevin Boone puts it, "human beings are, by divine mandate, supreme in the universe and anything that threatens human form or status is monstrous" (34). However, empire provided the monstrous a place in the subversive pantheon as a cultural artifact. When the Romans appropriated the Greek culture upon conquest, the Minotaur became pitiable as well as fearsome, trapped in his labyrinth. Gorgons such as Medusa mutated from terrifying cautionary tales designed to reinforce socially accepted behavior to territorial beasts whose main motivation was to avoid being beheaded by marauding (con)questers; and the medieval Britain *revenentia corpora* wandered bodily after death in tortured, half-finished quests, the remnants of which tales inspired Samuel Taylor Coleridge's dead sailors to rise and navigate the ship out of danger just to drop still again in "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Empire birthed the subversive monster trope, but mass media would give it teeth (and legs). The liminality and marginality of the first constructions of monsters not only lent them so readily to subversive cultural work, but also allowed monsters to become and represent whatever cultural anxiety that imbues their context. By the eighteenth century, the British Empire was approaching the expanse achieved by the Romans. Various plague, famine, and populational crises resulting from empire began to further alter monstrosity to express ontological anxieties—nowhere more clearly than in the colonial relationship between the British Crown and Ireland. Robert Smart and Michael Hutcheson argue that the efforts of the British to negate Ireland's pre-colonial history in order to better sculpt an image of Ireland as barbaric and in need of English rule resulted in the Irish and popular sentiment regarding the British Empire as vampires and other ghoulish monsters (107). The Irish Potato Famine brought the visage of death into sharp relief for the Irish and the ensuing "relief" efforts from the Crown were ever tinged with rhetoric of barbarism. British writers such as Edmund Spenser and Fynes Moryson had a flair for constructing the Irish barbarism around ritualized blood-letting and drinking. Moryson was repulsed by the Irish practice of mixing blood drawn from calves with oats and butter, and Spenser claimed to have witnessed an Irish execution at which a foster mother of the condemned drank his blood to avoid it being absorbed by the ground, which she proclaimed unworthy of such an honor (Smart 108). These attempts to barbarize the Irish image and to link barbarism with blood could well have spurred the reaction that the Irish nationalists then tendered, the construction of the British Empire as vampire.

While the eighteenth-century British were busy painting the Irish as subhuman and thus not only in need of subjugation to Empire but deserving of the famine and plague, the Irish were constructing an image of the British as *liminally* human. The Gothic trope of the otherworldly undead was (re)born and its first use was as a subversive counter-discourse to the negative history of Empire, making the Gothic Ireland's first postcolonial literature (Smart 110). Analogous to Ireland's subversive reappropriation of monster rhetoric—and across an ocean and a century—is the relationship by which the zombie came into the American monster vernacular. The nineteenth century Euro-American slave trade allowed the uses of monsters and the supernatural—both of which grew out of African and Caribbean religious practices—to stake a nascent claim on the American cultural psyche. Whether coincidentally or not, the circumstances surrounding this claim dealt, once again, with the oppression of a particular people—in this case, American slaves.

Western folklore and popular media gained access to the zombie primarily through the U.S. occupation of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 (Boone 35). This zombie is hardly recognizable compared to the modern zombie. In Haitian voodoun, a religion of superstitions and magic, the zombie was simply a reanimated corpse or otherwise incapacitated body enslaved to work in the sugar cane fields or the mills without reprieve. This metaphor of enslavement—of never ceasing work from which not even death could deliver a worker—makes a clear postcolonial statement. Kyle Bishop situates the Haitian zombie in the position of "sub-subaltern," building on Gayatri Spivak's idea of the postcolonial subaltern (71). Bishop claims that zombies are the

perfect “New World terror because of their essential ties to imperialist hegemony and oppression” (66). The Haitian zombie represented the oppressive effects of Empire as felt by its people, most of whose ancestors arrived in Haiti either as former French colonizers or former slaves or indentured servants. In nearly the reverse order of the reappropriation of the vampire imagery by the Irish, the zombie made its way into the culture of the colonizers by way of orientalism because, as Bishop puts it, the zombie (sub-)subaltern cannot speak up to the oppressors, but they can speak to each other, spelling the number one danger to Empire—insurrection (71). During the U.S. occupation of Haiti in the early twentieth century, greed for the strategic properties of the island was tempered with the petrifying fear of proximity to such otherness. This fear of otherness compounded with unfamiliarity of being on equal footing with that otherness. Those fears manifested in popular films in that same time frame.

When the zombie began to appear in U.S. popular media, in films such as *White Zombie* (1932), it was to portray a specific kind of anxiety to white audiences—the fear of the reversal of the asymmetrical power structures of Empire, such as the U.S. occupation of Haiti. The dangerous thing about the voodoo sorcerers like *White Zombie*’s “Murder” Legendre (Bela Lugosi) was that their power over those they enslave seems to trump the power of imperialism. The white protagonists Madeleine Short and Neil Parker take the zombification of the black others as simply a part of the context of their surroundings, but when Madeleine is kidnapped and zombified, Neil must take action against the reversal of power. Thus, the *bocor* (malevolent voodoo priest) has the ability to subvert the hegemonic power paradigm and the “zombie provides the

oppressed the opportunity to oppress" (Bishop 72). In this way, the zombie became a new salient American terror (meaning an *idea* which tortures the cultural psyche) in the twentieth century, but it was not yet a horror (a *bodily*—and often explicitly gory—manifestation of an idea). The next step in the evolution of the ravenous, walking dead would come from a monster merger between the completely unbeknownst-to-Western-audiences, middle-eastern "ghoul" and the Haitian zombie (Boone 35), forming what I'll refer to from now on as the modern zombie.

One of the many interesting things about George Romero and John Russo's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) is that, even though the film is credited with popularizing (or perhaps *finalizing* would be a better term) the current conceptualization of the zombie, nowhere in the script or publicity materials (which were scant due to the low budget) was the word zombie mentioned. Romero's hungry, walking dead were "ghouls" and he admitted to borrowing heavily for his seminal film from Richard Matheson's novella *I Am Legend* (1954), which tampered with traditional Gothic vampires by transmogrifying them from stately predators into a virulent, ravenous swarm (Bishop 33). The undead (such as vampires) and walking dead are liminal characters, falling into multiple, overlapping categories or binaries such as natural/unnatural (Boone 33), familiar/unfamiliar (Bishop 33), or simply life/death. The ultimate liminal space between life and death should not be permeable in both directions. Therefore, zombies transgress multiple ontological boundaries in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the zombie's heyday could very well have been short-lived after the success of *Night of the Living Dead* as most films that tried to follow in its footsteps focused on "campy

sensationalism and undisguised sexual exploitation" (Bishop 133). While certain counterculture movements of drug culture, war and civil protest, and Marxist consumerist critiques would always find room for the malleable zombie trope, the zombie would be relegated to the confines of the underbelly of pop culture for the next few decades until something on the scale of national trauma would allow them to let loose their mortal coils once more.

The Post-9/11 "Zombie Renaissance"

Socio-political theory cannot avoid the alterations in national discourses post-9/11. Harder to find are instances of these theories of trauma as applied to popular culture. This project grows out of a fascination with the undeniable coincidence of the "zombie renaissance" (Wells 2) and the years that followed the September 11, 2001 attacks. I first noticed the upswing in the volume of zombie films in 2002 when Paul W.S. Anderson's *Resident Evil* and Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* appeared within months of each other. What made each of these films unusual was that they were both big budget zombie-esque films in a time when the zombie film had become the fodder of B movies. In the years that followed, the number of medium-to-big budget zombie films per year seemed to increase exponentially. From the trough identified by Peter Dendle, Jamie Russell, and Annalee Newitz, who each concluded that the lowest point in recent history for zombie film production occurred just before 2000, to the "peak" identified by Newitz in 2008 (by which time Russell's and Dendle's data had ended), zombie film production has increased approximately 30 times (based on an average of data sets) per

year (Bishop 14). I question the definitiveness of the "peak" because the data were collected in 2009 and therefore the 2008 peak could be lower than more recent numbers. It's immaterial, however, because the striking thing about these data is that the highest point in film history for zombie-based stories is the decade after 9/11. And these data do not take into account textual zombie narratives.

Even though there is no empirical research as yet to show a corresponding post-9/11 zombie textual narrative boom, some would argue that the fact that books and stories began to be produced at all counts as a boom. Bishop, despite extensive comic, pulp, and oral/folklore traditions, contends that zombies were "virtual[ly] absen[t] from novels and other written stories (at least prior to 1968)" (Bishop 110). On the contrary, zombies and other undead monstrosities were so prevalent in comics and pulps that the morality crusaders inspired by Frederic Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* (1953) created the Comic's Code Authority within a year of the publication of Wertham's book to legislate the occurrence of certain themes in comics and pulps, including "walking dead…vampires and vampirism, ghouls, cannibalism and werewolfism" (Beahm 218, 220). Later incarnations of the code began to actually prohibit the use of the terms "zombie," "vampire," and "ghoul." However, these early versions of comic and pulp zombies were pre-paradigmatic having come before Romero's finalization of the genre, which could have resulted in Bishop's claim that there was no zombie literary history. Either way, whether one claims zombies have no literary history or are simply pre-paradigmatic, the evidence still supports a boom in zombie literature.

This zombie literature boom inadvertently supports the idea of a unified paradigm in that the literary zombie themes mirror those of film. Therefore, even if one cannot fairly state that zombies have no literary history (after all, the absence of an easily defined paradigm only inhibits the existence of a genre, not the narrative itself), one can at least argue that since 9/11, the paradigm has stabilized, thanks mostly to Romero. This sudden solidification of the genre, alongside the filmic zombie renaissance, provides sufficient evidence for me to start looking into the phenomenon. In 2004, the year my friends and I refer to as "the year of the zombie," I began to take more serious note of the occurrence of zombie films and books.

Once I was sufficiently satisfied that there was a coincidence between zombie themes in popular culture and the 9/11 attacks, I was able to settle more securely on a theoretical framework for continuing study. Others have also remarked on this coincidence in the fledgling field of Zombie Renaissance Studies. Bishop, in particular, has mentioned it in his introduction to *American Zombie Gothic*, in which he says that the "attacks of September 11, 2001, have unleashed perhaps the largest wave of paranoia and anxiety on American society since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor" (9). This statement is certainly beyond argument; however, in the years since Bishop conducted his research, I argue that there has been a perceptible change in the timbre of zombie narratives—a change significant enough for me to distinguish them from zombie narratives as zombie *survival* narratives. I came to this differentiation between the two types of zombie narratives when I contested Bishop's apparent conflation of Pearl Harbor with 9/11. Differences are too numerous to list, but those differences that

bear the most on a discussion of cultural "paranoia and anxiety" (or as I contest, *cultural trauma*) are tied up with context. The lack of context for the 9/11 attacks allows us ease of "othering" the transgressors and causes their impact to be profoundly different from that of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The unprecedented scale of the terrorist attack—a type of aggression that has unclear and complicated political and social context—made it impossible to ignore (as was largely done with the 1993 terrorist attack on those same buildings) or to deal with shamefully and vengefully, the way a stern parent does a wayward child (as was the case with the MacVeigh bombing in Oklahoma City). The scale coupled with the apparent peacetime, zealot-style of the 9/11 attacks left Americans—and arguably the Western hemisphere—with the trauma of either witnessing or experiencing an act of violence that, to the knowledge of the general population who experienced it, was unprecedented and unwarranted.

While comparisons of 9/11 to Pearl Harbor are common, my purposes might benefit from taking note of some key differences. First, the attack on Pearl Harbor was not on America's mainland, nor on its civilians, and thus it was not perceived so strongly as an "attack on America." However, to the extent that it was indeed an attack on America, America was able to respond by declaring war on a specific nation which could be clearly identified as having launched the attack. Third, and perhaps more significantly, the 9/11 attacks became visually iconic (and thus more traumatic) due to the endless media coverage. Twenty-first-century Americans had little context in which to situate the trauma of *witnessing*, both in reality and through mass media, an invasion of the homeland in a time of apparent peace. This victimhood facilitated a change in

many of the elements of discourse revolving around 9/11, the resulting Iraq war, and our national evaluations of patriotism, manhood, and dangerous subversion. Therefore, the zombie narrative to which Bishop refers, in which the zombies represent an anxiety akin to xenophobia, is only half of the zombie's mimetic range. To understand the importance of the zombie *survival* narrative, we must consider it, as so many monsters before it, against a backdrop of subversion. The zombie survival narrative indeed highlights the fear of zombies, but also the ability of humans to survive a world that no longer makes sense. In this way, zombie survival narratives directly antagonize many of the revenge-driven narratives to proliferate in the decade since the 9/11 attacks. Zombie survival narratives illustrate nothing if not that the happenings of the world are beyond any single individual's control, and in the wake of large-scale trauma, one's best hope is to survive and stay human. The life of the revenge-driven zombie narrative has been a network of complications for human characters. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and the more recent *Zombieland* (2009) each exemplify how retaining humanity in a zombie narrative correlates with not going on a revenge bent against the invading horde.

In *Night*, film critics have argued that the reason none of the humans survive is that they did not learn to work in unison toward their own survival. Most agree the film represents the stresses and turmoil experienced in America during the Vietnam War. In the case of the characters in the film, their squabbling over leadership, resources, and real estate (safety) led to each of their deaths when cooperation would undoubtedly have provided a better chance of survival. In the contemporary context of the film,

soldiers and their families were suffering the greatest traumata, due in part to political posturing and global economic conquest. The complication of the context of Vietnam is in the fact that it was never actually a sanctioned war. Soldiers, their families, and taxpayers occupied a political no-mans-land in which there was no clear purpose for their discomfort and suffering. To complicate this for veterans, their return from combat—recognized as a traumatic time for most soldiers since even the Civil War, whose physicians termed it "soldier's heart" (Samet 14)—often entailed rebuke and even violence from their own fellow citizenry despite their often involuntary service in a war without context. Romero's film could be seen as a metaphor for the lack of context, but also a warning for the possible outcome of the dissolution of the cooperation and—for lack of a better term—brotherhood of society.

In a similarly devoid-of-context, post-9/11 America, *Zombieland* also focuses its rhetoric around the rebuilding of community among surviving humans. The film concludes optimistically with the characters forming a new type of community to replace their lost family structures. In particular, *Zombieland's* commentary regarding the loss of the nuclear family is somewhat dismissive. The suggestion is that in the face of loss and trauma, humans still require communal, social bonds with one another in order to recover from trauma. Again and again the idea of community is perpetuated as recourse to social recovery, which accords with what psychological and cultural trauma theorists purport.

In order to examine literary zombie survival narrative post-9/11, I construct a critical framework of trauma theory works such as David Simpson's *9/11: The Culture of*

Commemoration (2006) and Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence* (1992). I will supplement these over-arching theories with masculinity, system management and organization, and postmodernism. In order to focus this project, I will narrow my literary gaze to a specific corner of zombie survival narrative known as the mash-up. The term mash-up refers to a genre in which an author superimposes an anachronistic or otherwise mutually exclusive theme to an established, generally canonical work. The first I will discuss, which establishes the firmament for my discussions of the next works, is W. Bill Czolgosz's *Huckleberry Finn and Zombie Jim* (2009). As with Mark Twain's original, masculinity theory lends itself perfectly to Czolgosz's mash-up. Here I will discuss the interrelationship between the (hyper)masculine hegemony, the suspension of social realities, and system justification theory. This chapter will show that the war of ideologies that resulted from our own media-government's revenge response to 9/11 altered the masculine hegemony, and that the key to retaining community without engaging in system justifying revenge discourse is to play with liminality, the way that Huck does in Twain's original and the way that zombies do in a post-9/11 traumatized society.

Building on the limning of the hypermasculine hegemony, the next chapter will discuss the role of femininity in the construction of masculine hegemony, as hegemony exists only through the complicity of those groups subjugated and marginalized. To illuminate this point, I will discuss the first popular zombie mash-up, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), whose original template had already been prductive in the discussion of femininity. Along with trauma theory, I will again use masculinity theory

along with system justification theory. I discuss hegemony through such masculine-making institutions as sport, military and men's magazines, highlighting the role femininities play when marginalized from such "boys clubs" and also the role of femininities when they *infiltrate* the boys club.

Zombie mash-ups play with boundaries in the same way that zombies themselves do. Transgression is necessary in a war of ideologies in order to rediscover the human element in the mix. An example of an institution that was once a boys club and has been infiltrated by certain (non-emphasized) femininities is West Point. The military institution is a real-world example of a transition from what some have called "incomplete masculinity" (as in, in progress) comparable to Huck Finn's adolescent precipice before the transition to manhood. Elizabeth Samet's book *Soldier's Heart* (2005) describes a moment in the lives of a particular class of firsties (seniors) in which they celebrate their impending graduation—fittingly, through *institutionally sanctioned* mild rebellion and performance:

> Perhaps the most important moment of misrule…is the senior-class revue, written and performed by cadets. It is called *The 100th Night Show* (the name indicates the number of days that remain until graduation). Throughout the Army, in skits performed at unit Christmas parties and other gatherings, soldiers transgress the normal boundaries by mocking one another and their commanders. These skits…sometimes involve cross-dressing as well as other forms of travesty. (132)

Samet, who teaches English literature at West Point, points repeatedly to the separate worlds of the cadets and their needs to keep themselves separate from the very real possibility of war. Transgressions such as the senior revue and even the power cadets take for themselves in studying something like literature remind them of their inner lives and their capacity for play. Samet says, "[O]nce [the freshmen] realize that language is one of the things over which they still retain command, they begin to want to exercise their power" (69). In many ways, West Point cadets have an advantage over resisting the revenge rhetoric of the hypermasculine hegemony over general society in that their exposure to the ideology is not as mediated. In other words, cadets interact with the *reality* of war and its contexts rather than the hyperreality of war which society at large interacts through media imagery. The difference between the two interactions is as stark as the difference between the world and experience of wartime reality and The World of Warcraft. The war of ideology is carried out by media-government rhetoric, and military servicemen and –women are simply casualties of that war. In this light, zombie survival narratives that counter the revenge-driven hypermasculine hegemony are a kind of cultural peace summit or arbitration. What my thesis will show is that the genre of zombie horror fiction could easily have woven itself into the discursive current of revenge narratives which became so problematically popular post-9/11 with TV shows, video games and films such as *24*, *Splinter Cell*, and *The Sum of All Fears,* respectively, to name only a few of the examples. While each of these examples fit onto the revenge narrative of system-justifying rhetoric, and zombies could easily have come to represent the evil enemy other of the us/them mentality of the War on

Terror, instead the genre took a turn toward survival in the face of a world-gone-mad. And the world that has gone mad is post-9/11 America. The importance of the zombie survival narrative is that the thing most worth saving—and the thing likely to suffer the heaviest casualties—is the humanity of an entire nation of innocent bystanders to both physical and ideological shrapnel.

CHAPTER 2

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Zombie Jim: Liminality and Subversive Discourse in a Traumatized Society

Mark Twain's subversive, irreverent, bildungsromane figure of Huckleberry Finn plays out a moral dilemma seemingly only pertinent in an antebellum America to a contemporary audience decades after the Civil War. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) was telling an outdated story at the time of its publication of runaway slaves and the moral obligations the young, white protagonist wrestles with regarding whether he should turn Jim in. However, Huck's story was not simply preaching to the choir. It is widely recognized by historians that the Reconstruction of the South following the Civil War was nearly as socially damaging as the institution of slavery had been. While Huck may have debuted (as a protagonist) to a country post-slavery, he did not do so to a country post-inequality and segregation. The social backlash stemming from the loss of the Civil War in the South cannot have made for an easy place for African Americans to live. And so, Huck's moral decision regarding the slave Jim could easily have referred to the continuing social issues resulting from Reconstruction and the fact that no matter which side of the war any given community had fought, individuals must now contend with the very real fact that the War was over, and slavery an institution of the extremely recent past.

Chad Kleist, calls the decision made by Huck an "inverse akratic act" "(257). An akratic act occurs "when a person believes performing X, all things considered, is the

correct act, and yet she performs ~X"; however, inverse akrasia occurs when a person "believes X, all things considered, is the correct act, and yet performs ~X, where ~X is the correct act" (Kleist 257). Huck's inverse akrasia stems from the fact that he believes that he is performing the incorrect social act in befriending Jim; however, his empathy turns out to be superior to his judgment and Huck never performs what he perceives to be the correct act (turning Jim in) despite being presented with several chances. If we accept that Huck's dilemma corresponds to the issues of racism and inequality in the Reconstruction South, then Huck's choice to escape *with* Jim rather than turn him in presents a subversive course of action for those who wish to not participate in the culturally pervasive racism and inequality. Considering Huck's action as an inverse akratic changes his subversive act from a moral choice to a foregone conclusion. Twain's text is useful as a vehicle of subversive discourse also because of the continued voluntary liminality of both Huck and Jim. Both characters are liminal in the realms of masculinity/citizenship and physical space. Subversion, coupled with multifarious forms of involuntary and voluntary liminality, makes *Huck Finn* ripe for a post-9/11 mashup with zombies.

Part of Twain's subversive punch was the use of racial slurs to refer to both enslaved and freed blacks in his book. Contemporary society is justifiably uncomfortable with such slurs, and it is debatable whether our political correctness has saved us from our uncomfortable past at the expense of our access to the full range of subversive discourse. However, W. Bill Czolgosz's mashup *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Zombie Jim* (2009) not only finds a way around the nagging problem of socially

acceptable language, but through replacing the concept of African American as second class citizen with that of zombie as second class citizen, brings the liminal concepts found in Twain's text into the post-9/11 zombie renaissance described by Steven Wells (Bishop 17). The inclusion of Twain's 1884 text in the post-9/11 zombie renaissance accomplishes a subversive alternative to participation in revenge-driven narratives for a nation suddenly inundated with nationalist ideology following the attacks of September 11, 2001. This subversive alternative discourse takes place through the formation of liminal spaces in masculinity and patriotism in order to navigate and antagonize the trauma created by an inability to mourn the victims of the attacks other than through ideological discourse and the threat of the unknowable enemy other.

Resurrecting Twain

Ihab Hassan, referring to the postmodern goal of dissolving metanarratives, expresses a fear that Western civilization evinced "the desire to recover norms, judgments, and values shared in new contexts of civic obedience" (9). It is our metanarratives that allow for the pervasiveness of ideology and so our need to dissent to such narratives is how we retain agency in the face of ideology. Twain's Huck is a natural choice for a foundation already steeped in dissent with the status quo. Hassan sees dissent not only as an essential part of postmodern agency, but as biological. Biological dissent occurs when "an organism engages in delicate transactions with its environment, from which it draws sustenance, delaying death so long as the enigma of mortality permits delay" (Hassan 1). However, this ability to defer mortality through

action is limited by many other factors, such as the immune system, environmental factors, and the food chain itself (2). Even at the basest biological level, dissent is both delimited through action and limited through reaction.

Beyond the biological, dissent is still split between delimiting acts of refusal and limiting environmental onslaughts. Social dissent, such as that performed in Huck's inverse akratic act, occurred on a macrocosmic scale in the resistance to nationalist ideology following 9/11. Mash-ups such as Czolgosz's introduce a discourse of dissent by playing with the liminal themes of masculinity already established by Twain's characters of Huck and Jim, who are both on the liminal edges of hegemonic manhood outlined in E. Anthony Rotundo's model of communal, self-made, and passionate manhood (5). Huck is on the brink of becoming a man; however, as a result of his status as sometimes orphan and always lower class, he will never participate in the masculine hegemony of the time, which consists only of rich, white, and, it goes without saying, straight men. Huck's only option to approach participation in the masculine hegemony is to allow the widow to "sivilise" him, which will make him a charity case (Twain 13). Given the option of either permanent exclusion from or permanent subordinance to the masculine hegemony, Huck discovers a third option when he meets Jim: prolonging the liminal state of his boyhood through his method of travel and his bond with Jim. Jim's liminality is much more complicated than his exclusion from hegemonic masculinity, but these complications are all related to his exclusion from the masculine hegemony, to be discussed in a later section.

While the popularity of mashups has some in the academy on the verge of collapse, Twain himself had no such high-minded notions about the appropriation of the work of others into one's own. In a letter to "a young correspondent" in 1887, Twain writes, "[A] considerable part of every book is an unconscious plagiarism of some previous book" (qtd. in Scharnhorst 53). Twain later reiterates this sentiment in an interview, "I laugh every time I hear the idiots jackassing in a charge of plagiarism against somebody or other. Why, to repeat another man's thoughts it to pay him the highest compliment you can" (qtd. in Scharnhorst 53). Similarly, the shepherd of the Haitian zombie into American popular culture, Zora Neale Hurston "emphasized the hybrid character of black popular expression, which was distinguished in part by its ability to rework and make its own a great variety of styles, characters, icons, and fashions" (Suarez 213). Hurston herself said, "'The Negro is a very original being. While he lives and moves in the midst of a white civilization, everything that he touches is reinterpreted for his own use'" (qtd. in Suarez 213). Henry Louis Gates catalogues a similar reappropriation when he refers to "signifyin." With such a history of mashing up always already in existence, it's time the academy accustomed itself to the appropriation of canonical stories, themes, and characters for the purpose of the production of new ideas.

Czolgosz creates these new ideas by complementing Twain's already subversive text with the equally subversive zombie monster archetype adapted from Haitian folklore—the ultimate liminal body. Reading Twain's and Czolgosz's texts with the liminal and hegemonic in mind will produce cultural representations of each society to

produce them. Twain's text uses the voluntarily prolonged liminal state as a means to defer participation in the masculine hegemony. Czolgosz's melding of pre-existing liminality in Twain's text with further gradations of liminal metaphors results in the liminal plane called for by Hassan in which "the drama of dissent unfolds" (2). This dissent occurs "not only in the space between self and other, it also fills that *imaginary* place between the one and the many, the presumed unity of existence and its felt diversity" (Hassan 2, emphasis mine). While the terms liminal and marginal both relate to boundaries, they are not interchangeable. Both terms describe a position on the edge of what is normative and privileged in a society: marginal refers to occupying that space in a degree of *exclusion* from the hegemony, while liminal refers to the occupying of that space *concurrently* with another. In other words, marginality denotes an excluded agent's position relative to the hegemony only, but liminality denotes hybridity. Just as hegemonic delineations are socially constructed based on a wide range of behavioral, physical, and economic characteristics, so are the postmodern spaces of dissent constructed *within* the liminal spaces created by the very existence of hegemony—of any kind, but in this case, masculine.

Twain's use of racial slurs throughout his text was likely part of the construction of his satire, but Czolgosz was faced with the problem of finding a substitute for the slur that could still connote pejoration and allow him to explore the themes of subjugation without overt racism. So Czolgosz employs the terms "bagger" and "half-bagger" to refer to the zombies, who have replaced Blacks as the enslaved labor force of the South—the difference between half- and full-baggers being the amount of their former,

living identities they retained upon reanimation. As Huck says, “people used to own other people” but now they only own dead bodies reanimated by the “fissythis,” Huck’s mispronunciation of phthisis, which was the name for tuberculosis in Ancient Greece and the epidemic that precipitated the zombie plagues in Czolgosz’s mash-up (Czolgosz 3).

Masculinity and System Justification

The zombie archetype, being thoroughly postmodern, has morphed and fragmented in definition since it appeared in American culture in the nineteenth century through trade with parts of the Caribbean. However, the zombie’s history as a cultural artifact of subversion in American culture begins with the U.S. occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934. According to Zora Neale Hurston, this occupation “seems to have resulted in greater local competition for limited resources” (qtd. in Littlewood 243). Despite the applicability of the enslaved Haitian zombie archetype to the context of Twain’s text, Czolgosz chose the form originated by filmmaker George A. Romero and authors like Robert E. Howard (*Pigeons from Hell*) and Richard Matheson (*I Am Legend*), all of whose monsters—at the time of their inception—were not called zombies, but their characteristics came to embody the modern zombie. This choice in form of the zombie archetype places the satire and discourse firmly in a contemporary setting, despite the timeframe established by the use of Twain’s text as framework, which is one of the things that allows for the cultural work of mashups to occur.

In a similar way that Twain's Huck and Jim accomplish cultural work in terms of creating a new space in the national discourse concerning racism, Czolgosz's Huck and Zombie Jim are creating discursive liminal spaces in masculinity, nationality, and vitality. While Twain's contemporary audience was permeated with an ideology of racism, Czolgosz's is constructed of nationalist, war-making ideology. Not coincidentally, masculinity has long been tied up with war-making, so much so that "[b]y extension, it can be surmised that the relationship between notions of masculinity and notions of militarism have been so closely connected that in many societies, throughout history, war-fighting becomes a form of male rite of passage" (Godfrey 205). In other words, what Godfrey is stating is that militarism and war-making are now "significant factors in wider conceptions of what it means to be a man (subject) and how Man (discourse) has been constructed" (205). Masculinity in Czolgosz's contemporary audience is constructed by making war on "terror" as the real enemy cannot be found. As any rational person can expound, making war on terror is much like fighting fire with fire. In the end, one only produces more fire, more terror.

In a war of ideologies, in which the enemy is not easily located, a complex network of system justification must permeate the national discourse in order to engender the desired revenge response. System justification is possible because "people come to implicitly associate information with the nation, and … this information can be triggered by subtle environmental cues, such as the American flag" (Carter 342). After the attacks of 9/11, there was a not-so-subtle increase in the activation of information associated with the nation, which led to increases in system-justifying

ideology and it was this ideology of which Czolgosz's mashup pair of Huck and Zombie Jim were born.

The use of Twain's text as a framework moves the discussion to the twenty-first-century uses and constructions of masculinity, but the nineteenth-century framework of masculinity must first be clearly defined as it applies to the two protagonists. According to E. Anthony Rotundo's model of the progression of hegemonic masculinity in the nineteenth century, both Huck and Jim would have been born into a margin of either self-made or passionate manhood. In the late nineteenth century, which is the time period of Twain's Huck, passionate manhood was beginning to replace self-made manhood. The difference between the two was the handling of the manly passions (Rotundo 5). In self-made manhood, the passions were to be repressed by each man, but in passionate manhood they were to be tempered by the presence of a woman who maintained the domestic sphere (Rotundo 22). Twain's Huck is lacking in feminine influence, as he resists the Widow's attempts to take him "for her son" and "sivilize" him (Twain 13). Huck appears desirous of allowing his passions to run wild, as he does not enjoy the Widow's attempts to introduce him to the civilized life, yet he also does not wish to stay with his Pap. Huck says it is "rough living in the house all the time, considering how regular and decent the widow [is] in all her ways" (Twain 13). The construction of civilization to which Huck so strongly reacts is that of the masculine hegemony of manhood. As Huck begins to pass from his boyhood to his manhood, rules become much stricter, his leisurely fraternizations with Tom Sawyer are to be restricted and structured, and he must participate in one of the civic duties of manhood: systems

justification. In other words, since the masculine hegemony in the nineteenth century was, by and large, decider and defender of the status quo, one of the duties of participants in the hegemony was to justify the existence of itself and the status quo. While the status quo in the temporal frame of the novel includes slavery, the status quo of Twain's contemporary audience was still imbrued with a lingering racist rhetoric. Twain's little protagonist is politely refusing to take part in that rhetoric by employing its language, themes, and familiar caricatures to perform the inversely akratic act of subversive dissent. Twain alludes directly to the masculine hegemony in a scene in which a man faces off with a lynch mob.

Sherburn has just killed a man named Boggs for getting too rowdy during his "monthly drunk," despite the fact that the rest of the town has assured Huck that Boggs is merely a blowhard when intoxicated (Twain 156). Sherburn says that he is "tired of this" but he will "endure it till one o'clock" leaving the townspeople—some of whom had been wishing Boggs would threaten them so they could laugh about it, as he never actually committed any violence—fifteen minutes to try to corral Boggs and sober him up (Twain 157). After Sherburn shoots Boggs twice, he turns on his heel and returns to his home, presumably awaiting the inevitable lynch mob. When the lynch mob arrives, Sherburn delivers a carefully constructed speech, seemingly criticizing the men in the mob for not being "men," but in reality, Twain was criticizing the status quo-justifying methods of the hegemony:

> The idea of *you* lynching anybody! It's amusing. The idea of you thinking you had pluck enough to lynch a *man*! Because you're brave enough to

> tar and feather poor friendless cast-out women that come through here, did that make you think you had grit enough to lay your hands to a *man*? (Twain 161-62)

Sherburn draws a distinction between himself, a man, and the mob, a group of not-men. However, we must not take Sherburn's distinctions as reliable. Sherburn asks the mob, "Why don't your juries hang murderers? Because they're afraid the man's friends will shoot them in the back, in the dark … so they always acquit; and then a *man* goes in the night, with a hundred masked cowards at his back, and lynches the rascal" (Twain 162). The important thing about Sherburn's distinction between men and mobs is that they are not mutually exclusive. Sherburn is not assigning white or black hats to either side; he is simply speaking about a conviction to duty, which is an expectation of self-made manhood. Sherburn chastises the mob for not having manly conviction to duty even though that duty is to lynch him. Therefore, Sherburn's speech is an inverse akratic act similar to the one Huck commits when he decides to "go to Hell" rather than turn against Jim (Twain 223). The difference between Sherburn's inverse akratic act and Huck's, however, is that Sherburn's is designed to perform the task of system justification. Sherburn is not only condemning that the judicial system is broken, but that the vigilantism that should be taking up the slack of the broken judicial system is also flawed. Huck's inverse akratic act does not attempt to justify or correct the existing system, but simply to stay only on the edge of that system. In other words, Huck wishes to enter only far enough into manhood to be "half a man" like Buck Harkness, who Sherburn chastises for starting the mob but not being able to follow through (Twain

162). This is comparable to Huck's desire to stay on his raft with Jim "forever" and his general lack of abolitionist or "zomby-lover" leanings outside of Jim (Czolgosz 155, 46). Huck doesn't want to be enough of a man to be charged with either directly opposing the hegemonic system or justifying it; therefore, he finds his liminal position most favorable.

Sherburn concludes his scolding with a jab at mob mentality, equating it to the army seemingly inexplicably. Czolgosz places this scene just one chapter prior to Huck hearing tell that the "Devil's Army" was beginning to devour civilization en masse (154). While racist rhetoric has not been eradicated in the century and more since Twain published his text, North American public discourse has become imbrued with a modified form of racism linked to nationalist system justification resulting from 9/11. Godfrey says that "Representations of war are, arguably, inextricably tied up with representations of masculinity," adding that images of military and the "warrior-soldier" have long served as signifiers of masculinity (207). However, images of the military and warrior-soldier also fit into a category of rhetorical imagery designed to trigger patriotic thoughts of America because "the information people associate with America tends to be the information that best serves the interest of America as a powerful state" (Carter et al 345). Therefore, Twain's text was readymade as a framework for a mashup concerning the role of masculinity in system justification rhetoric resulting from 9/11.

Death, Travel, and Hegemony

Huck views civilization as a burden but life with his Pap as terrifying and so prefers to cultivate a socially liminal state for himself. He gets that opportunity when he encounters the newly fugitive Jim, and once the two begin to move, they experience a Newtonian compulsion to keep doing so. Travel is overtly liminal in that the traveler is no longer fully centered in the point of departure, but has also not achieved a destination, other than the point of movement. Zachary Beckstead refers to this element of travel as "betweenness," but being between two places does not necessarily mean that a person is liminal (385). A person does not cease to exist while in transit, they are considered to be *somewhere*, but not quite fully where they are going to be in the next instant, or even ultimately. Given the individual situation of both Huck and Jim relative to the masculine hegemony and wider society when they leave, they have no more of a realistic destination than they do a place within the hegemony upon departure. Zachary Beckstead says that "the promise of travel is the possibility for personal transformation" in that the journey toward the unfamiliar allows for "novel ambivalent experiences" (387). In this sense, as both Twain and Czolgosz depict the journey of the two already marginalized characters down the river, both narratives can be said to be about a certain kind of self-making manhood, but in a setting bereft of any model. So the result is that the manhood that is created is not in keeping with the hegemony.

The most liminal characteristic of the manner of Huck and Jim's travel in both novels is that they are not necessarily transgressing borders but traveling along them.

Rivers, especially those as long and wide as the Mississippi, are often used as property, county or even state boundary lines. Since they are borders, but also space, when Huck and Jim are traveling down rather than across the Mississippi they are not only between spaces but in two spaces at once. So aside from being the most convenient form of transportation, the river is also a metaphor for the voluntarily prolonged liminality of Huck and Jim. Czolgosz carries this metaphor further by making it obvious that the liminal state of the river is the safest place Huck and Jim could be. As Huck and Jim escape on their raft in front of the advancing Devil's Army, presumably a huge horde of vicious zombies, Huck observes they had "best stick to the river forever; never go ashore again" (Czolgosz 155). The presence of the zombie horde in Czolgosz's mashup transforms the liminal spaces Huck and Jim occupy into the last safe spaces.

The vicious "bunderlugs" also have a frightening effect on Zombie Jim when gets caught up in their midst. Following the scene with Sherburn when Huck and Jim first see the horde sweep through town, Jim is caught up in the violence and begins to feast on living humans. Huck finds him "with his face buried in the entrails of a li'l blond boy, eatin' like he was just famished" (Czolgosz 149). When Huck questions Jim about his behavior, Jim responds, "'I sorry, Huck. I got hungry and careless, and done let my instink get th' betta of me. I knowed it was wrong before I did it, but I jus' couldn' help myself'" (149). What Jim is experiencing is the mob mentality described by Sherburn in his address to the not-men. Jim is able to distance himself from the cannibalistic urges he experiences when he is in his liminal state with just Huck, but when he finds himself in the midst of a rabid horde, he can't resist as easily. Czolgosz's zombie horde is a

metaphor for the pervasive, system-justifying ideology experienced by North Americans after 9/11. This patriotic rhetoric, which Travis Carter and others claim approaches nationalism (344), is intended to justify the system (nation) but it also resulted in a form of nationalism system justification that necessitated violence in the form of revenge against those who had perpetrated the attacks. Czolgosz's vicious zombie horde is analogous to the tendency of nationalist rhetoric to be tinged with violence. But the nature of the attacks and their own existence as acts of system justification resulted not only in the enemy being unidentifiable but also in warring ideologies. Two ideological systems, each supported by their own network of systems, each supported by their own network of system justifying rhetoric, collided on 9/11. The nagging problem for Americans was that only one of those ideologies was supported by a system justifying *act*, which allowed "the time of memory and commemoration [to evolve] alongside the time of revenge" (Simpson 4). The commemorative patriotism began to justify a revenge act in order to legitimate the status quo idea that America is a superpower and thus is dominant. A dominant superpower must retaliate against the power that attacked it. The problem with this form of system justification was that, in contrast to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, not only was it a peacetime act, but the perpetrators were non-national and impossible to find.

Like the Huck and Jim of Twain's and Czolgosz's novels, North Americans found themselves in the midst of a war of ideologies in which no actual winner was possible. The only possible outcome of the reciprocation of hostilities in the best of scenarios—where the enemy is identifiable—is the perpetuation of a cycle of trauma, pain, and

death. The outcome of the actions taken to avenge the nationalist ideology following 9/11 actually achieved a kind of worst-case scenario in which a third party—Iraq—was brought in to suffer America's vengeance in a bizarre, whipping boy-type role. Those who wished to distance themselves from the nationalism were forced to either become sympathetic with the invading ideology, which was dangerous besides being unpatriotic considering the effects of the warring ideologies on the lives of Islamic Americans, or create some liminal space that could allow for reflection more-or-less independent of ideological inundation. As David Simpson puts it, "Ours is a world both reproducing and resisting a totality holding together all that it contains (or all that matters to the system), but it not a plurality of purely separate worlds" (10). Mashups such as Czolgosz's operate in the discourse of that liminal space between systems by using zombies to ontologically represent the anxiety experienced by those wishing to subvert the violent bent of the system-justifying discourse. The use of the liminal zombie, liminality of travel, and the very liminal mode of travel down a border rather than across it all draw attention to this liminal discourse with the possibility to view the opposing ideologies somewhat objectively and perhaps break the cycle or perpetual violence the nationalist rhetoric has a tendency to incur. However, Twain's allusion to the freedom of liminal space and deferment of transgression is not the only one amplified by Czolgosz.

Imagery and Metaphor: Dying and Thresholds

Martin Frommer muses on the human tendency to not fully recognize the reality of mortality until the moment of crossing the threshold (480). The moment of mortality—the moment that life meets not life—is expressly as liminal a moment a being will ever experience in reality. However, Frommer is treating the phenomenon that humans—other than certain rare occasions when a person is clinically dead for a time and then is revived—never engage the transience of their existence before the moment of its end. Twain and Huck exhibit a book-length preoccupation with death which is unusual in a fourteen-year-old boy, but perhaps not so in a satirist such as Twain. Satirists don't tend to use allusions lightly, so it is safe to say that Huck's preoccupation is a signpost. Therefore, an examination of some of Huck's more telling allusions to death and dying will go far in aiding later discussions of socio-cultural relevance of both Twain's novel to the 1880s and Czolgosz's novel to post 9/11 North America.

Huck's allusions to death begin less than three pages into the text, when he says that he "don't take no stock in dead people," referring to his disinterest in anything given in an historical account such as the Bible (Twain 15). Huck goes no further in explaining his disinterest in history; however, we can infer certain motives. Huck's statement carries an implied anthropomorphism of the dead in that he places his disinterest in the "dead people" themselves rather than the practice of passing down stories through historical accounts. In fact, Huck and Tom show interest in history in the fantasies they create within their play, such as the gold they pretend at capturing from

the Spanish conquistadors and "rich A-rabs" (Twain 24). The *events* of history are not the offense to Huck's interests, but the dead. This early, flippant remark by Huck provides a porthole into his understanding of the validity of life and the invalidity of death, which in turn opens the door for further understanding of dichotomies, such as that of the hegemonic and the non-hegemonic. Huck may recognize that "dead people" very clearly still have an impact on many of the living (not only, but especially in a religious setting) but the living have no impact on the dead. Huck's desire to disregard the dead is an interesting aberration in his formation of manhood—seemingly separate from the hegemonic (Tom Sawyer, who is fascinated by stories of people from antiquity and who is likely solely responsible for Huck's interest in anything from the historical record) and the non-hegemonic (Jim and Pap, who both speak to taking stock in the dead and each of which I will discuss in a later section).

Very shortly after his ruminations regarding his disinterest in the dead, Huck goes to his room and becomes so lonely that he fantasizes about being dead himself. That Huck's "most wish[ing] [he] was dead" follows his dismissal of the dead so closely implies a logical link between the two (Twain 16). Huck may envy the dead for their inability to be affected by the living as he is. This type of melodramatic response to loneliness is not unusual in adolescents; however, it is likely that this logical link could have been a large part of his impetus to go on the run with Jim.[1] Directly after fantasizing about his own death, Huck begins assigning meaning to his surroundings fitting to his preoccupation with death when he hears "an owl, away off, who-whooing

[1] This discussion is continued in the "Civil Death and the Posthuman Patient" section.

about somebody that was dead, and a whippowill [sic] and a dog crying about somebody that was *going to die*" (Twain 16, emphasis mine). The impending death Huck thinks he is hearing about could be the death of his boyhood, and therefore his current existence. At age fourteen, Huck is poised to enter manhood. However, his prospects for being accepted into the masculine hegemony are bleak. The fluidity of social strata in boy culture allow for Huck to be less marginalized than he will be when he crosses the threshold into the world of men. Huck's lack of property, parentage and social skills will keep him well outside the hegemony. Therefore, the death of Huck's boyhood is distressing in its prospects and unavoidability. And so, here is Huck, trapped upstairs in the Widow Douglas's respectable and civilized house for the night, and he can feel himself settling into a stillness that is uncomfortable in its acquiescence. He places impending death knell importance on natural night sounds because, as Frommer suggests, the moment of death is a future moment and so cannot be envisioned by the mind (483), not unlike any other one-way threshold, namely that between boyhood and manhood. All Huck can perceive about the other side of the threshold (of the grave, but by extension of the metaphor, of manhood as well) is its permanence.

Huck acknowledges the impenetrability of the barrier between life and death when he follows the image of the birds' reports of death and dying with an image of a communique from beyond the grave. He hears "that kind of a sound that a ghost makes when it wants to tell about something that's on its mind but can't make itself understood" (Twain 16). It is the communication barrier of the grave that brings home the sense of confinement, helplessness, and finality of the loss of both life and boyhood,

and which leads Huck to escape from the Widow's house and to seek movement of some kind. Huck equates staying physically still with acquiescing to the death of his boyhood because he will have no choice but to travel in other ways while staying still. Through mere interaction with adulthood he will be forced to travel emotionally, intellectually, and socially, even if he does not wish to. The ghost that cannot make its meaning known to Huck is his manhood, and it is not only a complete mystery, but a terrifying one; no doubt in large part because his main model of manhood—his Pap—is despicable to him. Huck likely recognizes that his own eventual manhood will be shaped by his Pap's own relationship to the masculine hegemony. When Huck crosses the threshold of manhood, the ghost that cannot make itself understood to him will be his boyhood, just as the ghosts to the dead are the living.

Through the doorway of Huck's preoccupation with death and manhood, Czolgosz inserts his zombie plague; however, the plague itself is merely a setting for the animation of the liminality of the moment of death. This liminal moment of death is an apt metaphor for the liminal masculinity of a boy like Huck, who is at the point in his life where he is partially an adult and partially a child and who—upon fully entering adulthood—will have one foot in the hegemony due to his status as white, but will have the other outside it as the poor orphaned child of an alcoholic scoundrel. The "fissythis" removes the permanence of the barrier between life and death, but the loss of this permanence only compounds the layers of meaning in the metaphor because now that there is a dialogue between the living and the dead, there is a question of identity (lost or gained) in crossing the threshold. Therefore, Czolgosz expands the metaphor of

manhood-as-death into manhood-as-lost-agency by revoking the power of the dead to not be moved or affected by the actions or sentiments of the living. Similar to how Twain's Huck recognized physical stillness (perhaps comparable to that of death or even enslavement) as a vehicle for the ideology of adulthood to infiltrate his identity, Czolgosz's Huck sees the resemblance between identity alteration possible with prolonged exposure to the masculine hegemony and the unpredictability of the identity changes in the returning baggers. Huck describes a full-bagger, who turned out to be the vicious kind that craves human flesh, "shriekin' and howlin' and rippin' like wolves to get out of the bag" (Czolgosz 16). He says that "most baggers…was tame and pleasant enough…but you couldn't know which way they'd be until they came back" (16). However, whether the bagger is a killer is not the only part of its return that is uncertain; there is also the likelihood that a bagger may return without even the meanest sense of its former self. A bagger may not return a voluntary killer, but it could return as a blank canvas for other ideologies to construct. At best, the presence of zombies does not take the mystery out of death, and at worst, it increases it. Therefore, where Twain's Huck was reluctant to complete his journey to manhood due to its uncertainty and his inevitable exclusion from the hegemony (and therefore subjugation to its power), Czolgosz's Huck must navigate around a system (society) riddled with the walking, ravenous dead. In order to understand the difference between Twain's death imagery and Czolgosz's death metaphor, we must examine each text in relation to its contemporary society.

Voluntary Liminality

The temptation when reading Twain's book may be to attempt to judge its themes, language, and characters against our own contemporary setting. I refer to it as a temptation because, even as we do it, we are aware of the impossibility of consolidating a late nineteenth-century book with our own modern sentiments.[2] Many critics have examined the book with this temptation as the central problem, and just as many have read the novel against the antebellum backdrop of the novel's setting. However, the more useful and interesting criticisms examine the relevance of the novel to *its own* contemporary setting—meaning twenty years after the end of the Civil War. Not coincidentally, regardless of which temporal frame one chooses to read the novel with, nearly all discussions will center on race. While this route may be fertile, reading race in the novel against its own contemporary period can produce problematic results. For Christopher Gair, the novel's commentary is flawed because of the way "racial identities are constructed…through a polarization of the black/white divide" (188). Gair first points to how the factors forming this divide are socially constructed and then concludes that "Huck's relationship to Jim (and the partial transformation that this brings about in Huck's own thinking and behaviour [sic]) interrogates the racial identities within the black/white binary rather than moving beyond it" (188). In other words, Gair asserts that the novel's relevance to the late nineteenth century is "questionable," due to Huck's operation within a culturally constructed racial binary.

[2] The uncomfortable racial slurs in Twain's prose and dialogue have engendered many sanitations, among which, were it not for its multi-level cultural applicability, Czolgosz's mash-up might even have been counted.

The problem Gair encounters is the result of reading race alone in Twain's novel. However, reading race along with nineteenth-century masculinity theory produces the liminal spaces necessary to move beyond the white/black binary—making race simply another element of the definition of the masculine hegemony. Since race is only one aspect of the novel's discussion of the masculine hegemony, the first step to moving beyond the black/white binary is to move beyond a myopic view of the possible relevancies of the novel.

Given Huck's ambition towards liminality—which is the only kind of manly passion from Rotundo's model Huck seems to have—his decisions in his escape, both in terms of lack of destination and his companionship, show determination and premeditation. Huck appears to be willfully choosing a separation from Tom, whose continued acquaintance would have sped up Huck's journey to adulthood. Tom once exerted enough influence over Huck to bring him back to civilization after Huck ran away, and Huck would not want that type of influence over himself if he wished to distance himself from society (and hegemony). One may be tempted to argue that Tom would be the perfect companion for a boy who wishes to defer manhood, especially considering Rotundo's model of "boy culture" (32). However, while boy culture would seem the perfect environment for Huck's disinclination to transition to manhood, it doesn't work at all for that purpose. Boy culture, and thus companionship with Tom, work as a prelude to manhood—sort of manhood boot camp—designed to prepare boys for the competitive world of men. The late nineteenth-century masculine hegemony was a capitalist arena that rewarded ambition and a cutthroat business attitude, and

contrasted with the play of boy culture, which tended to be competitive but engendered a kind of camaraderie. The type of play Tom and Huck perform is simply play to Tom, but to Huck it is a kind of ideal. Tom is not opposed to civilization in the same way that Huck is. Tom's boy culture play is very temporary and tangential to the domestic sphere. Huck fantasizes about a state of perpetual betweenness—one that would allow him to transgress the borders of multiple spheres without becoming mired in the hegemony. Huck is able to partially realize this dream when he is on the run with Jim, whose status as a slave, especially later when he is freed, has him in a permanent liminal state as man, but not-man. Being on the run with Jim, even before he is freed, is a much more sustainable form of liminality. However, while the liminal state between adolescence and adulthood cannot be maintained forever, it can be maintained in such an environment of social vacuum as to allow for Huck to authenticate his own brand of masculinity. And so, when Tom reappears at the end of Huck's story, and after Jim is freed by Miss Watson's death, Huck "light[s] out for the Territory," pursuing another state of liminality (Twain 296). In both Twain's and Czolgosz's versions, Huck resolves to travel alone in his liminal existence until he happens on a companion capable of prolonging the moment of boyhood death.

To accomplish this deferral of the moment of manhood, Huck settles into a journey with Jim, who is excluded from hegemonic masculinity in both Twain's and Czolgosz's novels' contemporary settings by his status as a Black man or zombie, respectively. Twain's novel sets up such a rich framework of discussion of the hegemony of Czolgosz's adaptation because of Huck's preoccupation with death

imagery and allusion, but also because of at least one actual mention of the walking dead in Chapter 6 by Pap, who claims the dead are coming to get him: "Tramp—tramp—tramp; that's the dead; tramp—tramp—tramp; they're coming after me; but I won't go—Oh, they're here! Don't touch me—don't! hands off—they're cold; let go—Oh, let a poor devil alone!" (Twain 41). Pap is haunted by the walking dead and his haunting serves as a model for Huck's haunting by his manhood in that Pap is haunted by the present (or perhaps an alternate reality in which his masculinity is hegemonic), while Huck is haunted by the future.[3] Pap, due to his possession only of the manly passions of combativeness and a desire for entitlements such as easy living, is haunted by his marginal position within the masculine hegemony, as evidenced even before his delirium tremens hallucination by his appraisal of the freed Black man he heard of in Ohio as a sort of malediction (Twain 39-40). On the other hand, Huck wishes to prolong his position of betweenness in relation to the hegemony as long as possible.

Civil Death, Civil Suicide, and Posthumanism

Possibly the example of metaphoric death most relevant to Twain's novel's contemporary setting is that of the "civil death" of freed slaves (Hsu 702). Jim, as a runaway slave in the novel, is experiencing the physically liminal state of moving down a river on a raft and the liminal masculinity of a runaway black slave, who was still property but was not currently under the "rule" of his owners. The nineteenth-century

[3] Pap's words here will make Romero fans mutter the lines of the character of Johnny, who taunts his sister in a Boris Karloff impression with the now iconic, "They're coming to get you, Barbara!"

masculine hegemonic model often referred to African American men as "boy"—a highly offensive term intended to show the ways that African American men did not conform to the hegemonic model as it was constructed. Therefore, the cultural setting in which the novel would have been originally received was the Reconstruction South rather than the antebellum setting of Huck and Jim's story, as during Reconstruction, the hegemony would have likely been even more determined to further subordinate newly freed lsaves from the hegemony. Therefore, Twain's novel would have been relevant criticism of the continued enslavement via civil death of freed slaves. Jim does not travel in a liminal state identical to Huck's because Huck is in the process of self-making masculinity. Jim's liminality then does not place him concurrently in the masculine *hegemony* and boyhood, but an irreversibly non-hegemonic masculinity and something akin to boy culture. Therefore, Jim's position of liminality is civil death, where Huck's is not (Hsu 697). This critical relevance to Twain's own contemporary culture makes the book's themes perfect as the jumping-off-point for a postmodern (and posthuman) critique of the post 9/11 (hyper)masculine hegemony.

In their essay "A Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism," Sarah Lauro and Lauren Embry discuss the postmodern movement of posthumanism. Lauro and Embry intended the zombie manifesto as a reworking of Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto," which proposes that the posthuman condition is a liberating one. They argue, however, that "as a metaphor, [the] zombie reveals much about the way we code inferior subjects as unworthy of life" and "the zombie's irreconcilable body (both living and dead) raises the insufficiency of

the dialectical model (subject/object) and suggests, with its own negative dialect, that the only way to truly get posthuman is to become antisubject" (Lauro and Embry 87). This tightly-packed premise places the zombie as deconstructor of the subject/object dialectic, which no longer aptly contains all options of being in the fragmented, postmodern Heterology. The zombie's "negative dialectic" and suggestion of an antisubject empower the counter-discourse of the non-hegemonic. Therefore, the antisubject of Slave Jim must morph into the antisubject of Zombie Jim in order to empower the counter discourse of the non-hegemonic in a traumatized, postmodern/posthuman, post-9/11 America. The development of the zombie antisubject dissolves the subject/object dialectic and, in doing so, antagonizes the us/them binary so central to the nationalist, system justifying rhetoric of the post 9/11 media-government.

Due to both of their positions outside of or tangential to the masculine hegemony, Zombie Jim is generally nonthreatening to Huck, even though Jim admits to having the desire to consume human flesh. After Zombie Jim protects Huck from the vicious zombie in the floating house—which he later reveals to have been Huck's Pap—by snapping its neck (Czolgosz 54), Jim warns Huck to be wary that "some o' dem might try to eat you, Huck" (55), which broaches what should be a terrifying topic for both of them—the zombie craving for living, human flesh. Huck pries Jim:

> "Why would anyone want ta eat somebody?"
>
> "It a bad desire, I tell you."
>
> "Would you wan' eat me, Jim?"

"No, but I could 'magine it."

"'Magine eating me? Thet's bunky."

"I wouldn' do it 'cause you my friend…but I be lyin' to you if I said the' warn't part o' me that din' think it might be nice to take jus' a li'l taste." (Czolgosz 55)

Questionable pastiche aside, Czolgosz has hit on the main complication of the zombie's potential to subvert the violent revenge narrative—its own proclivity toward violence, which has been its legacy since comic, pulp, and film writers turned it loose of the puppet strings of sorcery in the mid-twentieth century. The cannibalistic drive of the modern zombie removes most of the potential for empathy with him as an Other. Zombie Jim's added dimension of sentience allows him to choose not to eat those he cares about, despite his desire, making him a truly liberated posthuman antisubject. Jim does not have to refrain from eating humans if he does not wish to, because the rules for his condition do not require him to. However, the rule of his friendship with Huck (which is voluntary) requires him to refrain from eating Huck. Therefore, that is what he does. Jim embodies modern, voluntarily liminal manhood as a subversion of the masculine hegemony by being dead, infectious, and cognizant only of the rules he *chooses* to follow.[4]

[4] Many films have experimented with the "tame" or "friendly" zombie trope, such as Bub in Romero's *Day of the Dead* and the eponymous Fido in the Canadian film of the same name, each of whom protects his human friends. The difference between Zombie Jim and Bub and Fido is that Jim has his own personality and identity, while Bub and Fido are more in the mold of pets.

Diane Price Herndl picks up the discussion of the postmodern "remission society" as Arthur Frank began it in his book *The Wounded Storyteller*, which she suggests asks the question, "How does illness interrupt or redefine a person's sense of self?" (773). This remission society is made up of citizens who are so aware of illness that they perceive themselves to be constantly in recovery through the accomplishments and advances of modern medicine and technology. Therefore, survival in the wake of illness is often tempered with an anxiety and "self-consciousness of what it means to live in the wake of illness" (Frank qtd. in Herndl 773). Anxiety and self-consciousness about survival in our society has turned illness into a "peculiarly postmodern condition" (Herndl 773). This excerpt of Herndl's work predates 9/11 by a few years; however, it is possible to extrapolate some links between the postmodern remission (from illness) society and the post-9/11 recovery (from trauma) society. The easiest way to make a link between the two is to point out that illness is often traumatic. Metonymically, illness is a failure of a system or attack by a foreign entity within a body (organism), which represents America. Illness can also result from trauma. The 9/11 attacks can be seen in multiple medical metaphors, all of which establish a strong link between the cultural trauma of both the attacks and the resulting ideological war, and the individual trauma of illness. Therefore, Zombie Jim's position is one of true, posthuman antisubject, while Slave Jim was never able to transcend the subject/object dialectic. The postmodern remission society to which Herndl refers is the result, in large part, to the widespread knowledge of germ theory. Fear of communicable illness has morphed into other phobias, including (most obviously)

germophobia, xenophobia, and homophobia. Perhaps sensing the oppressive trend developing in response to the advent of germ theory, Laurel Bollinger wishes to shift the way the West talks about microbes from purely fearful to understanding that microbes play a much larger role in evolution and the construction of ecosystems (378).

A postmodern social reaction to illness may not only have produced the alienation from illness and certain other elements of humanity, but also the possibility of a cure within a postmodern evolution—an evolution that understands that "being human…is not a matter of drawing boundaries between ourselves and microbial 'invasion'" (Bollinger 378). The Human Genome Project revealed that "only ten percent of our genome is what we would consider 'human'; forty to fifty percent, by contrast, of our genome consists of fragments of viral DNA, and eight percent—nearly as much as the purely 'human' data—consists of intact viral genome" (Callahan qtd. in Bollinger 378). This oversimplification of data may not necessarily show that humans are more microbe than human, but what it does show is that the evolution of humans (and probably other great apes) has been impacted by the intermingling of germs and viruses. Therefore, had germophobia manifested itself much sooner than it did, the course of human evolution would have been altered. Therefore, the postmodern remission society is also posthumanist, as it's impossible to guess if humans were ever fully human, but whatever we were, every virus to which we are exposed moves us farther from that mythical starting point. The image of this evolution simply by breathing is comparable to the liminality of Huck and Jim's travel down the river, in that the moment of change cannot be identified because it is constant. The water is always

moving and microbes are invisible to us as we interact. Zombie Jim is a thoroughly postmodern zombie, and therefore posthuman by extension. He embodies human illness because he can speak, and he dissolves the imaginary boundary Bollinger describes by being both (post)human and illness from which there is no recovery.

Conclusions: Antagonizing the Hypermasculine Hegemony

The zombie's position as neither living nor dead but somehow both—its fire-like ability to mimic or produce a facsimile of the defining characteristics of life such as movement, reproduction, and autonomy—equip it perfectly not only for social commentary but as a dissolution of the imaginary boundary between human and not-human that Bollinger describes. Thus, the postmodern zombie dissolves the subject/object binary. Its antisubject status allows it to antagonize the us/them binary central to America's post 9/11 rhetoric. Zombie Jim can speak and feel and even control his murderous impulse to feed on Huck, which makes him more "human" arguably than living humans such as Pap and the King and the Duke, all of whom beat and/or try to kill Huck and Zombie Jim either eats or kills in return. The ever-changing definition of the popular culture zombie corresponds to Bollinger's plea that microbes be recognized as helpful (even essential) as well as potentially harmful. Jim represents the helpful microbes in that he doesn't eat Huck, but also protects him from the overwhelming horde of baggers that have lost all control and joined the vicious baggers in consuming all surviving humans in their path. Jim is useful because he can sense when the vicious zombies are near. He says, "I kin see backwards an' I see that when the Devil's Army

gets close to the corral, the tame baggers inside began thrashin' and clawin' around" (Czolgosz 179). The fact that Jim can "see backwards" (which could either be literal or figurative for "sense") is not the only interesting part of his vision. Evidently, when the vicious baggers get near the tame ones, the tame ones join the violent frenzy. The fissythis is not the only type of contagion and, more importantly, it is not the type of contagion that decides whether a zombie will be violent. The contagion that causes violence is mob mentality, which is a form of ideology. Therefore, the boundary between tame bagger and a vicious bagger is not only unclear, but impermanent.

Zombie Jim's role in antagonizing the hypermasculine hegemony is multifaceted. Twain's Jim is a slave who runs away from his owner, Miss Watson. While in 1884 there was no such thing as a runaway slave, the invoking of the memory of it would conjure taboo, similar to how the racial slur would still have been loaded with meaning. Similarly, even though the modern zombie does not exist, the applicability of the metaphor to so many socially liminal or marginalized masculinities (and femininities) "creates a dilemma for power relations and risks destroying social dynamics that have remained—although widely questioned, critiqued, and debated—largely unchallenged in the current economic superstructure" (Lauro and Embry 90). By turning Jim into a zombie, Czolgosz transforms him into a form of liminal manhood that would not only question the hegemonic model, but destroy it. As an embodiment of the reigning socio-politio-economic model, masculinity must be locus of the dissolution of the subject/object dialectic. The zombie can affect this dissolution of subject/object through his liminality and his contagion. As Lauro and Embry put it, "As a figure defined

by its liminality, the zombii [sic] illustrates our doubts about humanity in an era in which the human condition may be experiencing a crisis of conscience as well as a crisis of consciousness" (91-92). If creatures such as Zombie Jim are a call for the destruction of the existing model, and if Bollinger's claim that contemporary society must remove its sole obsession with the negative effects of germs is correct, then the zombie is both the destructor of the existing model and partial progenitor of the new. Zombie Jim retains the one human quality that few zombies have been able to hold on to—the ability to speak and think—which is coincidentally a human quality African Americans were thought incapable of in the nineteenth century.

Twain's use of a boy who doesn't want to transition to manhood and a runaway slave are enough to fix *Huck Finn* in the American cultural heritage alone. But the story could have unfolded any number of ways and remained centered around Huck and Jim. Twain put Huck and Jim in an active role of subversion to the masculine hegemony, when that step was not necessary to secure the text's legacy. However, Huck is not a mouthpiece for abolitionist rhetoric. Huck distances himself from the abolitionist movement on Jackson Island when he and Jim first join up. Huck says he will not turn Jim in for running away, even though people will call him "a low down Ablitionist…but that don't make no difference" (Twain 55). Huck is more concerned with keeping his promise to a runaway slave, even though he questions his decision at times, than he is with what other white people think of him. Huck and Jim's story is one of friendship and freedom from their respective oppressive institutions, and each wishes to define their own masculinity against the hegemony which marginalizes them.

With slavery roughly 150 years in the past, Czolgosz sets his eyes on the post-9/11 hypermasculine hegemony. He places Huck alongside Zombie Jim on the cusp of the zombie apocalypse. In the postmodern remission society, siding with the zombie—the embodiment of contagion—is tantamount to siding with a runaway slave in the antebellum South. The posthuman movement wishes to dissolve the boundaries—most of which are socially constructed and therefore imaginary to all except those excluded from the hegemony by them—that separate humanity from its potential (or for the fatalists out there, inevitable) evolution. The "Zombie Manifesto" calls for us to change the way we think about humanity, and what is worthy of the definition of it. The zombie is at the forefront of the posthuman march and more and more writers are choosing its companionship for the same reason that the manifesto suggests—to destroy the reigning homogenizing hegemony and to allow a group of individuals, in the case of Huck and Jim, to dissolve their oppressive hegemonies and create their own masculinities.

CHAPTER 3

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Zombies as Ubiquitous Enemy Other and the Role of Femininities in the Construction of Post-9/11 Masculinities

The case of *Huckleberry Finn and Zombie Jim* (2009) is an intriguing one because of the metaphorical use of the zombie as representative of non-hegemonic masculinity. However, Seth Grahame-Smith's zombie mash-up *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009) uses zombies as characters/settings against which to highlight both stereotypic and aberrant masculine and feminine gender roles in post-9/11 America, despite being set in England. In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, the zombies are much the classic archetype first solidified by Romero's films—shambolic and easily fooled. They accomplish their takeover through sheer numbers and contagion. Grahame-Smith's narrative presents the zombies as a natural disaster-type of plaque designed merely as a baffling new kind of enemy to be dealt with. The zombies (otherwise referred to as "stricken" and "unmentionables") terrorize Hertfordshire, Hunsford, and Meryton, and so the regiment of soldiers which Wickham later joins are stationed in Meryton to protect England against the zombies. This setting of ubiquitous, unknowable enemy other opposed with military force (that may or may not be clueless as to how to actually fight the terrible menace) mimics the post-9/11 setting in which the Western world lives in fear of "terrorists" but is in no position to effectively define what "terrorist" means exactly (nor how the past and present actions of the West can be considered all that different). While this allegory is fascinating and humorous and may put certain parts of

life in the twenty-first century in a more accessible context, the real cultural work of this mash-up is its examination of what the (re)construction of gender roles post-9/11 may indicate.

The co-constructions of femininities and masculinities in Austen's source material hinge upon a highly stylized set of social mores, expectations, observances of manners, and general proximity of community. Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. references the ease with which Austen's characters refer to their towns, estates, or hamlets as "country," in the same way that Thomas Jefferson referred to Virginia as his "country" (606). Pre-industrialized, Augustan England afforded the landed gentry and the leisure class with little to do but socialize, so it is unsurprising that most moral strictures concerned behavior and perception within society. For women of the class of the Bennet sisters, social and moral perception are equated. However, Austen only flirts glancingly with the realities of the type of ruin and marginalization into which so many other eighteen-century novels, such as *Pamela, Roxana,* and *Moll Flanders* plunge their female characters (Scheuermann 318). Each of the Bennet family members displays a particular type of irreverence for the accepted modes of comportment in society, each leading to its own degree of consequences. Mr. Bennet proves himself to be disinterested to the point of rudeness in society, while his wife irritates nearly everyone she meets with her incessant match-making and scheming to get her daughters married off, while congratulating herself on how spectacularly accomplished she is at all things society. It doesn't escape the modern reader that these social transgressions fall under the trifling category of "annoyances" in our own milieu. Yoder suggests there is a "law of inverse

proportion between the scale of the novelistic scene and the delicacy and fineness of manners and their observation" (606), meaning the intimacy of all social occurrences and "countries" was sufficient to "impart intense significance to small gestures" (606). In short, in order to understand the import of social mores and manners to gender construction, we as modern readers must attempt to comprehend Austen's milieu, however unlikely complete success may be. Fortunately for these purposes, masculinities and femininities co-construct one another oppositionally more often than not. While traits may change over time as to which camp (and to what degree) they are identified with, it is likely they will not move at random, but along discursive conventions resulting from social, political, or economic stimuli.

Similar to Huck and Zombie Jim's resistance to participation in the masculine hegemony, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (hereafter referred to *PPZ*) shows the role of femininities in the construction of the masculine hegemony. While the zombies in the mash-up represent the anxiety and unshakeable fear of living in the post-9/11 West, several different forms of both masculinities and femininities interact, subtly restructuring each other and playing with power dynamics. Grahame-Smith's mash-up deviates from Austen's original in more ways than the mere presence of the zombies. For the warrior culture of *PPZ,* gender construction is less likely to depend on manners as much as how each gender role and social class are expected to negotiate the plague of zombies. Also similar to *Huckleberry Finn and Zombie Jim*, ultimately the goal for the warrior-protagonists is neither hegemonic (hyper)masculinity or emphasized (hyper)femininity, but a liminal gender role comprised of traits from each side of the

gender role binary, which stand the best chance of being resistant to the nationalist revenge rhetoric post-9/11.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity

The socially constructed dichotomy of hegemonic masculinity/emphasized femininity persists despite being a false or dualistic dichotomy. Rather than being separately defined, a dualistic binary defines the subordinated term through negation (Paechter 256). Thus, femininity is defined (and defines itself) as an absence of masculinity. Within this framework, then, the femininity in natural complement to—and complicity with—hegemonic hypermasculinity is a kind of normative hyperfemininity. Since there can be no such thing as a feminine hegemony—as hegemony is aligned with power and resistance to subordination and marginalization (Paechter 256)—this hyperfemininity constitutes an absence of the traits most valued by hegemonic masculinity. Thus, emphasized hyperfemininity has distanced itself as far from power as possible. Conversely, distancing oneself from hyperfemininity is a means to *claim* power (Paechter 257). Female characters in Austen's original text represent a range of both hyperfeminine roles and femininities that contain traits privileged by hegemonic masculinity.

The fact that such a thing is possible, that there are possibly infinite shades of ways to "do" masculinities and femininities, begins to deconstruct the gender binary (Paechter 262). Upon learning that her favorite sister has become ill after a horse ride in the rain, Austen's Elizabeth walks all the way to Netherfield to take care of Jane and

to appease her own anxiety (Austen 37). While the nurturing aspect of her motive falls more under the auspices of feminized traits, her determined and stubborn manner of arriving at Netherfield is quite masculine—especially to hyperfeminine types like Caroline Bingley. Mr. Bingley's sisters discursively marginalize Elizabeth after her walk to Netherfield by commenting on Elizabeth's "untidy" hair and her petticoat "six inches deep in mud," pronouncing the overall effect of her appearance to be "wild" and her character as "conceited independence" (Austen 40-41). Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst's intention may have been to subordinate Elizabeth's brand of femininity, but being normatively hyperfeminine they are without the power to do so. Therefore, they must content themselves with marginalizing her as wild and unruly. Ironically, while they certainly do succeed in marginalizing Elizabeth, this has the effect of moving her further from hyperfemininity and thus *toward* masculinity. In other words, their marginalizing her—if Paechter's theory is valid—increased her power rather than diminishing it. The proof of Elizabeth's increase in power is in the reactions of Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy, the latter of which had previously dismissed Elizabeth at a ball as merely "tolerable" and not worth his notice (Austen 19). At Caroline Bingley's attempt to solicit a negative appraisal of Elizabeth from the two men, Mr. Bingley is moved to empathize with her concern for Jane and Mr. Darcy—possibly in small part simply to irritate Miss Bingley—remarks that her eyes were "brightened by the exercise" (Austen 41).

For Austen's characters, the muddy countryside after a heavy rain shower represents the type of obstacle that could define one's propriety with regard to social status and gender role. Long before 9/11, Western society had changed

paradigmatically from the intimacy of Austen's Augustan setting referenced by Yoder. Even though performative ways of "doing" gender still retain their classifying powers, the distinctions are becoming more transparently reductive. Industrialization and globalization have dissolved many of the restrictions on dress and activities by class or occupation and, to a lesser degree, gender. The obstacle posed by the landscape in *PPZ* is not (entirely) tied up in propriety.

Since in post-9/11 America the masculine hegemony is overtly hypermasculine,[5] it has distanced itself as far from emphasized femininity as the binary will allow. While this is not necessarily a good thing for all femininities and subordinated and marginalized masculinities, this does not mean that the binary must be perceived as unchangeable. Huck and Zombie Jim must define their own liminal brands of masculinity in order to avoid participating in society and the hypermasculine hegemony, which shows every sign of tearing each other apart as the zombie plague spread. In other words, marginalizing themselves may have taken away their power as men, but it differentiates them far enough from the hypermasculine hegemony to enable them to survive. Being female, Elizabeth Bennet stands only to gain power by distancing herself from emphasized femininity, but doing so has a further advantage. Since Elizabeth and her ninja sisters choose to perform their femininity in a way that incorporates masculine traits, their femininities are in a position to (re)construct the masculinities with which they engage. The most salient example of a reconstruction of masculinity is (in both

[5] Laura Shepherd shows this paradigm shift in the masculine hegemony in her rhetorical analysis of the Bush doctrine post-9/11, "Veiled References: Construction of Gender in the Bush Administration Discourse on the Attacks on Afghanistan Post-9/11."

Austen's and Grahame-Smith's books) the changes that occur in Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy.

Marriage and Hegemony

The system justification theory referenced by Carter et al in their discussion of the patriotism bordering on implicit nationalism experienced in America after 9/11 (342) manifests itself in popular and news media as a hypermasculinization of traditionally masculine roles such as "provider" and "protector." In particular, these two categories of masculine traits manifest in the institutions of marriage and military service, both of which were highly idealized after the attacks. Coincidentally, 9/11 occurred less than two years before the raging debate over the constitutionality of gay marriage restrictions materialized in widespread public discourse and the debate about whether women should be admitted to certain divisions of the military. In the wake of the attacks husbands and (male) soldiers were imbued with metanarrative importance in the popular and news media gaze, not completely dissimilar to the victims of the attacks themselves. Each institution, therefore, became a site of discursive reconstruction of the masculine hegemony into something that could benefit and justify the existence of the national system. Some have referred to this reconstruction of the hegemonic masculinity as "ideological warfare" (Hinojosa 191). The principal cultural work of *PPZ* is to examine the gender role paradigms within marriage and the military post-9/11. Additionally, a larger point is made about the extent of the reaction throughout the rest of society due to the hypermasculine revenge narrative.

As I've already shown, there is evidence of fluid and reconstructing gender roles in Austen's book already, but Grahame-Smith's additions reveal specifically post-9/11 constructions. For instance, Austen's work provides several examples of marriages that exist as cautionary tales for what can be the consequences of marrying *for the wrong reasons*—which of course implies that those reasons should be easily qualifiable. The two examples of what one could refer to as "marriage of convenience" are the one between Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins and between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. The two marriages balance each other as both a before-and-after representation and a gender role-reversal. Oddly, it is Mr. Collins who embodies the normative feminine traits of officiousness, fastidiousness, gentility, and silliness which are most often associated with normative or hyperfeminine characters in the book such as Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lydia and Mrs. Bennet. Mr. Collins is therefore not performing a masculinity, but rather a femininity. And those (few) traits identifiable in his performance as hegemonically masculine are traits often not preferred by most femininities, such as obstinance (when he assumes Elizabeth is simply being coy in refusing his *first* marriage proposal), chauvinism, intellectual dilettantism, and presumably an endless number of undesirable traits. Thus, Charlotte's decision to settle for him as a husband is to be interpreted as an act of desperation from an aging spinster of 27 seeking simply a life of means and reasonable comfort.

Charlotte relates the news of her engagement to her closest friend Elizabeth only to have Elizabeth react incredulously. Charlotte responds by reminding Elizabeth:

> I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connection, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state. (Austen 117)

After Elizabeth has time to absorb the news, she wonders at Charlotte's willingness to "sacrific[e] every better feeling to worldly advantage," finally deciding the marriage makes a "humiliating picture" (117). The implication here is that Elizabeth finds either the idea of being married to Mr. Collins or the concept of the marriage of convenience humiliating. Grahame-Smith's mash-up takes this humiliation further by literally dehumanizing Charlotte into zombiism. Rather than looming spinsterhood, Charlotte is compelled to accept Mr. Collins's proposal due to having been bitten—and thus infected—with the zombie contagion. And rather than being a marriage of convenience of means and comfort, zombie Charlotte is simply hoping that her "final months be happy ones" and by "happy" she evidently means the comfort of having a "husband who will see to [her] proper Christian beheading and burial" (Grahame-Smith 99). Charlotte's hopes for a comfortable last few months are achieved; however, her hopes for the righteous disposal of her zombified remains are nearly dashed by the sheer obliviousness and idiocy of her pious husband, who never once notices that Charlotte is becoming every day more zombie-like.

Charlotte's affliction is the only example in the book of a character from Austen's being turned into a zombie; therefore, it can be treated as carrying significant relevance. In her analysis of romantic comedies after 9/11, Diane Negra theorizes that "in a

manner keeping with the illogic of 'homeland security' these [romantic comedy] narratives take the position that because national boundaries have been so conspicuously breached through terrorism, the ideological boundaries of gender and family need to be shored up" (52). Negra's analysis turns up repeated and significant themes of stories of "miswanting" in female alleged protagonists in post-9/11 films (53). In other words, women who begin a film pursuing a professional goal will experience an epiphany in which they realize they are happier doing something that makes them available to receive (or in direst cases, worthy of) affection and love from a man. Negra examines this miswanting alongside what she sees as the conflation of "traditional values" and reaction to the attacks (55). In the wake of 9/11, with no way to adequately define the enemy or the threat they posed, perhaps the idea was that the enemy couldn't penetrate the domesticity of the traditional marriage very easily. Mr. Collins and Charlotte's marriage satirizes this idea of infiltration by the enemy. Mr. Collins's masculinity is not protective (or perhaps vigilant is the right word) to prevent his marriage from being infiltrated by the zombie plague, even though Charlotte shows symptoms very early on. When Lady Catherine de Bourgh finally brings Charlotte's condition to Mr. Collins's attention, he is forced to behead his own wife, which he does even though Lady Catherine offers to do it for him (Grahame-Smith 237). Thus, Mr. Collins is forced to perform an aspect of the hegemonic masculine gender role. However, he does so effeminately, "fulfilling [his] husbandly duty…with [his] own hand—trembling though it was" (237). Mr. Collins performs a feminine masculinity, rather than the hypermasculine, yet obstinately survives intact when others more

stereotypically masculine, such as Wickham or Colonel Fitzwilliam, are crippled in various ways.

Returning to Paechter's work, the dualistic gender dichotomy is constructed more so through doing than talking. Zombie Charlotte's femininity (like Elizabeth's but for different reasons) is far enough removed from emphasized hyperfemininity to be equal in power to Mr. Collins's masculinity, which answers by being equally distanced from hegemonic hypermasculinity. So then, Mr. Collins's "rehabilitation of masculinity" (Negra 52) does not create hegemonic hypermasculinity, but a masculinity that includes femininities—precisely the type of liminality to which Huck and Zombie Jim aspire. James Beggan and Scott Allison's pre-9/11 study of expressed preferences in men by *Playboy* centerfolds shows that the Playmates prefer men who perform a diverse range of masculinities, the majority of which mix masculine *and feminine* traits (8). Interestingly, half of the list of "Negated Masculine Traits"—meaning the Playmates express a preferred trait in a man in what/how he should *not* do/be—nearly describes Mr. Collins. Such negated traits as "not too dominant," "not too independent," "not bold," and "not macho" describe Mr. Collins fittingly (Beggan 20). However, the traits that apply are not as telling as the ones that don't, such as "not arrogant," "not overegoed," "not too pushy," and others (20). By pre-9/11 standards Mr. Collins's masculinity is certainly not hegemonic, but he would have been reasonably successful when dealing with emphasized femininities willing to value feminine masculinities. Post-9/11, however, Mr. Collins must reconstruct—or rehabilitate as Negra says—his masculinity in order to provide his wife with the services she married him for. Mr.

Collins's suicide is ultimately a return to the pre-9/11 feminized masculinity; however, it is not set up for ridicule as it is before he kills zombie Charlotte. His death reads as noble, romantic, nearly sacrificial, and certainly penitent. His letter reveals that he will soon be "hanging from a branch of Charlotte's favorite tree, in the garden which her ladyship was so magnanimous in granting us stewardship over" (Grahame-Smith 238). In his effusion of grief, even Mr. Collins's fawning after Lady Catherine de Bourgh is softened into sincere gratitude. It is in this section that the satire reveals itself.

Warrior Culture, Emphasized Hyperfemininity, and Hegemonic Hypermasculinity

It's important to reiterate that hegemony is not created through dictatorial force alone. A social hegemony such as dominant masculinity "is maintained via socially dispersed consent rather than coercion, through constructing a sense of 'reality' that appears natural, ordinary, and inevitable" (Talbot 257). The masculinization and feminization of social institutions and roles is evidence of that dispersed consent. Military institutions have long been examples of "boys only" clubs, along with sports and the clergy. Many studies of these types of institutions have concluded that military, sports, and the clergy are all ideological state apparati responsible for creating justification for the continued existence of the masculine hegemony (Hinojosa 180; Page 33; Clayton 320). Along with performing femininities as negated masculinities being a way femininities are complicit in hegemony, these hegemonic masculine ISA's construct masculinity through an absence or exclusion of women (Page 33). Recent efforts to integrate women into the military, clergy, and even sports have drawn only more

attention to how much each institution's existing identity depends on the absence of femininity. In the post-9/11 milieu, this challenge to masculine identity-based institutions is arguably most evident in the military. As Hinojosa points out, "What the military-as-institution offers is not a hegemonic masculine identity; gender identities are not something individuals possess, nor are they items individuals acquire because of institutional memberships. Identities are *actively constructed as part of an interaction strategy that uses available symbolic and material resources*" (180, emphasis mine). In other words, participation in an ISA such as the military co-constructs a hegemonic masculine identity. Considering that this hegemonic masculine identity—or as in post-9/11, hypermasculinity—is constructed in no small part through the absence of femininities, the "women in the military" controversy was another form of what Hinojosa identified as "ideological warfare" (191).

PPZ certainly mashes up *Pride and Prejudice* by adding zombies, but such an alteration necessitates a wave of additional alterations in order to hold the narrative together. A change as equally large as zombie Charlotte is the warrior culture implied to be in existence throughout England. Not only is there the militia presence that Austen included in her original version, but Mr. Darcy, Colonel Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Wickham are all trained in karate or ninjutsu in Kyoto, but so are Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Georgiana Darcy. The Bennet sisters are trained in Shaolin kung fu, and there are several references to this being the training style of an inferior class. Despite this, Elizabeth refers to being sworn to the Crown to protect England against the zombie plague. Using language reminiscent of post-9/11 military platitudes designed to evoke

patriotism and sacrifice for the greater good of the nation, she says of her lack of love for Wickham:

> I am now convinced, my dear aunt, that I have never been much in love; for had I really experienced that pure and elevating passion, I should at present detest his very name, and wish him all manner of evil. But I find my thoughts returning to the protection of our beloved England, for truly there can be no higher purpose; indeed the feelings of one young lady seem rather insignificant in comparison. My talents and my times demand my service, and I believe the Crown more pleased to have me on the front lines than at the altar. (Grahame-Smith 115)

Firstly, the anachronistic "front lines," a phrase that did not come into use in terms of warfare until World War I to refer to trench warfare, removes the setting from Austen's to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, when during certain periods the term became so commonplace it was clichéd. Richard Godfrey notes that after 9/11, "Within popular culture…we find that there has been something of a renewed interest in representing war" (204), which stands to reason since America claimed to be *at* war after 9/11 even though it was not for another year and a half. The need to represent war in popular culture had to tide the ideological call for revenge over until the country could find someone to go to war with. As already noted, the call for traditional values quickly painted female professional goals with the stain of miswanting, and the military, already one of the boys only clubs, became fiercely a "masculine-gendered organization" (Godfrey 205). What, then, are the Bennet sisters, Lady Catherine de

Bourgh, and Georgiana Darcy doing as highly-trained—and most importantly, *hegemonically sanctioned*—martial artists charged with defending the homeland?

It would have been easy to mash-up *Pride and Prejudice* without including the satirical element, but perhaps taking the easy route could have lessened the cultural work. Elizabeth Bennet as a kung fu master might simply have come across as silly, rather than satirically valid. However, Elizabeth's infiltration of the warrior world of men doesn't simply point out the hypermasculine hegemony, Elizabeth performs her own brand of hypermasculinity. There is hardly a more subversive satire post-9/11 than hegemonic hypermasculinity performed by a feminine body. Elizabeth first displays an overtly hypermasculine response when Mr. Darcy insults her looks at the ball where they first encounter each other. Bizarrely, being sensitive about one's looks is typically considered hyperfeminine. However, Elizabeth makes up for her feminizing response to the slight against her beauty by having a thoroughly hypermasculine revenge impulse:

> As Mr. Darcy walked off, Elizabeth felt her blood turn cold. She had never in her life been so insulted. The warrior code demanded she avenge her honour. Elizabeth reached down to her ankle, taking care not to draw attention. There, her hand met the dagger concealed beneath her dress. She meant to follow this proud Mr. Darcy outside and open his throat. (Grahame-Smith 13-14)

There are a few layers of gender role reversal in this passage that don't necessarily make for pure satire. The idea that women are not helpless damsels-in-distress is a feminist archetype found in several other types of fiction. In particular, the dagger

under the dress smacks of thorns of the rose and other metaphors while re-enacting the trope of the femme fatale of certain spy texts—e.g. Angelina Jolie's character pulling the dagger from beneath her skirt in the 2005 spy film *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*. The allusion becomes satire, however, in the complete overreaction to the insult. Elizabeth feels wronged—her self-worth and beauty are somehow linked to each other and all she can think of to repair the injury she has suffered is to kill the person who inflicted it. However, it is not Mr. Darcy's fault that Elizabeth can't separate her looks from her self-worth; he merely expressed a sentiment. Put simply, the punishment Elizabeth decides as a course of vengeance on Mr. Darcy is not only so incongruent to the crime committed as to make it farcical, but also consistent with revenge motifs promulgated by the hypermasculine hegemony post-9/11.

Even though Elizabeth is performing gender more hypermasculine than feminine and is thus claiming power by moving closer to the hegemony as Paechter claims is possible (257), can it then be argued that Elizabeth is within the hegemony? At first the answer is not quite. Elizabeth is marginalized by her class and fighting style from warrior culture by Lady Catherine, until beating the superior woman in a sparring match rather than a battle of wits as in Austen's version. Therefore, Elizabeth starts her journey from a thoroughly liminal position, which is to say precisely from the point Huck and Zombie Jim strive to attain. My argument then, or perhaps my hope, is that such a position for Huck and Zombie Jim would afford them the luxury of authentically defining their own masculinity free from (in that novel) the doomed society. The inescapable element for Huck and Zombie Jim is that of bigotry—all too relevant in the revenge-

driven rhetoric of post-9/11 American media. Their only chance for authenticating their own gender identities is to save themselves through their liminal positions, society being beyond anyone's help. Elizabeth's unique positions of taking power for herself but remaining outside the hegemony, coupled with her feminine power to discursively and performatively construct the masculine hegemony, affords her the ability to salvage at least her own corner of society.

(Re)Constructions and Conclusions

Elizabeth and Darcy's (re)constructive power over each other is drawn completely from each other, as I pointed out earlier. Miss Bingley, Lady Catherine, the other Bennet sisters, and Georgiana all contribute to the construction of the masculine hegemony and Elizabeth's liminally powerful position to influence the hegemony counter-discursively. Elizabeth's contribution of femininity to the masculine hegemony is accomplished two-fold: First, through her own taking of power through masculinizing herself and through Miss Bingley's *compliance* with her masculinization. And, second, Mr. Darcy's response to her discursive (re)construction of both herself—he admits preferring her romantically to other women despite her masculine femininity—and *himself*.

Evidence of the first point occurs when Miss Bingley attempts to elicit contempt in Mr. Darcy of Elizabeth's appearance by pointing out its deviation from emphasized hyperfemininity:

> "For my own part," she rejoined, "I must confess that I never could see any beauty in her [Elizabeth]. Her midriff is too firm; her arms too free of loose flesh; and her legs too long and flexible…and as for her eyes, which have sometimes been called so fine, I could never see anything extraordinary in them. They have a sharp, knowing look, which I do not like at all; and in her air altogether there is a self sufficiency [sic] and composure, which is intolerable." (Grahame-Smith 217)

Again, the excerpt serves two purposes: First, to underscore a satirical goal of pointing out the fluidity of gender roles by drawing attention to the fact that, even though the description just given by Miss Bingley would have been unfeminine in Austen's time, it is very near the modern-day feminine ideal; and, second, to discursively marginalize Elizabeth's gender. However, this discursive marginalizing of Elizabeth by Miss Bingley does not hinder Elizabeth, as it is complicit with her own desires to distance herself from emphasized femininity, and thus claim power. For a second time, and much more emphatically, Mr. Darcy responds to the power claimed by Elizabeth rather than Miss Bingley, who has claimed no power, when he answers that Elizabeth is "one of the handsomest women of [his] acquaintance" (Grahame-Smith 218). Adding to Elizabeth's power perhaps is Miss Bingley drawing attention to masculine personality traits as well as physical traits. Very tellingly, the two descriptors Miss Bingley chooses, self-sufficiency and composure, are nearest to traits identified by Beggan and Allison as "power" and "intelligence" traits, such as "can handle himself," "confident," "keen intellect," and "decisive" (16). At this point, Elizabeth has been completely made over

as liminally feminine. Mr. Darcy could still take away much of the power if he chooses, but he does not. He reasserts her femininity as attractive to him, thus cementing her liminal gender identity, a position from which it is clear that Elizabeth's own reconstruction of Darcy's masculinity has also been effective.

Elizabeth's refusal of Mr. Darcy's first proposal is the moment she reconstructs his masculinity. Elizabeth's complaints with Mr. Darcy—that he is arrogant, conceited, selfish, and disdainful of "the feelings of others" (Grahame-Smith 153) could easily have been ignored by the latter owing to the same contradiction identified by Beggan and Allison in their study of the preferences of *Playboy* centerfolds: that no amount of preference can remake masculinity without discursive power, and in the case of women, that power must be taken from masculinity and femininities complicit with masculinity (5). Elizabeth, similar to the centerfolds, must take power by marginalizing herself from emphasized femininity. And, also like the centerfolds, she must do so in compliance to a certain degree with the (masculine) power hegemony, as embodied by Mr. Darcy. Constructing a liminal gender identity for subversive purposes—or even simply to take power for oneself—the way Elizabeth has done with Darcy might well be the most stable way of maintaining such an identity. Darcy can give Elizabeth power through his apparent sanctioning of her non-emphasized femininity. Therefore, Elizabeth's power is co-constructed and thus, so is Mr. Darcy's and her own gender identities.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion and Epilogue: Living and Walking Dead

While the post-9/11 trauma that occurred in the collective American psyche is much more complex that what can be examined along gender identities, much of the shift in our national metanarratives is tied up with the masculine hegemony and its hypermasculinization through media and government rhetoric designed to inspire reflexive patriotism, which in many cases borders on nationalism. Zombie mash-ups such as the two examined here certainly operate in the climate of this nationalism, but the coincidence of the zombie renaissance and the post-9/11 revenge rhetoric does not end at mash-ups. The zombie survivalist movement intersects leisure war games like paintball or capture the flag with real world anxieties post-9/11. The zombie survivalist movement started in the bleak corners of internet chat rooms and spread mimetically through multi-user dungeons and chat forums in the form of questions, such as "what's your plan for when the zombies come?" For those who care to notice, this question varies little from many before it. The only difference between this question and the 1950's government-issued flyers and handbooks about how to spot communists and how to build a fallout shelter is government backing—which means ideological power-backing.

Before 9/11, people with zombie contingency plans were seen simply as unstable, weak links in society. Now a simple internet search for "zombie preparedness" will turn up a range of websites with content ranging from "how-to," "preparedness,"

and "combat." These sites are owned by a range of do-gooder bloggers (www.zombiepreparedness.org), profiteering "bandwagon-jumpers" (e.g. Okcupid's zombie preparedness test) and the eerily legitimate "Preparedness 101: The Zombie Apocalypse" published by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Somehow, the collective trauma struck a chord with the underground, but evidently always present, zombie movement and the ontological applicabilities of the archetype were rediscovered.

Perhaps the most popular zombie book of the post-9/11 era is Max Brooks' *The Zombie Survival Guide: Complete Protection from the Living Dead* (2003), which not only defines the zombie body but speaks pragmatically about preparation for their apparently inevitable swarm. Not long after the zombie renaissance began, and the publication of Brooks' book, the idea again took to the internet, this time in the form of wikis like "The Zombie Squad" wiki. In the same year that Brooks' book was published, the Zombie Squad wiki was formed and less than two years later, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the U.S. harder than anything most areas were prepared for. My fellow zombie buffs and I had several debates regarding how well zombie preparedness could have served the citizens of New Orleans. I myself made the claim that the fact that the government was incapable of handling the level of disaster would not have mattered if even one in three people in Katrina-destroyed towns had been prepared for zombie apocalypse. If even one in three people had read Max Brooks' preparedness manual, there would have been fewer deaths due to dehydration and water-borne pathogens. But our amateur debates would always find us incapable of approaching

what was really at stake in the heart of the matter in post-Katrina New Orleans (and other areas)—where was the government relief? This is not a question whose answer I can approach in this project, but my hypothesis is that the resources to create system-justifying rhetoric do not come without cost to some other consideration. The careful restructuring of the country to believe war was both necessary (the easier task) and *possible* (the much more difficult task) required the unfortunate diversion of actual war in Iraq—the costs of which war are becoming clearer to us, and direr in consequence, with each passing year—both abroad and at home.

As well as with political unrest, perhaps zombies work so well with mashed-up gender identities because they are the ultimate liminal bodies. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately, however one sees it—they are unavoidably inconceivable in their most literal incarnations and we are left to interpret the dead however we wish. If the bodies of the victims of the attacks on September 11, 2001 or soldiers lost in Iraq, Afghanistan, or anywhere previous were walking around, menacing us, would we be so at ease to construct their deaths to our own system-justifying purpose? There is no way to know, and it is likely that the answer is even "yes." Fortunately, however, the ever counter-discursive potential of popular fiction allows us to play with our own license to (re)kill. The job of the zombie survival narrative is to antagonize the too-prevalent call to revenge in the majority of popular fiction in the decade or more since 9/11. Fighting an unkillable, unidentifiable, and ubiquitous enemy is a losing scenario, and in zombie narratives, as in the real post-9/11 America, there is always remaining life to be considered. It's a mystery to me when "fighting fire with fire" became something

desirable rather than something nonsensical to the point of impossibility—this is the danger of cliché. But similar to that, fighting zombies with living bodies only creates more zombies, just as fighting terror with terror, only creates—well there is really no such thing as "more terror," the same as there is no such thing as "more dead." And those we've thrown on the fire since the fire broke out could not possibly be more dead.

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