

## **The London in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009) and its 2016 Filmic Adaption**

**Choedphong Uttama**

Faculty of Liberal Arts

King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

Email: Choedphong.ut@kmitl.ac.th

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to read the zombies in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009) and its 2016 filmic adaption by Burr Steers as embodiments of the lower classes and foreign invaders in Austen's novels. Zombies, as popular monsters, are linked with social disorder, filth and disease, all of which the upper social strata in Jane Austen's time believed to be associated with the lower classes. By the addition of a zombie outbreak to Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Grahame-Smith manifests Austen's or the late-eighteenth-century gentry's and the upper classes' anxiety about the lower social classes and the masses in London with their tendency to stage riots and spread disease. In the filmic adaption, the zombies embody foreign invaders attempting to destroy London which stands for the nation. The collapse of London suggests that the film follows the popular cinematic representation of the city in apocalyptic zombie films. To achieve its aim, this paper employs a socio-historical approach by analyzing Austen's works against the socio-historical context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with regard to the lower social orders and foreign invasion, revealing the threats they pose and illustrating how these threats are captured by zombies.

**Keywords:** *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, zombie, London, apocalypse, mashup

Published by Quirk Books in 2009, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (shortened to *PPZ* in this paper) by Seth Grahame-Smith and Jane Austen occupies a crucial place in popular literature as it is regarded as the first literary mashup. The mashup has long been a creative part of music and film. As a literary practice, the mashup is "when you get two or more different literary genres and mix them up for a fresh, entertaining story" (Cicchini, 2014, para. 6) or, according to John Ladd (2010) in his online article, "Dawn of the Literary Mash-up", "a hybrid, half creative fiction in its own right and half-criticism or commentary on the original work" (para. 4). In her study of the evolution of mashup literature, Amanda V. Riter (2017) points out that the literary mashup is part of remix culture and is defined as "a work of literature that mixes disparate

elements that typically alter the genre into a new text” (p. 46) for artistic or critical purposes. Riter (2017) also proposes three types of mashup novel, one of which is a “direct mashup” to which *PPZ* belongs and which is described as “the monster and romance mashups that rely on all, or nearly all, of the unadulterated source text as their basis” and whose additions are inserted either to alter or exaggerate the source’s genre (p. 39).

According to Grahame-Smith himself (CBC Arts, 2009, para. 3), *PPZ* contains eighty-five per cent of Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and the other fifteen per cent contains his modifications. Tim Lanzendörfer (2018) identifies four ways in which Austen’s original text has been modified: (1) original passages have been deleted mainly for reason of length, (2) minor details (usually about zombies) have been altered and added (such as when Mr. Collins receives a living at Hunsford because the old rector succumbed to the zombie plague), (3) whole scenes of zombie attacks and related matter have been added (such as when the Netherfield Park’s ball is attacked and Charlotte Lucas is gradually transformed into a zombie, and (4) alterations not related to zombies have been made (such as when Mr. Collins commits suicide after the death of Charlotte and his death removes the threat of entailment from the Bennet family) (chapter 4).

Adhering to the original text, *PPZ* opens with the arrival of Mr. Bingley and his friend Mr. Darcy to the neighborhood, to the excitement of the Bennet daughters. The antagonist Wickham arrives next with the militia and later elopes with Lydia. Mr. Bingley falls in love with Jane but is later persuaded by Mr. Darcy to end the attachment because Mr. Darcy suspects that Jane might be infected. To cheer her up, the Gardeners invite Jane to spend time in London and Elizabeth follows. Elizabeth’s trip to London, the only London episode in both *PP* and *PPZ*, introduces the reader to the London of this zombic world. London is encircled by walls and within these, areas have been divided into sections by the King’s army.

Alterations, including a completely different representation of London, are made in the 2016 filmic adaption, Burr Steers’ *Pride + Prejudice + Zombies* (2016), shortened to *P+P+Z* in this paper. Unlike the *PPZ* zombies, some infected individuals in the film do not turn into fully-fledged zombies until they eat human brains. Mr. Wickham takes Elizabeth to Saint Lazarus Church where these infected individuals, referred to as “new zombies” and “Zombie aristocrats”, congregate and consume pig brains in order to survive and retain their humanity. “A newly-infected zombie” is barely distinguishable from the living. Mr. Wickham believes that humans can coexist with zombies as “[t]hese new zombies can be reasoned with” (Steers, 2016). The audience also learns from Mr. Wickham that “[t]he common hordes look to them [new zombies] for leadership. It takes just one of them to realize their power” (Steers, 2016). The London episode appears towards the end and forms the climactic part of the

film. Elizabeth and Jane travel to London in pursuit of Lydia who has eloped with Mr. Wickham. London is protected by the “Grand-barrier” and the Royal canal. The two learn that “[a]ll of London’s fallen to the zombies” (Steers, 2016). It is revealed that Mr. Wickham, himself is a member of the new zombies, is the leader of the undead and is behind the zombie invasion of London. With his undead army, he intends to rule the nation and probably the world. At the end of the film, the bridge connecting London and the outside world is destroyed in the attempt to prevent the zombies from crossing over from London.

This paper aims to read the zombies in *PPZ* and its filmic adaption as embodiments of the lower social orders and the foreign invaders in Austen’s novels. Popular zombies are intertwined with social disorder, filth and disease, all of which the lower classes in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century were believed by the upper social strata to be associated with. By the addition of the zombie outbreak to Austen’s original text, Grahame-Smith manifests Austen’s or the late-eighteenth-century gentries’ and the upper classes’ anxiety about the lower social classes and the masses in London and their tendency to stage riots and spread diseases. In other words, *PPZ* turns Austen’s lower social classes into zombies because of the similarities they share and their threat that is most visible in London. In the film adaption, the zombies embody foreign invaders who wreak havoc on London which stands for the nation. The collapse of London (which does not occur in *PPZ*) suggests that the film follows the popular cinematic representation of the city in apocalyptic zombie films. Central to the collapse is a rather unique zombie leader who has been infected with the French disease. To achieve its aim, this paper employs a socio-historical approach by analyzing Austen’s works against the socio-historical context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century<sup>1</sup> with regard to the lower social orders and foreign invasion, revealing the threat they pose and how these threats are epitomized by zombies.

### **The London of *PPZ***

Since its publication in 2009, critics noted the ways in which *PPZ*, as a literary mashup, highlights *Pride and Prejudice*’s sub-textual themes of class, violence and death. In her review of *PPZ* for *The New Yorker*, Macy Halford (2009), citing Michael Gamer, a professor of English literature, to whom she

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<sup>1</sup> I consider Austen and her novels to be “products” of the late eighteenth century. It is true that all of her major works were published during the 1810s but Austen was greatly influenced by the late eighteenth century novels of manners, especially those written by Frances Burney. *Sense and Sensibility* is also an engagement with the sentimental novel of the mid and late eighteenth century and *Northanger Abbey* with late eighteenth-century Gothic fiction.

wrote for an opinion, suggests that Grahame-Smith makes “blatant what [Austen] so elegantly obscured” (para. 6). Stephanie Merritt (2009) in *The Guardian* also indicates that the mashup “makes the metaphorical literal” (para. 8). Craig B. Jacobsen (2009) explains that the zombie addition “highlights the sublimated conflict of the source novel,” (para. 2) and the killing interludes “highlight [those] well-crafted scenes in which characters spar with words and react to subtleties of manner that can be far more suspenseful than campy fight scenes and copious vomit” (Jacobsen, 2009, para. 5).

Scholars have long been aware of the ways in which Austen’s sub-textual themes are underscored by *PPZ* but rarely have they been studied in great detail but are usually mentioned in passing. Elisabeth Chretien (2011) suggests,

zombies make an excellent choice as the vehicle to inject overt violence into *Pride and Prejudice*. With upper-class Britons afraid of a French invasion and a lower-class revolution during Austen’s lifetime, zombies offer an enemy that contemporary readers recognize as both foreign and based on a massive uprising. (p. 30)

However, all this being said, in spite of providing the historical contexts of both national and international upheavals in Austen’s time, she does not illustrate how zombies embody the lower classes and the French invaders (since her focus is on a feminist reading of *PPZ*). Camilla Nelson (2013) points out that the class dimensions are exacerbated. Wealth and social class assume an increased importance because only the wealthy and the privileged are able to have a large training hall, employ a large number of ninjas and spend time training, and wealth, class and combat skills make someone like Lady Catherine worthy of respect (p. 344). She also briefly illustrates a similarity between zombies and the working classes (Nelson, 2013, p. 334-335). The discussion of *PPZ* in this part will be an elaboration and extension of what critics and scholars have proposed.

The zombies in *PPZ* are chiefly associated with the socially inferior classes though it is true that members from all social classes can fall victim to zombies. The Netherfield Park ball, where both the upper class and the gentry gather, is attacked by zombies at the beginning of the novel and some guests are bitten and will turn into zombies. However, upper-class zombies are hardly depicted in the novel. As well as the common description of zombies’ disgusting physical appearance, zombies’ clothes are occasionally mentioned and, when they are, they indicate zombies’ socially inferior status. One zombie is described as having “modest clothing slightly tattered” and another is “clad in a blood encrusted blacksmith’s apron” (Grahame-Smith & Austen, p. 91). There is also “a small herd of zombie children, no doubt from Mrs. Beechman’s Home for Orphans” (Grahame-Smith & Austen, p. 48). In addition, the chances of survival

among the gentry or the upper stratum are higher, as Nelson notes earlier. A wealthy noblewoman like Lady Catherine de Bourgh employs many ninjas and Mr. Bennet, in spite of having none, can afford to send his five daughters to China for martial arts training. In contrast, all the Netherfield Park servants are killed by zombies. In Elizabeth's mind: "How two zombies could have killed a dozen servants, four maids, two cooks, and a steward was beyond Elizabeth's comprehension" (Grahame-Smith & Austen, p. 80). They are all killed arguably because they lack fighting skills and any form of protection.

The zombies in *PPZ* are associated with the lower classes and therefore embody Austen's lower classes, threatening the socially superior classes' stability and endangering national security. It must first be noted that the socially inferior classes in Austen's novels largely consist of servants who can pose threats at a personal level to their masters and mistresses. John Mullan illustrates how servants in Austen's novels can ruin their masters' reputations, betray their trust or become a problem. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, after the news of Lydia's elopement reaches her family, Elizabeth wishes that her mother would "hold her tongue before the servants, while they waited at table" (Austen, 1998, chapter 47), and later cries out to Jane that all the servants must have known. If they know, the world knows (Mullan, 2013, p. 118). Mr. Bennet, after Jane's engagement to Mr. Bingley, observes that the generous couple will be "so easy, that every servant will cheat [them]" (Austen, 1998, chapter 55). Outside the fictional world of Austen's novels and in the real world of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, court records illustrate the power or influence servants exercised over their masters in legal cases of adultery. That is, servants provided much of the evidence in these cases as "nearly all of the criminal conversation cases involved witnesses who were members of the same household, usually the servants or domestic staff" (Peakman, 2016, p. 49). Servants could betray, have an unobtrusive influence on or extort money from their masters or mistresses.

Juliet McMaster (1997) observes that "[b]eyond the servants comes the great mass of what was yet to be named the working class," and unlike Dickens who might depict "scenes of the unleashed fury of mob," "in Austen's novels, by and large, law and order prevail" (p. 128). However, the reader gets a glimpse of the "unleashed fury of [the] mob" in *Northanger Abbey* (1817). The characters are discussing the government and politics and one of them thinks of "a mob of three thousand men assembling in St. George's Fields, the Bank attacked, the Tower threatened, the streets of London flowing with blood, a detachment of the Twelfth Light Dragoons (the hope of the nation) called up from Northampton to quell the insurgents" (Austen, 1994, chapter 14). Here is a scene of London mass violence with which Austen was familiar. The mass violence, alluded to above, popularly refers to the Gordon Riots of 1780 instigated by resentment for Catholics and working-class anger at unsanitary and

overcrowded urban conditions, high taxes and repressive laws (The National Archive, n.d.).

The urban insanitariness and overcrowding contributed to disease. Before considering the London riot, it is interesting to note that due to such conditions, the urban poor and the lower classes, like zombies, were perceived by their social superiors and doctors to be associated with disease and contagion. The Great Plague of 1665, for example, began in the poor area of St Giles-in-the-Fields. Gideon Harvey (1665), in *A Discourse of the Plague*, suggests that the plague haunts a “place [which] is closer, nastier, and more putrid than others, [which is] environed with ditches, stinking gutters, and sinks” (p. 9). One of his “Caveats against the Plague” is to avoid “peoples’ steams and breaths, especially of nasty folks, as beggers, and others” (Harvey, 1665, p. 15). Richard Mead (1720) whose advice the government sought before passing the new Quarantine Act in 1721 published *A Short Discourse Concerning Pestilential Contagion, and the Methods to Be Used to Prevent It*. Mead (1720) recommends that once an uncommon manner of death with certain symptoms is discovered, “the Magistrates ... should immediately send skilful Physicians to Visit the Houses in the Neighbourhood, especially of the *Poorer* sort, among whom this Evil generally begins” (p. 38). Susan Williams (1987), in her study of “the Diseased Poor” in the early Victorian era suggests that the districts of the poor were associated with epidemics and it was increasingly believed that, in addition to the direct physical contact, the wind could carry the infectious particles, and so the poor, by citing Dr Hector Gavin’s *Unhealthiness of London* (1847), “extend their influences to the best parts of the districts; and thus affect the highest classes of the community” (Williams, 1987, p. 49). The urban poor and the lower classes were perceived to be disease breeders who one way or another could infect their betters.

The London riot, which the character in Austen’s novel refers to, is transformed into the London zombie riot in *PPZ*. The masses are responsible for the riot, the working-class mass in Austen’s novels and the real world of the late eighteenth century and the zombie mass in *PPZ*. Chretien (2011) notes that “upper-class Britons [were] afraid... a lower-class revolution during Austen’s lifetime and, by citing Peter Dendle, suggests that “zombies represent the threat of the masses rising up and overthrowing the ruling classes” (p. 30). Being present en masse and as harbingers of destruction, therefore, constitutes a similarity shared by zombies and other classes below Austen’s principal characters, namely the lower, working or laboring classes, collectively known as the mass. Although *PPZ* does not depict the unleashed fury of the zombie scene in London, the zombie mass, alluded to in a song sung by Mrs. Hurst, had been a prevalent trouble there (like other parts of the country). It must have been so prevalent that the London zombies are included in the song whose lyric goes:

*When once the earth was still and dead were silent,  
And London-town was for but living men,  
Came the plague upon us swift and violent,*

*And so our dearest England we defend.* (Grahame-Smith & Austen, 2009, p. 41)

London as a city for only the living is a thing of the past. It is constantly troubled by the undead both inside and outside. The same can be said about the constant mass riots alluded to in Austen's novels. The constant zombie threat explains the presence of the King's Army at each section in spite of having huge walls to keep zombies out. Zombies have been inside since they rose from the graveyards. When discussing the advantages of the countryside over London, Elizabeth acknowledges that "the scarcity of graveyards makes the country altogether more agreeable [than London] in times such as these" (Grahame-Smith & Austen, 2009, p. 38) ("such as these" refers to the rainy season when the rain softens the ground, allowing zombies to easily crawl out of their graves).

The song Mrs. Hurst sings is worth taking note of for another reason. London, the most important city, has been invaded by zombies and "dearest England" must be defended. The song shows that London stands for the entire nation. Defending London is an act equivalent to defending England. The King's Army is stationed in London and task forces such as "the Society of Gentlemen for a Peaceful Solution to Our Present Difficulties" are also in London. It is not difficult to imagine the collapse of London in connection with the collapse of all forms of authority and subsequently the entire nation. In contrast to the fall of major cities such as Cambridge and Manchester, people's lives, in Hertfordshire and elsewhere, are hardly disturbed.

It appears that the filmic adaptation picks up the song's rendering of the importance of London. As outlined above, the London of the film is invaded and collapses. The zombies in the novel represent the socially inferior classes threatening the stability of socially superior classes and the nation. In the film, the zombies come to represent foreign invaders. They invade and destroy London. They conquer London and the entire nation therefore falls.

### **The London of *P+P+Z***

Before diving into a discussion of the representation of London it is of interest to discuss Austen's and her novels' engagement with international turbulence. Although spending most her life in the countryside, Austen was aware of both national and international upheavals. She knew about the French Revolution. One of her cousins was Eliza Capot, Comtesse de Feuillide (1761 - 1813), whose husband was a French nobleman guillotined during the Reign of

Terror. Two of her brothers, Francis (1774 – 1865) and Charles (1779 – 1852) were naval officers serving throughout the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. While her novels are preoccupied with the country gentry whose life at home appears to have been undisturbed by violence and the tumultuous politics abroad, Gillian Russell (2012) observes that “[s]oldiers and sailors are as ubiquitous a presence in her novels and letters [and] [t]he hum of wartime, if not the blast or cry of battle, pervades her fiction” (p. 262). In *Pride and Prejudice*, the militia is brought to Meryton to be dancing partners for ladies but the fact that the militia was only formed during the national crisis is a sign of the danger humming in the background. Later in the novel, the militia moves to the coastal town Brighton. Its new station, on the one hand, facilitates the elopement crucial for the plot development and, on the other, historically indicates that the “invasion by Napoleon’s forces was felt to be imminent, the south coast was on full alert” (Russell, 2021, p. 261).

*P+P+Z* is both a filmic adaption of *PPZ* and a critical engagement with *Pride and Prejudice*. As director Steers said: “For me, it was reinterpreting Jane Austen” (Whittaker, 2016). That is, the Napoleonic War lurking in the background of *Pride and Prejudice* is brought to the fore and zombified. In other words, the Napoleonic Wars are transformed into the *Z- Wars*. One of the film’s producers, Brian Oliver, remarked: “we have all of the *Pride and Prejudice* beats in this movie... It’s just set in this alternate world where the zombie apocalypse is taking place, as opposed to the Napoleonic Wars” (Dercksen 2016). Steers also notes:

We have all these different genres and we attempted to do all of them justice, as well as we possibly could and blend them together in a coherent world. And, weirdly, it is. It all fits together. You take the Napoleonic Wars out, and put the zombie apocalypse in, and everything else still plays. (Dercksen 2016)

The threat imposed by the French in *Pride and Prejudice* turns into the zombie one in *P+P+Z*.

One of the additions that the film makes is an explanation of the plague’s origin which is not given in the novel. The plague is of foreign or French origin. As the film’s prologue explains: “Britannia was rich with the fruits of worldwide trade. From the colonies there came not just silks and spices, but a virulent and abominable plague. Naturally, many suspected the French were to blame. Definitely the French” (Steers, 2016). It is true that we do not see French zombified soldiers invading England. It is the French disease which turns the English into zombies and it is not difficult to see Mr. Wickham, who aims to rule the nation and the world, as a reincarnation of Napoleon Bonaparte. The



conquering of London is the first step for Mr. Wickham towards ruling the nation.

It should be noted that international trade and maritime activity had been the leading causes for the spread of diseases for centuries. To prevent seafaring traders and naval officers from spreading them, the first Quarantine Act in England was passed in 1710, tightened to the point of oppression by the 1788 Act, and relaxed in subsequent Acts passed during the 1810s (McDonald 1951, p. 22-23). It was common to blame an enemy or neighboring countries for the outbreak. The English named the disgraceful disease, syphilis, “the French disease” (the Russians called it the “Polish disease” and the Polish referred to it as “the German disease”) (Tampa et al. 2014, para. 2). In addition, in 1720, the last major outbreak in Western Europe of bubonic plague, though originating in the Orient, occurred in the port of Marseille, France. The outbreak seriously alarmed the English and historian Charles F. Mullett (1936) characterized the year 1720-23 as “the English plague scare.”

Similar to the London in *PPZ*, the one in the film appears to represent the entire nation. According to the film prologue which provides background for the audience:

So certain did it seem the end of days had come that even the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are said to have ascended from Hell. To protect the living, the Grand Barrier was built, a 100-foot wall encircling London. Then excavation began on the Royal Canal, a vast moat 30 fathoms deep surrounding both the city and its walls. The land twixt the two fortifications became known as The In-Between (Steers, 2016).

Zombies arrived and the living had to be protected. As the zombie plague came with “world trade,” London, as a hub of international trade and commerce, must have been the very first site of the outbreak. However, the walls and the Canal were not constructed to contain zombies but were rather built to protect the city from the undead who had escaped London before the barrier’s construction. This is because London, during the initial phase of the pandemic, was described as the safest place in the country. After the living defeated the undead in the Second Battle of Kent, the prologue continues, “Many believed the enemy was finally vanquished. The gentry began to leave the safe confines of London’s defenses for their newly-fortified country estates” (Steers, 2016). So, it follows that prior to the Kent Battle or during the early outbreak, “the gentry” and arguably all the classes above took shelter in London, the nation unto itself. London needed to be protected so the walls and the Canal were built. London represents the nation and the living in London represent the whole population. If the living lost in the Kent Battle, the ruling classes in London, instead of

heading to their country estates, would be slaughtered. London would be no more and neither would the nation.

London was in fact close to becoming besieged once. Again, in the Second Battle of Kent, “[r]avenous zombie hordes massacred every villager of The In-Between [the areas surrounding London]. It was said, the sight of this slaughter drove young King George mad” (Steers, 2016). (This also emphasizes the fact that the walls were built to keep zombies out rather than containing them within.) As every village was destroyed, the next to encounter cataclysm was London. Perhaps, it was not only “the sight of this slaughter” in The In-Between but also the possibility of the collapse of London (and then the entire nation) that rendered King George mentally deranged.

Mr. Wickham therefore needs to conquer London and this will enable him to conquer the nation and later the world. Mr. Darcy, who in this film is a Colonel, correctly observes that the London invasion “wasn’t the random act of a mindless horde. They’ve struck the Palace and both Houses” (Steers, 2016). He also remarks that “[b]y taking London, they’ve increased their ranks a hundredfold... If we should fail to contain them and they breach Hingham Bridge, it’ll be as if a great dam has broken” (Steers, 2016). London falls and its large population increases the size of the undead army. After the fall, one soldier also declares that “[i]f the undead of London take the bridge [that connects London and the outside], the rest of England will surely be lost” (Steers, 2016). By conquering London, Mr. Wickham, who declares himself to be “the one the undead have been waiting for [and] [t]he one to lead them” (Steers, 2016), can literally (since it is the nation) and strategically (by virtue of the large undead army) conquer the nation.

Central to the success of the London invasion is Mr. Wickham who represents one of the unique cinematic depictions of zombies. Not only is he a self-aware and fully conscious zombie but also one with the ability to lead his kind. The audience (I am certain) does not know that he is a zombie until the end. Not only are there some zombies who can resist their hunger for human’s brains and instead consume animal brains and are in every aspect like humans, but also there is no symptomatic or physical indication whatsoever that Mr. Wickham is a zombie. Mr. Wickham may be similar to Olivia Moore, a fully conscious and self-aware zombie who eats the brains of corpses to stay human in the TV series *iZombie* (2015-2019) or to the “second-generation” zombies who still have mental powers in Colm McCarthy’s *The Girl with All the Gifts* (2016). Mr. Wickham can be considered to be a member of what scholars term “new zombies,” or “sentient zombies,” broadly defined as “zombies [who] are agents, zombies that can think for themselves, can remember their human existence and can even begin to construct new (un)lives based on subjective wants and desires” (Bishop, 2015, p. 15). Popular representations of such zombies include

the zombies in Jonathan Levine's *Warm Bodies* (2013) and the BBC TV series *In the Flesh* (2013-2014).

Mr. Wickham's ability to lead the undead army and the zombies' potential to organize themselves are also unique albeit not novel. Steers mentions Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* (1954) as "something I used as a template, with the zombies retaining some of what they were as humans, and seeing them as a competitive race" (Whittaker, 2016). Mr. Wickham warns Lady Catherine about the potential organization among the undead under one leader: "The common hordes look to them for leadership. It takes just one of them to realize their power and then to lead the hordes into battle" (Steers, 2016). Indeed, his warning serves as a hint at his future actions as he continues, "according to the Book of Revelation, actually, the Antichrist shall lead the undead on the day that shall be the last day of mankind" (Steers, 2016). Towards the end, Mr. Wickham is revealed to be the Antichrist followed by the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The popular depiction of the zombie's leadership ability is also in George A. Romero's *Land of the Dead* (2005) in which a relatively intelligent zombie called "Big Daddy" leads other zombies, who have some form of communication among themselves and who have learned to use tools, to a human conclave which is situated in the Golden Triangle area of downtown Pittsburgh, protected by the rivers and an electric fence, a situation very similar to *P+P+Z*. Big Daddy attacks the human settlement in retaliation for the human's constant raids on zombie areas. The ability of one zombie to lead and control the hordes is portrayed in the TV series *Z Nation* (2014-2018) in which Murphy, the only known survivor of a zombie bite, exhibits an ability to control other zombies. Closer to Mr. Wickham's depiction is Zeus in Zack Snyder's *Army of the Dead* (2021). Zeus, who is really akin to a clever animal, is the original zombie commanding an army of the dead.

Mr. Wickham successfully besieges London. At the end of the movie, the Hingham Bridge, the only bridge that connects London and the outside, is destroyed to confine the zombies within London and The In-Between areas. However, zombies are shown, in the background, to ferociously jump from the first wall into the canal below. It is left to the audience's imagination whether or not "the undead of London" will escape the Canal wall. Mr. Wickham, however, manages to escape from it. In a mid-credit scene, he is shown to lead, with the Four Horsemen of the Zombie Apocalypse riding behind him, a horde of zombies heading towards Rosing Park, a country estate, where Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth, Mr. Bingley and Jane are celebrating their wedding.

The London in *P+P+Z* falls and becomes a most dangerous place overrun by zombies, like many cities in many films. The London in Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* (2002), the New York in Francis Lawrence's *I Am Legend* (2007), the Atlanta in AMC's *The Walking Dead* (2010 –) are deserted and infested with zombies. The London in *P+P+Z* is very similar to downtown

Pittsburg in *Land of the Dead* as both are similarly protected by the wall and the river and they are depicted to be intact throughout the rest of the film until they fall at the end. The city in many films turns into the land of the dead. As Toby Venables (2015) observes: “[i]n the recent wave of zombie films, from *28 Days Later* to *Zombieland*, the message has become clear: get out of the city,” and he emphasizes that “[t]he city belongs to the zombie” (p. 214).

London collapses and so does the nation. Following the conventional ending of cinematic zombie iterations, the ending of *P+P+Z* suggests an apocalypse. Catriona Miller (2016) argues that, unlike the novel which concludes with marital bliss and a possible cure, “the film does revert to an ending that is consistent with the traditional zombieverse,” and Mr. Wickham with his undead troop advancing towards Rosing Park, “reinstat[es] the nihilistic ending so typical of zombie films” (p. 138). Indeed, the first sign of apocalypse is the collapse of the government, authority and armed forces and they collapse when “Palace and both Houses” in London have been attacked. The apocalyptic ending is also reiterated by a zombieified version of a famous nursery rhyme, Ring a Ring o' Rosy, sung by a group of the child zombies from Mrs. Beacham's orphanage at the very end of the post credits. (The rhyme is briefly mumbled by them earlier in the film but it is indistinct.) This nursery rhyme itself is popularly thought to arise from the plague or be related to pestilence although some scholars have expressed their disagreement (Winick, 2014). However, in the film, the song is altered to fit the zombic world and its lyric goes (The important lines are in bold):

Ring-a-round the rosie  
 A pocket full of posies  
**A-tishoo! A-tishoo**  
**We all fall down**  
 Walking through the forest  
 A monster stands before us  
 Another there, another  
**They all rise up**  
 ....  
 Lift your musket calmly  
 Bludgeon! Bludgeon!  
 They all fall down  
 Ring-a-around to safety  
 Infection is a pity  
 ....

Ring-a-round the rosie  
pocket full of posies  
tishoo! A-tishoo!  
**We all fall down**  
-End-  
(Steers, 2016)

It all starts with “A-tishoo! A-tishoo” or sneezing, a sign of disease and infection and then “We all fall down” or we die and turn into zombies. Monsters are here and there since “They all rise up.” Muskets and bludgeons are then prepared and zombies fall down. “We all fall down” being the very last line of the song refers to both death/zombies and the fall of humanity. The song ends as we all fall down and so does the world as we know it.

## Conclusion

The zombies in *PPZ* are considered to embody the lower classes and the masses in Austen’s novels and in the late eighteenth century. By adding zombies to the world of Austen’s novels, Grahame-Smith manifests Austen’s or the late-eighteenth-century gentry’s and the upper classes’ anxiety about the lower social classes and the mass posing threats at both the personal and national level. The lower classes/zombies threaten their socially superior/living counterparts. Their threats become most visible and destructive in London which stands for the nation. Their potential to stage riots, create social unrest and spread disease in London places the nation at risk. Such potential possessed by the lower classes and zombies is feared by the gentry in Austen’s novels and the living in *PPZ*.

The representation of the London in *P+P+Z* is different from its source novel and becomes consistent with the popular cinematic depiction of the city in zombie narratives. Unlike the London in *PPZ*, the one in the film collapses and so does the nation it represents, thanks to Mr. Wickham who is infected with the French malady which turns him into a unique zombie possessing both humanity and Napoleonic leadership and ambition. He, therefore, becomes a representative of the foreign invader. The Napoleonic Wars humming in the background of *Pride and Prejudice* are replaced by the Z-Wars led by Mr. Wickham who desires to rule the nation. He succeeds in conquering London whose population increases the size of his undead army. As London falls, the nation, which is portrayed to be functioning throughout the rest of the film, is suggested to be facing an apocalyptic end, following the fate of many cities and countries in zombie films.

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