

Towards a "Secondspace": Conceptual Metaphor and Its Political Implications in *Zone One*

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Abstract This study examines Colson Whitehead's novel *Zone One* to address the following questions: What metaphors concerning cities and zombies does the author employ? What roles do these metaphors assume in shaping the imaginative world? What relationships between urban environments and their inhabitants do these metaphors reflect in the context of the 21st century? How do these metaphors impact readers? Drawing from Critical-spatial Theory and Critical Metaphor Analysis, this paper examines how metaphors enhance the thematic depth of the novel and contribute to the author's political critique through close reading and qualitative assessment. The study's findings show that a literary text has its First-, Second-, and Third-space, wherein the author's strategic use of conceptual metaphors constitutes the Secondspace. *Zone One* extensively employs conceptual metaphors, each illuminating distinct facets of the city, particularly its mechanization, institutionalization, rationalization, and bureaucratization. These traits serve as lenses through which readers discern the underlying societal forces contributing to the outbreak of the zombie uprising. A binary opposition is established between two metaphorical states: the rigidity of the urban environment and the fluidity of zombies. The latter's metaphorical meaning is concerned with a biochemical weapon attack against racial hierarchy, anti-black violence and the barriers of systemic racism. These metaphors prompt consideration of the confrontation between the living and the dead as a political conflict aroused by racial malady although the novel seems unconcerned with racial issues. Ultimately, these metaphors empower readers to conceptualize, engage in critical reasoning, and grasp abstract concepts, thereby enhancing the literary themes of the post-apocalyptic

novel.

Keywords Conceptual Metaphor, Critical Spatiality, Urban Metaphors, Zombie, *Zone One*

1. Introduction

The Pulitzer-Prize winner Colson Whitehead is distinguished for his elaborate metaphors, fictive worlds, genre-bending and devotion to the fabric of New York City. The 2010 novel *Zone One*, a genre of zombie apocalypse, stands out as exceptionally rich in metaphors. It offers a particularly insightful exploration of the cityscape, the precariousness of urban experience, and the aftermath of 9/11. Crucial to Whitehead's representation of this ravaged city is his architectural and spatial metaphors, which offer cues for understanding the living experiences of African Americans and the unspoken racial tragedy of a "post-racial" era. Whitehead satirizes this term and asserts that ethnic people suffer from a branding issue, and that "People Whose Bodies Just Happen to Produce More Melanin, and That's O.K." [1]. In fact, Whitehead's concern with race is rooted in his recognition that the ruling mechanisms are responsible for the current living conditions of African Americans in the 21st century, which motivates his spatialized representation of physical layout of the city and the post-apocalyptic world. New York's built environment provides a platform for narratives about family structures, class conflicts, and urban experiences of African Americans.

Critics have examined the zombie narrative within *Zone One*, a subset of the post-apocalyptic genre. Jessica Hurley [2] sees zombies as a critique of state power operations, and it introduces a third term into the biopolitical dichotomies of “human and non-human, life and death”. Erica Sollazzo [3] connects the post-apocalyptic vision with three real-world “apocalypses”, elucidating how Whitehead utilizes the zombie metaphor to criticize corporate influence on “governmental, legal, and social structures”. Grace Heneks [4] contends that zombie becomes a “multi-dimensional symbol, representing a myriad of meanings”, and interprets the protagonist’s survival as an allegory for the lived experiences of African Americans today, thereby explaining the nightmare that still haunts the post-racial dream. These readings have commented thoughtfully on the novel’s engagement with grotesque zombie, which serves as a metaphor for capitalism, post-racialism, neoliberalism and state power. However, they tend to neglect other significant metaphors grounded in the urban context. Furthermore, none of these studies have applied theories from cognitive linguistics to explore the nature of metaphor usage and its effects within the context of *Zone One*. Given these gaps, this paper aims to unravel the intricate psychospacial networks embedded in the author’s language by amalgamating metaphorical theory with the study of urban spaces. This investigation seeks to address the following questions: Which metaphors about cities and zombies does the author employ? To what extent do these metaphors contribute to the construction of the imaginative world within the text? What insights do these metaphors provide into the relationships between cities and their inhabitants in the 21st century? How do these metaphors influence readers’ perceptions and interpretations of the narrative?

To address the aforementioned questions, this paper presents interdisciplinary research by integrating the theories of cognitive linguistics into the analysis of literary texts within the realm of literary studies. A cognitive turn in literary study renders it possible to gain insights into the minds of writers through an exploration of language, wherein metaphor serves as a foundational element in shaping conceptual systems. In this context, literary thought emerges as an integral aspect of aesthetic cognition, where metaphor takes on a central role as one of its key representations. This metaphorical representation serves as a crucial tool, facilitating a connection between the realm of literature and the complexities of social existence. The cognitive turn in literary studies has yielded valuable research findings. For instance, Steen and Gibbs [5] conduct a comprehensive examination of various questions regarding metaphors in literature. Semino and Steen [6] demonstrate how the investigation of metaphors in literary works has drawn attention to their presence in individual texts, the works of particular authors, and discernible patterns belonging to specific literary genres. In a related vein, Caracciolo [7] examines “literary metaphors” and discusses how

metaphors, when employed in genre-specific and narrative strategies, influence readers’ interpretations. Moreover, several scholars have examined the significance of metaphors within specific literary works (e.g., Rasse et al., [8]; and Pratiwi et al., [9]).

Grounded on critical-spatial theory and Charteris-Black’s Critical Metaphor Analysis approach, this paper aims to examine the multifaceted functions of metaphor in deepening the theme, unveiling the author’s critique, and shaping readers’ critical consciousness. Given the nuanced and qualitative nature of the metaphors within the literary text, we adopt a close reading and qualitative assessment approach rather than a corpus-based methodology. The three stages of metaphor analysis in CMA contribute significantly to this study. Charteris-Black’s assertion that CMA is “an approach that integrates linguistic analysis with cognitive understanding and social insight as valuable in explaining why a metaphor rather than some alternative modes of expression was chosen in a particular type of discourse” [10], underscores its significance in understanding the function of metaphors. In science fiction and post-apocalyptic novels, metaphorical expressions have risen to prominence as writers construct wholly separate worlds and “others” with language. Consequently, metaphorical expressions not only serve as windows into the cultural and social milieu that has shaped writers’ metaphorical expression, but also serve as markers that signify the emergence of influential cultural and cognitive patterns. The strategic use of metaphor in *Zone One*, when examined through a cognitive lens that considers its impact on perception, has the potential to reshape and restructure readers’ understanding of New York City. Whitehead hints that the city had long been plagued by the marked increase in police brutality, the use of deadly force, and structural racism against US communities of color in the real world.

2. From Critical-spatial Theory to Metaphor

2.1. The Production of Text Spaces

If we approach the analysis of a literary text, it is imperative to consider the text’s materiality, the author’s compositional strategies, and its ultimate impact. In this context, we can draw upon the conceptual framework delineated by Edward Soja [11], who puts forwards a trialectics of spatiality that encompasses three perspectives: Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. Soja’s Firstspace corresponds to what is commonly referred to as the “concrete materiality”, which focuses on “things that can be empirically mapped”. It encompasses the tangible elements within the perceived space, such as streets, buildings, trees, and vehicles. Secondspace extends beyond the physical realm, encompassing spatial

imagery or “ideas about space” [11], which are manifested in various forms, including maps, drawings, and written materials. Thirdspace focuses on “lived spaces of representation” [11], considering the personal experiences and perspectives of tourists and visitors within the urban landscape. The amalgamation of these spaces collectively constitutes what Henri Lefebvre aptly termed the “production” of space.

In this sense, literature and textual discourse serve as conduits for the production of Secondspace. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the Secondspace itself is not devoid of spatial attributes, as it possesses its own Firstspace, and simultaneously generates a conceptual Secondspace to facilitate the emergence of Thirdspace. As Karolien Vermeulen [12] argues, a literary text can use the material Firstspace alongside the Secondspace concepts or ideas to generate a Thirdspace experience.

Hence, this study delves into the analysis of *Zone One*'s First-, Second-, and Third-space, with a particular emphasis on how Secondspace is shaped by metaphors. The Firstspace is characterized by selective descriptions, while the Secondspace is predominantly characterized by abstract concepts and literary metaphors. The Thirdspace, which embodies the landscape as envisioned by the author and subsequently reimagined and experienced by the readers, emerges as a hybrid construct resulting from these framing processes. It is noteworthy that metaphors contribute to an understanding of the genesis of textual space. The realization of textual space is achieved through the utilization of framing mechanisms, as “metaphorical framing” is “a way of producing textual cityscapes” [12]. By dissecting variances in literary metaphors employed by the author, it becomes possible to deconstruct the diverse perceptions and experiential dimensions inherent to urban space. To gain insights into how readers respond to the language of the text, it is imperative to turn to metaphor theory.

2.2. Metaphor Theory

Conceptual metaphor theory was initially formulated by Lakoff and Johnson [13]. They argued that “our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, and our ordinary conceptual systems, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature”. This perspective highlights how the experience of space significantly influences our conceptualization of time and other abstract constructs. It provides a framework for the emergence of abstract phenomena within our cognitive processes. The conceptual metaphor reveals the nature of conceptualization by making connections between more abstract domains and more concrete domains. The so-called “source domain” is a less abstract conceptual domain that aids in understanding a complex “target domain”. Furthermore, embodiment is a fundamental characteristic inherent to conceptual metaphors. Embodiment accentuates the significance of perceptual

movement and the experiential aspect of the physical body. This notion aligns with Setha M. Low's proposition regarding “embodied spaces”, signifying the site where human experience and consciousness manifest in tangible or spatial shape [14]. However, the problem of CMT lies in its reliance on introspection, thus potentially overlooking the contextual aspects in which metaphors are used. In essence, this approach exhibits a deficiency in objectivity, neglecting the inherently social character of language.

In this case, an interdisciplinary approach known as Critical Metaphor Analysis, is proposed by Jonathan Charteris-Black [10], who contends that metaphors possess the potential to exert influence on our perceptions of specific aspects of social reality. According to Charteris-Black [10], metaphor is a complex interplay of linguistic, pragmatic, and semantic orientations. To elaborate, linguistic criteria propose that a metaphor introduces semantic tension through reification, personification, or de-personalization. Pragmatic criteria posit that a metaphor manifests itself as a discordant linguistic expression aimed at covertly shaping people's ideas and judgments through persuasion. Such an intended purpose remains veiled, reflecting the author's underlying intentions. Lastly, cognitive criteria mean that metaphors emerge as a result of shifts within the conceptual system. These conceptual shifts are grounded in correlations or psychological associations between the attributes of the linguistic expression.

Charteris-Black [10] has delineated metaphor analysis into three sequential stages: identification, interpretation, and explanation. Metaphor identification entails a process of close reading aimed at identifying metaphorical keywords characterized by semantic tension between the source and target domains. Once these keywords are pinpointed, they are systematically categorized into various metaphor types in accordance with CMT. Metaphor interpretation places its emphasis on elucidating the social implications embedded within metaphors. It seeks to expound upon the conceptual metaphors and their associated conceptual keys across various metaphorical expressions. At this stage, researchers can examine the ideological and conceptual underpinnings that inform the selection of specific metaphors. Metaphor explanation is closely linked to textual semantics. It involves the identification of the social institutions contributing to the creation of metaphors and their role in shaping persuasive discourse. This includes an examination of the intentions and motives of the speaker or the author, ultimately unraveling the sociocultural and rhetorical context.

Based on the theories above-mentioned, this paper employs a combination of close reading and descriptive qualitative research methods to analyze *Zone One*'s text spaces and metaphors. The objective is to explore the production of text spaces and elucidate the role of metaphors in shaping perceptions of cities and zombies. Commencing with the research questions, this study primarily identifies two prominent metaphors: the urban

metaphor and the zombie metaphor, and proceeds to interpret these metaphors through critical metaphor analysis. The initial step involves a close reading of the text to identify metaphorical expressions based on semantic conflicts. Subsequently, an analysis is conducted to explore the relationship between metaphorical expressions and their cognitive and pragmatic functions, followed by an overview of the underlying conceptual metaphors. Finally, the social mechanism of the metaphors is analyzed, and their discourse functions are explained. By examining and synthesizing the imagery and attributes associated with both entities, we can uncover the profound impact of metaphors on readers' comprehension and interpretation. Given that metaphors often serve as a subtle mechanism that influences individuals' perspectives within a discourse, this investigation also uncovers the underlying evaluations conveyed through metaphors. In other words, it can decipher the societal functions of metaphors in facilitating their persuasive influence.

3. Urban Metaphors

Zone One portrays a post-apocalyptic 21st-century New York City. The text itself functions as Firstspace, providing readers with essential information about the novel's setting and its historical and environmental contexts. The metaphorical devices constitute the Secondspace, exerting a profound influence on how readers interpret the text. Among these devices, urban metaphors assume a pivotal role in conveying thematic implications. The city assumes the role of the target domain, interconnected with numerous source domains. These metaphors serve as illuminating tools for elucidating the intricate facets of New York City, shedding light not only on the implications of urban afflictions but also on Whitehead's motifs in the portrayal of an apocalyptic scenario. The key claim of Conceptual Metaphor Theory is that "metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason" [15]. Beyond its practical functions, the city serves as a potent symbol of a society's evolving values and historical trajectory. It is a multifaceted social construct that undergoes shaping within the political and economic milieu of its existence. In a metaphorical sense, a city can be likened to a textual entity, amenable to analysis and translation. The source domain encompasses a spectrum of conceptual features intricately linked to the idea of conceptual relevance. The subsequent conceptual features derived from these lexical interpretations and their contextual associations can be inferred and examined.

3.1. The City is a Machine

- (1) a. He was a mote cycling in the wheels of a giant clock. Millions of people tended to this magnificent

contraption, they lived and sweated and toiled in it, serving the mechanism of metropolis...

- (1) b. The machines wake to a new world where their old routines are void. [16]

Firstly, Whitehead portrays the relationship between city dwellers and the urban environment prior to the disaster. Far from "being an ornament or a rhetorical flourish", CMT holds a central role in shaping human experiences [17]. The term "contraption" conveys the notion of a peculiar, perhaps even alien-looking machinery. This implies that individuals were engaged in arduous labor to sustain the city, and in doing so, they lost their intrinsic human essence. They became mere appendages in the operation of the city, akin to cogs in a machine. The "machine" carries connotations of efficiency, mechanics, and precision, but it also harbors undertones of ruthlessness, coldness, and insensitivity. These characteristics of the modern city suggest a diminishing of human status, laying the groundwork for the emergence of a post-apocalyptic world. In this context, the city is metaphorically described as a "ghost ship" sailing on the final ocean at the edge of the world, where every individual assumes the role of a crew member on this symbolic vessel, which represents the island of Manhattan. However, despite the dwindling population, the structural core of the city, akin to the ship's hull or the machine itself, remains unchanged. In the narrator's perception, the city is portrayed as a well-controlled, well-oiled, sophisticated, powerful, precise system, endowed with swiftness. In contrast, people find themselves relegated to the status of mere tools within this system.

3.2. The City is a Monster

- (2) a. It had been an invisible fist floating above them for so long and now the fingers were open, disjoined, and everything slipped through, everything escaped.
- (2) b. The light climbed up a few stories on the Canal buildings like mold. He visualized the hard-core military lamps bleaching the concrete wall to sun-beaten bone...
- (2) c. The human beings were messy and did not obey rules, and every lane in and out, every artery and vein, was filled with outbound traffic. A disemboweled city, spilling its entrails... [16]

According to Charteris-Black, a metaphor carries its underlying purpose that reflects the author's intentions within specific contexts of use [10]. This metaphor is recurrently employed in the novel to establish a thematic link between the individual body and the physical layout of the city. The city is portrayed as analogous to a human torso, with its lanes and buildings serving as its organs and skeletal structure. Notably, the narrative frequently incorporates keywords such as "bone", "fingers", and "teeth" to reinforce this analogy. As articulated within the

novel, the building stood as a totem cloaked in blue metal. The protagonist's penchant for watching monster movies within the confines of his uncle's tall building serves to underscore a contrasting relationship between cities and monsters. Instead of fostering a sense of intimacy, the city's imposing infrastructure imparts a profound sense of detachment within this expansive spatial landscape. As exemplified in example (2a), particularly within the context of this post-apocalyptic setting, the conceptualization of the city as a living organism accentuates its inherent vulnerability and the gradual process of its decay. This monstrous representation of the urban environment possesses an intrinsic agency, symbolized by its latent but influential presence looming over the city, serving a unifying function. Amidst the chaotic oscillation between order and disorder, the outbreak of the zombie virus throws everything into chaos. The hidden monstrous side of the city emerges, revealing its teeth that seem ready to devour the people.

3.3. The City is a Container

- (3) a. As it expanded its magnificence, out over landfill or up in its multifarious and towering honeycombs, it required bodies to fill the vacancies.
- (3) b. The new buildings in wave upon wave drew themselves out of rubble, shaking off the past like immigrants.
- (3) c. The city—the pre-catastrophe city with its untold snares and machinations—intimidated him. [16]

This city's image conforms to what Johnson has referred to as an "image-schema" [18]. As Johnson argues, a scheme is composed of a limited number of elements and relationships, allowing it to organize an array of "perceptions, images, and events" [18]. As a container, the city has its own capacity, encompassing the accommodation of its inhabitants, their activities, and the edifices that compose its urban fabric. However, "where there is a container, there can be forces internal to it that are limited and constrained by the boundaries of the container" [18]. We can infer that the city creates the limit of the self. Here, by means of "fill in", "taken out of", "replace with", the city is demarcated by its boundaries. The two elements of the container—"inner" and "outer" demonstrate the city's limit. In particular, the city landscape undergoes perpetual transformations, rendering the buildings as dynamic entities. An underlying commonality between these evolving structures and the migrating populace resides in their shared attribute of mobility, a characteristic that contradicts the migrants' inherent quest for stability within their newfound abodes.

As Charteris-Black notes, metaphor unites individuals in a collective endeavor of constructing meaning [10]. The metaphor enlightens readers about the issue of gentrification in Western urban centers in the 1960s. *Zone One* explicitly points out the architectural mutation of New

York city. In *Delirious New York*, Koolhaas [19] defines gentrification as "we take from you what we need and we hurl back in your face what we do not need". This process has come with spatial differentiation, inequality and discrimination, a result of urbanization and the rise and fall of Fordist capitalism. Whitehead [20] also underscores this point in *The Colossus of New York*: "Steel-boned, mortar-blooded. Granite without end". There are very few people living here. He questions "the role of the gentrifier" in *Zone One* by presenting the process of sweeping when "Mark Spitz and his unit sweep through the abandoned office buildings and high-rises of New York", leaving the reader to contemplate the impact of their actions on the city and its residents [21]. The metaphor of the container amalgamates both time and space, encapsulating an imagery schema that emerges from the interactive human engagement with the tangible world. The narrator's aerial view of the city revealed flaws in the skyline and gaps in the architecture, which he found pathetic rather than magnificent. Whitehead uses the protagonist's psychological observations to reveal a paradox within the city. This transition from being characterized as a "brigade" to assuming the semblance of a "gang" symbolizes a transformative shift towards a state of turmoil precipitated by external forces.

3.4. The City is a Grid

- (4) a. The city bragged of an endless unraveling, a grid without limit; of course it was bound and stymied by rivers, curtailed by geographical circumstance.
- (4) b. The truths of the grid's rectilinear logic, its consequences, of how people moved and lived inside boundaries, had already been applied to cities across the country through the decades...Manhattan was the biggest version of everywhere. [16]

The metaphor is not just descriptive but also helps readers make judgments. The metaphor mentioned above accentuates the urban experience of city residents in a negative context. Whitehead examines the influence of Manhattan's defining element—the grid—upon citizens, placing particular emphasis on the imposition of principles such as logic, reason, efficiency, and bureaucracy. Historically, the concept of the grid has evolved and changed how Western societies consider the layout of cities and the construction of architecture. The grid has shifted in its meaning from a representation of physical and ration to the submaterial and governing rules. The urban grid was mass-produced in maps and coordinates and has since become an essential component of the city's life. According to Rem Koolhaas [19], skyscrapers are based on grid structures as well. It not only implies a capitalist project but also refers to a logic that assembles individuals and materials into a configuration which "generates value" [22]. Apartments and offices converge on the same form in this concrete grid, with each space nested within smaller

grids, such as individual desks separated by baffles, boxes for storing personal items, and small drawers, all uniform in height, width, and length.

Whitehead advances his metaphors to tell his readers the inner aspect of the "container". These metaphors are persuasive in discourse that facilitates the public's comprehension and access to pertinent information. In a sense, the standardized grid reflects the rationality and order of modernity even more. In Higgins's word, grid is "the image of an emerging modernity", and it mirrors "standardization, mass production", and "mechanics of transportation" [23]. Indeed, the grid meets the needs of industrial development, under which workers can manufacture and distribute products in different locations, and finally stitch them together into an industrial chain. *Zone One* explicitly shows how the grid functions to serve military management, task assignment and food distribution under the state of anarchy. The sweeper units crisscross downtown and Buffalo's plan recalls tactics used by the city planners like the grid. The sweeper units achieve their goals within prescribed time limit and the scope of regulation. For example, Mark-Spitz's unit was assigned the task of collecting statistical information on the dead in the cell block, the result of which can be used to estimate how long it would take to finish sweeping phase of Zone One, and when they could proceed to designate the area of Zone Two, Zone Three, and so on. In fact, the evolution of the grid is closely linked to the political, social, economic and religious history of the city, which manifested itself early on in colonial and imperialist expansion, but also in the movement of classes within space and the flow and dissemination of information in the Internet age. The survivors can exchange information, including the news about the Triplets, corn in Happy Acres, American Phoenix and Buffalo. When they were out of contact with Fort Wonton because of bugs in the military communications software, they could relieve themselves by mutual comfort. There is an irony here, because the efficiency of the grid-social internet depends on communication equipment. When transmission problems arise, grid assignments are confusing and misleading. This fatal weakness implies the collapse of both the tool of grid and bureaucratic organization.

4. The Metaphor of Zombie

Whitehead establishes a contrast between two metaphorical conditions: rigidity, which he links to urban environment, and fluidity, aligned with his portrayal of zombies. As a novel manifestation of existence, the zombies featured within this narrative pose a significant menace to both the city's rebuilding efforts and the routine activities of ordinary humans. When viewed from an ontological perspective, the concept of constructing an absolute "other" that eludes human recognition becomes an inherently implausible endeavor. Language, a

fundamental component of human cognitive capacity, is often characterized as a conduit into the depths of the human psyche. Within the framework of the cognitive approach to language, linguistic materials are construed as enduring, external representations of human mental processes. Consequently, the intricate web of mental spaces implicitly woven into language can be harnessed as a dependable reservoir of insights, facilitating future generations in their exploration of the author's creative mindset. Metaphor, fundamentally, entails the mapping of conceptual domains, typically manifesting as a structured alignment stemming from an intuitively apprehended source domain to a nuanced and intricate target domain. The process of constructing, associating, and comprehending unfamiliar organisms relies upon a foundational conceptual domain. Within the scope of this paper, a hypothesis is formulated positing that the creation of scenarios involving apocalyptic scenarios and zombies emerges as an outcome of a sequence of deliberate or subconscious operations related to conceptual integration. The metaphors push us to consider how the confrontation between the living and the dead might be considered a political conflict aroused by racial malady although the novel seems fundamentally unconcerned with racial issues.

4.1. Zombie as Virus

- (5) a. They came to eat you - not all of you, but a nice chomp here or there, enough to *pass on the plague*.
- (5) b. *Infected* by reruns. He sucked his teeth. Just as easy to get chomped up in a hayfield as in a subway tunnel. [16]

The virus exhibits an exceptionally high level of contagion, and the zombies elicit a great deal of fear due to this inherent characteristic. Its pervasive, all-encompassing, and egalitarian quality, conversely, transforms the urban landscape into a remarkably equitable arena, diverging starkly from the stratified cityscape of the past years. If we visualize spatiality of emancipation by a focus on the allocation of urban space, then zombie epidemic realizes an idealized vision of a city of justice because it accomplishes "equalization of the environment" that Luigi Cavalli-Sforza states [24]. Whitehead creates such an environment to verify that disparity in access to technologies and other resources serves as a foundation for racial inequality, while genetic distinctions do not [25]. From this assertion, *Zone One* shares similarity with social protest fiction that engages with race-based politics. According to Lakoff and Turner [26], one's understanding of a field enables one to make deductions about that particular domain. When a domain is utilized as a source domain in a metaphoric mapping, the inference patterns within the source domain are projected onto the target domain. The zombie virus spreads through blood and bites. One bite from a zombie will make someone a

zombie, a big reminder of “one drop rule”. Historically, the “one drop rule” means that anyone with a visually discernable trace of black blood is considered as black, which continues to persist with the demise of slavery. It is codified into law during Jim Crow to prevent white blood from being tainted by black blood. As David A. Hollinger [27] has argued, because white racism is assigned the same capacity with one drop of black blood, we can call “principle of white racist hypovictimization” as “one hate rule”. This is thus a certain irony that Whitehead tends to weave into stories to expose racist character of the one drop rule. Terry Eagleton [28] contends that “viruses are radical democrats”, which represents a disregard for social distinction”. Certainly, it is zombie virus that legitimizes “one bite rule” and makes everyone equal.

The dead body parallels with the concept of dirt, unclean, pathogenicity and threat. These characteristics are firmly affixed to specific groups. In this sense, zombie is a symbol for the other, the marginal and dead. And second, the revolutionary character that the zombie embodies is a response to long histories and current racial conflicts articulated at a biopolitical level. As the sovereign exerts extreme control over minorities through supervision, separation and exclusion, the emancipating struggle is aimed at dismantling systems that reduce individuals to fixed “others” or “bare life”. In Michel Foucault’s *Society Must Be Defended*, it is racism that allows authority to distinguish individuals who must be killed for the survival of others [29]. In the process of eradicating zombies, the city guarantees clear goals and high efficiency with allocated resources, technical efficiency, division of labour and unified management. Rational bureaucracy and technology, however, reside in a morally neutral position, thus serving as a guardian of the constructed ideological system. *Zone One* parallels the logic of racism with the scientific practice in a post-apocalyptic world with an aim to explore the origin of the regime.

4.2. Zombies as Water

- (6) a. Except it was not *water that flooded* the grid but the dead.
- (6) b. Perhaps it was a higher-than-normal *flood* of skulls at the wall.
- (6) c. The wreckers parted the *junk sea*, de-gnarling, unwinding the chaos.
- (6) d. The dead clambered up the bodies of the fallen and were rent by the artillery... and these latest were trampled by the next *wave*...
- (6) e. The other sweeper units, from Alpha on up, were on the move; *the wave of the dead* would have swept past the dumpling joint by now. [16]

In the discourse surrounding refugees and migrants, a metaphorical framework is employed in which these individuals are likened to water. This metaphor has been termed the “inundation metaphor”. The inundation

metaphor employed within the novel perceives the burgeoning population of zombies as analogous to a vast expanse of *sea, water, waves, or a flood*. The exponential rise in their numbers is equated to the unstoppable force of natural water phenomena, and their societal impact portrayed as a potentially perilous deluge. This inundation metaphor significantly influences how individuals comprehend immigration, steering them towards policy approaches akin to well-known strategies for managing dangerous flooding [30]. Consequently, due to these perceived hazards associated with proximity to such dangers, the necessity for a physical barrier, such as a wall, becomes apparent.

4.2.1. Border Wall vs. Water

- (7) a. They stoppered the tunnels and *blocked* the bridges. They plugged the subways at the preordained stations, every one south of where *the first wall* would stand.
- (7) b. Pools of blood gathered at the seams in the concrete *wall* where the brackets held the segments together, a wrinkled skin developing at the edges where they dried. [16]

A typical line in *Zone One* is the wall established between the safety zone and the zombies outside. The line evolves from the grid and aims to create a complete spatial separation, which constitutes the concrete form of the social order. As Madhu Dubey [31] points out, a hallmark of Whitehead’s works lies in its approach of constructing intricate narrative realms by literalizing metaphorical elements, including “the barricades defending against the zombie plague in *Zone One*”, which denotes “militarized nationalism”. The wall acts as a protective barrier as well as a boundary between survivors and zombies, between civilization and savagery. It serves as a remind for the well-defined boundary and color line that existed before the catastrophe. Therefore, the newly erected Canal Street in the novel symbolizes divide, antagonism and racial hate.

4.2.2. Barricades and Order

- (8) a. *That wall* out there has to work. *The barricade is the only metaphor left in this mess*. The last one standing. Keep chaos out, order in [...] There are small *barricades* - across the apartment door, then a whole house nailed up - and then we have the bigger *barricades*. We work our way to *bigger walls*...”
- (8) b. When the wall fell, it fell quickly, as if it had been waiting for this moment, as if it had been created for the very instant of its failure. Barricades collapsed with haste once exposed for the riddled and rotten things they had always been. [16]

Where there is a wall, there exists an inherent order. As the wall come down, the order inside the wall along with it. The falling wall proves inefficiency and instability of the social system. In addition to the wall, Whitehead also employs other literal barricades such as boards, trucks,

fences, doors, and so forth, to protect and provide survival space for the living. This constitutes a politics of building barriers that is reminiscent of political violence aimed at maintaining order through the use of "necessary force", particularly against African American civilians, under the guise of safeguarding public security. Black people are automatically marked as potentially dangerous in public places, based on which, the police will stop black drivers in luxury cars at important checkpoints and evict the black from white neighborhoods in prevention of their suspicious and criminal activities. Therefore, the roadblocks allude to the lived experiences of African Americans in daily life including stop-and-frisk, professional barriers, police brutality, mass incarceration, and so on. The traumatic memory of the pre-apocalyptic world rushes into Mark-Spitz's mind, blurring the line between the concrete wall and invisible color line that divides people based on race.

Barricades follow the essential features of grid, including boundary, order, seclusion and rational bureaucracy, which reveals the underlying logics of the social system. The above logic that overdetermines the nature of New York, also undergirds interpersonal violence. The racial discrimination and class division that exists are, consciously or unconsciously, formed by a social line. Reconstruction in *Zone One* requires three basic conditions: the hardening of borders through the construction of barricades, sufficient food and medical services, and the formation of community. All of these guarantee survival's ability to confront the zombie attack. The American Phoenix creates a binary and treats zombies as enemy. However, it is easier to form communities than to maintain them due to the fatal flaws in security caused by isolation, closure and strong dependence on barricades. It isn't surprising that *Zone One* concludes with the downfall of the barrier wall. The wall is doomed to fall because zombie refuses borders and persistently contends with the restrictions imposed by humans, "until their eventual success and the ultimate acceptance into their 'society'" by becoming the undead [32]. The wall establishes a continuum between past and present, a marker of racial oppression including the legacy of slavery, black lynchings, political violence, etc. The heavy history along with numerous instances of anti-black violence weighs down the wall finally.

4.3. Zombies as an Army

- (9) a. They were a succession of imponderable tableaux [...] *An army of mannequins, limbs adjusted by an inscrutable hand.*
- (9) b. They were almost *an army of skels* approaching the camp's delicious signs of human life.
- (9) c. Some unfortunate souls would discover where *the dead army* waited out bad weather. [16]

As the metaphor escalates, the reader's comprehension

of zombies becomes more profound. As proposed by Charteris-Black, politics is war. This conceptual metaphor highlights the inherent structural connection between politics and the war. Within this framework, social threats in America as "racism", "pandemics", "recession", "climate change", etc., are commonly identified as enemies. The army inherently signifies obedience and unity, and in this context, these armies are composed of mindless zombies. They coalesce into a formidable antagonistic force alongside the sweepers, who are tasked with the mission of eradicating the zombie threat. It is the sweepers that were responsible for lugging the bodies and throwing them out to same time and energy, and Disposal picked them up "with the eerie efficiency" [16]. As Whitehead notes, sweepers are part of the nation that favors shortcuts and impulsion, whose behaviours are identical to the nation's character. From the government's point of view, zombies deserve death because they represent an obstacle between the current tension-ridden reality and the envisioned world of happiness. In this way, soldiers and sweepers don't assume responsibility and voluntarily become killing machines to weed the garden for modern society, as can be seen from their attitudes towards the offenseless "stragglers". Although this army, comprised entirely of zombies, lacks a centralized command structure or a designated leader, it nonetheless presents a formidable challenge to the survivors. The undead not only match the survivors in sheer numerical and physical strength but also display an unwavering determination as they breach fortified barriers, navigate treacherous terrain strewn with the remains of their fellow zombies, and relentlessly seek vulnerabilities within the opposing human forces. This resolute and relentless pursuit of their objective starkly contrasts with the steadily diminishing optimism observed among the dwindling ranks of the survivors. Through zombie metaphors, the novel simply exchanges the roles played by white and black in reality and compels the white to experience violence and unfair treatment. Zombie's rebellion has evolved into collective black violence—zombie revenge. As the plague unleashes reactionary logic and practices of black violence, the sovereign state loses its white sovereign power and is no longer able to control the life of post-human zombies.

5. Conclusions

Conceptual metaphors subtly shape individuals' perceptions of the world, which are deeply rooted in their embodied experiences intricately linked to spatial grounding. Drawing upon Soja's trialectics of spatiality and metaphor theory, this article provides a reassessment of the relationship between the city and zombies in Colson Whitehead's *Zone One* to delve into the author's political critique. To begin, the textual material functions as Firstspace, providing readers with vital insights into the novel's post-apocalyptic setting and environmental

backdrop. Subsequently, the author's strategic use of conceptual metaphors constitutes the Secondspace, which in turn gives rise to the production of a Thirdspace experience. Within this evolving Thirdspace, readers synthesize their understanding of the textual material with the figurative and interpretive subtleties generated by the metaphors. This paper especially focuses on Secondspace to decipher the function of metaphors with Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis approach. So far, the answers to the research questions proposed have been clear.

Firstly, numerous source domains provide insights into the distinctive attributes of the city and zombies portrayed in the text. *Zone One* applies conceptual metaphors frequently, among which are "the city is a machine", "the city is a monster", "the city is a container" and "the city is a grid". Each of these metaphors vividly illustrates various facets of the city's characteristics, notably its mechanization, institutionalization, rationalization, and bureaucratization. These very characteristics serve as key lenses through which the reader can discern and comprehend the underlying societal factors contributing to the outbreak of the zombie riots. The city develops order, reason and acts as a supplementary to bureaucracy in modernity while zombie carnival creates chaos and incites violence. The metaphors on zombies include "zombie as virus", "zombie as water", "zombies as an army". It can be inferred that the survivors in *Zone One* view zombies as a threat to urban reconstruction, and the grid of which is automatically framed as a tool to consolidate order. The effect of zombie carnival's emancipation is a realization of urban porosity with shared public space of encounter, negotiation and mutual inclusion. The potential for this upheaval and revolution lurks where the grid has been disrupted. From the novel, the overwhelming force of zombies has an all-pervasive influence on the city, breaking the physical limits of line, wall and barricades established by the sovereign. However, geographical advantage, military equipment and unified command bound together fail to clean zombies from the city.

Within this imaginative world, metaphors serve as a conduit for the author's multifaceted stance toward this urban landscape, encompassing sentiments of admiration, awe, shame, fear, and more. Zombie carnival foreshadows a world of no hierarchy, privilege and order, where lives have exceeded institutionalized control. As expressed by Charteris-Black, metaphor explanation involves exploring "how metaphors are interrelated and become coherent referring to the situation where they occur" [10]. The metaphors provide a lens through which one can discern the writer's intentions and discern the ideological and rhetorical motivations involved. The urban struggle, as suggested, is influenced by the claims for the right to the city, which includes a right to establish redistribution or develop collective identity. Certainly, Whitehead's zombie carnival provides an opportunity of encounter, interaction and mutual recognition in New York, a place

of great diversity but lack of heterogeneity. Most notably, Lefebvre [33] views the city as the "perpetual oeuvre of the inhabitants", who remain in constant motion and are mobilized by this oeuvre. That means it is inhabitants rather than the city, or more specifically, the sovereign who manipulates the city with the intrinsic mechanism that determine the transformation of the city. To borrow David Harvey's notion of "dialectical utopianism", an alliance formed by the working class, disempowered, and marginalized should counter the hegemony of both economic and political institutions to increase their right to the city. Whitehead endows zombies with a capacity to strive for urban porosity so as to overturn bureaucratic mechanism and racism that are attached with city space.

Whitehead strategically guides and convinces the readers in the construction of a particular mental framework concerning racial violence in a post-racial era. Metaphors endow individuals with the capacity to conceptualize, engage in reasoning, and grasp abstract notions. As the reader forges a connection between the target and the source domain, the intricate relationship between the city and the zombie riot is elucidated. Whitehead's metaphors transcend the realm of mere linguistic expression, encompassing an epistemic framework that facilitates readers in apprehending the truth of the world. This influence, in turn, gives rise to the production of a Thirdspace. Within this Thirdspace, readers integrate their understanding of the textual material with the imaginative and interpretive nuances shaped by the writer's metaphors, thereby enhancing their immersive experience of the city depicted in the novel. Through the persistent repetition of these metaphors, the readers' mental construct is consistently fortified and consolidated. In this regard, Whitehead's *Zone One* contributes to the cultivation of critical awareness among the broader public regarding racial issues in the 21st century.

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