

**Lily Herne's *Deadlands* Series and the Practice of Zombie Politics in
Present-Day South Africa**

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Abstract

Since its initial publication in 2011, the *Deadlands* series gained an increasing amount of critical attention, owing to its relevance to contemporary South African society. The series demonstrates the relevance of zombies to reading present-day South Africa in local literature. Like Most South African literature, *Deadlands* and other science fiction novels grapple with the memory of Apartheid and how the youth approaches this anxiety. As Sarah Nuttall noted of young South Africans in the first decade of the new millennium, large parts of the South African youth today (now sometimes referred to as “Born Frees” if they were born in or after 1994) understand Apartheid as a history that does not belong to them yet. Ironically, many young people in South Africa incorporate struggle icons into everyday fashion, music and other facets of popular culture as a means of understanding history. Although the struggles faced by the current youth and that of the previous generations are not the same, they are related to one another via the different political conditions that characterised apartheid and post-apartheid circumstances. For the post-apartheid youth the new, democratically elected governments have done little to better the lives of all South Africans, with media and social media portraying a corrupted government that chooses to increase its own wealth rather than the lives of South African citizens.

For the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard and Canadian scholar and critic Henry Giroux, this practice – referred to as zombie politics by Giroux— is symptomatic of a modern capitalist society that celebrates social and civil decay and undermines the notion of a healthy democracy. In this worldview, wealth and affluence are linked to political gain and are measured by the number of outward symbols thereof, rather than embracing democratic principles. Furthermore, the practitioners of zombie politics use such symbols in order to manipulate the voting populace. The *Deadlands* series parodies this process to show that such practices are futile and that the apartheid legacy, specifically with reference to present-day political and economic discourse, is subject to decay over time. While this parody is from the perspective of two white South African women, *Death of a Saint* parodies the formative narrative of establishing whiteness in South Africa by re-enacting the Great Trek in a future, post-cataclysmic South Africa in which zombies have taken over most of the landscape. The second novel in the series rewrites this narrative in a way that suggests migration and conflict are means toward progress. For the protagonists, the information they discover toward the end of *Death of a Saint* can be used in order to change the hierarchal structure that exists in

the Cape Town enclave but instead, they are captured and enslaved by affluent overlords who profit from the existence of zombies and capitalism that ironically references its own origins in Northern Africa throughout *Army of the Lost*. The series humorously suggests that South Africa is embroiled in zombie politics, and that citizens are responsible for ensuring peaceful co-existence with the Other embodied by the zombie.

Opsomming

Sedert die reeks se publikasie in 2011 het die *Deadlands* boeke toenemende kritiese aandag geniet te danke aan die reeks se relevansie tot die kontemporêre Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. Die reeks demonstreer die relevansie van zombies in die lees van die hedendaagse Suid-Afrika in plaaslike literatuur. Soos die meeste Suid-Afrikaanse literatuur worstel *Deadlands* en ander wetenskapfiksie novelles met die nagedagtenis van Apartheid en hoe die jeug hierdie onderwerp en die emosies daaraan gekoppel, benader. Soos Sarah Nuttall opgemerk het oor jong Suid-Afrikaners in die eerste dekade van die nuwe millennium, het 'n groot aantal van die Suid-Afrikaanse jeug (wie nou soms 'Born Frees' genoem word as hulle in of na 1994 gebore is) Apartheid verstaan as 'n geskiedenis wat nog nie werklik aan hulle behoort nie. Ironies genoeg inkorporeer die jeug van vandag die ikone van die stryd teen Apartheid in hul alledaagse kleredrag, musiek en ander fasette van populêre kultuur as 'n manier om sin te maak van hierdie geskiedenis. Alhoewel die uitdagings wat die jeug vandag in die gesig staar nie dieselfde is as die van die vorige generasie nie, is die twee aan mekaar verwant deur die verskillende politieke toestande wat Apartheid en die nuwe bedeling karaktiseer. Vir die jeug van die post-apartheid era wat onder 'n demokratiese gekose regering leef, blyk dit nou dat die regering verskriklik min gedoen het om die lewens van alle Suid-Afrikaners te verbeter. Die media en die sosiale media skep die beeld van 'n korrupte regering wat verkies om hul eie welvaart te verbeter in plaas van die welvaart van Suid-Afrikaanse burgers.

Vir die Franse sosioloog Jean Baudrillard en die Kanadese geleerde en kritikus, Henry Giroux, is hierdie gebruik - wat Giroux beskou as 'zombie-politiek' - simptome van die moderne kapitalistiese stelsel wat sosiale verval aanhang, terwyl dit die idee van gesonde demokrasie ondermyn. In hierdie wereldbeskouing is rykdom en welvaart gekoppel aan politieke gewin en word dit gemeet aan die aantal uiterlike simbole daarvan, in plaas daarvan om liever demokratiese beginsels uit te leef en te versterk. Verder maak die praktisyns van 'zombie-politiek' gebruik van hierdie uiterlike simbole om die stemgeregtigdes te manipuleer. Die *Deadlands*-reeks boeke is 'n parodie van hierdie proses en dit wys dat sulke praktieke tevergeefs is en dat die Apartheid nalatenskap, spesifiek met verwysing tot die hedendaagse politiese en ekonomiese diskoers, onderhewig is aan verval met verloop van tyd.

Terwyl hierdie parodieë wel uit die oogpunt van twee wit Suid-Afrikaanse vroue geskryf word, is *Death of a Saint* (die tweede boek in die reeks) 'n formatiewe vertelling oor die vasstel van 'whiteness' in Suid-Afrika deur die heruitbeelding van die Groot Trek in 'n

toekomstige Suid-Afrika na 'n ontsaglike ramp waar meeste van die land deur zombies oorgeneem is. Die tweede roman in die reeks herskryf hierdie vertelling op so 'n wyse dat dit suggereer dat hierdie migrasie en konflik 'n middel is tot vooruitgang. Vir die pleitbesorgers kan die inligting wat hulle ontdek aan die einde van *Death of a Saint*, gebruik word ten einde die hierargiese struktuur wat in Kaapstad se ingeslote grondgebied bestaan, te verander, maar in stede daarvan word hulle gevange geneem en as slawe gebruik vir die ryk heersers wie wins maak uit die bestaan van zombies en die kapitalistiese stelsel wat deurgaans in *Army of the Lost* verwys na sy eie oorsprong in Noord-Afrika. Hierdie reeks stel op humoristiese wyse voor dat Suid-Afrika te midde van 'zombie-politiek' is en dat die burgers verantwoordelik is om die vreedsame naasbestaan met die 'Other' te verseker, wat vergestalt word deur die zombie.

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Chapter One: The First South African Zombie Series

The *Deadlands* series of novels is comprised of *Deadlands* (2011), *Death of a Saint* (2012), *Army of the Lost* (2014) and *Ash Remains* (2016). These four novels follow a group of young protagonists in a post-cataclysmic South Africa. A mysterious event at the time of the 2010 World Cup, hosted by South Africa, saw the majority of the country's population turned into zombies. The first novel starts ten years after the cataclysm and is set in a radically transformed Cape Town. The city has regressed to an almost feudal society, governed by a mysterious sect known only as the Guardians, and served by their appointed administrators of the city, the Resurrectionists. The Guardians have, as their form of power, the ability to control the undead, which threatens the civilians of Cape Town (now mostly relocated to enclaves of destroyed suburbs). Serving the Guardians, the Resurrectionists instil a culture of worshipping the undead and fear of the Guardians in exchange for basic needs, such as housing, electricity and sanitation. The *Deadlands* series was published under the pseudonym Lily Herne by the novelist and screenwriter, Sarah Lotz, and in collaboration with her daughter, Savannah Lotz. In 2015, Lotz was nominated for the Goodreads Choice Award (Best Horror category) for her novel *Day Four* and best newcomer in the Sydney J Bounds award for *The Three*. Lotz also writes horror novels and short stories¹ under the pseudonym S.L. Grey in collaboration with Louis Greenberg². Lotz's novels are generally considered pulp fiction and targeted at a specific market. In a 2014 interview (Fergus) for the *Civilian Reader* blog, Lotz shared her opinion that "the most exciting novels are being produced by so-called genre authors (and so-called literary authors writing genre fiction)". Although the *Deadlands* series is sold as genre-fiction, it reflects real-life political situations and embodies the culture of contemporary local and global writing. Another well-known local author of popular fiction, Lauren Beukes, described *Deadlands* as "cool, provocative and sharp ... teen zombie apocalypse with heart" and *Army of the Lost* as "*The Hunger Games* meets *The Walking Dead*",³ indicating the series' appeal to young audiences. The social and political commentary inherent in the text suggests another marketable asset.

As the first series of South African zombie novels, the *Deadlands* series (2011–2016) articulates the social and political anxieties of the current generation. As Pullman (724)

¹ *Pandemonium: Stories of the Apocalypse* (2011), *The Mall* (2011), *The Lowest Heaven* (2013), *End of the Road* (2013), *The New Girl* (2014), to name a few.

² South African scriptwriter, author and editor.

³ Popular international franchises

indicated, popular literature articulates everything from “the horrors of slavery, white xenophobia, Cold War angst, the fear of death, and even apprehensions about consumer culture”, a trend which has now emerged in local popular fiction. However, the series is largely satirical and political, and social concerns are presented in a way that articulates current anxieties. In *Deadlands*, the school-going protagonists emerge as rebellious against what they believe is an unjust political system in the aftermath of a zombie invasion. *Death of a Saint* documents the physical and psychological journeys undertaken by the protagonists as they transition from rebellion to activism. The novel introduces alternative modes of reading South African histories in its satire of the Great Trek narrative, and reimagines significant, iconic monuments or establishments associated with national heritage, such as Rhodes University, and deliberately reinvents the symbolic meanings of these places. In *Army of the Lost*, the protagonists return to the corporate city and individual narratives emerge in favour of the group’s journey. In an online interview (Lotz) conducted late in 2016, Sarah Lotz revealed that *Ash Remains* will interrogate South Africa’s colonial past in more depth, focussing on Ginger’s British heritage.

The pseudonym Lily Herne merges the identities of mother and daughter, Sarah and Savannah Lotz. In a 2011 interview, ‘Herne’ mentioned that “[she has] a dark half who has her own separate personality and Facebook account...” The series follows a number of English novels by South African authors⁴ whose work is aimed at the youth, otherwise designated as Generation Y. In *Stylizing the Self: The Y Generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg*, Sarah Nuttall defines this generation of South African youth as those who “remake the past in very specific ways in the services of the present and the future”. Nuttall and Achille Mbembe (2008:106) emphasise that this generation differentiates itself from others by remixing cultural forms “that cuts across sound, sartorial, visual and textual cultures”. In other words, these cultural forms take on similar significance in articulating the celebration of diversity and blending, while reframing identities. In the *Deadlands* series, the ethnically and racially hybrid characters navigate a post-apocalypse in a politically unstable environment. The series commences with the narrative of youthful rebellion. Lele, the only narrator in *Deadlands*, expresses resentment toward the economic and political structure of the Cape Town enclave in which zombies are used as a means of maintaining an industrial capitalist structure, in

⁴ In the introduction to *South Africa in the Global Imaginary*, Leon de Kock wrestles with the question of how South African literature is defined, stating that the genre “South African literature” cannot be based solely on the nationality of the author, setting or language in which it has been published.

which the sole purpose is the production and movement of pre-war goods.⁵ For Lele, this reflects an imposition on the moral drive to equalise and improve upon the living conditions of all inhabitants of the enclave. For Lele, emphasising capital over morality suggests the erasure of human interests.

Latham cites Marx's *Capital*, in which the historical roots of cyborgs and vampires are identified as metaphors for rampant consumption among the youth (3), characteristic of capitalistic social values.

In the factory we have a lifeless mechanism which is independent of the workers, who are incorporated into it as its living appendages. . . . Owing to its conversion into an automaton, the instrument of labour confronts the worker during the labour process in the shape of capital, of dead labour, which dominates and soaks up living labour-power." [...] Estranged from the material embodiment of their labour, workers find themselves integrated into the factory system as cogs in the productive apparatus their own energies have spawned, forced "to adapt [their] . . . movements to the uniform and unceasing motion of an automaton."

This means that the working classes, like zombies in Haitian folklore are enslaved and absorbed by the factory mechanism, becoming uncouth mechanisations in the process. In the first novel, the Deadlands become a metaphor for this process of enslavement and the Guardians maintain the mechanism. Guardians control the zombie population by sending the dead out into the Deadlands to be reanimated. In turn, the zombies keep the citizens of the enclave within its borders. These citizens depend on the Guardians for their means of survival and are provided with goods and services in exchange for loyalty to the Resurrectionists. The Guardians are thus constructed as part of an industrial organisation with a history of supplying the demands of a citizenry who are unaware that many of them will be able to enter the Deadlands themselves to obtain the goods. The ANZ is an underground youth organisation that combats the use of zombies as a means of controlling the inhabitants of the enclave and aim to restore a socialist system, in which the inhabitants of the enclave are able to claim equity in the production of goods. The narrative of youthful rebellion against a dissatisfactory political and economic system mirrors the circumstances enacted by the ANC during the struggle against apartheid, in which they demanded equal participation in the

⁵ Contrasted to the commercial structure in Johannesburg, where amaKlevas aim to generate and accumulate profits from the acquisition of pre-war merchandise.

democratic process for all eligible South African citizens⁶ regardless of race or gender. In 2012 Anthony Butler noted that the ANC often draws upon its history as a liberation movement against apartheid in its political discourse, but is seen as a capitalist organisation, driven by the generation of profits in more contemporary political narratives. *Death of a Saint* references historical narratives that contributed to the making of South Africa as a divided state. The primary allusion in this text is to the Great Trek, in which the Afrikaner nation and other homogenous populations are seen as distinct from one another, and competing to dominate the same space. The narrative is rewritten to express a hybridised view of a single South African identity. *Army of the Lost* returns to the idea of a commercialised, capitalist state, and exposes the potential dangers of repeating historical narratives without reflection and change. In *Army of the Lost*, the protagonists are not the ones initiating the revolution, but will be influenced by it directly. While Ginger and Ember recover from their respective psychological and physical traumas, Lele is pregnant and Saint has become a zombie. Ash becomes part of Jova's zombie genocide and is the only original protagonist who is directly involved in politics.

Part One of this thesis addresses critical, historical and theoretical aspects that contribute to the real-life context of the series. The works of Sarah Nuttall, Henry Giroux and Jean Baudrillard form part of the framework in which the novels are read. The second part analyses and discusses the series. The context of the series relies on social and political binaries and reflects the ways in which these dichotomies have changed between the pre-apartheid and the present.

Zombies and their Meanings

Traditionally, cinematic zombies embody humanity's other. They are often portrayed as mindless, greedy creatures whose only motivation is to feed on human flesh. Unlike the folkloristic zombie, cinematic zombies are threatening, as portrayed in early films such as George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, and humans unite against the zombie horde to maintain the social hierarchies they inhabit. For example, Lauro and Embry (2008: 87) note

⁶ The criteria for eligibility changed since 1910, during which time the vote was extended only to white men over the age of 21 (in Natal and the Cape Province, the vote was further limited to those men who had property). By the 1930's, this was extended to white women over the age of 21. In 1936, the Representation of Natives Act was passed, which excluded black voters from the common voters roll. Following the establishment of South Africa as a republic in 1960, the whites-only referendum declared that all non-white citizens will be excluded from the vote. Voting rights were restored to all citizens over the age of 18, regardless of race in the interim constitution, enacted in 1994 (n.pag).

that, among other things, the “zombie has been made to stand for capitalist drone and Communist sympathiser, and, increasingly, viral contamination”. That is, zombies epitomise the most widely perceived threats to any given social order. In the examples cited⁷, the zombies are typically portrayed as an Othered mass, while humans join together against this threatening force.⁸ However, more recent representations of zombies demonstrate the disintegration of human relationships and the drive to rebuild human society. For example, *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) demonstrates how the zombie invasion amplifies existing tensions between humans who compete for leadership and authority during the zombie crisis. In AMC’s *The Walking Dead*, group dynamics are constantly shifting as groups of survivors, each with their own leaders, change allegiances as new needs and challenges emerge.⁹ This demonstrates that although zombies are the antitheses of humanity, recent changes in typical zombie narratives focus on the human element rather than the threat posed by zombies.

The *Deadlands* series makes use of the zombie metaphor, which in recent years has become synonymous with pop culture. The zombie is a preferred figure in multi-media outputs, stringing together films, comic books, video games and popular fiction. Although the zombie has its origin in Vodun, the syncretic religion practised throughout the Caribbean, South America and parts of North America,¹⁰ the West re-appropriated the symbolic figure of the zombie to embody its own anxieties. In *American Zombie Gothic* (2010), Kyle Bishop emphasises the uniqueness of the zombie as a cinematic creature, indicating its association with popular culture from the outset. Bishop notes that unlike vampires, werewolves and other folkloristic creatures, the zombie is the only one that made the transition directly from mythology to film, before being developed as a literary monster. However, the symbolic associations of mythological and cinematic zombies differ slightly; these differences reflect dominant social discourses and the ways in which consumers have become enslaved to a system of signs and simulations.

In Haitian mythology and in early films, the zombie is a human being enslaved by a single power, who may be rescued and have their humanity restored. However, cinematic zombies

⁷ *Dawn of the Dead* (1978/ 2004)
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
28 Days Later (2002)

⁸ While Jovanka Vuckovic (84) noted that “Other Italian directors pushed the limits of bad taste to the breaking point with zombie- themed porn” queer sexualities have often been overlooked in the zombie genre. Two films, *Zombies* (2003) *Gay Zombie* (2007) parodies, and ultimately undermines homosexuality as Other. This reflects the dominant view that queer identities remain threatening to a heteronormative society.

⁹ For example, in Season 3, former prison inmates are accepted into the group of main protagonists when they kill their fellow inmates, proving their loyalty to the protagonists.

¹⁰ Most notably Louisiana.

such as those found in George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* are reanimated corpses – non-human creatures that shift the narrative focus from discourses of humans' enslaving one another to one in which humans become slaves themselves.

Zombies and Capitalism

Zombies' original association with enslavement emerged as capitalistic socio-economic circumstances developed, and the mythology expanded to narrate the sense that labouring individuals have been absorbed into a system that only values the individual. In its original context, enslavement was limited to the ownership of individuals or as the property of another. The zombie mythology preserves this association with enslavement, but takes on different meanings after the abolishment of slavery 1803. Along with the Vodun religion, the use of zombies as a metaphor was well established in the Southern States of America and transitioned from its folkloristic origins during the French occupation to popular culture in the late 1920s and early 1930s. After the migration of the zombie mythology to the West, the focus in zombie narratives such as those prominent in popular films of the time¹¹ shifted from enslavement to bourgeoisie capitalism. Significantly, *White Zombie* (1932) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943) depict the zombification and 'enslavement' of bourgeois women and natives in a male-dominated, capitalist society. More recent uses of the zombie mythology suggest that the narrative has undergone yet another significant change. After the abolishment of slavery in Haiti in 1803 and the revolutions that followed in the twentieth century, the way in which conflicts between dominant and submissive Others, such as humans and zombies are articulated in film, literature and other media, has become tantamount to other contextual factors such as enslavement, capitalism or gender. In other words, the ways in which these texts are constructed convey meaning. Meaning is thus located in the way zombies are represented as much as the way humans are. The zombie is thus a significant way in which meanings of enslavement and oppression, be it physical or economic, are articulated as a result of its history as a folkloric emblem of enslavement. In 1847, Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto* signified a change in meaning after the bourgeois revolution throughout Europe, in which currency supplanted idyllic meaning in a modern Western world, moving further away from feudal systems by the mid-nineteenth century:

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

¹¹ These include *I Walked with a Zombie* and *White Zombie*, both of which featured wealthy plantation owners.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment” (15).

Following the success of the integration of zombies into popular culture in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, European narratives of capitalism and control came to incorporate the zombie into its idiom. For example, Robert Weine’s *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919) depicts the ways in which a crazed Dr Caligari (Werner Krauss) reanimates Cesare (Conrad Veidt) the somnambulist, and uses him to commit several murders. In this case murder, and the power he is able to wield over those who shunned him takes on value to the Dr and is thus transformed into capital. Initially, Caligari is motivated by the fame and fortune he can accumulate at the annual fair, but soon devolves to murder after killing the town clerk who shunned him. Caligari succumbs to the power afforded to him by the somnambulist, and kills several other characters. The end of the film reveals that Caligari is in fact a patient at a mental institution, implying that the system characterised by the relentless pursuit of capital is an insane asylum. In this narrative, Cesare takes on the role of a zombie, enslaved by the greedy Dr Caligari.

In *Towards a Vanishing Point of Art*, a 1987 essay on French and American culture, Jean Baudrillard expresses the ways in which symbols of affluence have come to replace affluence itself. As an example, Baudrillard states that “[Andy] Warhol went the farthest in the ritual paths of the disappearance of art, of all the sentimentality in art; he pushed the ritual of art’s negative transparency and art’s radical indifference to its own authenticity the farthest”. Baudrillard continues by stating that “[t]he modern hero [Warhol] is not the hero of the artistic sublime, but rather the hero of the objective irony of the world of commodity”. In the same essay, Baudrillard uses an anecdote from the 1970 film *Rötmänd*. He compares modernity to an orgy of meaning. In his anecdote, he poses the question, “what are you doing after the orgy?” (2005: 103), indicating that for Baudrillard, modernity has devolved into an overwhelming number of deconstructed and ultimately empty meanings, which apparently have no end. Later, in *The Consumer Society* (1998) he reiterated the precedence of signs and symbols over meaning in the context of economics and consumerism. For example, Baudrillard refers to the body as “the finest consumer object”. In this chapter, he noted that health and beauty are sold to consumers who associate this with affluence, while in reality,

the market for health and beauty merchandise benefits and sustains itself. In 2011, following more than a decade of North American economic crises, Henry Giroux used the zombie as a metaphor for the state of North American politics at the time. In *Zombie Politics and Culture in the Age of Casino Capitalism* (2011), Giroux states that excessive capitalism has produced a system in which the democratic process has been corrupted to the point where the needs of the individual have overshadowed the needs of society. This led to a competitive and ultimately destructive society of self-serving individuals. As Giroux stated in a 2013 interview with Bill Moyers (n.pag), citizens have divorced themselves from civil responsibilities in order to pursue individual prosperity. Returning to the *Deadlands* series, some of Giroux's ideas may be applied. While Herne indicated that the use of zombies in the *Deadlands* series is "a nod to the complex West African Nzambi and Vodun legacy – and closer to home the tokoloshe mythology," zombies in this series manifest in a way that articulates the zeitgeist of present day South Africa. Thus, the use of zombies draws attention to the saturation of metaphors used to address real concerns, while simultaneously reflecting political realities in 21st century South Africa. Furthermore, the economy is run by the Guardians, who monopolised production in the Cape Town enclave, and the amaKlevas in the Johannesburg settlement whose sole drive is to generate profits.

Currently, local political theatre¹² demonstrates the abandonment of emphasis on ideals of freedom and equal opportunity in favour of charging history with material inequalities. Thus, politics can no longer be viewed only in terms of its ideological pursuits, but rather as the organised control of capital. Political performances originating before and during the events of 1994 focus on racial and gender equality, and foregrounds the idea of a unified South Africa despite cultural differences, while the post-apartheid rhetoric emphasises ideology as currency used to gain and maintain authority over the country's resources. As examples of this, Kruger (1999) references the act of inauguration, and the speeches and songs at rallies that highlight the genealogies of South African identities. However, more recent political performances such as presidential speeches often make use of apartheid as something to be corrected. For example, Emsie Ferreira quotes President Jacob Zuma during a quarterly presidential question session at the National Assembly in November 2016. The president stated that "the Apartheid system did not allow the majority of this country to be skilled so that they are ready to work, ready to create jobs [...] That is why South Africa (it) looks like it is more exaggerated than in places. It is a fact of history" (qtd. in Ferreira). In other words,

¹² This will be addressed later in a discussion of the embedded language of apartheid in the local cultural idiom.

the President claims that history, and not poor management of resources is to blame for much of the current economic shortcomings in South Africa. In recent local media, this rhetoric has often been criticised, implying that the President uses apartheid as a scapegoat for other shortcomings. Statistics show an increase in individual labour, suggesting the potential for economic emancipation at this level, where the disparity between rich and poor may in fact decrease with time if employment is sought outside corporate structures. However, as Marx and Engels note, “the undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without the distinction of class” (32). In South Africa, this manifests as the false equivalency between race and economic status. Protestors and politicians alike use race and previous disadvantage to define current economic inequalities. However, statistics reflect that only those who act individually are at a real advantage. According to Giroux, democracy has been commercialised and the voting public have become the consumers rather than active citizens in a welfare state. Furthermore, an excess of production results in a society where individuals can become self-serving, accumulating more and more while others remain poor. Even in an industrial society, the needs of the individual supersede the prosperity of the community and often extreme measures are taken to ensure affluence. However, in individualistic societies, such measures are not only necessary, but they have the potential to maintain the democracy they idealise. For Giroux, this focus on individualism is a form of zombification in which communal ideals disintegrate. In this case, it is individualism and the systematic zombification of individuals that have the most potential to result in the illusion of an affluent community.¹³ In contrast, the African humanist, as exemplified by a figure like Nelson Mandela, “seeks to reconcile his community with the needs of a changing modern world”, while encouraging this community to retain traditional African principles, or as Mphahlele argues, “the African begins with the community and then determines what the individual’s place should be in relation to the community” (Mphahlele 147). Furthermore, African humanism implies that “the individual is inextricably bound to a larger natural and cosmic order embodied by the community” (Bell 40) Thus, the individual cannot truly flourish if he or she does not facilitate the prosperity of his or her community.

¹³ *Deadlands* reflects this idea, in which zombification and the support of Guardians will ensure the fulfilment of the basic needs of individuals.

While it is necessary for the individual to serve themselves in the pursuit of prosperity in a capitalist economy, greed and excess lead to the unequal distribution of wealth and to class wars. Early zombie films, such as Victor Halperin's *White Zombie*, demonstrate how the capitalist reaches beyond his needs and, in doing so, imposes on the rights of others. The self-serving executive, Charles Beaumont (Robert Frazer), attempts to marry Madeline Parker¹⁴ (Madge Bellamy), who is engaged to Neil Parker (John Harron). Beaumont is portrayed as a greedy capitalist who has access to apparently unlimited power in his ability to zombify individuals. Legendre (Bela Lugosi) is a corrupt Vodou practitioner who eventually betrays Beaumont in an attempt to take possession of his estate. Throughout the film, Neil remains magnanimous and eventually reclaims his wife. The film demonstrates the ways in which capitalist pursuits inevitably lead to corruption. Both Beaumont and Legendre abuse the system and reject insubstantial ethics in favour of real wealth. These characters demonstrate the problematic nature of capitalism and obscure its potential for communal prosperity. For Marx and Engels (1969: 59), corruption ensues "when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation". This means that during the period of transition from a feudal to capitalist society, the bourgeois, free from feudal and imperial rule, "expanded to colossal dimensions [and engaged in] financial swindling [and] celebrated cosmopolitan orgies" (59) in order to set itself apart from the working classes. The use of the zombie as a metaphor for capitalist greed in later films ensured its place in the Western idiom.

Night of the Living Dead (1968) was originally produced as a low-budget feature film, but fared well enough to become one of the most successful independent films ever produced. In this film, and again in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), individuals compete for space as well as for a position of leadership within the group, thereby politicising the zombie. Initially, in *Night of the Living Dead*, Barbra (Judith O' Dea) and Ben (Duane Jones) enter the farmhouse together and Ben kills a zombie inside the house (presumably the original inhabitant), establishing the home as a safe haven.¹⁵ When two additional characters enter the scene, they immediately bicker with Ben over which part of the house is the safest. The competition over which part of the house is safest and which doors should be sealed in case of an invasion dominates most of

¹⁴ The film fails to mention Beaumont's intentions or Parker's contribution to the marriage.

¹⁵ Between the 20th and 40th minutes, the camera angles emphasise the importance of the house where furniture and the house itself often dominate the various frames. Ben is at work hammering, dismantling unnecessary ornaments and using the materials to board the doors and windows shut.

the sequence that follows.¹⁶ The tension between these characters also reflects racial tensions, as both men are competing to dominate the same space but Ben is obviously Othered for being African-American.

In *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), the protagonists only realise that they are in danger when one of them is bitten in their attempt to escape zombie masses. Toward the end of the film, a group of bikers invade the mall where citizens shelter from the zombies, and the original protagonists come under attack. In addition to the struggle for space and leadership, *Dawn of the Dead* portrays how status is dependent on wealth rather than on the source thereof. In order to gain a position within the group, individual members need to be able to contribute to the group, rather than benefit from it. Different characters have the necessary skills or possessions, such as weapons, a safe means of transport and the ability to provide for the group. As a result, they are allowed into the group and ensure their own survival.¹⁷ At different points in the film, different skills and commodities brought to the group become more vital for survival, and the characters in possession of the necessary commodity have the authority to make choices for the rest of the group. For example, Peter and Roger have weapons that allow them to protect the group. They make the decision to venture into the mall and secure the supermarket, from which the rest of the group are able to procure the goods necessary for survival. In both films, the zombies are a catalyst for competition among humans.

Postcolonial, Post-Apartheid and Millennial Zombies

In *Black Skin, Black White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon views the separation of the individual and the collective from an African humanist perspective, as a symptom of post-colonialism in which the idealised native heritage is separated from the ‘alien’ capitalist culture by the colonised¹⁸ as a cognitive reaction to hybridity. Unlike the views espoused by the current generation of writers, and enacted and celebrated by the current generation of youth, most postcolonial writers such as J.M Coetzee and Dambudzo Marechera view hybridity as a threat to the native culture (2005). Furthermore, Arundhati Roy is cited, saying that in India:

¹⁶ Tellingly, Ben tells Cooper to “Get the hell down in the cellar. You can be the boss down there; I’m boss up here”. Cooper’s insistence on protecting the women and the child in the cellar expresses his own masculinity.

¹⁷ This model has since been applied to an array of popular survival horror films and video games, in which each member serves a specific function, for example hunting or healing.

¹⁸ Also see *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) in which Fanon cites the romanticisation of the indigenous culture as a defensive reaction to the debilitating effects of colonisation on black identity.

hybrids are not only internally suppressed, pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their own history and unable to retrace their steps... but also suffer actual oppression in that they are shunned by their societies (2005: 199).

Hybridity requires constantly negotiating conflicting aspects of global and local cultures and results in the “fragmentation, paralysis and the ‘nervous condition’ of the native, as hybrids do not belong to either history or present, or coloniser or colonised” (198). Limiting the definition of the native is, however, problematic and exclusionary. When defining post-coloniality, the native traditionally refers to those who are indigenous to a given area. Because history is created from a limited range of data (2005:189), the idea of the native is only reinforced through limited representation and excludes hybridity. A layered reading of history therefore allows the concept of ‘native’ to be continually redefined and updated to suit present needs. In contemporary South Africa, emphasis on inclusion is made apparent in Y-culture that persists among urban youth. Nuttall and Mbembe (19) indicated that “in the modern West, urban difference was fundamentally read either in terms of class (the war between rich and poor) or in terms of the autonomy of individual existence”. However, among urban youth difference is marked primarily through arbitrary symbols such as fashion and music. Thus, rather than being explicitly marked by racial classifications as earlier generations of South Africans, the current generation is characterised by its consumption and display of social capital in the form of brand names and the latest trends. Often, such consumption takes the form of fong-kong¹⁹, or generic products aimed at including youth who cannot afford authentic brand names in participation in popular society, this often carries the stigma of poverty. Nuttall and Mbembe also note that one of the key characteristics of the South African metropolis that distinguishes it from its European counterpart lies beneath the city – both literally and metaphorically. Having being established solely for its mining exploits, Johannesburg is built on a network of tunnels and caverns that characterise the city as much as any of its visible aspects. Ultimately, Nuttall and Mbembe argue that the defining characteristic of African Modernity is the dialectic that develops between the surface, the edges and underground aspects of the South African metropolis embodied most pertinently in the city of Johannesburg. This inherently three dimensional character of the South African city can be adapted to suit contemporary understandings of the local landscape, resulting in a holistic, but multi-layered view of contemporary South Africa. In *Mapping Loss: South*

¹⁹ “Fong-Kong”, colloquially used in South Africa, refers to fake and inexpensive clothing, shoes and accessories.

African Literature after the Truth Commission, Shane Graham (2009) views South African literature as a palimpsest: a complex multi-layering of narratives. This suggests that South African literature not only attempts to construct history as a whole, while simultaneously acknowledging various and conflicting histories, but also acknowledges that history is not singular. In doing so, a new and complex history constantly emerges with each enquiry, suggesting that change also characterises history. By projecting itself into an imagined future in which the present has been destroyed,²⁰ the *Deadlands* series suggests the hybridity of postcolonial identity in South Africa in a manner consistent with Nuttall's take on Generation Y.

Post-Apartheid/Post-Rapture

The *Deadlands* series starts at a moment in history that suggests imminent change – the 2010 FIFA World Cup held in South Africa. In *Deadlands* (the first novel of the series), although set ten years after the zombie apocalypse, society has begun to restructure itself in a way reminiscent of an individualistic, corporate state. In Cape Town, politicians dominate the discourse by controlling the zombie population and economy by maintaining and directing the ideologies that drive society to produce more zombies, while the Resurrectionists maintain control over the goods consumed inside the enclave. They control the population through pseudo-religious indoctrination of a public rewarded for their compliance. In Johannesburg, businesses control the population by controlling employment opportunities and the supply of basic amenities. Left-handed individuals – those able to enter the Deadlands undetected by the majority of zombies – are solicited with the promise of paying off their debt to their sponsors, while these individuals accumulate unprecedented wealth that in turn allows them to control the supply of basic services, most evidently electricity to the population in exchange for their tributes. Coom and other wealthy inhabitants (amaKlevas) only maintain the vast majority of citizens to the extent to which they can be used to enrich themselves and increase their own wealth exponentially. Runners collect extravagant (and ultimately unprofitable) goods such as toys and shampoo (2014: 6) for the wealthy in exchange for basic necessities. The youth lead the uprising against what they believe to be unjust behaviour by the leaders and in their frenzy, incite a zombie genocide. This moment of change ruptures into chaos and violence for both human and zombie populations.

²⁰ References to the recent past such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup emphasise this point for the current generation as well as articulates the series' contemporary nature.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the irruption of violence, crime and criticism of the ruling parties reflects a trend in which the constitutional rights of all genders, religions, races and orientations have been documented, but not enacted equally by all citizens and groups. For example, soon after the 1994 elections, Adam Ashforth noted in 1998 a trend of increased violent crimes²¹ and deferring blame to external parties. Ashforth noted that:

Prior to the transition to democracy in South Africa, it was clear to everyone in Soweto that the purpose of government was to operate the System, and the purpose of the System was to oppress and exploit black people. The Government, at least in the dying phases of apartheid, was seen as an unmitigated source of evil [...] With the first democratic elections of 1994 the express purpose of government changed. The African National Congress, led by Nelson Mandela, took office brandishing a "Reconstruction and Development Programme" (RDP) and promising a "Better Life for All" [...] Most people have yet to see the good life, and the RDP has largely disappeared from the political horizon, living on mainly in the form of sardonic jokes in the township (1998: 24–5).

Furthermore, in the years following the disbanding of the TRC, new factors were introduced to the South African socio-political landscape. Laura Landlau (2010) concludes that the demonization of foreigners after the rise in xenophobic violence in May 2008 resulted from foreigners posing a threat to citizens who were themselves excluded from participating in the local market.

This irruption occurs during a period in which the language associated with rebellion and the struggle against apartheid is embedded in popular political discourse such as media and literature.²² Julia Kristeva states that “what is repressed cannot really be held down, and what represses always already borrows its strength and authority from what is apparently very secondary: language”. In other words, while the language of freedom and equality has been encoded into the popular imagination, it is not yet possible that they be enacted. Stephen David (1996: 23) notes the importance of popular discourse in reflecting and contributing toward language and identity. For David, language necessarily confines identity in a set of inescapable binaries:

²¹ Specifically, those accompanied by accusations of witchcraft

²² This is exemplified in *Deadlands*, most notably in Lele’s language. She often criticises the ways in which the residents of the enclave conduct themselves in accordance with the established norm, and narrates the ways in which she is unable to articulate her own views without coming being chastised.

One of the significant drawbacks of past and contemporary discourse of othered identities as in race, class, sex, gender, nationality, ethnicity, differential abilities, etc., is the inability to go beyond an analytical model which even while deconstructing binaries nevertheless reinscribes them at other levels. Even Bhaba's seemingly radical notion of the interstice or similar conceptions of intersections cannot but logically reinscribe the very polarities it seeks to destroy.

Using a Foucauldian model, David proposes that "wherever oppressive conditions exist, resistance, enablement and empowerment are always already in attendance" (23). Thus, for David, "it is necessary to avoid the stringent and narrow dialectics of the binary" (23) where oppressive conditions prevail. Instead, he suggests a strategy of representation that can articulate multiple possibilities for empowerment simultaneously. The *Deadlands* series, as well as other post-apartheid popular fiction, makes use of the underlying rhetoric of apartheid in order to articulate this moment of irruption, in which chaos ensues despite the possibility of utopia. The series makes use of ideas and discourses underlying the struggle against apartheid, such as protest and youthful rebellion to articulate the current narrative.

In an earlier collaboratively written novel,²³ *The Mall*, two millennials, Dan and Rhoda, are trapped in a surreal version of a shopping centre. The protagonists are transported to an alternative reality in which they are able to transition between being fully conscious humans and zombie-like 'characters' in the alternate reality. The novel focuses on how wealth and beauty determine privilege. Rhoda is able to acquire these by navigating through the game-like reality of the mall and 'buying' a new life for herself at the cost of her human consciousness. The novel explores the ways in which the local youth are able to exchange superficial identities at the expense of more authentic identities. In *Moxyland* (2008), health plays a significant role in how individuals are marked and separated from one another. *Zoo City* portrays individuals who are externally marked by their animal companion and special abilities. In these popular texts, traditional binaries of race and gender exist, but are regrouped under the single idea of binaries, and juxtaposed with the modern condition. These texts show that increasingly, the overarching binaries of gender, race, sexuality and health are replaced by the superficiality and superfluity that characterise the modern African metropolis, and by extension the developing youth culture (2008: 41). In these texts, youth accept

²³ With Lois Greenberg, as S.L. Grey

otherness as part of its *novum*²⁴ and address inequality directly. In the *Deadlands* series, the primary distinction is between the human and non-human and, secondly, the class differences marked between humans. Political affiliation and class are in direct proportion to one another in the Cape Town enclave, and wealth, measured in terms of material goods, determines status in Johannesburg (Sandtown in the series). The nomenclature suggests a satirical link to South Africa's political history – for example, the ANZ signifies the underground group of youths attempting to overthrow the ruling system, and Malema High peddles Resurrectionist ideology while its faculty are not fully committed. In *Army of the Lost*, the term Juju²⁵ playfully refers to Johannesburg's elite, who use their economic power for political gain.

Politicised zombies inhabit the *Deadlands* universe. Mid-way through the series, after learning that certain humans are immune to detection by the zombies, a group of youths set out to overthrow the ruling classes in metropolitan areas, as these classes employ the zombies as a form of state security even while they are an obvious threat.²⁶ Although the zombies in the series are all animated corpses infected with maggot-like tendrils, the corpses of the newly deceased are fast-moving Hatchlings while older corpses resemble George Romero's slow-moving zombies. In *Army of the Lost*, sentient zombies are introduced when Saint's narrative continues after her death. This distinction is important, as the nature of the zombie reflects what the text assumes about human beings and zombies. Before Saint's narrative, zombies are seen as "the enemy" and slaves to the state, who have no motivation of their own. However, Saint's narrative in *Army of the Lost* suggests that as a zombie, she is motivated to continue her quest to find the origin of the zombie outbreak. Not only do the creatures have different physical attributes (such as the speed at which they move or their physical appearance²⁷) and origins (they can range from magical to viral or alien), they also have different functions. Slow-moving zombies could suggest ennui while superhuman zombies could suggest an unrelenting struggle to consume. Slow-moving zombies in *Deadlands* are often described in terms of their decaying bodies, and the remnants of their human lives sent with them into the Deadlands during funeral services. The first slow zombie Lele notices is described as "weaving its way towards me, dragging its left foot behind it [...] yellow bones shone through the rips in its clothes and its fingers were really nothing more than nubby stumps" (97). In contrast, the Hatchlings are most often described in action scenes. During Lele's first

²⁴ Darko Suvin uses the term to designate a literary environment that functions by its own internal laws, and essentially serves as the internal reality of a text.

²⁵ A popular nickname for Julius Malema.

²⁶ It is only later in the series when the zombies become less of a threat.

²⁷ One of the most sophisticated of which appears in AMC's *The Walking Dead*.

encounter with Hatchlings, she assumes that they were “normal people like us” (114). During the fight with the Hatchlings, Lele notes that “they moved as one, racing toward us so swiftly that their limbs almost seemed to blur” (115). These varied attributes reflect the levels and type of othering that occurred amongst conflicting²⁸ manifestations of social identity.

Here, the focus is rather on the human character and his choice to allow infected individuals to cross the border for payment rather than quarantining them. Saint’s narrative in *Army of the Lost* implies that individuals remain sentient after being turned into a zombie; they can hold onto their memories as humans or discard them and become fully zombified as the Guardians have become. In the series, several political factions have been formed in the aftermath of the zombie invasion and a new economy has emerged. However, revolution and the impending zombie genocide – at a moment when the narrative suggests that the zombies are capable of being sentient and coexist peacefully with humans – continue to threaten the new establishment. The eradication of sentient zombies may, in fact, be inhumane.

In all three examples, references to political icons and what they have been accused of in contemporary media are set up as thinly veiled anecdotes, but are deconstructed using unreliable narrators. *Deadlands* opens with a short prologue that expresses Lele’s untrustworthiness as a narrator:

I know it’s a bit of a downer to start it here, but it just feels right, I could begin ten years ago... but if you don’t like it, as my friend Ginger would say ‘Not my problem mate’... (2)

The tone rightly suggests that she is an adolescent, but as a narrator she compromises her own reliability when she panders directly to the audience (“I know it’s bit of a downer”) and relies on Ginger’s expression rather than on her own. Each chapter in *Death of a Saint* points to emotionally unstable characters, who only offer their perspective of the events as they happen. Again, Lele is the prime example of an untrustworthy narrator as she spends much of the narrative comparing herself to Ember and grumbling about her friendship with Ash. *Army of the Lost* opens with a new character, Tommy, and expresses multiple split identities. The names Ash and Jack refer to the same individual but in *Army of the Lost*, the name ‘Ash’ refers to the individual as Lele, as well as the reader knows him, and Jack refers to an earlier version of himself, before they joined the Mall Rats. Although the characters remain the same, they are narrated as different from themselves at different times. Saint, who is a

²⁸ Both visible and invisible.

reanimate by this time, struggles with aspects of her new identity and her internal monologue reflects her own struggle of coming to terms with her own death. ‘Ash’ is used to denote the character as he is known and understood by the Mall Rats, while Jova refers to him as ‘Jack’, indicating a radical shift in his identity prior to meeting Saint, Ginger and Lele. Thus, “Jack” and “Ash” exemplifies a palimpsestic identity.

In *South African Literature after the Truth Commission* (2009), Shane Graham notes that post-apartheid literature is palimpsestic in that different histories are often read simultaneously, and contrasting experiences and ideologies are projected onto the same space. For example:

Constitution Hill is a palimpsest. A palimpsest is a surface on which the original writing has been erased to make way for new writing, but upon which traces of the old writing remain visible. The site is – and must remain – a place where the layers of history contained within it remain visible (16).

In the same way, the remnants of history remain visible and a defining characteristic of South African literature. In contemporary literature, Graham notes the emphasis of the anti-apartheid movement’s own crimes, the role of youth and women in a changing society, and sexuality in contemporary literature. In his discussion of Zoe Wicomb’s *David’s Story* (2000), Graham indicates that:

[the] emphasis on the anti-apartheid resistance movements own crimes during the struggle, and on the growing venality and nepotism of some factions of the new ruling party, marks a distinct shift from South African literature of the 1970s and 1980s, which was typically strident in its condemnation of white minority rule and open in its admiration of the resistance movements (124).

However, this emphasis does little to erase the binaries embedded in the language used to address these relationships. The *Deadlands* series addresses these post-apartheid anxieties in its use of a zombie apocalypse. The majority of zombies resemble George Romero’s zombies who apparently act without cognisance. These zombies are not manipulated directly by humans,²⁹ but humans use them as a means to maintain control of the enclave by creating fear. In *Death of a Saint*, the protagonists discover that they are immune to the zombies and use this to rebel against the Resurrectionists.³⁰ Toward the end of *Deadlands*

²⁹ As is the case in Haitian mythology

³⁰ The ruling class in the Cape Town enclave.

and in *Death of a Saint*, the zombies are shown as vulnerable and misunderstood victims of their creators.³¹ While the Mall Rats constantly attack the zombies, the zombies themselves are floundering creatures. Similar to Romero's zombies, they are walking corpses who bear traces of their human lives. Lele notices that many of the zombies have individual characteristics, and describes them in almost human terms:

A tall guy with the remains of what must have been a beautiful jacket... a woman clutching a plastic doll, a feather duster taped to a bony arm; a small child carrying a broom... the last strands of black hair scraped over the scalp (98).

In *Death of a Saint*, the prison guard refers to the zombie prisoners as 'the boys' (287) and treats them exactly as he would human prisoners. Humanising the zombies in this way temporarily erases the binary between humans and non-humans and articulates multiple, fluid interpretations of authority. At this point, it becomes clear that the protagonists may have been wrong to fear the zombies, as they are possibly sentient.

In the political context of the series, the possibility that zombies may be sentient offsets the hierarchy of Guardians, Resurrectionists and criminals, with emphasis on sameness and reflecting uncritical indulgence in unity with post-apartheid discourses. If zombies all are sentient, the possibility exists for the balance of power to shift between the Guardians and zombies, in which the Guardians no longer have control of the Deadlands. The Hatchlings, who are newly-made zombies, are treated as a threat to the protagonists (who are treated as criminals by authorities), and are the products of the Resurrectionists' Machiavellian control over the Cape Town enclave and the Jujus' economic dominance in Johannesburg. As zombies are not the product of natural processes, they are instrumental in the Resurrectionists' control in the enclave. The act of moving the corpses of the deceased indicates a deliberate attempt to maintain the zombie population, despite the fact that it is done under the guise of religious ceremony. These zombies resemble a more recent trend in fiction, in which zombies are superhuman. Action sequences often demonstrate the ways in which the protagonists defend themselves against the Hatchlings, fearing that they too will become zombies.³² However, in *Deadlands*, their fear is the direct result of Resurrectionist rhetoric and demonstrates the ways in which the protagonists are also trapped within this discourse. Like older zombies, Hatchlings are not directly under the

³¹ This is also indicated in *Army of the Lost*, when Saint wanders into an area called "Die Hel", an area where undisclosed events took place that were instrumental to the origins of the zombies.

³² *World War Z* demonstrates this trend in zombie fiction, in which the infected are the enemy.

control of humans, but the threat they present is more immediate as they are more likely to infect the humans. This, coupled with the fear instigated by the Resurrectionists, drives the protagonists out of Cape Town in search of answers. Ironically, by the end of *Army of the Lost*, Saint, now in some kind of afterlife, is closer than any of the other protagonists to discovering the truth about the origins of the zombie invasion.

Chapter Two: Zombies throughout History

Historically, zombies are associated with the group of religions practiced throughout the Caribbean, South America and the Southern States of the United States. Vodun refers to the group of syncretic religions influenced by traditional African practices, specifically those endemic to The Republic of Benin, Ghana and South Western Nigeria, and Catholicism.³³ These religions presuppose a connection between the human and spirit worlds, and man's ability to exploit this connection. Practitioners of these religions, specifically Haitian Vodou and Louisiana Voodoo consider zombies to be the victims of a controlling agent, usually a Bokor.³⁴ Individuals who have come under the control of a priest or priestess have lost their free will, and are no longer considered functional human beings. Although zombies themselves were not originally feared, the fear associated with them would be of being turned into one, in which case the victim is someone to be pitied. In their earliest form, zombies reflected the reality of enslavement. In these religions, distinct physical and material planes of existence are presupposed, and the idea that actions carried out on one of these planes bear consequences within the other is significant. In the practice of Vodou, the zombie is one such example, in which the undead body, a purely physical entity, reflects the lack of spiritual essence or soul. In Haiti the practitioners (Bishop) believe in the reality of zombies; as literary creatures they preserve the experiences of slaves and reflect socio-economic circumstances of the time. The Bokor typically exploits the body as a source of unpaid labour and can be employed by capitalists wishing to do the same. Manifesting in Haiti, Cuba and later the Southern States of the USA, zombies have become a figure associated with various kinds of oppression, and have often been used to articulate the changing crises that characterise any particular moment in history, such as the trauma associated with slavery, anxiety associated with scientific discoveries and various apprehensions about capitalism. It may therefore be presupposed that the changes in how zombies manifest reflect changes in specific cultural views on the relationship between the body and a social agent. For three hundred years, millions of individuals were taken from different parts of Africa and forced

³³ Several spellings of the term exist. For the purpose of this analysis, 'Voodoo' is used specifically to denote the cultural and religious practices in New Orleans, while Vodou refers to the religion observed in Haiti. Hoodoo refers specifically to the practice of using the religious artefacts for financial gain. The practice is generally frowned upon, but happens nonetheless. Petwo and Radah refer to subcultures that exist within both manifestations of the religion. Hoodoo refers exclusively to the process whereby the Vodun religion is exploited for commercial gain.

³⁴ A mid-tier Vodou priest who creates zombies.

into slavery in Hispaniola, later known as Haiti.³⁵ The result was that original religions and spiritual practices were conflated with the icons of Catholicism and developed into what is known today as Vodou or Voodoo. However, Vodou is a distinct religion. Altars found in the homes of practitioners typically include Roman Catholic icons as well as ritual materials that channel the energies associated with specific deities. Although Vodou has not been recognised as compatible with Catholicism³⁶, a 1996 interview with Elmer Glover (n.pag), a Haitian Bokor, reveals that religion has been used as an early form of resistance against colonisation. Glover notes that “Catholicism was [used] to mask the African practices”, as slaves were not permitted to practise their ancestral religions freely. Catholicism was perceived as “the white man’s magic” and its icons were incorporated into traditionally African practices in order to dupe masters into believing that slaves conformed to the dominant religion. While this view is common, Bishop (2010) points out that the images of Catholic saints were used as an approximation of particular Lwa (Loa)³⁷ the individual wishes to invoke.

Because ‘no Haitian artist has given them an interpretation or concept of the Loa’ and since most of the iconographic saints share similar features and attributes with specific *loa*, the adoption of one for the other was a logical move; for instance, Damballah Ouedo is usually represented by St. Patrick or Moses because they all share the symbol of a serpent³⁸ (2010: 46).

Viewed either as an attempt to cajole slave owners into believing that slaves were submissive, or appropriating catholic saints into voodoo, syncretism ultimately played a key role in the Haitian revolution. In both instances, the religion functioned as a site of resistance against Catholic dominance, either as a way of conciliating slave owners into a false sense of security, or using religious icons to actively claim a creole identity. Between 1791 and 1803 secret Vodou ceremonies were instrumental to the slave revolution (1996, 2000) as sites of

³⁵ The history of slavery is often used as the departure point for discussions on Vodoun religions, as these religions only developed after the varied tribal practices of African slaves were combined with French and Spanish Catholicism. See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1202857.stm>

Lost Worlds: Voodoo dir. Jose Manuel. 2000. Transglobe Films and New Atlantis
Voodoo from the Inside. Dir. David M. Jones. 1996. DMJ Productions

³⁶ For Elmer Glover, voodoo practitioners view the two religions as compatible, but the Catholic Church disregarded voodoo as paganism. This demonstrates the Catholic insistence on dominance, while voodoo practitioners regarded syncretism as fundamental to their general worldview as well as religious practices.

³⁷ Most often Papa Legba, the spiritual representative of the distant gods originating in Yoruba. Lwa are spirit guides similar to saints in Christianity.

³⁸ In the practice of Vodou, as well as European pagan traditions, the serpent is a symbol of fertility.

the collective display of rebellion and community values among slaves. During this time, the zombie became a symbol of the slave consciousness and part of a wider movement to abolish slavery. Embedded in the religion is the awareness of maintaining links with the ancestral home, and therefore resistance against the forced migration and labour endured by slaves. voodoo served as a means of embedding the consciousness and experiences of slaves as part of a western capitalist society. In this way, the zombie is a fundamental part of asserting the role of slaves in the west.

In 1996, Dwight Webster³⁹ argued that one of the best known symbols associated with the religion, namely the Vodou doll and the placing of nails or other metal objects into the poppet, is originally understood as a means to “tap into some power“. However, by the time the religion emerged in New Orleans, it intersected with what Webster referred to as “European superstition and Witchcraft”⁴⁰; these dolls were also seen as objects of witchcraft by Christians. This and other perspectives from practitioners establish that Vodou is not based on a belief in the supernatural, but a culture of spiritualism. In any respect, the different attitudes toward the various symbols of the religion demonstrate the ways in which condemning voodoo as witchcraft would suit the colonial standpoint that such a site of resistance should be erased.

While the implications of voodoo as a religion was made clear during the Haitian revolution, a secular perspective reveals the ways in which this cultural symbol has been converted into capital. In 2013, Todd Platts (548) indicated the effects of the popularisation of zombies on global markets:

It may be tempting to brush zombies aside as irrelevant “pop culture ephemera”. Zombie inflected popular culture, however, now contributes an estimated \$5 billion to the world economy per annum (Ogg, 2011). In addition to movies, comics, books, and video games, individuals routinely don complex homemade zombie costumes to march in zombie walks and/or engage in role-playing games like *Humans vs Zombies*. This is not to mention zombie-related merchandise (e.g., t-shirts, coffee mugs, mouse pads, toys, and bumper stickers), music (e.g.,

³⁹ Director of African and African American studies, SUNO and Senior Pastor at the Christian Unity Church in New Orleans.

⁴⁰ In other pre-Christian religions originating in Europe, similar forms of practices could be found, in which poppets and talismans are used. After the spread of Christianity, pagan religions were also construed as witchcraft. Webster’s assessment thus reflects the same bias against European paganism that he argues is shown against Vodou.

The Zombies and Evenings in Quarantine: The Zombie Opera), and fan sites (e.g., allthingszombie.com and zmdb.org).⁴¹

In addition to driving a billion dollar industry, the practice of Vodou itself requires the consumption of several costly effects in the form of offerings. These include rum, cigars, fruit, honey, champagne and livestock, most of which are discarded during the ritual process. As the tourist industry grew, increasing profits have, however, been made from Vodou paraphilia⁴² sold in popular tourist destinations, the economic consequences of which have been interpreted as the mass zombification of consumers, a focus area explored later in this project.

Literary Monsters

In literature, monsters essentially personify difference. For example, Alexis de Coning (2012) cited Noel Carroll that “fictional monsters represent ‘disturbances of the natural order [and] seem to be regarded not only as inconceivable, but also unclean and disgusting’”. That is to say, the monster embodies the abject. For Julia Kristeva (1982), the abject refers to those aspects of the ego that are rejected in order to separate the ego, or self, from the defiled other. Abjection “threatens the ego and results from the dual confrontation in which the uncertainties of primary narcissism reside” (63). As the embodiment of the abject, the literary monster reinforces the narcissistic belief in morality, conformity and beauty by demonstrating the ways in which divergence from these norms are a threat to the existing order. Following Bishop’s model,⁴³ monsters that emerged from English literature in the nineteenth century are considered as a departure point of the contemporary literary monsters. They have been presented in nearly all writing cultures in the form of ancient gods, demons, hydra, ice giants, dragons, vampires and countless others before zombies entered the western cultural idiom. These mythological monsters are necessarily different from humans.⁴⁴ Asma (2011: 36) notes that even in antiquity, the monstrous often manifests as the antithesis to humanity:

Most ancient Greeks and Romans considered all human ethnic groups other than their own to be barbarian . . . the literature of the ancients reveals a continuum of degrees,

⁴¹ Platts also indicates that, by expansion of these microeconomic influences, the zombie mob functions as a metaphor for insolvent banks.

⁴² This is distinguished from genuine implements used during worship, and is referred to as hoodoo. Such a specific distinction indicates that using cultural and historical events have become a means of buffering the Haitian economy.

⁴³ In which zombies transition directly from folklore into popular culture before becoming literary creatures.

⁴⁴ In most early cases, monsters are thought of as physically superior, although moral representations are varied.

whereby races of men decline further and further away from their ethnocentric starting place. Some of these humans are monstrous because their culture is considered odious, like Pliny's Scythian tribes who feed on human bodies.

By the Renaissance, monsters in English literature had taken a decidedly human form⁴⁵, most notably in the works of Shakespeare with characters like Caliban, the savage man in *The Tempest*; the witches of *Macbeth*, and, to some extent, Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*'s Claudius and Lady Macbeth, all of whom may be read as abhorrent human characters. De Coning (2012) cited Noël Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror: Paradoxes of the Heart*, in which he argues that in Western cultures, monsters – whether human or not – “disturb the natural order”:

[Monsters] are unnatural relative to a culture's conceptual scheme of nature. They do not fit the scheme; they violate it. Thus, monsters are not only physically threatening; they are cognitively threatening. They are threats to common knowledge.

This significant shift in fiction exemplifies certain Machiavellian principles, in which fear and dominance, rather than mutual affection are the governing principles of social hierarchies – and in which humans are assumed to be inherently self-serving and avaricious. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the difference between humans and monsters become increasingly obscure as the nature of morality came into question. Mary Shelley's creature in *Frankenstein* is the first literary monster capable of human reason and emotion despite the fact that his humanity remains unacknowledged. Frankenstein's endeavour to restore life to dead flesh by using the elements of various sciences – natural philosophy, chemistry, mechanics and alchemy⁴⁶ – in order to create what has since been accepted as a reflection of his own inner conflict illustrates his promethean ambition, but simultaneously subverts enlightenment ideologies such as rationality and the control over nature out of which it emerged. In *In Defence of the Enlightenment* (2006: 5), Tzvetan Todorov notes that the primary purpose of the enlightenment movement was to “[produce] a disenchanted world, obeying the same physical laws overall and, insofar as human societies were concerned, revealing the same mechanisms of behaviour”. This meant that divergent behaviour was construed as unenlightened, primitive and monstrous. *Frankenstein* also reflects the rejection

⁴⁵ De Coning (2012) states that “the abominable status of monsters is not entirely due to their physical grotesqueness”, indicating the emerging preoccupation with morality.

⁴⁶ The text contains several references to alchemists, such as Paracelsus, Albertus Magnus and Cornelius Agrippa; and other occult practitioners.

of an ideology in which faith, religion and the sense of community based on uncritical acceptance of these are abandoned in favour of scientific progress. By defying death, Frankenstein's creation embodies a scientific transgression, thus becoming monstrous. As Erinc Özdemir argued in 2003, the novel endorses the defiance of God, which is characteristic to the enlightened male subject but it simultaneously subverts it in the novel's moral ambiguity. Özdemir also cited George Levine (1998), who argued that Frankenstein's actions, and in particular his compulsive drive to create life merely for the sake of creation, are not necessarily construed as evil and that his rejection of the monster for no reason other than its difference signifies his own monstrous drive to perfect and consume scientific knowledge, conquer nature (in this case, death) and do so in a reasonable manner. Frankenstein's drive toward enlightenment is considered the source of his monstrosity. The description of the creature, and the way it came into being lends itself to a reading in which the monster, like Caliban, is Othered and functions only as the antithesis of the modern, enlightened subject.⁴⁷ In addition to being created on what is to Victor foreign soil, the creature's physical description, narrated from Frankenstein's perspective, reveals the ways in which he is completely rejected by Frankenstein:

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I have selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and his teeth of pearly whiteness; but these luxuriance's only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun – white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

In this case, beauty, monstrosity and perfection are combined in the creature, rendering him incomprehensible, and therefore threatening to Frankenstein's identity. Despite the monster's appearance, Frankenstein is unable to find any visible signs that suggest sameness. Frankenstein's creature is an early precursor to the contemporary zombie, as its presence as an Othered subject threatens unchecked scientific progress, the established morality at the time and the inherent malevolence of excess. This philosophical underpinning would later merge with other manifestations of the zombie as an exotic and monstrous cultural artefact, giving rise to zombies as they are understood in contemporary

⁴⁷ Asma introduces the concept of monsters by discussing the ways in which the ancient Greeks and Romans Othered all cultures outside their own.

culture.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the monster's physicality as depicted in visual media foregrounds the notion of dead flesh brought back to life. In the earliest film adaptation of *Frankenstein*, a 1910 silent film by Thomas Edison that predates Seabrook's *The Magic Island* (1929), the creature appears as a crude skeletal form with flesh packed around its frame, capable of rudimentary movement, emphasising the process whereby the creature is brought to life. In later scenes the monster is more reminiscent of wild, primitive man. In James Whale's 1931 adaptation of the film, the creature (Boris Karloff) appears rigid and slow-moving in a similar way to the zombies in *Night of the Living Dead* and other film adaptations of the period.⁴⁹ In both instances, the creatures are perceived as threats, but are in fact docile, and threatened by human protagonists. As a literary predecessor to the zombie as we know it today, Frankenstein's monster embodies a threat to the established society through its Otherness and reflects the aggression of human society.

Another significant monster that emerged as a symbol of Otherness during the nineteenth century is the vampire. Much like the zombie, vampires also resurfaced in popular culture during recent years⁵⁰, illustrating renewed interest in literary monsters and the Otherness they represent. Whereas Shelly's zombie remained outside civil society and drove his creator to madness, Polidori and Stoker's vampires are overly refined, decadent and able to incorporate into society as it suits their purpose by hiding themselves. These vampires embody human desire and express the desire to accumulate an excess of wealth. The differences between early zombies and vampires exemplifies the dualistic nature of what monsters stood for; while both represent Otherness, it could arise from differences inscribed onto the creatures' social position relative to the ideals of the time. Polidori's Lord Ruthven, the first vampire to manifest in English literature, abides by the social and moral codes of Victorian England to some extent, but the impact of his interactions makes him monstrous:

The idle, the vagabond and the beggar, received from [Ruthven's] hand more than enough to relieve their immediate wants. But Aubrey could not avoid remarking, that it was not upon the virtuous, reduced to indigence by the misfortunes attendant even upon virtue, that he bestowed his alms . . . all those

⁴³ Furthermore, the creation of the monster suggests that the body is objectified and separated from the individual itself. In order to create the monster, Frankenstein used parts of corpses and infused it with life.

⁴⁹ *White Zombie* (1932), *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943)

⁵⁰ The rise in interest in the undead is often attributed to the rise in industrial capitalism, and the excesses that are often produces.

upon whom it was bestowed, inevitably found that there was a curse upon it (248–9).

Both creatures serve as a means of exploring human vice and virtue in context of their social settings, exploring the visible and invisible aspect of their alterity. Furthermore, Ruthven's cursed alms draw attention to the evil that arises when his possessions outweigh their utility. In their discussion of consumer fetishism, Fred Botting and Scott Wilson (2010) noted that a romantic passion for death and the unknown produces a singular desire for an unobtainable object. According to Botting and Wilson, the result of such widespread obsession is a collective form of psychosis⁵¹ that drives relentless consumption and participation in a consumer society. The monster is not inherently evil but, in the case of these early monsters at least, the excess they represent are a threat to the established norms of marriage and, in Ruthven's case, heterosexuality. Ruthven's monstrosity emanates from his status as "a nobleman, more remarkable for his singularity, than his rank" (246). For Adam Roberts (2012: 33), monsters' ability to transform into men and vice versa embodies the gothic novel's ability to reflect the fluid nature of man and monster it seeks to express.

Later Gothic novels spun variations on out of their supernatural monsters, introducing different varieties of monster, as well as vampires – Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), or much more famously Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) – and shape-shifting beast-men, such as George W. M. Reynolds's *Wagner the Werewolf* (1847) and Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). What all these monsters have in common is their protean ability to transform, to move from unexceptional "human" behaviour to barbaric, violent, transgressive and unfettered. In this respect they are emblamizations of the protean force of the Gothic novel itself; a form capable of being associated with supernatural excess, but one that proved easily capable of assuming the shape of mundane Victorian domestic fiction (33).

Zombies reveal the ways in which, through Othering and ostracization, humans are transformed into monsters. Furthermore, the cannibalistic nature of zombies and, to a lesser extent, vampires reflects the self-cannibalising nature of a society obsessed with producing excess. Botting and Wilson (2010) noted that through this act of consuming, and doing so in

⁵¹ Botting and Wilson refer specifically to a Lacanian understanding of psychosis, characterised by the "inability to distinguish fantasy and reality" in which the paternal metaphor is substituted with a "delusional metaphor" or indeed a "swarm of images" that reorganise the symbolic order, [and sets up] another world alongside the conventional one, or replaces it.

excess, humans become monsters. For Botting and Wilson the foundation of consumption is the creation of 'needs' in order to drive an industrial system to produce more and more, resulting in exuberance and wastefulness.

For the Marxist and German Critical Theory tradition, commodity "fetishism" sucks out the humanity from the consumer. Commodity fetishism drains consumers of their sense of human inter-relatedness and transforms them into the un-living and un-dead things they would consume. Commodification is seen as part of a general process of reification which involves a loss of an essential humanity or the loss, at least, of an historical, organic culture (30).

The popularity of monsters in fiction may thus be used as an indicator of the cannibalistic cultures they emerge from. The commodity fetishism that results from an excess of exploitable resources leads to the disintegration of human relationships and results in a society obsessed with its own monstrosity and unable to unburden itself. For Charlene Burns, the popularity of monsters and science fiction indicates its relevance, and addresses a persisting social need. For Burns (393), "The monster's body is a cultural body...a construct and a projection' which 'exists only to be read.'" The monsters produced by a particular society can thus be read as an indicator of the extent to which commodity has come to replace its morality.

Taken as a reflection of the cultural body produced in South Africa, the zombies in *Deadlands* reflects the ways in which local culture is driven by commodities. This is reflected in the mere presence of the zombie in local literature, as well as the zombies' attributes. Throughout history, the physical attributes of the zombie have undergone several metamorphoses as their cultural significance changed. It is notable that several nineteenth century monsters appear as humanoid creatures, reflecting the extent to which humanity itself has come under scrutiny in these texts. As Elizabeth Neail notes, the portrayal of zombies continues to change in the present, and is likely to do so in future. It is for this reason that the zombie appears to be a culturally appropriate trope representing changing anxieties in varied contexts. Most scholars, including Zora Neale Hurston (1937), Rev. Dr Dwight Webster, Alafia Gaidi and Charles Siler, agree that early zombies originating from Caribbean folklore reflected racial and economic anxieties associated with slavery and colonial terrors. However, as Sarah Lauro and Karen Embry noted in *A Zombie Manifesto: The Nonhuman Condition in the Era of Advanced Capitalism* (2008), the zombie was recently employed as a surrogate for

cultural anxieties including, but not limited to foreign occupation, civil unrest, and diseased bodies:

[T]here is the Haitian *zombi*, a body raised from the dead to labour in the fields, but with a deep association of having played a role in the Haitian Revolution (thus, simultaneously resonant with the categories of slave and slave rebellion); and there is also the *zombie*, the American importation of the monster, which in its cinematic incarnation has morphed into a convenient boogeyman representing various social concerns. The *zombie* can also be a metaphoric state claimed for oneself or imposed on someone else. This zombie has been made to stand for capitalist drone (*Dawn of the Dead*) and Communist sympathizer (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), and, increasingly, viral contamination (*28 Days Later*). In its passage from *zombie* to *zombie*, this figuration that was at first just a somnambulistic slave singly raised from the dead became evil, contagious, and plural (88).

In addition to the Haitian zombie, and the cinematic zombie, as delineated by Lauro and Embry, zombies are typically either docile or aggressive. Docile zombies such as those that characterise the Haitian myth often articulate the anxiety associated with the perceived lack of agency in particular situations, while aggressive zombies articulate the sense of being threatened. In the Haitian manifestation of the zombie, the links to labour and capital are clear; a Bokor would be employed by the aspiring capitalist to create magically reanimated bodies as a source of free, unrelenting labour. This would mean that unlimited production is possible without losing any profit. Following the rise of zombies and other monsters in film, the same fear is articulated on a different scale. Rather than isolated individuals' becoming victims of specific capitalists, the mass of zombies signify the mass of consumers who have become enslaved by a complex system of seemingly unlimited production and spending potential, while the use value of capital is not always apparent. In this scenario, the mass of consumers who are driving the global economy, are also enslaved by it.

Zombie culture first emerged in the United States and by extension in the West in 1929, as a manifestation of new, exotic literature ready for consumption. The travelogue refers to 'strange' rituals of the Caribbean, marketing them as "adventures and emotional experiences".⁵² Vodou paraphernalia included Broadway productions, films and similar

⁵² Brochure published by the Alberta Bureau in the wake of Seabrook's publication.

narratives, reflecting a growing fascination with zombies, where the dominant anxiety was the docile, enslaved individual and the loss of power. After being losing prominence in cinema culture between the mid-1940s and mid-1960s,⁵³ the genre resurfaced in 1968 with George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*. Rather than depicting zombified individuals as docile victims of an oppressive power, *Night of the Living Dead* shows hordes of hungry, murderous ghouls rampaging through the United States. This is radically different to earlier manifestations of the zombie, marking the first genre-defining development in the way zombies manifest in popular culture.

In earlier films such as *White Zombie* (1932) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), zombies are often human, female and portrayed as victims of the villainous Bokor,⁵⁴ indicating attitudes toward power relations between men and women, as well as the assumptions made about gender differences. In 1998, Eric Savoy argued that “the psychic ‘house’ turns towards the gothic only when it is ‘haunted’ by the return of the repressed, a return that impels spectacular figures”. Bishop (2010: 125) also noted that the face of the decaying tenant in *Night of the Living Dead* represents the decay of morality.⁵⁵ The tenant is an older white male, suggesting that the sense of morality espoused by his generation has broken down and is being replaced by Barbra and Ben's need for survival. Replacing the established moral code with the immediate need of survival is further reflected in the reaction of shock to Dr Grimes' advice to unceremoniously “soak 'em with gas and burn 'em”, when questioned about the best means to overcome the zombies. Here, burial rites are replaced with decisive action aimed at reducing the zombie population and maintaining humans. Rather than being humans who have been enslaved and could possibly be saved, the zombies in *Night of the Living Dead* are clinically described as “just dead flesh”, shifting the focus to the living.

The zombies that gave rise to Romero's ghoul first appeared on screens in the 1950s in films such as *Creature from the Atom Brain* (1955), *Zombies from Mora Tau* (1957) and *Voodoo Island* (1957), none of which gained much popularity. Jovanka Vuckovic (2011) noted that

⁵³ Popular film during the 1940's reflected the preoccupation with the ongoing war, while the 1950's celebrated post-war affluence, leisure and conformity. The early 1960's gave rise to the decade of fun with the rise of rock music, transitional cultural values also emerged during this time. Another major influence on the film industry at the time was the decline of the theater and the rise of the multiplex.

⁵⁴ In *Night of the Living Dead*, Barbra resembles this type of protagonist the most, as early in the film she is fearful, hysteric and then becomes silent as the conflict between Ben and Harry take center stage.

⁵⁵ In the context of *Night of the Living Dead*, moral decay is linked specifically to the atrocities of the Vietnam war, which ended in 1975.

despite their general unpopularity, these films generally reflect anxiety about nuclear radiation and an anti-communist sentiment because the causes of the zombie apocalypse had become known, and are often related to exploration of foreign territories, control, strange, unexplored powers and asserting the sovereignty of American values (2011: 46). In these films, a cause of the zombie apocalypse is often nuclear radiation, implying that the paranoia expressed in these films is associated with advances in this field, and the unknown consequences of this new source of energy.⁵⁶ She also observed that, during this time, zombies were generally slow-moving and not frightening, their only interest being to enslave humanity⁵⁷ in a way that suggests American culture is at risk from a foreign attacker. In *Night of the Living Dead*, however, the ghouls are violent and monstrous, indicating a more immediate threat. Zombies gained popularity across the globe, engaging criticism as early as the 1970s. Therefore, zombies rivalled creatures such as vampires and werewolves as popular satires of heteronormativity and Otherness. By 1978, Romero capitalised on the increase in popularity of the zombie with the release of *Dawn of the Dead* (with its climax famously set in a shopping mall). The fad continued to spread across the globe, and has not shown any signs of dying out three decades later: most zombie narratives follow a link between mass culture and consumerism. Furthermore, less popular films produced during the 1970s articulate anxieties associated with sexuality and the women's liberation movement.

Jean Baudrillard (1998: 71) identifies the mall, or the drugstore,⁵⁸ as the site in which commodities are separated from their value and placed within a new system of meaning, resulting in a simulation of euphoria and the substitution of reality with a system of signs:

We may say that the basic problem of contemporary capitalism is no longer the contradiction between 'profit maximisation' and the 'rationalisation of production' (from the point of view of the entrepreneur), but that between a potentially unlimited productivity (at the level of the technostucture) and the need to dispose of the product. It becomes vital for the system in this phase to control not just the apparatus of production, but the consumer demand at those prices. The 'general effect' – either prior to the act of production (surveys and

⁵⁶ The Hydrogen bomb can be read as a symbol of American dominance and strength during the Cold War.

⁵⁷ Often the female body was discriminated from the male body for its reproductive capacity.

⁵⁸ Also relevant to the casino.

market research) or subsequent to it advertising, marketing, packaging) – is to ‘shift the locus of decision in the purchase of goods from the consumer where it is beyond control to the firm where it is subject to control’.

The shopping mall, as exemplified in *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), is the ideal alibi for participation in the consumer world,⁵⁹ as it endows the protagonists with superfluous extravagances. In the extended version of the film, excess is emphasised in scenes in which, despite the threat of the zombies, the protagonists loot the mall. When the world, or at least the United States, is overrun by zombies and the shopping mall in which they have taken shelter is overrun by a mass of plunderers, the protagonists choose to defend what was initially intended as a temporary shelter despite having access to a helicopter. In the 2004 remake of the film, the conflict among human characters is emphasised in the need for one group to dominate another.

Research conducted on the zombie phenomenon has not been limited to literary and sociological fields, but has been included in scientific studies such as Muntz, Hudea, Imad and Smith’s (2009) mathematical model for a zombie infection, reflecting the extent to which zombies have become culturally significant. Although a zombie outbreak is mathematically and scientifically unlikely, such studies revealed the extent to which zombies may spur paranoia in the general public.⁶⁰ In the model, two strategies (quarantine and aggressive) for surviving a zombie outbreak are proposed, and the likelihood of survival is calculated in each instance:

An outbreak of zombies infecting humans is likely to be disastrous, unless extremely aggressive tactics are employed against the undead. While aggressive quarantine may eradicate the infection, this is unlikely to happen in practice. A cure would only result in some humans surviving the outbreak, although they will still coexist with zombies. Only sufficiently frequent attacks, with increasing force, will result in eradication, assuming the available resources can be mustered in time... Thus, if zombies arrive, we must act quickly and decisively to eradicate them before they eradicate us (2009: 14).

⁵⁹ See Kyle Bishop. 2009. *Dead Man Still Walking: A Critical Investigation into the Rise and Fall... and Rise of Zombie Cinema*. Pp. 194–237.

⁶⁰ Similar texts include The History Channel’s *Zombies: A Living History* and several ‘how to’ guides such as Roger Ma’s *The Zombie Combat Manual* on surviving a zombie apocalypse.

This illustrates a contrary view to popular fiction, such as *The Walking Dead*, in which social cohesion among a particular, albeit diverse group of humans is fundamental to the survival of humanity. Furthermore, zombies have also been employed as a metaphor for political unrest (*Theories of International Politics and Zombies*)⁶¹, mass consumerism (*American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture*) and immigration policies (*Zombie Trouble: Zombie texts, bare life and displaced people*)⁶² – to mention only a few. Some studies have attributed the latter to the attacks on the World Trade Centres, which increased fear of terrorist invaders throughout the United States, and threatened to destroy the global economy. In these instances, it is clear that zombies remain the social other while humans represent the norm. Jon Stratton (2011) argued that:

The trope of a group of humans defending a space from threatening zombies has become a common theme in zombie apocalypse texts, and it is now even more open to be read in terms of the threat considered to be posed by illegal immigrants than Romero's first film (274).

In this case, however, the displaced individual occupies a liminal space in society, and is reduced to bare life.⁶³ These people, metaphorically and quite easily represented by zombies, become the victims of a society that cannot accommodate them, and perpetuates the process of Othering. In the same period, however, a different subgenre of zombie fiction emerged. Novels such as Broadway Brook's *Breathers: A Zombie's Lament* (2009)⁶⁴ exemplified a reaction to this discriminating approach in which the zombie itself has a sense of control. In this novel, and later in Jonathan Levine's *Warm Bodies* (2013), the zombie is aware of his own situation and interacts with a human female. Unlike traditional zombies, these are sentient and impose their own will on others, implying that despite their physical form, they are similar to humans. Otherness is given a voice and the distinctions between different others are obscured. However, these also reveal a return to homogenous society in which either humans or zombies need to evolve somehow in order to co-exist with the other.⁶⁵ This is

⁶¹ Daniel W. Drezner (2011)

⁶² Jon Stratton (2011)

⁶³ Having a lack of legal protection and being forced to occupy the fringes of society in all facets of life.

⁶⁴ Adapted into the 2013 film, entitled *Warm Bodies*.

⁶⁵ In *Deadlands*, Lele, Saint and Lucien's bodies are infected with a similar substance as the 'white spaghetti stuff' that animates the corpses. In addition to shielding them from detection by the zombies, they are able to

revealed in film adaptations such as Mark Forster's *World War Z* (2013) and Jonathan Levine's *Warm Bodies* (2013). In *World War Z* the primary focus is on the healthy body and the role it plays in structuring contemporary American society. After failing to find the origin of the zombie apocalypse and saving a Palestinian soldier from infection by amputating her arm, Gerry Lane (Brad Pitt) discovers that humans can hide from zombies by infecting themselves with a deadly virus as immunisation. In *Warm Bodies*, the zombies slowly regain their humanity through socialisation.

In 2012, author Max Brooks noted that “what makes it frightening is that it’s not just one zombie, it’s a mob. You just can’t outrun them”.⁶⁶ This reflects a notion that society, and not the individual, is a destructive system, and essentially a threat to itself. In fact, the individual can in many ways be seen as a victim of a capitalist society. In the 1976 English translation of *The Positivists Dispute in German Sociology*, Adorno elucidates his view of society:

Society is a system in the sense of a synthesis of an atomized plurality, in the sense of a real yet abstract assemblage of what is in no way immediately or 'organically' united. The exchange relationship largely endows the system with a mechanical character. It is objectively forced onto its elements, as implied by the concept of an organism – the model which resembles a celestial teleology through which each organ would receive its function in the whole and would derive its meaning from the latter. The context which perpetuates life simultaneously destroys it (139).

O'Connor (2013: 36) emphasises that “a system imposes an identity upon its parts [and] turns individuals into moments of itself”. For the zombie mob in *Warm Bodies* and *World War Z*, individual zombies are mere representatives of their collective, and integration only becomes possible when humanity and zombification are reduced to similar states. In *Warm Bodies*, zombies become more human through learning and communication. In *World War Z*, humans have to resemble zombies physically by injecting themselves with an antidote made from the same virus that causes zombification. The zombie mob thus becomes an extreme metaphor for the ways in which Otherness and convention are conflated in modern narratives⁶⁷ and individual identity is absorbed into the collective.

heal quickly and possibly maintain their sentience after death. It is not yet indicated how this will affect Lele and Lucien's child.

⁶⁶ *Zombies: A Living History* (2012)

⁶⁷ Often, and significantly the city.

Chapter Three: The South African Context, Deadlands and the Decayed State

Although the ANC has a history of being a liberation party, predominant and ongoing media discourses emphasise how the state has failed to deliver on what it had set out to do after the 1994 elections. Such reports have in common the conflict over who controls state funds. The general media rhetoric seems to suggest that the ruling party aims to maintain economic control, while the opposition positions itself as defenders of the Constitution.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the media covered the trials of President Jacob Zuma in 2005 and the 2016 Nkandla trials, perpetuating the idea of criminal activity among national leaders. As a result of conflict between the ruling ANC and its opposition – most notably the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) led by former ANC Youth League president, Julius Malema, and the Democratic Alliance (DA) – parliament is often conducted in an unruly manner, creating the impression of an incompetent presidency and providing a platform for new ways of interacting with the voting public (Ferreira). Following the SABC's failure to report protests against the allotted ANC mayoral candidates in Pretoria,⁶⁹ journalists have revolted against this new enactment of censorship (Ferreira), resulting in further criticisms against the leadership of the country.

Since 2011, when *Deadlands* was first published, two particular narratives of interest related to the 2016 reality can be sourced: Julius Malema's highly public deflection from and battle with the ANC and the Protection of Information Bill lobbied for by the ANC later that year. Although both narratives can stand alone, they are easily included in most media interpretations of the trajectory of political discussions. In summary, the conflicted public image of the ANC involves circumspect state capture ties, a critical lack of transparency and notorious in-fighting. While such public in-fighting between representative parties occurs, the majority of citizens remain at the mercy of the state and often serve only to maintain state functions.

⁶⁸ Political theorists reflect this rhetoric with their claim that during the last two decades of ANC control in South Africa, corruption within the party itself was made a matter of public concern in 2007 when the arrest of Toni Yengeni highlighted concerns regarding the ANC's ability to lead effectively. For example, Quobo and Mashele (2014: 90) discussed the appropriateness of electing a convicted felon as a high ranking official⁶⁸. They argued that while Yengeni was promoted to the "coveted status of being a member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) to head its political education [the party's morality is spread to] the rest of its flock", implying that the ANC permits criminality within its own ranks.

⁶⁹ On 21 June 2016, Thoko Didiza was announced as the ANC's mayoral candidate for the Tshwane metropolitan. Residents took to the street in protest, and the SABC was condemned for not showing any footage of the protests.

The version of South Africa found in *Deadlands* is an already decayed state, a post-cataclysmic country after a mysterious event resulted in a zombie invasion of South Africa. Inequalities between the grossly wealthy state representatives and the abject poverty of the voting public remain, but are fictionalised, and therefore made apparent without engaging directly in state conflicts. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the enclave remain ignorant of the political and economic structures that determine their circumstances. The *Deadlands* series explores the link between this fictional state and the real-life events taking place in South Africa since 2010; this unintentionally foreshadows contemporary events. The political reality of South Africa is explored through the novel's insistence on the fact that no sooner is a cataclysm survived than we find ourselves re-enacting the same mistakes made before the cataclysm in terms of social injustices and imbalances. The Resurrectionists lord over the human survivors of the enclave and control the population through fear, and demand veneration in return for basic amenities such as clean water, food and housing in order to maintain control of capital and the general population.

Lele narrates *Deadlands* from the perspective of one aware that the Guardians control the Resurrectionists through fear and their manipulation of the dead, while human survivors are settled (as well as segregated) into policed enclaves built from the remains of Cape Town's suburbs and city bowl. Beyond the walls of the enclaves are the Deadlands, where the zombies roam before they reach an advanced 'age', slow down and ultimately perish. The Guardian and zombie populations are maintained by adding to their numbers from humans who have recently perished, or those whose bodies have specific characteristics. Toward the end of *Death of a Saint*, the protagonists' left-handedness and the presence of the silver tendrils in their genetic make-up somehow shield them from detection because they are similar to the Guardians. The Guardians also control the movement between the enclave and other settlements, such as the Agriculturals outside the Deadlands, by using shielded carriages. Human survivors fear entering the Deadlands because it will be a violation of enclave laws, but they are also unaware that certain individuals cannot be detected by the zombies, and are therefore safe from them.

Fighting the Resurrectionist governance is the underground ANZ Movement, who are located within the walls of the enclave. However, the ANZ is dependent on a rogue, almost legendary group of true outcast rebels known as the Mall Rats. The Mall Rats leave the enclave to procure goods such as clothing and medicine from the last remaining mall, Canal Walk, without interference from the Guardians, who only supply these resources to the

Resurrectionists who support them. The central characters are teenage survivors of the cataclysm and, sometimes, the strange experiments conducted on humans by the apparently supernaturally powered Guardians. The adults enjoy the privileges afforded them by complying with the established state and enforcing their authority on the youth. Lele narrates the story from the moral standpoint of rebellion against what she believes is an authoritarian system. In doing so, she re-enacts the discourse of rebellion associated with the struggle against state oppression synonymous with South Africa. Therefore, the series articulates contemporary concerns in a commercially appealing way and draws on a growing market for science fiction.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the series ironically references pop culture and icons of consumerism,⁷¹ such as movie posters, Coca-Cola and other emerging South African science fiction writers. For example, *Deadlands* alludes to Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City* in its emphasis on foreign refugees (and also allows Beukes' novel a cameo appearance). Saint and Ginger are both from foreign countries and were trapped in South Africa after the zombie invasion of 2010. Lele often notes the markers of Ginger's foreignness, such as his ginger hair and British accent, pointing to the fact that he was not born in Africa but arrived in South Africa as a tourist, when the zombie invasion prevented him from going back to the UK. Lele later makes the same observation about Saint, whose mother is from Botswana.⁷² When Lele meets Ginger after running away from Saint and Ash, she remarks on this difference when asking him where he is from:

Looking up at him I realised that he actually wasn't that much older than me. And he was wearing the same sort of outfit as Saint and Ash – black trousers and a dusty army greatcoat, the sleeves of which didn't actually reach his wrists.

'Who are you?'

He laughed. 'I'm Ginger, innit,' he said, and I found myself smiling back at him. I couldn't help it. 'So you're the chick who outsmarted Ash and Saint, yeah?'

⁷⁰ Neil Blomkamp's internationally acclaimed *District 9* (2009) is one such example of a recent, popular science fiction film.

⁷¹ In *The Consumer Society* (1998), Jean Baudrillard refers to icons of consumerism as symbols that have no definite function because they correspond to a social logic, or the logic of desire.

⁷² It is, however, noted that even though she is from Botswana, she has a Xhosa name because her parents wished that she would "fit in" in a South African school, indicating that attempts to erase her difference were made.

‘You know Ash and Saint?’

‘Yeah! Course I do, mate.’ He crossed the fingers on his free hand.

‘We’re like that!’

‘Where are they?’

‘Back home, I’ll tell you something though; they’re going mental. How’d you manage to lose them anyway?’

‘I couldn’t place his accent and I had to concentrate to make out what he was saying – the words seemed to run into each other.

‘Where are you from?’

‘Same place as you, mate. Where else?’ (128).

Marking Ginger’s Otherness once again alludes to the real-life political discourses that received media attention, in this case, aggressive rhetoric that draws on the colonisation of South Africa in the mid-1700s. For example, part of Julius Malema’s political repertoire (from 2011 through to 2016) is the insistence that white South Africans are not truly African, and that they do not belong in Africa (“White people don’t own the land”). When Lele meets Saint and Ginger, among the first questions she asks is where they are from,⁷³ alluding to nationality as a marker of Otherness. Furthermore, the youth focus of the first novel, coupled with the zombie element, allows for *Deadlands* to be read in terms of the postcolonial Gothic and as a study in abjection. The characters all represent hybrid identities and are cast as Others in relation to the teenagers who chose to abide by enclave laws. In addition, the zombies embody the enslavement to capitalism. Drawing on its Haitian origins as the embodiment of the fear of enslavement, the contemporary zombie can be read as a metaphor for consumption. Reading the zombie in a postcolonial, post-capitalist context implies that, rather than being enslaved to a controlling master, consumers have become enslaved to the goods and services being consumed. Abjection is most immediately obvious in the novel’s concentration on Self/Other through Lele and her relations with her family, other teenagers at school, the Mall Rats and, eventually, the truth about her own Otherness. The decisive Other in the novel is, of course, the figure of the zombie – the corpse that, in

⁷³ Considering the isolation of the enclave and the fact that Lele is the newcomer, Lele’s concern with where the other characters are from indicates her preoccupation with and her perhaps different understanding of the individual’s origins. Lele is concerned with where Ginger and Saint had come from before the cataclysm, while they understand their own origins in terms of their lives for the ten years after they zombie invasion.

Kristeva's theory, is the ultimate abject. The zombie is the embodiment of death and allows for the study of abjection as it is experienced in the local political climate.

While the science fiction genre is often associated with political commentary, the zombie in *Deadlands* includes an element of the postcolonial Gothic and consumerism.⁷⁴ For Darko Suvin (71), the genre explores human relations by cognitively estranging the reader from the real world:

In SF, or at least in its determining events, it is not iconic but allomorphic: a transgression of the cultural is signified by the transgression of a more than merely cultural, of an ontological, norm, by an ontic change in the character/agent's reality, either because of his displacement in space and/or time or because the reality itself changes around him [...] This new reality overtly or tacitly presupposes the existence of the author's empirical reality, since it can be gauged and understood only as the empirical reality of the author modified in such-and-such ways.

In this way, the genre itself serves as an Other, by which the implied realities of the readers and authors are measured. In a similar fashion, the zombie embodies an "uncontrollable ambiguity [and thus] cannot be reduced to a negative presence" (Larsen, 2010). The zombie does not simply exist as the embodiment of consumerism, but rather as an ontological mirror, by which human relations and cultural norms can be evaluated. From this starting point, the *Deadlands* series explores the Gothic re-enactment of South Africa's journey to modernity (*Death of a Saint*) as well as both the re-establishing of city culture, post-cataclysm and modern industrial capitalism (*Army of the Lost*). The series ends on a cliff-hanger,⁷⁵ although political overtones make their return to the series at the end of the third novel, which parodies the overt gluttony of a political system run by career capitalists. In short, the series both comments on twenty-first century South Africa and suggests that it is palimpsestically built on the unresolved remains of nineteenth and twentieth century South Africa in which nationality served as a signifier of political affiliation. The alternative reality proposed in the *Deadlands* novum re-enacts history as well as the social norms of the empirical reality of the South African authors and intended readers (youth).

⁷⁴ For example, *District 9* is often considered a commentary on the xenophobic violence that dominated South African media in 2008.

⁷⁵ The fourth instalment, *Ash Remains*, ironically remains unavailable in South Africa.

Set against a world of either zombies or conformist adults, Lele, as a first-person narrator, is full of youthful energy, frustration and rebellion. Until she meets Thabo, who is later revealed as part of the ANZ, she has little outlet or motivation to act on her impulses or satisfy her curiosity about what she perceives to be wrong with the Resurrectionist government. The system Lele resents is essentially a capitalist one, in which the Guardians and Resurrectionists make up the upper echelons of society while the rest of the inhabitants of the enclave comprise the working class. In order to prosper, or even acquire basic amenities such as water, electricity and housing, workers need to show their support for the Resurrectionists, who in turn depend on the Guardians' ability to move between the Deadlands and human settlements. The more these individuals support this sect, the more they are able to prosper in the current social climate. Initially, Lele views the ANZ as a means of transgressing the social limitations placed on her by this system, but she later joins the Mall Rats who physically overstep the boundary of the enclave and, in doing so, contravene the limitations set by the Resurrectionist government.⁷⁶

As Latham (2002) notes, vampires and cyborgs (to which we can add zombies) are “privileged metaphors possessing an uncanny ability to evoke the psychological and social experience – the relationships of desire and power – characteristic of postmodernist culture” (1). In *Deadlands*, this means that the working classes have become zombified in their bid to acquire the basic means of survival, and perhaps other objects of desire, such as fashionable clothing. While the majority of the population that Lele observes in the enclave are Resurrectionists and display their allegiance to the sect by recruiting members and wearing the amulet in order to maintain a basic standard of living, Lele concerns herself with the luxury items others have, which she wants. After being selected in the lottery, Lele and one of the teenagers she resented for the luxuries he possesses become equals in the Deadlands. They were both selected for the lottery and face the same dangers. However, Paul becomes a Guardian and Lele joins the rebellion. The Deadlands become a metaphor for the process of enslavement to the established order, and Lele's escape symbolises her transgression of the boundaries that maintain the social system. While sending teenagers out into the Deadlands is part of the Guardians' means of increasing their own numbers,⁷⁷ Lele divorces herself from the process of becoming part of the given order by escaping from the carriage transporting her to the Deadlands. After this initial escape, and separation from Thabo, Lele experiences a

⁷⁶ Although it is implied in *Army of the Lost* that the Mall Rats are working with the ANZ to move goods into the enclave.

⁷⁷ Later in the series, the other teenager who was selected in the lottery, Zyed, has been turned into a Guardian.

sense of belonging when she comes into contact with the Mall Rats and their stern sub-leader, Ash, who quickly replaces Thabo as her romantic interest. The Mall Rats who are themselves a group of outsiders, even to the ANZ, claim Lele and induct her, training her as a zombie-fighter.

Fighting the abject figure of the zombie, the Mall Rats group prides itself on its own Otherness and sense of abjection through self-styling: Saint is half-South African, half-Botswanan, queer, and adopts a goth-punk image;⁷⁸ Ginger is a film-obsessed British male modelling himself on horror movie icons and Ash is a former boy soldier with a history reminiscent of uMkhonto we sizwe, the militant wing of the ANC. However, the members of the group share similarities, such as their style of clothing and the set of rules they follow. Their membership is marked by their fighting techniques and use of unique weapons they acquire during their training/ initiation.⁷⁹ Initially, Lele's sense of belonging to the group is in a compromised state because she had little choice in joining them, being a matter of survival brought about by circumstances and, as we later discover, being contrived by the Mall Rats. Although she was recruited, she was required to undergo training to fully belong to the group. After being brought to the Mall Rats' hideout, Saint and Ash assert their dominance over Lele by mocking her, and Ginger and Hester offer comfort. Lele undergoes training to acquire the necessary fighting skills and, through this process, becomes a full member of the Mall Rats. This narrative highlights rejection and belonging in that it demonstrates the liminal space Lele occupies after rejecting the ANZ and before being accepted by the Mall Rats.⁸⁰ Lele's eventual acceptance into the group points to new themes, namely the inevitability of Othering and the need for an Other, which foreshadows the possibility of interdependence between humans and zombies. Early in *Deadlands*, the zombie is necessarily an Other, as Lele's escape from the zombie-worshipping Resurrectionists depends on construing them in this way. However, as the narrative progresses and focuses on the tyranny of human characters such as Coom, Jova and possibly Hester, the possibility of zombies as companions is introduced. Such interdependence is most notable in Mariska's narrative in *Death of a Saint*, in which she recognises the individual zombie moans and implements it in her "warning system", and again in Tommy's narrative where he befriends Optimus Prime.

⁷⁸ While the Gothic style is not traditionally associated with Africa, it has been adopted by the Motswana subculture that originated in Botswana.

⁷⁹ While the specific weapons are unique to the individuals, the group is characterised by this custom weaponry. For Baudrillard (1998), materiality is taken up as the result of social tactics (or, in the case of the body, narcissistic cult objects.)

⁸⁰ See Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror* (8)

When likening the post-cataclysmic South Africa presented in the novel to the post-apartheid reality, it becomes apparent that Othering remains fundamental both to maintaining the given system and to changing it. While the Mall Rats are motivated to discover the origins of the zombie invasion, which will undoubtedly change the society they occupy, their primary motivations are generally self-centred. Ash and Lele want to discover the truth in order to learn what happened to their siblings when they were taken away, and Saint needs to find meaning in Ripley's death. Nevertheless, the group's activities have the potential to change both Cape Town and Johannesburg. Despite repeating the process of Othering, Lele's rejection of the ANZ and Resurrectionists, her training and eventual inclusion in the Mall Rats show that Othering is a necessary aspect of forming and belonging to social groups, and constantly rediscovering ways in which overarching structures can be changed.

Postcolonial Gothic

Furthering abjection to the level of state and self-identity, the novel crosses over into the postcolonial Gothic. In *Deadlands*, zombies embody the fear of repeating history. In its post-apartheid context, the novel starts when zombies have been cordoned off from the human population and the Guardians, who have the power to move between different regions occupied by humans, make use of this power to control the human and zombie populations, with themselves at the top. However, in order to maintain this power, the survivors in the Cape Town enclave need to believe that the Guardians are the only ones with the power to go into the Deadlands to retrieve items from the mall. In the Johannesburg settlement, where people know whether they are immune to zombie detection or not, all left-handed individuals are employed to do the work done by only the Guardians in the Cape Town enclave, resulting in the accumulation of more wealth from the outlying suburbs. In both instances, however, the functioning of the human settlements is dependent on their physical isolation from the zombies. In Cape Town, the boundary that separates humans and zombies, a fence, was damaged in an accident ten years prior to the beginning of the narrative, when Ash (or Jack as he was known at the time) set off a fertilizer bomb that destroyed part of the wall and allowed the zombies into the enclave. Although zombies have not invaded the Johannesburg settlement in the series thus far, Coomb's mansion has been infiltrated, signifying the beginning of the plan to change the industrial capitalist system he represents. In both cases, the Others' physical crossing of boundaries signifies a transgression made by an oppressed Other.

Jerrold Hogle (5) stated that beneath the tangle of contradictions on which the Gothic is premised rests "the terror or possible horror that ruination of older powers will haunt us all". Recent literature with a specific focus on zombie invasions (see Chapter 2) reflects this as traditional forms and modes are threatened by rapid changes in the available cultural idiom. With reference to on-going wars, financial crises and other social and political tragedies, Kyle Bishop notes that for approximately the first decade of the millennium, the zombie has developed in a way that embodies the fear of the ruination of postcolonial society. The zombie also lends itself to an interpretation of the anxieties associated with hybridity as, traditionally, these creatures are not entirely human or non-human. From a Gothic

perspective, assuming that the post-colony is inherently hybrid, African fiction demonstrates the ways in which the post-colony is a threat to itself. Gaylard (182) asserted that:

[the political view espoused by Dambuzsdo Marechera, Ben Orki and J.M Coetzee's] suggests that African postcolonialism is apolitical, but the truth is that it has no single political stance. Its politics are nothing if not complex and various: on the one hand, it is a politics imbued with the resistive spirit of the Marxism and African nationalism in which it was incubated; on the other hand, it is a politics that is all too wary of the dangers of reactivity often attending on such resistance... if fiction limits itself to commenting upon the real, it runs the danger of reinforcing that real.

The use of zombies in the *Deadlands* series self-consciously and deliberately demonstrates the threat of such reactivity. As Jack Shear (70) stated, the Gothic continually reinvents itself to reflect the specific anxieties associated with the origin of a given text. Shear argued that Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf* (1994) is a uniquely South African manifestation of the Gothic in which traditional aspects of the Gothic are reinvented to articulate the terror of white South Africa after the inclusion of non-whites in the democratic process. However, *Triomf* only narrates the single family drama, and excludes the experiences of other families, whose presence results in anxiety for the Benades. The text acknowledges a family headed by a homosexual couple, as well as the non-white neighbours whose interference causes a breakdown within the Benade household. Thus, *Triomf* maintains the traditional family is maintained and disrupted by the changing social and political climate. The Gothic is politicised in terms of racial and gendered tensions.

The *Deadlands* series reflects the anxieties of the South African youth born roughly after the first democratic elections in 1994, commonly referred to as millennials, Generation Y or the "born-frees".⁸¹ This generation inherited the language, ideals and shortcomings of the previous generation, many of whom participated in the liberation movement without experiencing it themselves. Political themes such as the overlap of racial tension, reconciliation and restoration, and economic inequalities remain embedded in understanding local and global power relations. *Deadlands* captures this moment of change by illustrating the anxieties that characterise the current generation using the post-apocalyptic mode of storytelling. The novel reveals the ways in which South Africa has become an 'authoritarian'

⁸¹ See: Nuttall, S. *Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-apartheid* (2009)

state where ideals are constantly and rapidly revised in order to maintain the status quo. Loren Kruger suggests that this repetition of discourses was most apparent during the 1994 inauguration of Nelson Mandela and the 1995 Rugby World Cup.⁸² She argues that the function of this occasion was primarily political, and quotes Gevisser⁸³ (1994) in showing that the major sporting event “became a living enactment of this country’s possibilities” (4). However, these “possibilities” are not without the re-enactment of the memory of difference imposed by colonial and, later, apartheid discourses. Kruger (2001) also states that the city is associated with ambition and competition for space and resources. As the centre of this competition shifted away from the country, participation in a capitalist state became an essential component in the acquisition of resources and opportunities for progress. The city is thus a space to re-enact contested spaces that dominated the apartheid era. Kruger (569) states that, during apartheid, conflicts between Afrikaner and urban black South Africans shifted from the political to cultural arenas:

After their electoral victory in 1948, Afrikaner Nationalists organized cultural activity along tribal lines, using the most modern technology to promulgate the idea that African identity was essentially rural. State-subsidized institutions, such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) – which included Zulu slots from 1941 and organized programming in seven African languages from 1962 – and the exclusively white National Theatre Organization (NTO, 1947–1962), were harnessed to the production of ethnicity, rural identification, and the enforcement of white supremacy.

Nuttall illustrates the relation between the demographic layout of Sophiatown and the literary impact its writers had on the ways the South African city was represented in apartheid literature:

Openly critical of liberalism, Sophiatown’s writers, most of whom worked as journalists for *Drum* magazine, neither romanticised the rural nor condemned the moral degradation of the cities, contributing to a new tradition of writing which focused on black experience in the South African city (34).

⁸² Later enacted in the 2010 Soccer World Cup in an iteration of the role of sporting events as theatre. In the *Deadlands* series, the event marks an apocalyptic moment.

⁸³ Journalist cited to demonstrate the view from the ground, opposed to that of the SABC who broadcast from the amphitheatre.

In these early years after the legal abolishment of apartheid, well before new legislations aimed at restorative action entered fully into national discourse, the city was constructed as a space in which the differing attitudes toward the past could be fairly juxtaposed but not necessarily transcended. In contemporary representations of the city, such as in S.L. Grey's *The Mall*, Lauren Beuke's *Moxyland* and the *Deadlands* series, as well as the construction of the city itself, an effigy emerges in which previously separated communities merge in order to create a new identity. Mary Louise Pratt (2) refers to these spaces as contact zones – “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other”. In Cape Town, the tourism industry takes hold and the city is primarily understood as such, while Johannesburg becomes a commercial centre.

Unlike Cape Town,⁸⁴ the history of Johannesburg is central to narratives of resistance. During the apartheid era, much of the country's political uprisings such as those instigated by the ANC Youth League in 1944 had their epicentre in Johannesburg, resulting in the city and surrounding regions being transformed into a modern political centre. Presently, Johannesburg and its surrounding suburbs are home to prominent South African politicians and other public figures, popular celebrities and several major production studios and businesses. However, some of South Africa's poorest and most marginalised citizens can also be found here. City representatives admit that “some 20% of Johannesburg residents live in abject poverty”⁸⁵ while the city's elite live in grotesque wealth. The increase in foreign refugees' living in the city⁸⁶ also contributes to the city's cosmopolitan nature, as the city is increasingly characterised by difference and hybridity. Estimations in 2007 showed that nearly 50 per cent of all foreign nationals were found in Gauteng.⁸⁷ By May 2008, local and international media (Bearak) were overrun with reports of xenophobic violence. This new wave of political violence, described by Landau as the “bi-products of the state's pastoral ambitions” (2010: 216)⁸⁸ soon sparked an array of cultural representations, most notably in

⁸⁴ Although Cape Town and parts of the Eastern Cape are by no means insignificant to the struggle, most critical actions (such as the Rivonia Trial) that have become central to the apartheid narrative as it is told today originated in Johannesburg or the surrounding townships.

⁸⁵ www.joburg.org.za

⁸⁶ Estimates showed that nearly 50 per cent of all foreign nationals were found in Gauteng.

⁸⁷ Statistics South Africa statistical release P030227007 shows that in July 2007, 20.2 per cent of South Africa's population were concentrated in the Gauteng province.

⁸⁸ Foreigners presented a threat to impoverished, black South Africans who felt that they were cheated out of jobs and state housing. These citizens' ambitions were threatened by their own poverty, as well as the foreigners. Cultural bi-products refer to the effect of continued poverty after the 1994 election after being promised a better future, in addition to the belief that foreigners occupied the few positions available to impoverished individuals.

the 2009 film *District 9* and Lauren Beukes's *Zoo City* (2010). These texts represent the city as divided along new cultural lines: the divisions, formerly racial, have become nationalised; therefore, rather than overcoming boundaries as postulated in the popular ideal, boundaries have simply shifted. The city thus remains deeply threatening, but rather than coming exclusively from the racial other, a national dimension has been added.

Wealth is disproportionate and, as a result, power is distributed unevenly. This is illustrated in the ways in which democratically elected officials have been constructed as villains (predominantly in the media) and how Lily Herne has reimagined protest culture in South Africa. By maintaining the notion that elected officials are villainous, the media creates an environment conducive for the re-enactment of protest narratives. Herne reimagines this narrative by incorporating it into her protagonists – most notably Ash and Lele, and deconstructs the mechanisms underlying their protest. Both characters reject the circumstances in the enclave and rebel against them, but their grasp on the underlying systems is limited.

Before the characters leave the Cape Town enclave, little remains of the city's colonial past, but citizens are under the control of the Resurrectionists, who maintain control of the city by enforcing policies such as the annual lottery and sending corpses into the Deadlands. They achieve this through their attempts to barter basic goods and services in exchange for complicity with their experiments that turn people into zombies and keep them in power. The general complicity of the inhabitants of the enclaves illustrates how the city itself determines the trajectory of the characters' development. While the disparity in wealth between the Resurrectionist citizens and the poor is apparent, the citizens remain complicit in the scheme that maintains the current status quo, for fear of the unknown Deadlands.

Subjectivity is enacted on the body, which in turn determines the layout of the city. For Skelton and Van Gogh, young people do not only inhabit the city, but their lives and identities are also shaped by the city. They indicate that “young people are social and spatial agents who dwell in the city in different ways from adults and play significant roles in the diversity of the city” (2013: 459). In the novel, the link between the city and the body becomes apparent through the act of looting food and clothing from the mall. The protagonists physically enter the Deadlands to loot the items that turn the bodies of the

wealthy into objects of affluence.⁸⁹ However, as the narrative progresses, these symbols are internalised – more often in the form of food and active participation in the establishment – until the body dies and the individual is able to move between a physical existence and purely mental state of being, capable of moving between the city and the Deadlands. These individuals are revered within the social structure of the Cape Town enclave. After Saint is killed, the first experiences she narrates as a zombie reveal that the physicality of the city is a threat to the transcendent individual, and that Lele and the others should never have fought against what they believed to be the oppression of the Guardians:

Among the shooting sparks of life and energy there's something else. A dark.
Drifting presence.

It's ahead. In the city ahead. Where my friends are going to be taken.

And even through my own foggy mask, my own deadening, I can feel the horror
of it.

And I know.

It's not the Guardians we have to fear. It was never the Guardians. (346)

Youthful Rebels, Self-Styling and the City

In *Stylizing the Self: The Y Generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg* (28), Sarah Nuttall defines Generation Y as the generation of South African youth who “remake the past in very specific ways in the services of the present and the future”. Furthermore, Nuttall notes that this generation consists of those who attended racially mixed schools as well as those who have attended “exclusively black township schools”. Nuttall differentiates between the global and the South African youth who are the first to be exposed exclusively to post-apartheid rhetoric and technologies, such as the internet, which enabled high speed global sharing and communication. For Nuttall, the city features prominently in contemporary texts as the site of interracial “remixing and reassembling of racial identities”. She refers to the relationship between the act of remixing identities and the city as one of entanglement, which is used as an analytical tool that reemerges and remixes bifurcated concepts. This theory is applied to the way in which the politicised city and landscape are read in the *Deadlands* series. Lauren Beukes’s *Zoo City* (2010) and, more recently, *Broken Monsters* (2014) take the form of

⁸⁹ See Baudrillard (1998: 129), who argues that in a consumer society, the body is commodified as an object that comes to symbolise and embody the individual subjectivity.

investigations and demonstrate the ways in which identities are reconstructed. In both texts, characters from different backgrounds are bound by their connection to the city and specific events. The South African setting in *Zoo City* clearly illustrates Nuttall's emphasis on distinguishing between the South African and global youth. While the characters are from different parts of Africa, they come together in the South African city. Here, they are exposed to the local democratic process as well as discrimination against the African diaspora. The concept of the city itself is more significant than the location and specific history of any given city to the entanglement that occurs. In both novels, the city is divided by race, class, history and gender, but negotiating each scenario⁹⁰ requires the reader and protagonists to navigate these divisions and, in doing so, create a constantly changing city. This is comparable to a living organism as explored by Reynolds-Hall and Cross-Schmitt (153). Geographical difference is thus less significant than the interaction between the city and individual.

In the *Deadlands* series,⁹¹ the setting alternates between two major South African cities, inland and on the coast. Characters are required to navigate between these in order to fulfil their individual quests while facing certain challenges. In the series, the physical, social and political landscape of South Africa is constantly reinvented in a manner congruent with Nuttall's definition of Generation Y. Nuttall views Generation Y as one characterised by "the loss of politics itself – or at least a form of resistance based on mass politics" (18). For Nuttall, a critical moment in local politics is one in which historical discourse is reiterated and one which defines a yet unknown future.

In *Death of a Saint*, the characters finally abandon the Cape Town enclave in search of the truth about the cataclysm and the Guardians, and to escape the enclave where they will simply be tried and punished as criminals. Their journey culminates in new discoveries for the group and in major changes in group dynamics. Compared to Cape Town, the Johannesburg settlement is in an advanced state of capitalism due to the increased labour force that can be exploited. Moreover, the Johannesburg resistance is much stronger than the Cape Town resistance. The advanced capital state in Johannesburg enabled the resistance to build an army of left-handed individuals, capable of going into the Deadlands without being detected, which in turn enabled them to overthrow the oppressive amaKlevas.⁹² In Cape

⁹⁰ This form draws directly on the narrative established in other forms of media such as the video game, in which the player (also the protagonist or reader) is required to solve certain puzzles before progressing to the next.

⁹¹ Most prevalently in *Death of a Saint*.

⁹² The wealthy, upper class in Johannesburg.

Town, the movement of the general population is easily controlled by manipulating the fear of the Deadlands and the zombies that inhabit it; the Johannesburg population is able to break off into smaller sections. Coom, who controls most of the labour in Johannesburg, was able to isolate himself and his wives in Monte Casino while lording over the masses who live in squalor. Much like the Mall Rats, the Outcasts form a community outside the limits of the city, and are initially seen as “monsters” (161) simply because they occupy a space outside the designated areas.⁹³ This group establishes a functioning rural community outside city limits similar to the way other characters encountered their journey to Johannesburg.⁹⁴ This shows that Othering takes place regardless of the economic status of a given context, as in the cases of the Outcasts and Mall Rats. It is an accepted phenomenon in Cape Town as well as Johannesburg and contributes directly to the social structures in the given areas. Furthermore, in both cases, the city or enclave functions as the object of Othering, as the large number of individuals who occupy the city implies that the city is the centre of all action.⁹⁵

Most scholars note that central to the construction of modern South African culture is the metropolis itself,⁹⁶ as it has effectively become an active agent in the construction of the self. For example, Debra Shaw (789) states that “the city is where the posthuman finds its conceptual home; where the spatial logics that have dictated the organising principles of bodies and their being in the world are brought into crisis by the recognition that what the human looks like, how it functions and what it will become is dependent on how you program the map”. Inter- and intra-city differences and nuances as noted by Lemanski, Landman and Durlington (2008) contribute to and perpetuate the idealised South African identity as necessarily multi-dimensional and fluid while reworking the relation between people and objects. Debates about city planning and restructuring are focused primarily as ideas of complete freedom and equality that have been solidified in the South African imagination through the Constitution. In various sociological studies of the cultural impact of gated communities⁹⁷ throughout South Africa, Lemanski et al. and other authors (Hook &

⁹³ At this point, Tommy assumes that they have killed Olivia’s husband, but later finds out that he had in fact joined the outcasts.

⁹⁴ Along the Garden Route, the group encounters Mother and Father who established two communities in the forest canopy and a golf course respectively, Wiseman and Mariska who built a home on a farm, and Mr Philiso who treats the prison as a community of zombies. In *Death of a Saint*, Lele and Saint also discover two men who occupy a cruise ship on the coast of Port Elizabeth. Unlike Wiseman and Mariska, however, they are trapped on the ship, surrounded by zombies.

⁹⁵ Ironically, the city changes at a slower rate than any of the other smaller settlements, and the protagonists learn more outside the city than they do within.

⁹⁶ Shaw (2013)

⁹⁷ Gated communities are themselves problematic, as they isolate groups and restrict movement.

Vrodoljak, 2002) found that, despite changes in national policies since the eradication of the Group Areas Act in 1991, racialised patterns remain embedded in the spatial layout of most South African cities as a consequence of racial and economic developments. Nuttall, however, notes that among the upper class black youth, icons of the struggle against apartheid are incorporated into self-stylisation in a way that produces a sense of individual pride. While loxion culture reflects a positive economic development, it remains part of a consumer culture that is reflected globally. Thus, despite definite economic growth and social development, the structures that inform such development remain unchanged.⁹⁸

In South African literature, the city is of particular significance as, historically, the physical space has been divided along racial lines. In J.M. Coetzee's *The Life and Times of Michael K* (1983), historical boundaries are challenged and new representational spaces created. Karowska (128) notes that in *The Life and Times of Michael K* the nomadic lifestyle adopted by the protagonist after the death of his mother poses a threat to neophytic settlements aimed at integrating these nomads within the urban establishment. This system forms part of an economic superstructure in which the labouring individual ultimately serves a hierarchy determined by accumulated capital. Michael and the medical officer, who narrates the latter half of the story, remain trapped within this hierarchy despite their potential to transcend these boundaries. Although the narrative time is uncertain,⁹⁹ a plausible future¹⁰⁰ is imagined in accordance with political circumstances of the time. In a similar way, Herne imagines a future where South Africa has been overrun with zombies, in which this narrative is superimposed on current political and economic discourses.

Graham (2009) notes that during the process of political reconciliation that followed the 1994 elections:

... the postmodern African city, with its multiplicity of social and commodity flows interacting in complex ways with the built environment, resist[ing] representation either of its own spaces or of the memories encoded in those very spaces. The challenge for the new urban literature in South Africa, then, is to

⁹⁸ Baudrillard (1998) discusses the influences of consumerism on global culture.

⁹⁹ Helgesson (2004) describes the narrative time in *The Life and Times of Michael K* as the future of the present, implying that Coetzee's narrative "extrapolates political tendencies" (181).

¹⁰⁰ Although the text itself is not science fiction, Coetzee's setting has much in common with the novum, as delineated by Suvin.

pioneer modes of representation that can either circumvent these resistances, or at least make them visible (103–4).

While the memory of apartheid remains embedded in the South African city in the form of colonial monuments and street names, contemporary literature ascribes new meanings to these relics. A significant aspect of the *Deadlands* series (and *Army of the Lost* in particular) is the way in which it imagines the perspectives of the youth who have not lived during the apartheid era:

A group of sweating blues is busily keeping the handlers' area next to the auction platform free of riff-raff, and Tommy shields his eyes and glances at the Nelson Mandela statue next to them. Olivia is always going on about how the real man was a genuine hero, but when Tommy was a kid the statue had featured in most of his nightmares. He'd endured months of night terrors as it came to life and chased him through Sandtown's tunnels and aisles. He suspects it's because there's something weird about the statue's proportions – he's never been able to figure out if its arms are too short or its head is too big for its body (21).

Tommy's perspective invokes the memory of Nelson Mandela, the actual struggle hero through the memory of Olivia, but new meaning is given to the monument in the narration of his own experiences. As he does not form part of the generation who would have experienced apartheid in this speculative universe, the history passed to him in Olivia's stories and the monument itself function as material on which his lived experiences are superimposed. Likewise, the journey undertaken in *Death of a Saint* (2012) reflects a significant moment in South Africa's history,¹⁰¹ but a new threat has emerged and the narrative is determined by the immediate situation rather than history. The resulting representation is a palimpsest, in which the memory of the (real) past remains, and the imagined present determines the course of the narrative. The contemporary South African city thus literally becomes a subversion of the past, much like its central band of characters, the Mall Rats.

¹⁰¹ The narrative implies that the Great Trek is recast, as the journey undertaken in *Death of a Saint* mirrors that taken during the Great Trek. The protagonists leave Cape Town and Johannesburg, their destination is regarded as a haven before they are captured and enslaved.

Science Fiction in the South African Context

Central to the entanglement that characterises contemporary South African literature is the notion of space and segregation, and the ways in which it has been used in the negotiation of identity throughout recent South African history. As demonstrated by Nuttall (2009), physical spaces reflected early changes in the youth's perception of racial identity, which were later translated into literary representations of the city itself. During the 1940s, until the abandonment of the apartheid policy, segregation may have been only to serve white economic motives, as Ashforth (48) suggests, but the systematic segregation produced secondary cultural effects¹⁰² that remain after the regime has officially ended. It is noted that:

Both Johannesburg and Durban's post-apartheid changes have been characterised by a growing Black African middle class moving out of former township areas into inner-city suburbs, thus eroding the entrenched racial and class divisions of apartheid. In Cape Town, however, urban transformation since the demise of apartheid has been minimal . . . Residential movement has been constrained by the strong private property market in former White areas.

Recent horror and science fiction emerging among South African authors – set in very specific locations – reflects the dynamic that characterises the contemporary South African city. Among the first of this new generation of urban literature was Lauren Beukes's *Moxyland* (2008) which portrays Cape Town as a predominantly corporate space characterised by technology and surveillance. Instead of the masculine individual imprinting his own identity onto the cityscape, androgynous subjects are impacted upon by the functions of the city itself. The city is thus given a degree of agency, and a dual dynamic between the city and individual emerges. Furthermore, Bethlehem (523) notes that sci-fi/horror as a mode of representation constructs the present in an apocalypse that “ruptures the structure of the given order [and precipitates] ‘the ceaseless struggle to dismantle and repurpose’ the sites we occupy”. As such, the post-apocalyptic urban narrative that characterises subgenres of

¹⁰² See Nuttall (2009: 23)

Science Fiction¹⁰³ breaks down the traditional borders of identity, creating a hybrid characterisation of both the individual and the city.

In a contemporary South African text such as S.L. Grey's¹⁰⁴ *The Mall* (2011), the mall is used as an emblem for the modern consumerist state that physically isolates individual consumers from other members of society. Whereas technology "facilitates a certain configuration of social relations" (527)¹⁰⁵ in *Moxyland*, it remains inaccessible to the vast majority of South Africans today and maintains social boundaries. It is worth noting that the self-styling of the Mall Rats (and, to an extent the ANZ) owes plenty to their ability to access the largely preserved Canal Walk shopping mall.

In 1986, Michael Cope's *Spiral of Fire* speculated that science fiction may be used as a device to explore anxieties about racial tensions that existed in South Africa at the time:

Spiral of Fire does not primarily concern Billy's novel. Rather, it uses the creative process of science fiction as psychological catharsis for him to work out his unresolved problems in living as a white man in the strife-torn, Nationalist South Africa of the 1980s. Through the devices of reversal and Utopia, Billy experiences in his imagination what he desires for his country (523).

In a similar way, Well's *A Modern Utopia* (1905) explores the writing process itself as a way of creating utopia (27). Byrne (2004) suggests that Cope's novel explores the creative process primarily as a means of processing social anxiety.¹⁰⁶ Rather than attempting to address any particular anxiety, Herne's novum employs a critical utopia to illustrate the need for the complete revolution in South African politics, and suggests that the system of governance in South Africa – with all its implications and related sub-systems – is ripe for revision. Herne thus avoids taking a particular stance on the political situation in South Africa (and in doing so, perpetuating it), opting instead for an alternate, historical view of the political situation that characterises the present.¹⁰⁷ While the series draws inspiration from South Africa's political and literary histories, it also documents the present, in which the youth re-enacts history and creates the future. More than circumventing superficial criticisms that ultimately

¹⁰³ Especially Cyberpunk and Steampunk

¹⁰⁴ S.L. is the pseudonym used by Sarah Lots and Louis Greenberg

¹⁰⁵ See Stephen Grahame. *Beyond the 'dazzling light': from dreams of transcendence to the 'remediation' of urban life*. SAGE Publications, 2004.

¹⁰⁶ See Also Jack Shear's 2006 analysis of Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf*

¹⁰⁷ Pohl (1997) thus suggests that science fiction is necessarily historical.

perpetuate narratives of racial- and gender-based discrimination, the series illustrates the mechanisms of abjection and proposes alternate ways of relating to the Other. For Deery (27), the writing process itself is a way of creating utopia:

While Utopian narratives are obviously fictional, many aspire – in a weak or strong sense – to nonfictionality; that is to say, they are written in order to be translated into reality, or rather to have reality meet their description to a greater or lesser extent . . . This is at once an obvious and extremely curious aspect of this type of fiction; in effect utopists attempt to create not only within but also beyond the boundaries of the text.

Furthermore, this alternative mode proposes an immanent apocalypse, as Gunn and Beard (270) explained, “combined, Kermode and Baudrillard inform an alternate model of non-religious, apocalyptic thinking that situates apocalypse in a state of perpetual crisis without an end, an ‘immanent’ apocalyptic.” Rather than simply existing as utopic, the immanent suggests that specific ends continue to exist indefinitely. Thus, paradoxically, the end continues to exist indefinitely. Early in *Deadlands*, the confrontation between Lele and Comrade Xhati reflects the strong sense of historicity of Herne’s novum, as well as its political relevance to South Africa. The celebrated new history book, introduced as part of Malema High’s new curriculum, reads as follows:

Is there another country in the world with such a shameful History as South Africa? The authors of this book believe that there is not. Before the war, South Africa was a mess of violence, extreme poverty, HIV infection, incest, child abuse, terrorism and murder . . . Fortunately, salvation was at hand. When the reanimates [zombies] rose, and started adding other saved souls to their flock, the Guardians who came among us decreed that the remaining chosen will be taken care of, all the better to look forward to their heaven on earth [the Deadlands]. This is a true history of our glorious new beginning . . . (34).

Contemporary threats such as HIV, violence and terrorism are considered a thing of the past and have, in the view espoused by the resurrectionists and re-articulated by Comrade Xhati, come to an end. However, the quasi-religious tone of the text that masquerades as non-fiction (in this case, a school textbook) suggests an immanent apocalypse¹⁰⁸ – a complete narrative with its references to ultimate “salvation”, and the construction of Guardians and “saved souls

¹⁰⁸ See Kermode (1967).

. . . the remaining chosen”. However, for Lele, this utopia is not an end and only perpetuates inequality and social dominance. The real history that includes references to Hector Peterson (34) – a figure strongly associated with the Bantu Education Act of 1953 – woven into its context provides an explicit factual counterpart to the fictionality as well as the historicity of *Deadlands*. The novel continues with Lele’s challenge to the “facts” provided in the history book:

My voice trailed away. I didn’t remember much about the War and its immediate aftermath, but I did know that it wasn’t a great big mash-up of love, happiness and rainbows . . . I’d made a terrible mistake, but there was no going back.

‘Well Lele, I think you should start with your version of why the War started . . .’

‘Something – some kind of parasite or whatever – came from the sky or from an asteroid or whatever . . . and it wormed its way into the bodies of the dead, bringing them back to life’ (34–5).

The quasi-religious textbook disrupts the notion of an impending apocalypse as it has already taken place, and assumes that salvation is inevitable, while ignoring the gross inequality the system promotes. Lele’s uncertainty and the readers’ subsequent doubt about the origin of the reanimates disrupts the expectation of utopia – or an end in which all injustices are resolved – and establishes the immanent mode that characterises the rest of the narrative. The cataclysmic events (the invasion of the zombie tendrils and the subsequent war between humans and zombies) that resulted in the establishment of the enclave have already occurred, and humans no longer contend with violence, disease, terrorism and murder.¹⁰⁹ For the older generation, this is a victory to be savoured, but the younger generation contends with the consequences thereof. Although the origin of Guardians and Reanimates is not explained until later in the series, the assumption that the Reanimates, were divinely conceived to rid South Africa of its problems, together with the younger protagonists’ search for the truth behind the zombies’ origins, reflects the science fiction genre in that it both creates a “scientifically” accurate novum that seeks out its own origins.

Fredrick Pohl relates an anecdote in which his friend Ray Bradbury was asked whether the dystopia presented in *Fahrenheit 451* was meant as a prediction, to which he replied: “Hell no. I’m not trying to predict the future. I’m just doing my best to prevent it” (8). Similarly,

¹⁰⁹ Ironically, Jova’s plan to eradicate the zombie population at the end of *Army of the Lost* once again suggests terrorism and murder.

Deadlands is not written in anticipation of a zombie apocalypse in South Africa, but is used as a means of speculating how the current social and political climate will manifest in the wake of such a cataclysm, or any cataclysm for that matter. The tension that arises between young and old characters in the novel allows the text to be read beyond what it is. Conflicts in the dominant ideologies of the novel's most politically inclined characters – Lele and Comrade Xhati, and later Lele's father and the Mantis – represent one dimension of the conflict between generations. In the novel, each generation looks forward and backward at the same time, but each can only remember its own past and anticipate its own future. Older characters therefore do not have access to the futures anticipated by younger ones; for example, one in which humans and zombies can coexist, while the young characters do not have direct access to older characters' pasts, in which they experienced violence, terrorism, incest and HIV.¹¹⁰ Xhati looks forward from his perspective and sees the present as a positive development in light of his own past: "You see, you might not remember much about before the war, but those of my generation do. Life was hard back then . . ." (38), while younger activists look forward to a future not accessible to the older generation. Lele replies: "I wanted to say. *Sure. Trapped in a muddy, stinking prison, surrounded by a sea of dead people and ruled by a bunch of hysterical nutters, that's so much better than before...*" (38). While Xhati appreciates the developments of the present, Lele has direct access to the negative aspect of it, viewing her present (Xhati's future) as "a muddy, stinking prison surrounded by a sea of dead people . . . rather than the utopia Xhati inhabits". Both older and younger generations' views of the present are thus limited to their own experience and remain trapped within a system that, in its attempt to cater for the collective good, fails to recognise individual freedom. The way Lele and her classmates are taught history suggests that the authors use their authority to compel the new generation to believe that they live in a relatively comfortable world compared to their forerunners, rather than continuing to change the world for themselves and future generations. However, there are adults, such as Cleo and (possibly) Comrade Xhati in the enclave who act as double agents on the side of the Mall Rats. For the youths who accept the established order, this utopia continues, but they come to inhabit a state between life and death, and play their own part in perpetuating the system as it is rather than changing it. While Saint's narrative in *Army of the Lost* suggests that the silver threads allow those infected with it access to a different reality, she, unlike those who have "[given] into the darkness" (Ripley and Paul), is able to use her own experiences in order to determine her trajectory, while

¹¹⁰ Comrade Xhati also mentions child abuse as a thing of the past, but it appears that Lele's brother and other teenagers are being exploited for the ability to host the silver threads.

accessing the apparently supernatural powers she acquired after the car accident. In this way, Saint not only inhabits a space between life and death, but her consciousness also consists of both her past and present, as she simultaneously exists as both Saint and Ntombi. In this way, Saint's narrative is fragmented, but ultimately culminates in a separate narrative trajectory from the other Mall Rats.

The Palimpsest

The remains of Johannesburg's cultural history are physically and metaphorically buried in the mines beneath the city, resulting, in what Shane Graham (2009), and Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe (2008) refer to as a layered reading of the physical and cultural landscape. For Graham (155), much South African literature produced during and after the TRC proceedings manifests the repression and displacement of traumatic memories. This results in a palimpsest, in which old and new narratives overlap and create new spaces. The *Deadlands* series forms part of a body of literature that attempts to negotiate these liminal spaces, while simultaneously re-enacting preceding narratives. *Deadlands* can thus be seen as a contemporary re-enactment of South African history, expressing the deliberate negotiation of liminal spaces. The protagonists move toward the centre of modern South African history and, in doing so, history is rewritten in a way that erases the boundaries that define national identity. The most pertinent example is the journey from Cape Town to Johannesburg, which re-enacts the route taken by the trekboers during the Great Trek, and reimagines it in a way consistent with a cyclical view of history that suggests that history is not only repeated, but also that it is interpreted and created by those in authority at any given moment. When the protagonists enter Grahamstown¹¹¹ in *Death of a Saint*, they believe that the town has been untouched for years due to the different styles of building. However, when they cross the town border, they realise that even this apparently 'time warped' town was affected by the zombie outbreak:

This town is anything but untouched. Behind a sagging fence cobbled together from rusted metal, wood and coils of spiked wire, I can just about make out a cluster of once-imposing red-roofed buildings and the top of a boxy clock tower. The bushes and plants in front of them are scorched skeletons, and soot stains the walls above the few windows that are visible (234).

¹¹¹ The site of Rhodes University.

In contrast to the embassy in Cape Town, Rhodes University has deteriorated to the point where it has become uninhabitable, as evidenced by the subsequent evacuation. Rather than being destroyed as a result of radical political action, the building described has eroded due to natural processes. Lucien and the children attempt to make use of it for as long as possible before entering the Deadlands, where they would be at the mercy of natural and unnatural forces. Grahamstown is especially significant, and one of the few cities named in the series, as the town was originally established in order to aid the British colonial project in 1812. In 1904, Rhodes University was established and named after Cecil Rhodes, whose monuments would be destroyed over a century later as part of student protests. By illustrating that the University has deteriorated through natural processes, Herne emphasises the natural decay of history. As an emblem of colonial history, the University survives the apocalyptic changes exemplified by the zombie invasion, but succumbs to natural decay. This aspect of the narrative undermines the traditional Afrikaner narrative in which the interior of South Africa was divinely bestowed on the Afrikaner nation to settle there. The consequence was that the Afrikaner be viewed as a separate nation within South African borders.¹¹²

In *Death of a Saint*, the protagonists make the journey from Cape Town to Johannesburg with very little confrontation and, in fact, they meet others along the way who help their journey.¹¹³ Unlike the original narrative, in which the Voortrekkers are remembered as a separate nation who established themselves in the inland, *Death of a Saint* proposes an alternate version. Here, separate groups are unified rather than differentiated in a system in which one group dominates the other. Slabbert (49–51) suggests that an official Afrikaner identity only existed until 1990, after which the Afrikaner nation was absorbed into a cosmopolitan, national identity. *Death of a Saint* reiterates the idea that separate identities were absorbed into a cosmopolitan national identity after the abolishment of apartheid. Thus, the youth who re-enact the Great Trek narrative are not identified as Afrikaners, and do not establish an identity of their own after the events of *Death of a Saint*. The narrative recognises this aspect of South African history, but articulates it in a way that reflects how such accounts influence the identities of those involved. In this retelling, the idea that the Afrikaner mythology was responsible for the separation of identities is dispelled, and

¹¹² See: J.P. van Der Merwe. *An Anthropological Perspective on Afrikaner Narrative and Myths* (2009) and Herman Giliomee's *The Afrikaners* (2003).

¹¹³ The greatest conflicts occur when two men attempt to rape Saint and Lele, and when the protagonists are captured and taken to Johannesburg.

emphasises the fact that the Great Trek is one of several chronicles that influenced the ways in which identities were formed throughout the history of South Africa. For Van der Merwe, narrative has an important function in building and maintaining an identity. Stories that are told and retold develop into tales that are more closely related to personal experience and national memory. Over time, a set of narratives develop into a mythology, which articulates the identity and origins of an entire nation. For Van der Merwe, it is impossible to separate Afrikaner identity from its originating mythologies. He traces the myth back to the early clashes between burgers and the *Verenighde Oosindische Compagnie* (VOC), which demonstrated how the burgers identified more closely with the Cape than the distant VOC. Self-preservation in a rapidly changing economy¹¹⁴ led to divergent political alignment among Afrikaners and eventually the “realisation that Afrikaners’ primary national concerns would not be maintained if they did not have the political power to ensure this themselves” (40).

The writing was on the wall, especially in regard to language rights and the relationship with ‘non-whites’. This gave rise to an agreement in 1947 between Malan and Havenga, which led to an election victory in 1948 for the parties in which Afrikaners were predominant (40).

For Van der Merwe, this victory, and the de-mythologising and demonisation of other national myths¹¹⁵ ensured the establishment of a distinct Afrikaner identity. The irony in *Death of a Saint* is that the novel inverts the myth it imitates and rather than culminating in the formation of a distinct Afrikaner identity, it signals the beginning of diverging identities based on individual experience. Rather than rising to prominence as political figures, the protagonists are captured and enslaved by the amaKlevas in Johannesburg. With the exception of Saint, they become impotent, silent and enslaved to an economic system governed by wealth and the ability to employ those able to enter the Deadlands. By the third novel, the protagonists do not establish a new identity immediately, and their changing loyalties reflect the fluidity of their identities. In Saint’s zombie-like state, she is able to physically experience the links between herself, the landscape and other individuals, transgressing boundaries between her physical, psychological and spiritual existence. Through his studies, Jova becomes aware of this merging of different realms of experience

¹¹⁴ By this time, the Cape was under British Imperial control.

¹¹⁵ Van der Merwe references the ways in which Dingaan was demonised in the Afrikaner myth.

and employs Ash as a means of accessing this other form of experience without putting himself at risk.

Considering South Africa's history of segregation, Herne's series reflects the potential of some protagonists to change the political and economic circumstances in a positive way, and that of transcending race, wealth and nationality as necessary markers of social boundaries. Race is thus changed from a marker of limitation into one of several means by which identity can be experienced. Writing about the South African city, Graham (2009) suggests that the city and landscape embody the palimpsestic nature of South African history – that is, the present is superimposed over a history that pervades contemporary narratives. Using Reynolds-Hall and Cross-Schmitt's analogy of the city as living organism, the city in the *Deadlands* series can be viewed as either a dying or an evolving entity; however, clear parallels between the city and the body in motion remain, and can be used as a means of interpreting the fictional South African city portrayed in the *Deadlands* series. Integral to viewing the city of Cape Town as a living entity in the first novel is the integration of the city into the natural landscape. This draws on a history in which the South African landscape was constructed as a politicised and nationalised entity.¹¹⁶ In several South African cities, surrounding flora, the ocean, rivers and mountains form a backdrop to the urban setting, and are often the means by which the city self-identifies.¹¹⁷ In the *Deadlands* series, these natural landmarks are not only a means of identifying specific cities that have otherwise decayed, but the landscape itself becomes a metaphor for the disintegration of the capitalist state. For example, Table Mountain is used as a means for Lele to locate herself in the *Deadlands*, but soon after she discovers the road leading to the mall, she notes how the natural landscape literally absorbs the symbols of human activity:

After the roller coaster sighting, I'd scrambled down from the tree as fast as I could, and ditched the path for what was clearly a grassed-over highway, stumbling past the shells of cars hidden under shrouds of foliage and fynbos (100).

While the cars and roads serve as the by-products of an affluent state, they disintegrated to the point of being 'shells' and have clearly lost all their value. In capitalist societies in which

¹¹⁶ For example, this is reflected in the former South African national anthem *Die Stem van Suid-Afrika* and the new South African flag in which the colour green is often interpreted as a symbol for the land.

¹¹⁷ For instance, Cape Town is strongly associated with Table Mountain and the Atlantic Ocean, while Durban is often associated with the Indian Ocean.

internet access and other technologies such as private transport are status symbols that have become normalised to the extent of having no real value, the state becomes zombified in the sense that status and material wealth replaces altruism and social consciousness as markers of prestige. In 2004, Byrne stated that:

the contested land itself deserves the status of a major protagonist [. . .] By situating their stories in hostile settings, reminiscent of frontier existence and difficulty, Cope, Gunter and many other South African writers foreground the scarcity of resources and the inevitable competition for them (524).

While this competition for resources is normalised early in *Deadlands*, the destruction of the mall at the end of the novel symbolises the extent to which corruption and decay have set in. In *Zombie Politics and Culture in the Age of Casino Capitalism*, Giroux (2011) states that excessive capitalism has produced a system in which the democratic process has been corrupted to the point where the needs of the individual have overshadowed the needs of society. This led to a competitive and ultimately destructive society of self-serving individuals. As Giroux stated in a 2013 interview with Bill Moyers (n.pag), citizens have divorced themselves from civil responsibilities in order to pursue individual prosperity. The ways in which the landscape reclaims the emblems of capitalism in *Deadlands* articulates this zeitgeist in which the accumulation of capital is normalised. Furthermore, escaping from the given system and the desire to liberate others, as Lele and the other Mall Rats try to do, are seen as non-conformist.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ See Stephen Graham (2004: 23) *Beyond the Dazzling Light: From Dreams of Transcendence to the 'Remediation' of Urban Life*, who notes that "electricity, water, lighting and sewer systems . . . were widely celebrated . . . as icons of modernity, progress and the technological sublime". However, they were gradually veiled beneath the urban scene.

Chapter Four: Zombie Embodiment

Palimpsestic texts such as the *Deadlands* series are inherently monstrous because they are uncontrolled, unpredictable and uncanny. *Deadlands* evokes the uncanny by superimposing popular culture literature associated with zombies on the already varied history of South Africa. In *Mapping Loss*, Shane Graham references texts such as Zoe Wicomb's *David's Story* and Ann Landsman's *The Devil's Chimney*. Both of these deal with the repercussions of apartheid in order to illustrate how South African literature reflects layered histories, in which multiple narratives exist simultaneously. For Jack Shear (2006), Marlene van Niekerk's *Triomf* (1994) "reinvents itself across borders" (70) and exemplifies the South African Gothic. Thus, *Triomf* transgresses borders that traditionally define the Gothic to include a focus on political Otherness that results from a racially and culturally segregated history.

By forging continual connections between preternatural horrors and current focal points of anxiety, the Gothic captures the *Zeitgeist* of cultural tension. Cultures, then, breed their own demons necessarily. Since culture is multiple and variable, its demons and spectres tend to be exclusive expressions of a specific troubled social milieu (73).

Although *Triomf* is set in an urban environment, the narrative focuses on the political implications of including the majority of non-white, formerly segregated South African citizens in the democratic process, and its implications for the impoverished Afrikaner family. Although the environment is central to the narrative, *Triomf* tends to give access only to the ways the Benade family relates to it. Although the narrative includes other families, they are cast as catalysts that generate anxiety for the Benades, who remain at the centre of the narrative. While *Triomf* draws attention to the effects of national politics on the impoverished Afrikaner family, it ignores the impact of political changes on the homosexual and non-white families. While *Triomf* emphasises the Gothic for the traditional Afrikaner family, other works such as S.L. Grey's *The Mall* and Lauren Beukes's *Moxyland* apply the Gothic to a range of South Africans and the anxieties they face. Lauren Beukes and Sarah Lotz address this deficit to include elements of popular culture, such as zombies and cyborgs, as well as readings of the city in their narratives. Maria Beville (2009) argues that as modern societies developed, the nature of the Gothic changed. For Beville, one such change in

demographics that impacted the Gothic was urban development,¹¹⁹ which resulted in the significance of the psychoanalytical and Darwinian approaches to reading the Gothic:

Gothic, as a distinctive literary mode, became less conspicuous. The urban landscape replaced the forest, supernatural and abject forces became internalised and the distinctions between reality and fiction began to dissolve. It is widely accepted that parallel to this change of aesthetic, the Gothic transmuted in response to the challenges of contemporary, social, philosophical and artistic developments. The most significant of these extra-textual developments is psychoanalysis (62).

The characters in *Deadlands* embody the cultural history of South Africa and articulate what it means to be a millennial, emphasising the role of the city in the construction and performance of identity.¹²⁰ While the postcolonial city is an emblem of hybridity and modernity, the destruction thereof is indicative of the threat posed by a history that constantly invades the contemporary.¹²¹ As demonstrated in the layout of the city itself and the literature about the city, the present cannot be understood without a memory of the past. In this way, the city itself becomes a palimpsest in which history is re-inscribed and reinvented, rendering the city Other to its inhabitants. To reiterate the point made in the previous chapter, Debra Shaw (2013) states that the modern city is inextricably linked with the body. However, rather than being like the body, the modern city acts upon the body.¹²² Furthermore, Shaw indicates the psychoanalytic significance of this distinction:

With the rise of psychoanalysis in the early 20th century, a discourse emerged which equated the presence of the disordered unconscious within the ordering of the psyche with the presence of the disordered and uncontrolled primitive within the ordering both of the body and its social space. The past here was thought to survive as an atavistic presence in the lower classes in the same way that the

¹¹⁹ Stephen Graham (2004: 20) also studies the impact of cyberspace and technology on the centrality of the city, stating that “in a world of increasing economic and infrastructural liberalisation, the giant transnational media and infrastructure firms that build and control the material bases for cyberspace tend to concentrate their investments where the main markets are – in major cities, urban regions and metropolitan corridors [yet] one third of the world’s population has yet to make telephone call (let alone log onto the internet). [. . .] these hidden urban spaces are ‘grotesque’ sci-fi fusions of technology and deprivation”.

¹²⁰ As an example, Sarah Nuttall (2009) uses the mall as an emblem of the city, upon which identity is actively constructed.

¹²¹ Lauren Beukes’s *Zoo City* and *Moxyland* both address narratives of segregation. For Beukes, writing about South Africa, for example, is necessarily writing about its apartheid history.

¹²² Sarah Nuttall makes a similar observation in her discussion of the physical layout of the city.

physical appearance of non-European bodies was held to indicate a lower stage in the evolutionary hierarchy (781).

The *Deadlands* series embodies such a process of constant renewal, or evolution, where the social as well as physical structures of the city adapt to the needs of its inhabitants.¹²³ The city itself is never destroyed or never comes to an end, but instead changes continually. This constant renewal culminates in the constant possibility of different versions of the city.¹²⁴ Levina and Bui (2013), citing Jacques Derrida, state that the monstrous always refers to that which is unknown and that the future is therefore necessarily a monstrosity, as change is unavoidable, but it remains uncertain what the result of such change will be. According to this ontological approach, “monstrosity is an imaginary order prior to the Symbolic where the Ego creates a relationship between the self and its reflected image” (7). Furthermore, as soon as something becomes known – or is recognised – it can no longer be monstrous.

A monster is also that which appears for the first time and, consequently, is not yet recognized. A monster is a species for which we do not yet have a name, which does not mean that the species is abnormal, namely, the composition or hybridization of already known species. Simply, it shows itself [elle se montre] – that is what the word monster means – it shows itself in something that is not yet shown and that therefore looks like a hallucination, it strikes the eye, it frightens precisely because no anticipation had prepared one to identify this figure. . . . But as soon as one perceives a monster in a monster, one begins to domesticate it, one begins, because of the ‘as such’ – it is a monster as monster – to compare it to the norms, to analyze it, consequently to master whatever could be terrifying in this figure of the monster (6).

Deadlands familiarises the city, referencing known landmarks such as Table Mountain, as well as the marked difference between the poor and wealthy, but simultaneously marks its Otherness to the city it represents by indicating the presence of Guardians and Resurrectionists. Herne uses real life concerns as a departure point for her alternate version of

¹²³ This can be marked in the vast differences in the Cape Town and Johannesburg enclaves, but also in how various survivors encountered in *Death of a Saint* isolate themselves from the zombie invasion. For example, Mother and her community have made use of an old holiday resort located in the tree branches where zombies are unable to reach them. This demonstrates the evolution of a space, previously used for recreation, into a home for its new inhabitants, where constant work and maintenance are necessary.

¹²⁴ In *The Gothic Body: Materialism and degeneration at the fin de siècle* (2004), Kelly Hurley notes the Darwinian character of the Gothic, by stating that “gothic entropy can be seen as traditional narrative structure: it moves steadily, without detour or interruption, towards a telos, albeit the negative telos of loss of specificity. What Wells describes by contrast [in *Early writings in Science and Science Fiction*] is a narrative model more consistent with Darwin’s own: a model of random movement, non-directive, non-telic, aimless and errant.

Cape Town, but demonstrates its alterity by introducing fictional elements. Ironically, it is the introduction of fiction that problematises the real. En route to school, Cleo notes the development of a new sewerage system,¹²⁵ while Lele was bothered by the the city stank and hawkers.

‘Look Lelita,’ the Mantis [Cleo] said, after a lengthy silence. ‘isn’t it beautiful?’

I honestly couldn’t see what the hell she was talking about. As far as I was concerned not only was the city enclave as ugly as sin, but it also stank. The Mantis and Dad were always going on about the fancy-smancy sewerage system the Resurrectionists were constructing, but now we were edging into the centre of the sector and the place reeked of open drains and other foul stuff I didn’t want to think about [...] We topped a rise and I got another tantalising view of Table Mountain in-between the spilling clouds.

The rickshaw driver slid to an abrupt stop.

‘What now!’ The Mantis said, looking at me in irritation as if it was my fault.

‘Resurrectionist parade, ma’am’ the rickshaw driver said, pointing towards the road ahead where a solid wall of bodies was marching in formation, droning some tuneless phrase over and over again. I couldn’t make out the words, but it had to be the same kind of crap the Resurrectionists at Gran’s funeral had spouted.

‘Guardians!’ I said, unthinkingly grabbing the Mantis’ arm (14).

For Herne, poverty is not categorised as the Other, but the city itself is made uncanny by the presence of the Guardians and Resurrectionists, who are simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar.¹²⁶ Lele projects her own assumptions of the Guardians and Resurrectionists alike and, as a result, views them as a threat to her ideologies. As Shaw notes, atavism is not unfamiliar in the city, as Lele demonstrates by equating the ugliness of the city with sin.¹²⁷ However, the Cape Town Lele inhabits is made unfamiliar to the reader in its criticism of the “fancy smancy sewerage system”. In 2006, Hellen Zille was elected Mayor of Cape Town

¹²⁵ Waste management is and was a real concern for the City of Cape Town since the early 2000s.

¹²⁶ In Lele’s narrative, they are presented as familiar capitalist overlords. For her, they supply the goods from the mall, mainly to the Resurrectionists and transport people between settlements in exchange for a continuous supply of corpses.

¹²⁷ Hurley cites Cesare Lombroso’s theory of anthropological criminality in order to demonstrate Lombroso’s belief that physical appearance, or in the case of human beings their genetic features, determines criminality.

after much deliberation (Zille); she remained in office until 2009. During this period, the city released press statements stating that “certain storm water and sewerage systems” would be repaired (Zille), and the N2 gateway project was initiated. With backing from the Constitutional Court, residents of the Joe Slovo Township were evicted and relocated, calling to mind the evictions of District Six residents during the 1970s. Zille continued her work as a public figure, predominantly in her role as leader of the DA until May 2015, when she was replaced by Mmusi Maimane. In 2013, the city of Cape Town, still under DA leadership, installed portable sewerage systems in informal settlements around Cape Town. However, residents were dissatisfied with the sewerage system, claiming that it was “just a more sophisticated version of the bucket toilets” (Mposo). In protest, sewerage was flung at DA councillors, roads were blocked and a community hall was burnt down. The media reacted to this by constructing government officials as the ‘targets’ of protesters who “managed to empty buckets of raw sewerage on every vehicle in the convoy, including the vehicle carrying Zille, as well as a bus that had earlier ferried people to the event” (Mposo).

Like Cleo, the City of Cape Town took an optimistic approach to the proposed changes being made to the condition of the city’s sewerage systems and, like Lele, the residents of Cape Town were not impressed with these changes. Although Lele does not protest this specific aspect of her dissatisfaction with the governance of the City, Herne creates similarities between what her character represents and the lived realities of the inhabitants of Cape Town, who are also subjected to vast differences between poor and wealthy. While Cleo represents the city governance, who take pride in the projects they initiate, Lele represents the dissatisfied inhabitants, who continue to live in abject poverty despite being patronised by those in power. In this way, *Deadlands* embodies a representational approach to Otherness, in which “the Other [is] not as external to our culture, but rather [. . .] representational of those characteristics that we repress in order to fit into the cultural normative regime” (Levina, 4). In this case, the poor are not rejected as living outside the boundaries of a civil society, or inhabiting another culture, but are constructed as part of the culture of politics as it exists in Cape Town.

Monstrous Bodies

Throughout the *Deadlands* series, Otherness is inscribed on the bodies of characters; the most pertinent example of this is the wanted posters distributed in the Cape Town enclave early in *Death of a Saint*. The protagonists, Lele, Saint, Ash and Ginger, are named and described in terms of their age, nationality and physical characteristics. For example, Ash is distinguished from others by his “different-coloured eyes (grey/ black)”, and Lele is described as being “5 ft 2, short (possibly shorn) hair [and] slight build” (7). In contrast, Saint and Ginger are also described in terms of their physical characteristics: “Well built unruly hair” and “extra-large build, red (ginger) hair” – as well as the weapons they carry – “known to use chains and fire as weapons” and “carries a chainsaw”. These characteristics and the mere fact that they are wanted criminals show how they differ from other residents. Also, the identifying markers used in the posters set them apart from other teenagers. To reiterate points made in the previous chapter, the protagonists are all millennials¹²⁸ and enact Sarah Nuttall’s processes of self-stylisation and entanglement. In *Entanglement*, Nuttall (2009) notes that, for millennials, self-stylisation draws attention to the self-conscious expression of identity, enacted on the body. Individual identity as it is experienced subjectively is made visible through clothing, hairstyles, and accessories.¹²⁹

The conception of the body as a work of art, an investment in the body’s special presence and powers, a foregrounding of the capacity for sensation, marks Y-culture. Selfhood and subjectivity are presented less as inscriptions of broader institutional and political forces than as an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process (109).

For Jean Baudrillard, the “artful process” of fashioning identity delineated by Nuttall is also one of consumption and the body itself becomes an object of salvation that requires narcissistic reinvestment from a dissociated subject. Thus, in Baudrillard’s view, the body serves as a threatening double¹³⁰ to the subject inhabiting the body. In his discussion of an article found in *Elle* magazine, which promotes reconciling individual subjects with their bodies, Baudrillard notes this narcissistic objectification of the body in consumer societies:

¹²⁸ Elsewhere referred to as Generation Y.

¹²⁹ Which, for Baudrillard, feeds into the commodification of the body.

¹³⁰ For Baudrillard, the body is also a commodity.

If you don't make your bodily devotions, if you sin by omission, you will be punished. Everything that ails you comes from being culpably irresponsible towards yourself (your own salvation) [. . .] one can see how this discourse, under the guise of reconciling everyone with their own body, does in fact reintroduce, between the subject and objectified body as threatening double, the same relations which are those of social life [. . .] what is interesting is the suggestion that one should revert back to one's own body and invest it narcissistically 'from the inside', not in any sense to get to know it in depth, but, by a wholly fetishistic and spectacular logic, to form it into a smoother, more perfect, more functional object for the outside world (131).

Thus, taken as an object, the millennial's body celebrated as an art form by Nuttall functions as a threatening object to the protagonists' subjectivity and identities, but the narcissistic investment therein assures the continued existence of the subject. As a site for consumption, the body and how identity is displayed take precedence over internal aspects of identity. This is made most apparent in *Deadlands* and *Army of the Lost*, where the uncanny nature of the unknown zombie parasite that inhabits Lele, Ash, Saint and Thabo's bodies is emphasised.¹³¹ Early in *Deadlands*, the mysterious substance is linked to the resurrection of corpses¹³² that led to the zombie invasion, and is treated as a threat. However, as Lele recognises the pleasure of being separate from this threat, she becomes aware of her own subjectivity:

To describe what I was seeing as 'grotesque' or 'horrific' would be a serious understatement. The hillock was a huge sprawling pile of bones and skulls. Thousands upon thousands of them. And it appeared to be moving.

Filled with a horrible fascination I edged closer, making sure that I kept out of sight. I could make out a few tufts of rotten material stuck in amongst the bones, and as I made my way down the slope I realised why I'd thought the pile was moving, slippery tendrils of white stuff – what Saint had called spaghetti – were snaking around the skulls and body parts (127).

¹³¹ The presence of this substance also renders them Other from the rest of the protagonists who, although they are also immune from zombie detection, are not infected with what Lucien later refers to as an "affliction" (*Death of a Saint* 226). For Lele and Lucien, hosting the parasite is shameful, suggesting that they may be stigmatised.

¹³² Kristeva indicates that the human corpse is the ultimate abject because it serves as a concrete reminder of the observer's own inevitable death.

Lele's disgust suggests that at this point, she has already rejected the corpses and the "spaghetti stuff"¹³³ as something foreign to herself. The awareness of its Otherness is necessary for Lele to be aware of herself. At this point, she is unaware that she is possessed by the silver tendrils; she not only becomes the aware of the fact that she is alive, but also that unlike the corpses on the mound, she is not dead. The narrative is consistent with Julia Kristeva's understanding of the experience of horror, which she in turn links to enjoyment. In Kristeva's example, fire is the rejected threat (much like the infected corpses in Lele's narrative), as it poses a definite threat to human flesh:

A big fire at night always produces an exciting and exhilarating effect; this explains the attraction of fireworks; but in the case of fireworks, the graceful and regular shape of the flames and the complete immunity from danger produce a light and playful effect comparable to the effect of a glass of champagne. A real fire is quite another matter: there the horror and a certain sense of personal danger, combined with the well-known exhilarating effect of a fire at night, produce in the spectator (not, of course, in one whose house has burnt down) a certain shock to the brain and, as it were, a challenge to his own destructive instincts, which, alas, lie buried in the soul of even the meekest and most domesticated official of the lowest grade. This grim sensation is almost always delightful. 'I really don't know if it is possible to watch a fire without some enjoyment' (18).

Lele's "horrible fascination" with the heap of corpses suggests that, at that moment, she is confronted with the symbolic figure of her own death, or her own consumption by the spaghetti parasite.¹³⁴ Lele witnesses the horror of corpses that have been reanimated and expired a second time – first from its living, human state, then from its infested, zombie form. When Lele realises that the zombie parasite exists in some form in her own body, she is confronted not with her mortality as much as her own monstrosity. She is able to identify the silver tendrils as something similar to but also different from the parasite that animates the zombies. At the end of *Deadlands*, Paul (Zit Face), who has by this time become a Guardian, tells Lele that she is more like the guardians than she thinks, and that she will eventually become one of them:

¹³³ In *Deadlands*, the substance is never named specifically as a virus, parasite or technology.

¹³⁴ The parasite both consumes in the sense that the human body is taken over by it, and, at least for those individuals who were turned into zombies after they died, results in inevitable decay.

‘What do you mean help Thabo. How?’

‘How do you think Lele? He can become one of us, as we had planned.’

‘What? No!’

‘Then he will die,’ Paul said, again in that same lifeless tone. He waved his hand towards the shop doorway. ‘And he will join the dead ones’ [who he previously mentioned are like slaves to the Guardians].

‘Because you’re . . . you’re monsters!’ it was the only word I could come up with right then to describe them. What else *were* the Guardians?

‘It’s not us who are the monsters, Lele.’

‘What do you mean by that?’

Paul laughed his empty laugh. ‘People kill each other, brutalise each other, and do far worse things to each other than we ever could. Like what is happening in the city now. It is not us sending people out of the enclave to become the living dead.¹³⁵ We are not the ones filled with hate’ (284–5).

Ironically, the only word Lele can think of to describe the Guardians when confronted is “monster”.¹³⁶ In order to experience her own subjectivity and construct it as morally superior, it is necessary for Lele to reject the zombies (the dead ones) as much as she rejects the Guardians. However, the silver tendrils that give the Guardians their seemingly eternal life are also present in her own body, and destabilise her idea of who she is.¹³⁷ Having named the Guardians, Lele has little choice but to identify them as monstrous when she discovers the parasitic technology inside her own body. In this way, Lele creates the monster she eventually recognises within herself.

In an article entitled *Zombies as a form of immaterial labour: The modern monster and the death of death*, the author describes the zombie as “a post-being, a no-longer-human, an impossible subject”. For Larsen, the zombie embodies a “lack incarnated . . . at the level of enunciation in the zombie narrative”. Larsen explains:

¹³⁵ This implies that, like the original Vodou mythology, the threat is not dying, but becoming a zombie-enslaved to a master and then dying.

¹³⁶ The text also emphasises that the origin of the zombie apocalypse is unknown, and therefore represents a monstrous future.

¹³⁷ When Lele asks Paul what that is, he answers: “It is what we are.” Lele proceeds to hide the fact that the silver tendrils inhabit her body, even though she has learned that Ash and Saint also possess them. When Lucien confronts her about the secret they share, they both agree that it is shameful.

Its presence cannot be explained away as a mechanism for reintegrating social tension through fear [as it is in *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*]. It is a strange, tragicomic monster that displaces evil and its concept: the zombie isn't evil, nor has it been begot by evil; it is a monstrosity that deflects itself in order to show that our imagination cannot stop at the monster. It is irrelevant if you kill it (there will always be ten more rotten arms reaching through the broken window pane). The zombie pushes a horizon of empty time ahead of it; whether that time will be messianic or apocalyptic is held in abeyance. Or, the zombie represents the degree to which we are incapable of reimagining the future. So the question becomes: How can we look over its shoulder? What future race comes after the zombie? How do we cannibalize self-cannibalization?

Although from Lele's perspective the zombie – or Guardian – is necessarily evil,¹³⁸ the Guardians inhabit a realm outside life or death; they are neither living nor dead. The Guardians in *Deadlands* deflect social and political evils to reveal how humans and their societies embody evil. By being non-entities, their inescapable presence reveal how human custom and its need for a hierarchy lead to human-on-human Othering and the violence that accompanies it.¹³⁹ It is necessary for Lele to see the Guardians, and ultimately all the zombies as evil entities who take advantage of the living, while in reality, it was human government officials and Resurrectionists who established the class system in the enclave. Similarly, in *Army of the Lost*, Jova motions for humans to dominate the dead, despite being aware of the childlike zombie Tommy discovered in a bathroom. When Tommy informs Jova, he reacts indifferently, suggesting that he either knows that zombies are potentially harmless to humans and could possibly co-exist with humans, or that his political ambition prevents him from investigating the possibility. In either scenario, Jova demonstrates the potential for evil more than the Guardians or any of the other zombies, as they are indifferent to human activities. Like Coom, Jova's bid to destroy the zombie population by the end of *Army of the Lost*

¹³⁸ This is necessary if she sees herself as good.

¹³⁹ In most cases, Guardians do not interfere with humans, but limit their activity to the Deadlands and zombies. In the enclave itself, it is humans who parade as Guardians (Cleo mentions that Resurrectionists wear robes in reverence to the Guardians). In reality, wearing robes is a means of hiding the identities of humans. On several occasions, the protagonists themselves use Guardian robes as a disguise.

appears to be a strategy that will ensure his dominance in a human context rather than forge peace and prosperity.¹⁴⁰

In his online post, Larsen also mentions: “Beyond the experience economy, and beyond sociological analysis of these, there lie new artistic thinking and imagining . . . Thus we can witness how it all falls apart in the end: sociology, zombie as allegory, even the absence of the end that turns out to be one. What is left are material traces to be picked up anew.” Thus, the zombie embodies a negative telos that can only signal something new. By embodying death and emptiness and ‘lack’, the only possibility that remains beyond the zombie is its binary opposite – the presence of something different.

The Death of Death: Saint as Art

In *Army of the Lost*, Paul’s dialogue with Lele reveals that Saint, who is also possessed by the mysterious silver thread, is in fact not dead – she inhabits a space elsewhere between life and death; she is alive in the realm of the undead, as he, Thabo and Ripley are. However, only a few living individuals like Tommy and Mr Philiso are able to understand the undead and relate to them somehow. After her accident, Saint loses all sense of limitation, and is not overly concerned with investing and preserving her body. Previously, Saint and the other Mall Rats would scour their environment for food, shelter, clothing and transport as means of protecting and preserving their bodies. They would move it from one place to another, only to repeat the process in a space that offers different means of survival. In other words, they would enact the kind of narcissistic investment in their bodies that characterises consumerism, with no sense of an end goal or actively seeking out others like themselves.¹⁴¹ Once Saint becomes zombified, her actions are directed toward her end goal of finding the origins of the zombie invasion, and she is able to cut the thread that connects her to Lele, Ash and the other Mall Rats, as they have become superfluous. During *Army of the Lost*, Saint often refers back to her own past to make sense of her new form, but the text suggests that she is at least capable, if not yet willing, to cut ties with her own history as well.¹⁴² After her accident, survival becomes less of a concern and she becomes less aware of her body, because

¹⁴⁰ In *Army of the Lost*, Cezanne mentions that before the zombie cataclysm, she and Coom were a middle-class suburban family; however, after Coom’s multiple, strategic marriages to left-handed women, he was able to build an empire and become a kingpin.

¹⁴¹ When they meet Ember, Lucien and Mr Philiso, their encounters happen almost by accident, during their pursuit of shelter or supplies.

¹⁴² In this dialogue with herself, she refers to her former self as Ntombi. If she chooses, she can continue to dwell in this imaginary space she created from her memories.

she has already overcome the barrier of death. Furthermore, her narrative becomes separated from the rest of the Mall Rats as she realises the futility of their actions:

Saint has lost all sense of time. How long has she been lying here?

Hours? Days? Weeks?

It's as if she's just another piece of the wreckage scattered around her: her skin is as rusty as the wheel rims, her bones as dented as the truck's crushed carapace. It would be so easy to lie here forever until she's nothing but a stain on the tarmac.

She doesn't feel any pain, although she has an idea that at some point her back was broken, the memories of how she ended up in this position are vague and out of order, like pages of a manuscript scattered to the wind (74).

Although she is aware of her body, it is less a canvas on which she is able to enact her identity, and more a link between hers and her environment and other life forms. For example, she is able to sense her travelling companion, the hyena's hunger and fear rather than read it in his physical expressions. Saint's narrative exemplifies Donna Haraway's understanding of nature in which the physical and imaginary are both real, but is in fact so physical that it can be mapped out as a journey across the natural landscape. Saint goes from occupying the same narrative space as the protagonists to embarking on her own quest. While Ginger and Ember become silent in *Army of the Lost* despite occupying the same narrative space as the other protagonists, Saint remains present as a fractured being, and progresses along an entirely different path. Throughout Saint's narrative in *Army of the Lost*, she psychically connects to her environment with threads, and is able to follow these to reach a destination that becomes progressively clearer, as she interprets the world via her connection to her childhood memories.¹⁴³ Furthermore, Saint's narrative exists outside the dichotomous world of the living protagonists and demonstrates the idea of nature being all inclusive. Haraway (3) claims that, like the difference between the physical and imagined, the difference between nature and science is also constructed and this difference is used as a means for one discourse to oppress the other. Therefore, science and nature exist on the same plane: rather than being separate and alien to one another, they represent two poles of the same theoretical space. However, capitalist society favours science over nature for its

¹⁴³ She considers "let[ting] go of the last meaningless pieces" and "giving in to the darkness" in order to be like Ripley and the other Guardians, but Ntombi, with her drive to live, refuses to let go, and feeds her happy images from her childhood; she has the option of remaining in this (heavenly) delusion, but chooses "Hell", where she believes she will find the answers to her questions.

apparent discursive objectivity. Objectivity is therefore commodified and used as a means to control certain discourses.

We have granted science the role of a fetish, an object human beings make only to forget their role in creating it [. . .] We have perversely worshipped science as a reified fetish in two complementary ways: (I) by completely rejecting scientific and technical discipline and developing feminist social theory totally apart from the natural sciences, and (II) by agreeing that nature is our enemy and that we must control our 'natural' bodies (by techniques given to us by biomedical science) at all costs to enter the hallowed kingdom of the cultural body politic as defined by liberal (and radical) theorists of political economy, instead of by ourselves (8–9).

Thus, for Haraway, an unnatural binary opposite between science and nature is constructed in order to drive the cultural body politic and its political economy. Like Haraway's Cyborg, Saint has become a boundary creature and is now literally monstrous, as she exists outside these binaries and signifies the unification of discourses, perhaps as a palimpsest.¹⁴⁴ In her death, Saint is able to transcend the binary vision of human subjectivity and inhabit a sublime space, in which she is able to direct her own narrative.

Monsters in the 21st Century

The twenty-first century is characterised by rapid movement which includes faster modes of travel, high-speed communication and instant gratification that can be equated to rapid death and replenishing. As soon as one need has been satisfied, a new one arises that will be satisfied just as quickly. For example, on any given web page, dozens of links to other pages, videos and articles exist, each linking to other pages with similar content. Furthermore, smaller, more efficient devices are always in development and regularly replace its predecessors.¹⁴⁵ According to Amber Case (n.pag), new technology and the ways we interact with it means that we have all become cyborgs – not in the sense that we are physically or externally modified in order to adapt to new situations, but that we have mentally altered ourselves to adapt to a rapidly changing world. As individuals, we are digitally extended to connect to any place that suits our purpose for that moment, and are able to switch between

¹⁴⁴ The image of the pages of a manuscript scattered in the wind signifies this. While the palimpsest literally consists of images and words erased and inscribed over one another, Herne uses a reversal of this – instead of being layered, the pages of the metaphorical manuscript are scattered.

¹⁴⁵ This is particularly relevant in a capitalist culture. These devices often cost obscene amounts of money and are immediately fed back into mega corporations that produce only more and more.

such moments simply by changing web pages or clicking a link. For Case, digital technology thus has the effect of bending the way we perceive space and time. Drawing on the language of quantum mechanics, Case notes that technology creates a techno-social wormhole that has the psychological effect of compressing space-time. For David Harvey (vii), the influence of technology has a profound effect on the way individuals and societies exercise control over their environments. Harvey surmises that the “[sea change in cultural and political economical practices] are bound up with the emergence of new dominant ways in which we experience space and time”. Harvey cites Baudelaire’s *The Painter of Modern Life* to demonstrate how the ephemeral and fleeting are bound with the immaculate and immutable, “making it appear as if [modernity] can, as Lionel Thrilling once observed, swing around in meaning until it’s facing the opposite direction” (10). For Baudelaire (403), “Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable.” For Harvey, “being suffused with a sense of the fleeting, the fragmentary, and the contingent” have profound consequences for the way the modern subject views or locates themselves within a short-lived and incomplete system of meaning. Harvey goes on to state that modernity is simultaneously separated from and linked to its own history, and is doomed to eventually consume itself: “Modernity can have no respect for its own past, let alone any pre-modern social order.” Harvey adds:

The transitionariness of things make it difficult to preserve any sense of historical continuity – if there is any meaning to history, it has to be discovered and defined from within the maelstrom of change. . . . Modernity entails a ruthless break with any or all preceding historical conditions, but is characterised by a never ending process of internal ruptures and fragmentations within itself.

[. . .]

The lust to dominate nature entailed the domination of human beings,¹⁴⁶ could only lead to ‘a nightmare condition of self-domination’ (11–13).

Taking into account Haraway’s, Case’s and Harvey’s definitions of nature, technology and modernity, Saint’s narrative becomes allegorical for the process of becoming a postmodern subject, or in Lele’s words, monstrous.¹⁴⁷ In *Army of the Lost*, Saint is transitioning between

¹⁴⁶ As well as the domination of space, the economy, science and technology when Haraway’s definition of nature, which includes literally everything, is taken into account.

¹⁴⁷ Using Haraway’s understanding, monstrosity may be used to refer to hybrid Others; who do not fit neatly into established social categories. Saint does not fit into the categories of living, dead or Guardian.

her human and final forms, and does not (yet) occupy a singular position as zombie, Guardian or modified human. For Baudelaire,¹⁴⁸ the modern subject is one who “in each movement represents the multiform life and the moving grace of all life’s elements”. Furthermore, this subject passionately seeks out that which is other than himself and embodies it fully, but continues to exist as one who can be described as modern. Saint, however modern she may be, is also a hybrid, unnamed being. She did not die in the car accident, but was transformed into something other as a result of the silver tendrils. Her histories as Saint and as Ntombi are fragments of her future self, and if she is to discover the answers to her questions about the origin of the zombie invasion, these fragments will be necessary to translate her intentions into action. Before she is able to translate meaning into action, Saint makes a number of connections to her own history – before the zombie attacks and before her death – to organise her meanings into language.

Before the darkness, Saint would have run from [the horse]. Her old self wasn’t too keen on animals [. . .] Ntombi feeds her a recollection of something Ash said to her years ago: The world and everything in it are just molecules, bonded together. He tried to explain DNA to her, but she wasn’t able to follow that at all. She has to attach herself to the horse in the same way she connected herself to Bambi (150).

Saint recalls a fragment from her past, in which she was unable to understand chemical bonds, and instead relates it to the way she bonds herself to the animals. Saint gives new meaning to the memory by using it as a means to demonstrate her understanding that all life and matter consist of the same materials, bonded together in different ways. By means of the memory, Saint is able to realise that she, Bambi (the hyena) and the horse are the same; despite their apparent dissimilarities, she is able to out beyond difference to a space where she connects with them through their similarities. This series of internal fractures between Saint and Ntombi eventually lead to a different version of herself – one in which she is compassionate toward animals, where she admits that during life she had no real affinity for animals. As she transitions from one state of being to another, she necessarily experiences the ruptures within herself that eventually build up to this change.

In *Deadlands*, the silver tendrils (which may be nano-technology or an organic parasite, or some combination of the two) allow the teenagers whose bodies are consumed by the

¹⁴⁸ Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*.

mysterious substance to connect in a way that appears to compress space and time. Although Saint's body becomes almost redundant in *Army of the Lost*, her narrative never excludes it entirely, indicating that it still has a part to play in the way she is represented.¹⁴⁹ Before she is turned into a zombie, she is one of the most physically active characters, whose body is central to her narrative. Lele notices her physicality before she becomes a speaking character,¹⁵⁰ and throughout *Deadlands* and *Death of a Saint*, her movements are emphasised more than that of any other character. She is always fighting, running or doing something in a way that becomes synonymous with Saint. In other words, before the accident, Saint does not merely move, but she is movement embodied. Perhaps the most relevant example of Saint's physicality before the accident is her and Lele's fight with Previn and Scott aboard the cruise ship. Both female characters fight the would-be rapists, but Saint's movements do not allow Previn the chance to fight back, while Scott manages to knock Lele down, and is only taken down through environmental factors. Previn is defeated through the force of Saint's physicality:

A boot clouts [Lele] in the stomach, forcing the breath out of [her] lungs [. . .] Previn and Saint are circling each other. He towers over her, but I know this won't make any difference.

'Oh I like it,' Previn says, waving the flick knife in front of him. 'A chick wo thinks she can fight. Sexy.'

'Sorry,' saint says. 'I'm not into guys.'

'I can change that,' Previn says 'It wouldn't be the first time.'

Rushing forward he lashes out wildly with the knife, but even after who knows how many drinks Saint is more than a match for him. She catches his wrist and twists it so that he's forced to drop the knife. Then she spins and kicks him with full force in the groin. Previn yelps and drops to his knees (221).

Scott is knocked out after Lele pulls him downward, and he hits his head against the table behind him, but Saint disarms and binds Previn with sheer force. Lele makes use of gravity and is perhaps lucky that Scott was knocked out when his head hit the table. The environment

¹⁴⁹ Not only is her narrative a representation of her herself, it is also an articulation thereof. Haraway includes action as well as non-action in her understanding of articulation. Thus, for Haraway, anything that communicates meaning is an articulation.

¹⁵⁰ *Deadlands* (110)

and coincidence have little to do with Saint's victory. Even as Lele narrates it, each move is calculated and decisive – she deliberately builds momentum, takes Previn down and ties him up. The near-rape aimed at “correcting” her sexuality is a physical threat, and Saint's reaction shows this. As a zombie, Saint still acknowledges her body, but she is far more at ease now that physical survival and maintaining her body are no longer her main priority.

Saint can walk for hours without getting tired, leaving an endless trail of footprints in the red dust. The steady throb in the back of her mind leads her away from the highway and into a world of dry dirt, thorn trees and bones. The fastest route to her destination is through the desert, but Bambi's need for water means that she is unable to stray too far from the river.

The hyena is the only weak spot in her new reality.

She should leave him behind. She knows this.

But every time she tries, Ntombi stops her (146).

Because it is no longer necessary to focus on her immediate survival, Saint is able to reflect on her own destination and define exactly what her goals are. Although she still considers Bambi a weakness,¹⁵¹ Ntombi's connection to him means that she has not yet become absolutely indifferent to life, as Ripley and the other Guardians have become.

Saint's narrative has slowed down significantly in comparison to the other protagonists. She is not driven by a sense of urgency and constant threats of death and escape. She is not a hatchling – at least not in her own mind and follows a clear path (although, at this point, she has not been able to express that purpose to herself or the reader as clearly) that she senses in the form of otherworldly threads (to the reader). As a result of her attachment to the living,¹⁵² she is able to slow down to the pace of the living, rather than accelerate to the speed of life. In other words, the compassion that stems from the fragments of her former life (Ntombi) allows her to slow down and embrace the Other¹⁵³ rather than speed up in order to accomplish her personal mission and assert her subjectivity by dominating the Other. Initially, Saint's narrative reflected the sense of detachment from other individuals characteristic of our own digital age, but as a zombie, she connects with others by understanding and acting on her own

¹⁵¹ Later Saint turns Bambi into a zombie as well, opening up the possibility for an ecological narrative in *Ash Remains*.

¹⁵² With Bambi and the lost horse she demonstrates sympathy for the living, non-human subject

¹⁵³ In this case, living Others, some of whom have never existed in human form as Saint has.

subjective experiences. While Saint's experiences are not facilitated by technology, they are reminiscent of the zombification and disconnection experienced in an age dominated by technology. While Saint's experience isn't necessarily digital, the alien invader (tendrils) function as an exogenous component, that that expands her consciousness, and to some extent her physicality in the same way digital technologies allow humans to expand their awareness. In addition to having the effect of turning everyone into cyborgs, Amber Case argues that digital technologies create the space for the existence of a second digital self. In much the same way, Saint is able to experience a number of selves, located in various regions of her existence.¹⁵⁴ Modern people exist as physical beings, and as online presences that exist in the form of social media profiles, blogs and applications. This second existence results in what she refers to as ambient intimacy: while we are not necessarily connected to everyone at all times, we are able to choose which online presence to connect to at any time and in almost any place.¹⁵⁵ Case states that we have become an "instantaneous, button-clicking" culture¹⁵⁶ with a panicked sense of time.

Saint's death allowed her to forego this sense of panic still demonstrated by the hatchlings, and is able to slow down and connect on a more humane level through her otherworldly connection to her surroundings. This demonstrates that, more than embodying what human society seems to lack – patience, compassion, understanding – and showing humanity its own monstrous reflection, Saint's narrative and Paul's dialogue with Lele demonstrate that because the zombie lacks the need for dominance or the narcissistic sense of self that stems from it, they inhabit a space without hierarchy and are complete within themselves

¹⁵⁴ In a recent case, Penny Sparrow became a household name after she tweeted racially offensive content. As a result, she lost her job and her reputation was publicly impaired.

¹⁵⁵ In his discussion on the selfie in the neoliberal era, Henry Giroux indicated that the selfie is an indication that the private sphere has become commodified. Online trends include nude celebrity selfies, bathroom selfies and the "sleeping" selfie, in which the subject captures what is supposed to be private moments and sharing them online.

¹⁵⁶ Even the platform on which the discussion was presented (Ted Talks) is a compressed, digitised version of the traditional classroom lecture.

Chapter Five: The function and production of waste in *Deadlands*

For Sherryl Vint (134), “New and abject posthumans raise anxieties about massification and material collapse that emblemize our current state of neoliberal crisis and biopolitical governance [that] bears little relation to Haraway’s ironic cyborg” who, rather than embodying the unification of discourse, reinforces binaries.¹⁵⁷ For Vint, this manifestation of abjection is most evident in the representation of zombies as the infected living rather than the reanimated dead (134). *Deadlands* sets up the contrast between the two in the different types of zombies that inhabit its narrative universe: the reanimates, or rotters who are born from the corpses of the deceased, and the Guardians who are made from the infected bodies of teenagers. The rotters embody a constant, but non-renewable source of labour for the Guardians who maintain their numbers by recycling human bodies. However, the rotters are also subject to decay. This forms part of the Guardian’s initiative to save the environment and “stop the whole population becoming like the rotters” (322). For Joan-Mari Barendse (2015: 88), this suggests that the only way to end the destruction of the environment is to destroy the human population and that an alien master is the only hope to save both humans and the environment. However, human corpses are a necessary part of the Guardian’s proposed social and economic order, as they depend of the reanimates as a source of labour. Early in the series, the corpses of the dead, including Lele’s Grandmother are sent into the Deadlands in order to join the ranks of enslaved rotters under the grim pretext of entering ‘a new life’ (4) enforced by the quasi-religious control of Resurrectionists. Young adults and adolescents are encouraged to reproduce in the enclave as a means of ultimately sustaining the Rotter population who work for the Guardians. Although the Guardians later reveal to Saint that their aim is to preserve the environment, and that humans have squandered the power given to them in the form of a zombie parasite, their own behaviour suggests that they too create ideologies in order to maintain their own authority in the enclave. When Lele and Paul talk in the mall, Paul intimates that the Guardians dominate the new hierarchy under the pretence of saving the human race from itself. When Lele asks Paul how the Guardians control the other zombies, he responds by saying ‘In the enclave, you have workers – people who pull you along the streets like horses, others who pick up the rubbish. That is what the dead are to us’ (274). This suggests that although the Guardians motivate their actions to Lele and Saint by claiming that they intend to save the human race, their actions result in a form of control

¹⁵⁷ For Michael Drake (2013: 229), the sense of renewal of social hierarchies and binaries, rather than their devolution is also apparent in the awareness of the performative nature of nationalist discourse.

which in turn, motivates Jova to instigate a civil war against the zombies. Rather than destroying the human population, this suggests that to some extent, the Guardians mirror human behaviour and power structures. The ways in which Guardians operate imply that they are dependent on the waste, including corpses produced by human life. The inhabitants of the enclave deliberately over produce bodies in order to sustain the number of Guardians, who they believe are the only means of safely moving between settlements and acquiring the commodities necessary for survival. The Guardians, who actively attempt to include the protagonists among their ranks by harvesting their bodies and infecting them with the silver tendrils, are more of a threat to the protagonists than the rotters, who cannot detect them. Their immunity to detection is exploited by Hester in *Deadlands* and by Coom and the Ama Kleva's in *Army of the lost*. This indicates that in both cases, the bodies of infected, and left-handed individuals are exploited in order to drive the economy that characterises the post-cataclysmic city. In other words, the capitalist system is driven by the biopolitics of the zombie apocalypse.

For Vint (138) “biopolitics works to separate within the individual subject that which is human (bios) and that which is merely living (zoe) in order “to keep what it can make into a thing and exploit (labour-power) and jettison what is inconvenient” (138). This means that whatever is inconvenient is essentially a waste product of a capitalist system driven by biopolitics. In this way, the individual is reduced to a source of labour as a result of their biology, while their subjectivity is repressed or forgotten, without necessarily being lost¹⁵⁸. Individual subjectivity thus becomes a form of waste produced by the capitalist system. The confrontation between Lele and Paul towards the end of *Deadlands* suggests that this form of waste manifests itself as the image of corporate affluence. Throughout the confrontation between Lele and Paul, the narrative highlights Paul and the other Guardian's lack of emotion, suggesting that the Guardian's emotions and subjectivity have been altered or forgotten in order to heighten their power over the collective dead. Furthermore, Paul often demonstrates a paternalistic attitude in order to demonstrate the superiority of the Guardians, who present themselves as indifferent and all- powerful.

It looked like Paul; it presumably had his memories (he'd recognised me, after all), but there was something sinisterly alien about the eyes, about the way he didn't seem to blink or show even a glimmer of emotion.

¹⁵⁸ This reflects the Marxist belief that the essence of the individual is destroyed through labour in the production of capital.

Then Ash asked the question we'd all been wondering. 'Why did you – the Guardians I mean – leave the mall intact?'

'Because it's your god.' [...] 'We couldn't destroy the thing you loved most. Before we came, we watched you carefully. Places like this are where you spent most of your time and energy (274-5).

When questioned about the mall, the reason Paul gives is that the Guardians were able to gain their power over humans by deliberately keeping the mall intact, thus keeping the humans trapped in their consumerist habit and unable to question the Guardians. The Guardians took control of the space between the humans and the mall and capitalised on the human population's fear of being attacked by zombies who are more often than not represented as benign inhabitants of the Deadlands in order to keep them confined to the enclave, giving the Guardians power over the human population. However, at this point in the series, it is not yet clear whether the Guardians are in fact acting to evolve the human race or re-enact a form of human politics in which they are the only authority figures.

For Jean Baudrillard (41) consumer societies measure affluence by its waste rather than only by what it (over) produces. Such squandering enables the individual and society to experience its own existence and assert its affluence. Furthermore, this indicates that the consumer society is not characterised by real affluence, but rather the sense that affluence can only be experienced by waste, rejection and abjection¹⁵⁹. Waste is therefore functional, in that it serves the social function of maintaining the semblance of affluence among the status quo:

All societies have always wasted, squandered, expended and consumed beyond what is strictly necessary for the simple reason that it is in the consumption of a surplus, of a superfluity that the individual -- and society -- feel not merely that they exist, but that they are alive. That consumption may go so far as *consumation*, pure and simple destruction, which then takes on a specific social function... The notion of utility, which has rationalistic, economic origins, thus needs to be revised in light of a much more general social logic in which waste, far from being an irrational residue, takes on a positive function, taking over where rational utility leaves off to play its part in a higher social functionality -- a social logic in which waste even appears ultimately as the

¹⁵⁹ For Julia Kristeva (1982: 12) the rejection and waste of food is the most elementary form of abjection, by which the individual separates the body proper, or self from that which is unclean.

essential function, the extra degree of expenditure, superfluity, the ritual uselessness of 'expenditure for nothing' (43-44).

The idea of humans as waste is emerges in other zombie narratives such as Zach Snyder's 2004 remake of George Romero's 1978 *Dawn of the Dead*, in which the primary conflict revolves around humans who have been infected with the zombie parasite, but have not yet become zombies themselves, and are therefore candidates for murder. These infected humans have become a threat to those who have not been infected, because they pose a threat of spreading the zombie virus. After a pregnant woman becomes infected, the father of the child conspires to keep her and their child alive, but all three are killed soon after the zombie-child is born. The family is comprised of an African-American man, Russian mother and part-zombie baby. Killing this hybrid family suggests that despite the cataclysmic scenario faced by the protagonists, the narrative favours the survival of the status quo established in the mall, rather than risking the introduction of a family that disrupts the given hierarchy. *Army of the Lost* introduces a similar narrative, in which Jova elects to create his own Guardian in his bid to destroy the zombie population rather than consider the possibility of peaceful co-existence between humans and zombies. At the end of the novel, Ash demonstrates his willingness to sacrifice his own life for Jova's cause. Ash is required to sacrifice his life in order to accommodate Jova's political cause, and Jova's actions suggests that he places less value on human life than on his own power. Thus, inciting a zombie genocide reflects on Jova's political ambitions as a means of perpetuating an unsustainable political practice. In other words, Jova's authority depends on Ash's sacrifice. This reflects a Derridean (113) notion that the subject's authority is dependent on a sacrifice made by the Other. Through his sacrifice, or at least the willingness to sacrifice his life at the end of *Army of the Lost*, Ash becomes more waste than Martyr. For Henry Giroux (2011: 36) "[political practice that relies on corporations and punitive governments] and the devaluation of the public go hand in hand". Giroux argues that practices that rely on sacrifice necessarily cultivates fear of the Other and fails to integrate the Other into society:

zombie politics and the punishing state do more than substitute charity and private aid for government-backed social provisions while they criminalize a range of existing social problems. They also cultivate a culture of fear and suspicion toward all those other immigrants, refugees, Muslims, youth, minorities of class and colour, the unemployed, the disabled, and the elderly-who, in the absence of dense social networks and social supports, fall prey to unprecedented

levels of displaced resentment from the media, public scorn for their vulnerability, and increased criminalization because social protections are considered too costly, thus rendering these groups both dangerous and unfit for integration into American society (36).

Not only does the dependence on the sacrifice of an Other to assert political power cause social problems for the Other, but it also prevents the Other from integrating into the given order. In *Army of the Lost*, the zombie's position outside human affairs means that they can be used as a tool to gain and maintain control by Guardians as well as ambitious humans like Jova without having any authority themselves. While it is implied that the Guardians started the zombie invasion as a means to protect the environment, the impact of the zombie war resulted in human waste in the form of abandoned buildings that include homes, schools, convenience stores and petrol stations listed throughout the series. Furthermore, the experiments conducted on zombies at 'Die Hel'¹⁶⁰ resulted in the destruction of human lives as well as the immediate environment. However, the Guardian's maintain that their sacrifice is in service of future generations' survival through evolution. When Saint telepathically questions the Guardians about "why [she is] not like the rotters", they reveal that she is 'the next wave'.one of the survivors." (323) – evolved. The Guardians can be seen as evolved because they need very little food or water to be sustained and have the power to travel and communicate without the need to produce technologies that enable them to do so resulting in the preservation of a sustainable, egalitarian Guardian society.

Contrasted to the necessary abjection, rejection and subsequent waste of human life Jova requires from Ash, Saint finds ways to spare Bambi and the Horse's lives after becoming a zombie herself. Not only does this suggest that as a zombie, she embodies more humane characteristics than she did during life, but by following her zombie instinct she is able to ensure that Bambi and the horse are able to experience a sense of belonging on their own terms. After indicating to the reader that Saint "wasn't too keen on animals" (150), Saint's recollection of the idea that "the world and everything in it are just molecules" (150) motivates her to find the team of horses to which the stray could attach itself. Although she "tries to send [the horse] a wash of calm, but fails" (150), it becomes apparent that "calm" for the horse does not necessarily mean the same thing as it does for Saint. Sundhaya Walthers

¹⁶⁰ *Army of the Lost* 320-324

(77) suggests that animal experience cannot be confined to human language. She states that the animals' "entry into language, via [...] textual representation, amounts not to an inclusion, but rather to a violent exclusion of the animal through the appropriation and containment of its silence". This means that for J.M. Coetzee's Elizabeth Costello, the representation of animals through language undermines their subjectivity, and limits it to human experience. By reducing the horse's experience to a molecular bond rather than an emotional one, Herne's narrative averts the assumption that animals experience the way humans do, and therefore does not require that animal subjectivity is relinquished in favour of its human narrators. Although animal subjectivity is not relinquished, the protagonists are able to project their fears and experiences onto the animals without affecting the animals themselves. Before Ginger adopts Bambi, a hyena is killed nearby their camp. After seeing the carcass, Ash is reminded of the constant danger they are in, despite the fact that they were able to relax the evening before the attack.

One glance is enough to convince me [Saint] that Ash was right to warn me. It's not pretty. Flies crawl over a grey shape the size of a large dog, which lies just below where we were sitting last night. The ground around it is stained a dark reddish brown, tufts of gory fur dotted in the grass.

I turn away. 'What sort of animal is that?'

'A hyena, I think,' he says, standing up and sliding his sunglasses over his eyes.

I drop to my haunches and poke through the clothes, cans, tampons and toiletries, checking what is salvageable. I pick up the remains of the map book. It's still readable, but the pages are torn. I chuck it at Ash.

'Last night really put things in perspective for me' he says.

'What do you mean?'

'This trip. How dangerous it could get.' (125).

The fact that Ash projects his awareness of the danger they are in onto the carcass suggests that the animal, having lost its ability to threaten the protagonists, became an Other through ways which Ash could experience himself.¹⁶¹ However, in order for this to happen, the hyena's life had to be sacrificed. Conversely, Ginger depends on the orphaned hyena to channel his trauma. After an uncharacteristic show of emotion, Ginger adopts an orphaned hyena and projects his desire to show affection onto it. Although he and Bambi form a bond

¹⁶¹ Furthermore, this links to Kristeva's (1982) idea that the corpse is the ultimate abject, as it literally embodies death.

of companionship, their relationship is limited to that between human and animal. Although Ginger often anthropomorphises Bambi, referring to the hyena as ‘he’ rather than ‘it’¹⁶² the hyena maintains its animal instincts.

Ginger puts the hyena on the ground. It raises its head and shakes its body.

‘You sure you want to do that, Ginger? [Saint asks].

‘He won’t run away.’

‘That’s not what’s worrying me.’ There are several ducklings paddling near to the bank below us. ‘Just watch it doesn’t- ‘

Too late. The hyena perks up and scurries towards the edge.

‘Bambi! No!’ Ginger shouts. He barges past me and rugby tackles the hyena, grabbing it around its torso before it can snap at the baby ducks. It yelps and whips around, clamping its teeth down on Ginger’s hand (2012: 137-8).

Bambi maintains his animal subjectivity despite Ginger’s maternal attitude toward him. This allows the two to become companions, but Ginger maintains a position of authority as a result of his projection. The narrative expresses Ginger’s subjectivity while Bambi’s remain outside the realm of communication.

Zombies and the need for sustainability

In March 2016 Howard Earnest stated that “zombies are as American as apple pie, blue jeans, bad credit scores and childhood obesity” because they embody rampant consumerism and emblematised popular culture. He goes on to say that zombies are a threat to humans because of our own reluctance to kill creatures that resemble our loved ones.¹⁶³ Earnest light-heartedly referred to Thomas Jefferson as “the nation’s founding zombie slayer” in reference to Jefferson’s environmental concerns. In 1789 Jefferson wrote to James Madison about the necessity for preservation of natural resources for future generations, stating that both practice and ideologies ought to expire after a finite number of years. Jefferson Writes:

[The] earth belongs in usufruct to the living; that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it. The portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his when himself ceases to be, and reverts to the society. If the society has formed no rules for the appropriation of its lands in severality, it will be taken by the first

¹⁶² *Death of a Saint* (2012: 126)

¹⁶³ A theme also expressed in Zach Snyder’s remake of George Romero’s *Dawn of the dead*.

occupants, and these will generally be the wife and children of the decedent. If they have formed rules of appropriation, those rules may give it to the wife and children, or to some one of them, or to the legatee of the deceased. So they may give it to its creditor. But the child, the legatee or creditor, takes it, not by natural right, but by a law of the society of which he is a member, and to which he is subject. Then, no man can, by natural right, oblige the lands he occupied, or the persons who succeed him in that occupation, to the payment of debts contracted by him.

Howard Earnest suggests that political zombies in the form of those re-enacting past political discourses and ideologies are a threat to the social progress of the current generation, whose social environments and crises are considerably different from their predecessors. Accepting Jefferson's proposal of renewing policies every thirty- four years Earnest suggests that it is necessary for each generation to be protected from the shortcomings of the last, and that each generation has the responsibility to preserve the environment for the next. In *Deadlands*, the Guardians and Jova both take on such responsibility from their own perspectives. Jova wishes to further human freedom while the Guardians are concerned with preserving the environment while populating it with a new species and imposing their ideologies on the population that extends beyond their own groups. Jova re-enacts the zombie politics that manifests in real political practice today, suggesting that his policy is geared towards maintaining and reinforcing boundaries between the human and non-human. His attempt at a zombie genocide suggests that humans dominate the zombies rather than share space with them. His proposed genocide is reminiscent of those practices employed in Nazi Germany and later in Apartheid South Africa, in which the submissive Other is abjected and discarded as waste. While the Guardians do not aim to discard humans, their representation in *Deadlands* suggests that they re-enact capitalist discourses that would entail the infected human reject their subjectivity and human bodily functions. The dialogue between Saint and the Guardians in *Army of the Lost* shows this necessity for rejecting human functions, but also suggests an alternative.

<where is Ripley?>

<later>

<I [Saint] need to know>

<you can to her if you want to>

The lure of the darkness and the peace it promises is stronger than ever, and this time Atang allows her to detect a trace of silvery dancing threads. One of them, she knows, is Ripley's. Another reminder that if she jettisons Ntombi, she'll be at one with the darkness and all if this turmoil will be over. <why am I like this? Why am I not like the Rotters? Why do you want me? > (323).

Rejecting Ntombi and becoming one with the darkness and becoming a fully-fledged Guardian would mean that Saint's questions would be answered, or rather that she would no longer maintain the sentience necessary to ask any questions, and that she, like Paul and the other Guardians would be evolved beyond the Rotters.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, accepting the darkness would mean that Saint will not be reunited with Ripley as an individual, but they would rather become part of the same collective. Her choice not to accept the darkness would allow Saint to construct her own identity from the fragments of memory that she maintains, rather than be subjected to the generalised label 'Guardian', which erases binaries such as gender, race or class, but in doing so also erases the individuals subjectivity and humanity. Rather than suggest that the only way humanity can be saved is by erasing it, Saint's narrative suggests that despite erasing the binaries that determine individuality, the individual is free to choose their own fate or accept that imposed by others. This is reminiscent of the trend in South African science fiction, in which identity is chosen rather than imposed. Molly Brown (2014: 36) argues that narratives such as Lauren Beukes' *Zoo City* and Herne's *Army of the Lost*, that places a young female protagonist in the midst of urban decay rejects the notion that dystopia is dependent on the loss of female characters subjectivity. Brown explains that:

[W]hile individual identity may be and often is dispersed, annulled or objectified by those in pursuit of power, it may well also be that it can only be found in the voluntary surrender of self-interest." Once Saint decides not to join Ripley as a Guardian, she realises that "If people destroy the rotters, wipe them out, then we're all screwed" (323).

Rather than reuniting with Ripley, Saint voluntarily chooses to return to Cape Town to save her friends along with the rest of the population that inhabit the enclave.

¹⁶⁴ Here, evolution is used in the social Darwinist sense that Guardians are more evolved than the Rotters, who Paul previously compared to manual labourers.

Conclusion

While the *Deadlands* series is cheap and accessible, it also emphasises contemporary social and political commentary. Lily Herne's series addresses concerns of the current millennial generation that include reconciling local history with Global culture in a way that warns against the repetition of history. The series also warns against the dangers of reiterating historical discourses and performances, such as non-peaceful protests and iconoclasm. While contemporary youth culture, particularly in the local context, is grounded in the synchronicity between history and the present, the youth in the novels re-enact history, both major and personal, in ways that leads to their potential destruction. At the end of the *Deadlands* series, Lele is pregnant with Lucien's child, and faced with the decision of whether or not she will keep the child, who may be the first of a new species, given her and Lucien's mutation. This crisis is an extension of her role as caregiver and carrier of the silver tendrils that give rise to the guardians. Ash abandoned the original group in order to pursue Jova's political cause. During the course of *Army of the Lost*, Ash is torn between his own past and the Mall Rats' quest of discovering the truth about the zombie invasion in order to change circumstances for their loved ones. By the end of *Army of the Lost*, he is caught up in Jova's plot to instigate a zombie genocide and is on the verge of committing suicide for this cause. While he may be trying to atone for the accidental deaths he is said to have caused earlier in his life as a child soldier, the implication at the end of *Army of the Lost* is that he is once again set to do more harm than good by joining Jova's army. Jova uses his political prowess to instigate a zombie genocide, which as Saint realises will have grave consequences, as the survival of the planet depends on the human population evolving to the point where they have become Guardians. Despite having become a Guardian and having jettisoned her emotional connection to the Mall Rats, Saint chooses to remain in the post-human form she assumed after dying. She is neither fully human nor Guardian, and is perhaps closer to embodying the ideal espoused by the Guardians, who have also come to mimic corporate behaviour. Ember is gravely injured during the car accident in *Death of a Saint*, and at the end of *Army of the Lost*, Ginger is committed to taking care of her, although he also believes that zombies remain sentient but is unwilling to speak up for them.¹⁶⁵ While Ginger showed his support for Tommy, he hasn't shared this with any members of the original group who left Cape Town with them. At this point Saint is dead, and continues to pursue the truth about the origins of the zombie

¹⁶⁵ Tommy, on the other hand speaks up but is ignored. While Tommy develops relationships with Ginger and the childlike zombie, Optimus Prime, his is often mocked and ignored by other characters.

cataclysm despite her partially zombified state. Despite starting out on a mission to find the origins about the zombie apocalypse and changing the dissatisfactory political situation in the Cape Town enclave, the group split to the extent where this mission appears to be secondary to their own pursuits. In other words, although their motivation to leave the enclave was political, the series demonstrates the ways in which these concerns become less immediate when each protagonist is faced with their personal crises. However, each individual's crises and choices contribute to the overall political situation they are faced with; the most pertinent example of this being the cliffhanger on which *Army of the Lost* ends, in which Ash chooses to sacrifice himself for Jova's cause.

Rather than enforcing an African Humanist approach in which the collective crisis motivates individual characters, the series emphasises individual actions and its potential to influence the broader political context. For Henry Giroux, the dangers of an individualistic society are clear: individuals are turned into self-serving 'zombies' at the expense of integration into a community when politicians no longer serve a community, but use the masses in order to further themselves. Jova's actions reflect the potential negative consequences of such zombie politics. Jova gained support by embodying the qualities the population sought in a leader and promising to erase the zombie population. Despite his charisma, those who chose him as their leader remain ignorant of the consequences of a zombie genocide. For the inhabitants of Sandtown, co-existence and eventual evolution may mean that the resources they depend on can accumulate over time and that the poverty they live in could be ended. However, Jova's conservatism means that the depletion of capital and resources will continue, as humans need more of these to survive than the Guardians. Assuming that Saint and the remaining Mall Rats will be able to inform the Sandtown and enclave populations about the possibility of co-existence, it is unlikely that they will win over the populace as easily, given that the majority of the enclave's resources will remain with the Resurrectionists and Sandtown's with Jova and his army. Communication between humans and zombies has been limited but as Tommy, Jacob and Mr Philiso have shown, it is possible. For the Mall Rat's mission to be successful, it will be necessary for Saint to devise such a means of communication once she understands the origins of the zombie cataclysm. Furthermore, the process may be slow, as the enclave's inhabitants' reaction to the knowledge that teenagers were deliberately sent into the Deadlands to be turned into Guardians is unpredictable at this stage of the narrative.

The use of zombies as a metaphor in the *Deadlands* series is particularly salient, as the creature that has its origins in the colony of Saint Domingue, later renamed Haiti, not only withstood the historical and cultural changes over centuries, but also managed to change in its likeness to meet social and cultural demands. Originally, the folkloristic zombie articulated the anxieties associated with enslavement, and had its origins among African slaves who were forced to adapt to the new world. This gave rise to the syncretic religion that was itself a form of resistance against enslavement, even before active revolution began. While the zombie was central to the voodoo practiced in Haiti, the emblem also managed to adapt to the Western cultural idiom, in which it came to stand for universal Otherness and enslavement to consumerism. The zombie simultaneously embodies Otherness and syncretism, and can be used as a symbol for change. As an exotic Other in America, the zombie came to be incorporated into Western popular culture, albeit, no longer as an Othered creature evoking sympathy, but in the recognition that in many ways, the world is inhabited by zombies. This new version of the zombie became associated with anxieties among the American masses in the 1940s and 50s, with films such as *I Walked with a Zombie* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. In 1968, George Romero used the zombie to articulate changing racial tensions in the midst of anxiety about nuclear power and weapons in *Night of the Living Dead*. By 1978, *Dawn of the Dead* used zombies to express the societal enslavement to consumerism. In all these films, the zombie embodied otherness, whether it was enslavement or disease, but by 2009 Broadway Brook introduced the idea of the zombie who has its own consciousness in *Breathers: A Zombie's Lament*, which was later adapted into film. The zombies in the *Deadlands* series and Henry Giroux's metaphor embody the accumulation of zombie narratives that express the fear of enslavement and otherness, but also the potential for peaceful co-existence among diverse humans. While the present form of the zombie also articulates enslavement, it adapted to include the enslavement to a capitalist system that depends on consumerism, and the dependence on zombie politics. The popular consumption of zombie narratives and metaphors in the media reflects the generalised consumption of goods and images, rather than the necessity to act in productive ways to prevent the decay of human society.

Although zombies were originally constructed as humanity's Other, globalisation resulted in the hybridization of what the zombie is capable of expressing. Early English literature on monsters suggested that humanity is limited to the enlightened subject and that society had no place for the monstrous Other, such as Shakespeare's Caliban and Frankenstein's creation

who embodied the conflicting character of the enlightened subject, as suggested by scholars like Erinc Özdemir (2003). During the same period in European colonies, specifically those in the Caribbean and the Southern States of the USA, the Voudon religions of African slaves and by extension, the zombie became a symbol of resistance against such a Eurocentric view of humanity. With contemporary zombie narratives, sentience increases the potential of zombies for doing harm to humans, but also creates the conditions for co-existence with humans.

The *Deadlands* series highlights this fear in order to warn against Jova's self-serving politics which speak to the persistence of war and genocide metaphors in the 21st century (*Deadlands* was first published the same year the initial Iraq War of the 21st century ended with the extraction of U.S. troops but the conflict resumed in 2014, when *Army of the Lost* was published, indicating, if nothing else, that international warfare—since exacerbated by the emergence of ISIS—has been active throughout the 21st century so far. In 2016 Donald Trump has become yet another symbol for zombie politics, as perceptions of women's rights, immigration and civil liberties are being highlighted in media coverage of the contentious and offensive terms and ideas he articulates). While the young protagonists are cast as revolutionaries in *Army of the Lost*, Tommy's friendship with the zombie he named Optimus Prime highlights the possibility of peaceful co-existence with the other. However, it is in Jova's personal interest to establish himself as a revolutionary, regardless of the consequences of the proposed genocide. Not only does Jova embody the practice of zombie politics, but also the militant style of figures such as Julius Malema and uMkhonto we Sizwe, the former military wing of the ANC that resisted the Apartheid government.

Giroux uses the zombie metaphor as a way of explaining what he sees as the collapse of the democratic ideal. In 2015 and 2016, several campaigns such as the #Rhodesmustfall and #Zumamustfall movements emerged in universities across the country. These protests included the desecration of colonial monuments¹⁶⁶ in order to articulate disdain with existing economic inequalities based on the events of the 19th century, and even the arrival of the first European settlers in the late 1600s. The iconoclasm enacted during these protests is reminiscent of the protests during the uprising against apartheid and includes the destruction of colonial monuments and other art. These and other destructive protests are re-enacted in

¹⁶⁶ Including universities

Herne's series, but rather than having the desired outcome for the protagonists, they remain outcasts and by the end of the third novel, are no closer to discovering the origins of the zombie apocalypse or helping their families in the enclave. Herne's series could thus be read as a warning, that iconoclasm and destruction are not protest, and are not conducive to positive change. Instead, Herne suggests that abjection and oppression cannot be forcibly erased, but are subject to decay over time, if the effort toward co-existence is made.

By the end of *Army of the Lost*, the protagonists are forced to adapt to their current circumstances and accept the irrelevance of their original quest. In *Deadlands* the protagonists protest against the socio-economic system in the enclave that depends on restricting the citizens of the enclave's movements in order to maintain the capitalist structure. The Guardians remain in power when Lele, Ash, Ginger and Saint leave the enclave in order to seek the origins of the zombie apocalypse and destabilise the control maintained by the Guardians. In *Death of a Saint*, the focus shifts from the protagonists to the South African landscape and what it embodies. While contested during apartheid, the landscape itself holds significance for the histories of most cultural groups in South Africa, stemming from conflicting ideas of ownership and succession established during the centuries leading up to apartheid. Central to understanding this is the legend and myth (in terms of the contentious nationalism that based itself on the supposed founding narrative exemplified by the Trek) of the Great Trek. In this myth, competing groups claim separate rights to the land, rather than embracing the idea of a shared history. *Death of a Saint* destabilises this myth and instead, articulates the effects of time on mythology. While the Voortrekker myth emphasises the idea of separate nations, *Death of a Saint* articulates the views of a cosmopolitan history held by the current Generation Y. Landmarks are used as a means of articulating the natural decay of history and contrasted to the deliberate destruction deemed necessary in *Deadlands*. *Army of the Lost* shifts away from the series' emphasis on history, and focuses on the ways in which the protagonists own histories are superseded by the immediate crises they face. Saint has been turned into a zombie, and is forced to acquire an understanding of what it means to be a zombie in the present, while Lele discovers that she is pregnant. Ginger and Ember have both been traumatized by Saint's death and their own limitations while Ash is forced to decide whether or not he will participate in the forthcoming Zombie Genocide. Although he is only introduced later in the series, Jova becomes a central political figure, as he embodies the young revolutionary, who appeals to the masses, but

whose actions are directed at improving his own political status rather than improving the social, political or economic circumstances in Johannesburg.

Overall, the *Deadlands* series makes use of global trends in zombie fiction that accumulated since the origin of zombies, in order to articulate contemporary anxieties. The zombie, as expressed in *Deadlands* is not only contemporary but appropriate as a means of expressing such anxieties, as it has been used for the expression of contemporary anxieties throughout modern history. Moreover, the zombie is more appropriate for the expression of contemporary concerns, as the creature has its origins in hybridity. For a generation defined by hybridity and one who views history as a palimpsest, the zombie is more capable of articulating fears and anxieties that has up to now only manifested as the repetition of historical discourse. The *Deadlands* series shows that such overt repetition is not sufficient in correcting historical inequalities, but that the youth need to accept contemporary crises as much as historical ones. The series warns against dominant ideas among the youth and government that poverty and other inequalities are a symptom of history alone, as the methods employed to remedy these issues (if they did) have proven to be insufficient. Individual action, such as Tommy's friendship with Optimus Prime, and understanding of the consequences of such actions are however required to promote co-existence.

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