THE POĒSIS OF DECAY:

A PAINTER'S RESPONSE TO THE DYSTOPIAN AESTHETIC

By

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Title:

THE POĒSIS OF DECAY: A PAINTER'S RESPONSE TO THE DYSTOPIAN AESTHETIC

Summary:

This study focuses on the investigation and deconstruction of the phenomena of the South African dystopian society, as reflected in the novels of Lauren Beukes and films by Neill Blomkamp. The characteristics and signifiers of a uniquely South African dystopian society are established and investigated through a posthuman lens. The theoretical framework of this study is principally concerned with the critical posthuman writings of Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway and, to a lesser extent, Cary Wolfe. Feminism and post-colonialism, and their influences on posthuman theory, are applied as the secondary theoretical framework, in this study.

The study is practice led, with the study of the literature serving as mutually informative to the execution of a body of work centred on the dystopian theme. The paintings are intended to be metonyms for the wide range of manifestations of social decline evident in contemporary South African narratives.

List of key terms:

Avarice; Beukes (Lauren); Blomkamp (Neill); Contemporary painting; Decay; Dystopia; Feminism; Identity; Post-colonialism; Posthumanism; South Africa.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

3D	three-dimensional
AAF	Aposymbiosis, Acquired Aposymbiotic Familiarism
ANC	African National Congress
aka	also known as
DNA	d(eoxyribo)n(ucleic) a(cid)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
IMDb	Internet Movie Database
LOTR	The Lord of the Rings
MNU	Multinational United
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
sa	sine anno (without date)
sl.	sine locus (without place)
sp.	sine pagina (without page number)
SF	Science Fiction
Ibid.	in the same source
sic.	thus it had been written
US	United States

Introduction

Scope and focus of the study

The research and related body of work entitled *Poēsis of Decay: a painter's response to the dystopian aesthetic* is intended to study, discuss and examine the aesthetic value of decay as presented in visual narratives of Neill Blomkamp, and literary narratives, of Lauren Beukes, and its validity as a metaphor for the changing social reality within contemporary South African society from a posthumanist stance. The objective of the study is to test the premise that the perception of South Africa as declining into a dystopian society exists within the selected texts, and that this manifests itself in contemporary society through a number of signifiers and has therefore become a zeitgeist[1](Simpson 2018: [sp]). The following statement: *To what extent does the perception of South Africa declining into a dystopian society exist in the fiction of Lauren Beukes and films of contemporary filmmaker, Neill Blomkamp and to what extent can this inform a body of contemporary paintings*? is tested and deconstructed throughout the dissertation by investigating instances of decline (both in real life and in the fictional texts). These instances are analysed and investigated and offered as proof for the prevailing spirit of decline.

The trajectory of the investigation follows a critical examination of the literary dystopia to examine the three key characteristics of a dystopian society and how it manifests within the posthuman condition. The study focuses on contemporary South African narratives such as the novels of Lauren Beukes and films by Neill Blomkamp - specifically their use of

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1 Zeitgeist: The defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time (Simpson 2018: [sp]).

metaphors in reflecting the current social climate in terms of the dystopian themes of decay, identity and avarice. The concept of decay, both physically and socially manifested, is the common denominator throughout the chosen texts. The influence of decadence on identity presented as fractured and riven, opens avenues for investigation into the nature of the posthuman identity as being in a constant state of flux. The exacerbating influence of human avarice on the natural environment as well as the psyche of society offer insights into the all-encompassing state of decay which seems prevalent within a dystopian society. These three factors are established as key themes within contemporary society and are shown to be signifiers of a critical dystopia, as well as being indicative of the larger posthuman paradigm. In Chapters 2 to 4 each of these themes are explored, documented and discussed in conjunction with their practical manifestations in my own praxis. The use of these signifiers are discussed and analysed in the discussion of my work at the end of each chapter. In these sections attention is given to how these signifiers manifest in my own work, what these signifiers mean to me, and how the viewer is led to interpret them. The concept of decay is shown to be the common denominator and is therefore established as a significant characteristic of a critical dystopian society.

The objective of the practical exploration of the themes of decay, identity and avarice is the manifestation of the interpretations drawn from each of the chapters of theoretical research. They include the interpretation of the posthuman dystopian condition (through documentation of current events) combined with personal metaphors and visual signifiers (presented as drawings, collages and compositional renderings in a visual diary). This process leads to the manifestation of the posthuman dystopia through the painting process; the metaphorical power of the materiality of paint; the physical manifestation of decay on the canvas surface and the exploration of the human/animal hybrid as a metaphor for the posthuman dystopian identity as being a fluid and malleable entity. The sculptural tableaux of Jane Alexander are referenced significantly within my body of work and, for this reason, I have included an appendix on her work and its implications within the posthuman dystopian society. (See appendix 1). Some attention is given to the manifestation of the ripple effect of avarice, by means of consumer capitalism, on the natural environment through the use of visual signifiers. However, this concept remains only an underlying narrative. The visual exploration of the dystopian aesthetic, in terms of decay, identity and avarice, is presented in

its entirety in the *Poetry of Decay: a painter's response to dystopia* exhibition to be presented at the *Art B Gallery* opening on the 11th of March 2019.

Premise

To what extent does the perception of South Africa declining into a dystopian society exist in the fiction of Lauren Beukes and films of contemporary filmmaker, Neill Blomkamp and to what extent can this inform a body of contemporary paintings?

For those of us born late into Generation X, in South Africa, the past quarter century has proved an interesting, perplexing and in certain respects, a disheartening time. None more so than for those individuals who cast their first votes, as adults, in a non-racial democracy in the first democratic election of 1994. Having spent our youth at the end of apartheid, we were in a privileged position to witness the end of an era that was marked by a general atmosphere of dread and despair and view ourselves embarking on adulthood in a new utopian age as the 'rainbow nation'[2].

In retrospect, the optimism of the decades following the dawn of the 'rainbow nation' has not been constant. As Stobie states (2012: 370) the years following the first democratic election could be divided into three distinct periods. Nelson Mandela's presidency (1994 – 1999) can be characterised as the 'rainbow nation' utopia. However, with Thabo Mbeki's presidency (1999 – 2008), it became increasingly clear that the utopia was failing even though many still

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2 'Rainbow nation' is a term believed to have been coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to describe the multi-racial and multi-cultural society of post-apartheid South Africa, after South Africa's first fully democratic election in 1994 (Manzo 1996:71).

remained hopeful. After President Jacob Zuma became president in 2009, the general atmosphere of South Africa declining into a dystopia was prevalent, culminating in the ANC's decline in the 2016 municipal elections and the Khwezi protest, broadcast on national television during the President's announcement of the election results (Pather 2016).

During the past two decades, the changing social climate has been reflected in the work of authors such as J.M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer and Eben Venter, to name a few. An increasing number of visual artists engaged with dystopian themes, most notable the nomadic exhibition titled Dystopia (2009) under the curatorship of Elfriede Dreyer and Jacob Lebeko. Several South African realities - among them the high crime rate; perpetual racial tensions and gang-related violence - were addressed in film which helped paint the growing perception of a dystopian South Africa. South African films like *Four Corners* (2013), directed by Ian Gabriel and *Tsotsi (*2005)[3]*,* directed by Gavin Hood both addressed dystopian issues in a changing social climate.

Chapter 1 will examine the speculative dystopian novels of Lauren Beukes and films by Neill Blomkamp to explore how they have engaged with the 'rainbow nation' as a failed utopia.

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3 The classification of these films as dystopian, is based on my personal interpretation that Four *Corners* (2013) deals with the gang culture on the Cape Flats and specifically in Pollsmore prison, addressing poverty and crime as a direct result of avarice and capitalism. *Tsotsi* (2005), in my mind, deals with similar issues. Both films depict what happens to individuals living on the fringes of society as result of human greed and reflects the capitalism-poverty cycle as an inescapable loop.

Methodology

The dissertation takes the form of a literature study, wherein the novels of Lauren Beukes and films by Neill Blomkamp are deconstructed through a posthuman lens. The relevant texts are analysed in order to establish conflicts and incidences of the manifestation of decline within the fictional works, and how these instances correspond to occurrences in the real world. The texts are examined as works of fiction reflecting the dystopian spirit. The objective of the study is not to make literary distinctions but rather to use these texts to inform the research into decline within a critical dystopia.

The nature of the study is qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) and therefore the findings are not attained by statistical methods. The literature study is performed in a deductive manner whereby the investigation progress from an overview of dystopia as a literary genre, narrows the investigation down to the characteristics of a critical dystopian society (as opposed to the classical/ canonical dystopia). The signifiers of a critical dystopian society are established as decay, identity and human avarice. Drawing principally from the vein of critical posthumanism that finds its origins in the anti-humanism of Lyotard and Foucault and disregarding the transhuman branch of posthumanism. The methodology follows a contextual approach whereby the South African social reality is argued to be in a constant state of flux, and therefore also in a constant state of decay[4] (Simpson 2018: sp) as social structures, systems and the norm are forever in the process of falling. This further means that the posthuman identity is also forever in a state of flux, and the permeability of boundaries offers an opportunity for the liberation from the set structured identity prescribed and venerated by

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4 Decay, from the original French 'decair' based on the Latin decidere (from de- + cadere, meaning 'fall') thus literally meaning to 'fall down or off' (Simpson 2018).

classic humanism. This ambivalence of the posthuman identity is mirrored in the relative nature of the posthuman paradigm. Julia Kristeva's theory on the abject is implemented as a vehicle for exploring and deconstructing the posthuman identity. As a result of the changeability of the posthuman standard, and the fact that nothing is ever cast in stone, the study actively participates in ambiguity. The methodology leads to the exploration of ambivalence in terms of exploring various posthuman viewpoints (ranging from Braidotti's (2013) anti-humanist-based theory to Haraway's (2006) cyborg theory) which might appear contradictory and do not necessarily offer final conclusions. The relativity and uncertainty characterised by the posthuman condition are therefore reflected in the methodology.

The literature study is complemented by a practice-led methodology, whereby the research both support and mutually inform the studio praxis. The literature study serves as a vehicle for further exploration in the body of work, whilst the body of work continually opens new avenues of investigation. The studio praxis is documented through a series of photographs and a visual diary.

Theoretical Framework

Posthumanism is the socio-political ethos that is born from scientific and technological advances and defined by its critique of the anthropocentric mindset of Liberal Humanism. The philosophy of posthumanism is therefore closely linked and greatly influenced by such emancipatory movements of the previous century such as feminism and post-colonialism. Critical posthumanist theory decentralises humanity as the centre of the universe, effectively abandoning the anthropocentric character of classical humanism in the investigation of finding new ways to 'exist' in the world. Thereby defining this era wherein we find ourselves in a state of perpetual re-evaluation of the role of the humanities and the course of humanity as a whole. Whatever one's stance on posthumanism, it has become evident that humanism, in its purest form – as the ethical stance that places humanity at the centre of the universe, as master and conqueror of nature and all other existence – is failing (Pepperell 2003:171).

Robert Pepperell (2003:168-169) argues that the posthuman condition is steeped in uncertainty and that this uncertainty is not to be feared. Likewise, N. Katherine Hayles (1999:289) argues that posthuman does not necessarily mean the end of humanity, but rather

signals the end of the conception of humans as "autonomous beings exercising their will through individual agency and choice". Therefore, one can state that the posthuman age is characterised by a general sense of uncertainty and an overwhelming sense of loss of control by the liberal humanist subject.

I shall be employing critical posthumanism as evident in the writings of Rosi Braidotti (2013), Donna Haraway (2003,2006,2008,2015) and Cary Wolfe (2010) as the primary theoretical framework for the investigations and analyses of the determined dystopian themes as stipulated earlier. Wolfe (2010) criticises the work of N. Kathrine Hayles (1999) as "a kind of triumphant disembodiment" (Wolfe 2010: xv), citing it as not 'posthumanist' at all, but rather a perpetuation of the anthropocentric[5] mindset of classical humanism, only referring to 'posthuman' in the sense of being 'after' our embodiment has transcended. Likewise, Pepperell (2013: 13-34) emphatically argues that consciousness is not located in the mind alone and that it cannot be separated from the body or the environment (2013:178). I would argue that disembodied life should not be feared (Hayles 1999) should Science and Technology advance to the point where this becomes a possibility. What is, in reality, called for is a radical transformation of the mindset: of how we as humans think about our place in the universe. This is, in essence, what posthumanism is as opposed to the extended life of the "unenlightened" liberal humanist subject, which would have a devastating impact on the natural environment should human avarice be allowed to run unchecked by finitude. In short, my argument is not so much against disembodied consciousness, as it is about the kind of

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5 Anthropocentric: "regarding humankind as the central or most important element of existence, especially as opposed to God or animals" (Simpson 2018: [sp]).

consciousness which resides within the disembodied space. Therefore, transhumanism[6] (Dictionary.com 2018: sp) and popular posthumanist theory will be excluded from the study.

I shall argue that while liberal humanism contributed to such high ideals as liberty, equality and human rights, it has simultaneously nurtured the worldview that humans are superior to all other lifeforms. Furthermore this anthropocentric worldview has, in the worst instances, given rise to the view that certain humans are superior to others. This manifests itself in a number of human rights violations such as racism, xenophobia, colonialism and sexism, evident within contemporary society (Braidotti 2013:30). These instances will be explored in great length in the section on social decay, focussing on recent instances of civil unrest in South Africa and exploring how these instances of xenophobia are manifestations of the decline of liberal humanism. This concept is also examined as it occurs in the dehumanising of "Others" leading to the exploitation of the "Other", whether human or non-human animal, as a result of the supposed superiority of the Eurocentric man. These anthropocentric and Eurocentric mindsets, driven by the all too prevalent human characteristic of avarice (as evident in free market capitalism) have led to the exploitation of other humans (slavery), nonhuman animals (factory farming) and the natural environment (Harari 2011: 254-263). The argument will be made that the devastating effect human avarice has had on the planet and its inhabitants, both on human and nonhuman animals, can be directly linked to the humanist ideal of man being superior to all of creation, and the consumer mindset of humanity when it comes to natural resources.

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6 Transhumanism is the theory that humanity can transcend its current form, beyond the physical body and its accompanying mental limitations, by implementing new technologies. It advocates the disembodiment of humanity through the downloading of consciousness into an automated physical form, be it a cyborg or machine (Dictionary.com 2018).

The influence of human avarice and its manifestation in slavery and imperialism will be explored and discussed in greater detail in the chapter on avarice. It therefore stands to reason that antihumanism and its influence on posthumanism have greatly influenced the emergence of the emancipatory movements of the previous century, such as feminism, environmentalism and postcolonialism (Pepperell 2003: 171-172).

The secondary theoretical framework used in this study includes feminism and post-colonialism, as evident in these philosophies' influences on posthuman theory.

Post-colonialist theory challenged the whiteness of the eurocentric "Ideal of Man", holding eurocentric humanism accountable for the atrocities perpetuated against 'Others' under colonialism. Franz Fanon (1967) argued that Europeans have corrupted the humanist ideal, stating that, should there be any future for humanism, it needs to originate from outside the Western world (Braidotti 2013: 24-25). This study will investigate the contemporary instances of postcolonial theory as it manifests in the #Feesmustfall and #Rhodesmustfall movements. These movements have not only forced South Africans to earnestly re-evaluate the whiteness of the Eurocentric concept of the "Ideal of Man" but also to acknowledge and open dialogue into the devastating effects that Imperialism, Colonialism and Slavery have had on our shared past in this country. However, the perspective is taken throughout this study that the underlying impulse at the root of imperialism and colonialism is the human tendency to expand, conquer and consume as a symptom of human avarice (Pepperell 2003:160). I shall therefore argue that postcolonial dystopian fiction is essentially also anti-capitalist in nature, and therefore a critique of man's consumer impulse as the origin of imperialism, colonialism and its fallout, namely slavery and racism. Postcolonialism therefore, becomes a precursor to the Fallist movements, which in turn becomes a physical manifestation of the fall of a wide range of systems rooted in the liberal humanist ideals.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, postcolonial theory will only be relevant for its anti-humanist properties; as far as it speaks against liberal humanism support of the mindset whereby Eurocentric man is viewed as superior to all Other humans, nonhuman animals and the natural environment (Pepperell 2003: 171). Postcolonial theory, in its anti-humanist vein, is therefore implemented to investigate systems such as racism, colonialism, apartheid

and xenophobia as negative manifestations of the liberal humanist superiority complex, as a result of human avarice.

Feminists such as Hooks (1981) and Hartsock (1987) argued against patriarchal superiority. Anti-humanist feminism rejected the eurocentric humanist view of the European ideal of man arguing against the humanist system which called for the classification of 'Others" (being different) as being inferior to the 'Ideal Man' (Braidotti 2013: 27-28). Pertinent to this study however is Haraway's (2006) Cyborg Theory as it played a vital role as a precursor to posthumanism. Haraway challenged the hegemonic patriarchal mindset by creating the cyborg myth as a subversive strategy to challenge the eurocentric male-dominated capitalist system. (2006:151). By challenging the "patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism" (2006:155), Haraway opens avenues for enquiry into the potential for "feminist others" to undermine and deconstruct the liberal humanist constructs of patriarchal capitalism. I argue that if feminism enables posthumanism to actively work against capitalism driven by human avarice, it becomes an ally of posthumanism. Furthermore, the cyborg became the embodiment of the posthuman identity's tendency to cross subject boundaries, blurring the border between human/nonhuman, thereby occupying contradictory paradigms and becoming entirely posthuman. Haraway's (2006) Cyborg Theory will be instrumental as a theoretical framework for the investigation into the malleable and fluid nature of the posthuman identity, as present in hybridity, as well as being applied as a secondary framework for the examination of the patriarchal capitalist system as a pervasive undercurrent for human avarice.

The concept of hybridity functions as a dynamic metaphor for the fluctuating and malleable character of the posthuman (and also the feminist) identities. Donna Haraway's cyborg theory (2006) relates specifically to the shifting of the subject identity across human and non-human borders. Here hybridity becomes the signifier for the mutability of the posthuman identity, challenging the hegemonistic humanist paradigm of human subjectivity as being absolute and unquestionably human. I shall argue that both Beukes and Blomkamp employ a hybrid methodology in their narratives and that these methodologies become dynamic signifiers for the process of becoming animal/becoming hybrid, as the active shifting of subject boundaries within the posthuman paradigm. Therefore hybridity does not only relate to the posthuman identity as presented in the selected texts, but also to the characteristic of

the shifting of the parameters of identity by humanist standards, as it presents in both feminist and postcolonial theories. Hybridity calls for an acknowledgement that we are all part of a larger whole, what Braidotti (2013:17) refers to as a 'zoe-egalitarianism'. In simpler terms, identity no longer entails only being a white male and European, but shifts and expands to include all others: human and nonhuman alike.

Therefore postcolonial and feminist theories, as manifested in hybridity, are used as supporting theories to posthumanism, expanding and elaborating on the posthuman theory within certain contexts. These theories ultimately challenge the superiority complex of the liberal humanist subject and its penchant for human avarice, which have led to the decline visible in the socio-political, psychological and environmental spheres of contemporary South African society.

Due to the nature of the posthuman condition wherein everything exists in a constant state of flux, the application of these theories, along with the meaning that have traditionally been assigned to them as static concepts, will necessarily shift slightly throughout the dissertation. The ambivalence characteristic of the posthuman paradigm is reflected in the methodology of the study, whereby the meaning assigned to concepts such as hybridity and posthumanism are constantly shifting somewhat throughout the text, though care is taken not to conflate them.

Seminal Sources

The following theorists have been seminal to the paradigm of this study:

Rosi Braidotti's (2013) theory on 'the fall of The Vitruvian Man' as a metaphor for the decline of classical humanism is explored in this research as a framework for examining the representation of the body in contemporary South African society as reflected in the chosen dystopian texts. Braidotti's posthuman interpretation of 'being other' and how it manifests as a result of the eurocentric humanist ideal of 'Man' is utilised as an introduction to the exploration of the changeability of the posthuman identity. Lastly Braidotti's anti-humanist approach to advanced capitalism and neoliberalism is applied as a framework for the critical examination of the influence of human avarice on the natural world. These theories are applied as they appear in her work *The Posthuman* (Braidotti 2013).

Donna Haraway's (2006) 'Cyborg theory' is used as a framework for the exploration of the posthuman identity, especially in terms of its playful, feminist qualities, evident in *The Cyborg Manifesto* (Haraway 2006).

Haraway's (2003) theory on companion species and 'becoming animal' as it relates to human identity, explained in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (Haraway 2003), along with her theories on community and 'making kin' evident in her work *When Species meet* (Haraway 2008), is applied as a theoretical framework in addressing the posthuman identity in terms of becoming animal/becoming other.

Haraway's work on the anthropocene as the capitalocene and how advanced capitalism influences the environment, in her article *Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin* (Haraway 2015) is employed as a theoretical framework in the exploration of the influence of human avarice on the natural world.

Cary Wolfe's (2010) work on non-human animals and moving beyond speciesism[7] in our process of becoming posthuman, especially his interpretation of visual art, from a posthuman perspective. This is evident in his work *What is Posthumanism?* (Wolfe 2010) and is instrumental in the exploration of the posthuman identity as malleable in the chapter on becoming animal/becoming other.

Wolfe's (2010) theories on becoming animal are also instrumental in addressing the influence of human avarice (evident in factory farming and the exploitation of our non-human others) explored in the chapter on human avarice.

Julia Kristeva's (1982) work on abjection and being 'other' evident in her book *Powers of Horror* (Kristeva 1982), is used as a theoretical framework in the exploration of the

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7 Speciesism: the assumption of human superiority leading to the exploitation of animals (Simpson 2018: [sp])

posthuman identity as becoming other. Kristeva (1982:53) describes the process of abjection as the porousness of the boundaries of the Self, rendering the Self in essence changeable and fluid. In Chapter 3, I shall argue that the abject body/identity is presented as a dynamic metaphor for the posthuman identity as it emerges as a fluid and mutable posthuman state as opposed to the classic humanist boundaries of subject/object, natural/technological, inside/outside and human/machine amongst others.

Cheryl Stobie's (2012) article *Dystopian dreams from South Africa: Lauren Beukes's Moxyland and Zoo City* served as a catalyst for studying Beukes's novels as the quintessential South African critical dystopia. Many of her observations served as a genesis for the formulation of my hypothesis although I shall be applying posthumanism as a lens for investigating the phenomena.

Structure of the dissertation

In this dissertation, the genre of critical dystopia as it manifests in themes of decay, identity and avarice, which I identify as crucial to the understanding of the concept of dystopia, both in my paintings and in the texts under discussion, will be examined. Parallels will be drawn with the contemporary South African social climate, citing occurrences that may be interpreted as manifestations of social decay as they happen.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the literary dystopian genre, by investigating the historical origin, characteristics and manifestations of the critical dystopia as a literary genre. This is followed by an analysis of Lauren Beukes's novels *Moxyland* (2008) and *Zoo City (*2010) and Neill Blomkamp's films *District 9* (2009) and *Chappie* (2015). These works are explored and discussed in terms of how they present posthuman critical dystopian societies, in terms of the characteristics of this genre, being open-ended and refraining from genre purity in as much as they are presented as hybrid genres. The three key concepts of the critical dystopia are established as decay, identity and avarice, followed by an introduction of how the critical dystopia manifests itself within my studio praxis, focussing specifically on how it presents itself in the physical act of painting. The practical methodology is shown to support the theoretical research through the materiality (or lack thereof) of paint and the application of layers - in both the conceptual as well as the physical act of painting.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the theme of decay as the overarching characteristic of a critical dystopia by tracing the origin of the concept of decay and how it presents as a visual metaphor for the fall of humanism. The argument is made that the fall of humanism signals the dawn of the posthuman era, and locates this era as residing on the "horizon of hope[8]" and therefore falls within the critical dystopia. Focussing specifically on the Fallist movement,[9] an analogy is drawn between the fall of humanism and the fall of the Rhodes statue, rendering this incident effectively as the South African metaphor for the fall of humanist systems. Other manifestations of decay, such as physical and social decay, are explored in terms of how these concepts are manifested in the novels of Beukes (2008, 2010) and films of Blomkamp (2009, 2015).

The final section of this chapter examines and documents the manifestation of decay as a visual signifier for the prevailing social decay within contemporary South African society in my own body of work. Specific focus is given to the physical manifestation of decay on the canvas and the active role that decay plays in the painting praxis.

Chapter 3 takes the form of an examination of the concept of identity, starting with the philosophical history of subjectivity and how it is presented as a fluid identity within the posthuman condition. The concept of the abject identity is explored in light of Julia

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8 The phrase is taken from the Introduction in Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination (Baccolini & Moylan, 2003, p. 6) by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan – it suits the narrative of a contemporary dystopian South Africa to such an extent, that I shall borrow it frequently in the following chapters.

9 Fallist: the term attributed by the South African Press to a number of movements, calling for the fall of everything from the Rhodes statue, university fees, Afrikaans as higher education language and President Jacob Zuma (Davis 2016).

Kristeva's (1982) work on the abject and 'otherness' and how it is presented as a metaphor in the decay of the human body in the novels of Beukes (2008, 2010) and films by Blomkamp (2009, 2015). This is followed by a study of the concept of identity as presented as becoming animal/becoming hybrid evident in the theories of Braidotti (2013), Haraway (1991, 2008, 2003) and Wolfe (2010) and how this concept is employed as a metaphor for the posthuman identity presented as malleable, fluid and in flux, in the works of Beukes (2008, 2010) and Blomkamp (2009,2015). The final section of the chapter examines and documents the manifestation of the posthuman dystopian identity as it is presented as abject, becoming animal/hybrid within my own body of work. The metaphorical signifiers for an identity in decay is established as being in a constant state of unravelling, with specific focus on how the visual narrative of the body of work points to a perpetual unravelling of identity; a constant loss of control and a growing ambiguity in the visual signifiers employed.

Chapter 4 investigates the theme of avarice, tracing its origin as a deep-rooted human characteristic which has co-opted utopia (Baccolini 2003). A division is drawn between the materialistic impulses of utopia and the strong critique of capitalism in the critical dystopian genre. Consumer capitalism's impact on the natural environment, as a result of factory farming and the commodification of the individual through Neoliberalism, is examined. The concept of human avarice evident in consumer capitalism is investigated as presented in the novels of Beukes (2008,2010) and films by Blomkamp (2009,2015). Beukes's (2010) metaphorical use of the landscape to address the mark that humanity's consumption impulse has left upon it, is examined. The final section of the chapter briefly discusses the underlying motif of human avarice within my own body of work. As far as the visual metaphors for human avarice employed in my work are concerned, the literal images are mentioned but not discussed in detail. This is done for the purpose of leaving the narrative open-ended, situating it within the speculative critical dystopian genre, whilst still leaving the metaphors open for individual interpretation.

Chapter 5 will offer possible conclusions and reflections upon the data presented.

CHAPTER ONE: Dystopia

There exist as many definitions of dystopia as there are utopian theorists; and researchers, artists, authors of fiction and filmmakers have explored these in countless ways. Dystopia[10](Simpson 2018: sp), from the Greek δυσ- and τόπος, literally translates to anti-utopia, synonyms include cacotopia or kakotopia. The first Utopia[11], from the Greek οὐ ('not') and τόπος ('place') meaning '*no-place*', originated from Plato's Republic, written in approximately 394 BC (Simpson 2018: sp). Both the terms utopia and its antonym dystopia were originally coined (from the original Greek) by Sir Thomas More in 1516 in his written work titled, *Utopia (Libellus vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festivus, de optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia).* Dystopian literary texts dating from the time of the Athenian Empire to the 1960's can generally be characterised by a pessimistic world view, portraying the ruling class as brutal and autocratic. The narrative usually evolves, leading up to a 'process of awakening' for the protagonist(s) and resulting in a resistance movement that acts in diverse ways to affect a change in society.

Classical or canonical dystopia is usually characterised by moralistic or even dogmatic accounts that serve as a warning to the potentially dire consequences for a society continuing along the status quo. The conclusions are often bleak and gloomy with no hope for a better future. (Stobie 2012: 369-370) Most notable in this category are the works of George Orwell (1949), Aldous Huxley (1932), Ray Bradbury (1954) and Anthony Burgess (1962). Starting in the last decade of the previous century, there has been a marked increase in young adult

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10 (Simpson 2018: [sp])

11 (Simpson 2018: [sp])

dystopian novels. These novels, while adhering to the characteristics and structure of the canonical dystopia, have opened a view into contemporary pop culture. Focusing on modern technology, adolescent angst and the struggle for individuality in an ever-increasing consumer culture, the majority of these novels have been translated into mainstream Hollywood films, most notably *The Giver* (Lowry 1993)*, The Hunger Games Trilogy* (Collins 2008 - 2010) and the *Divergent Trilogy* (Roth 2011 - 2013).

The most relevant literary dystopian subgenre to this study, however, is that of speculative dystopian fiction. Speculative fiction has its origins in 'mythopoesis[12](Simpson 2018: sp) or mythopoeia, after Hellenistic Greek μυθοποιία, μυθοποίησις, literally meaning 'myth-making'. The word mythopoesis, in turn, has its origin in a poem written by J.R.R. Tolkien in 1931 after a debate concerning creative myth-making (Chance 2004:62-63). Speculative fiction, like dystopian fiction, generally falls within the genre of science fiction but, more often than not, is linked to alternative history, hypoethical[13] history, social science fiction and magic realism. Generally speculative science fiction is more concerned with speculation pertaining to human behaviour and society, moving into the anthropological realm rather than focussing on Science and Technology. Seminal authors working within the Speculative dystopian framework are Haruki Murakami (*IQ84,* 2011), Kazuo Ishiguro (*Never let me go*, 2005) and most of Margaret Atwood's oeuvre, notably the *Oryx and Crake Trilogy* (2003 - 2013) and *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

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12 (Simpson 2018: [sp])

13 hypoethical: Something which is presumed to be ethical. Where is pertains to speculative fiction, it is intended to question the ethicality of certain actions throughout history, and how it impacts the word we live in today.

Graham J. Murphy (2009) characterised late 20th century and early 21st century dystopian fiction under the umbrella term 'critical dystopia' (Murphy 2009:475) and defined this as open-ended, providing certain utopian elements, most notably a measure of hope. However, in his paper *Critical Dystopia Reconsidered: Octavia Butler's Parable Series and Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake as Post-Apocalyptic Dystopias,* Hui-chuan Chang (2011) argues that the 'critical dystopia' label assigned to dystopian works after 1980, needs to be reassessed in light of the shortfall in identifying certain key aspects of millennium dystopias to articulate its difference from canonical dystopia, and claims that the term 'post-apocalyptic dystopias' would be more appropriate (Chang, 2011:4). However, his argument fails to consider speculative dystopian works within the social science fiction and magical realism genre. For instance, both Murakami's *IQ84*[14] (2011) and Ishiguro's *Never let me go* (2005) function within the critical dystopian paradigm, without making any reference to a cataclysmic or apocalyptic event. This could be due to the fact that Chang's (2011) reading of Atwood's (2003) Oryx *and Crake* takes the position of viewing it as a single novel, not taking into account that it is the first of a trilogy, the following works being; *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and *MadAddam* (2013)*,* thereby accounting for his view of it having a closed ending and an apocalyptic atmosphere. Chang (2011) cites Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan (2003:7) identifying crucial critical dystopia characteristics as the blurring of genres and open-endedness. Arguing that, in contrast to the gloomy character of canonical dystopia, critical dystopia allows for both reader and protagonist to entertain the "horizon of hope".

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14 Murakami's (2011) *IQ84* is essentially a pastiche of George Orwell's (1949) canonical dystopian novel *1984*. The title *IQ84,* is a Japanese pun on the Orwellian title of *1984*. In Japanese, the number 9 (typically written as "kyū", but appears as "kew" on the book's Japanese cover) is pronounced like the English letter Q. They are thus homophones which are often used in Japanese wordplay. Unlike Orwell's (1949) Big Brother, the protagonists are being watched by a religious cult, Sakigake, who in turn is being controlled by the far more sinister "little people". The little people are in themselves a pun on Orwell's Big brother. There are numerous instances of parallels with Orwell's *1984* (1949) throughout the novel, thus placing it firmly within the dystopian genre. (Anderson 2011)

Baccolini and Moylan (2003:8-10) also propose that critical dystopianism allows for hybridity and fluidity in that it abstains from genre purity, instead prescribing to a broadening of the social and political horizons. This hybrid genre praxis revises or renews dystopian fiction, allowing for the inclusion of those 'others' who have traditionally been excluded due to their race, gender or sexuality (Baccolini & Moylan 2003:7).

Vita Fortunati (Viera 2013:4), feminist utopian theorist, argues that critical, feminist, dystopia, as evident in the speculative work of Margaret Atwood (1985) and Octavia Butler amongst others, undermines the humanist eurocentric dystopian paradigm, as seen in the works of Huxley (1932) and Orwell (1949), in that it requires active participation on the part of the reader, forcing them to engage in seeking alternatives rather than offering prescribed outcomes. Fortunati insists that the critical dystopia

> anticipates a horizon of hope […] showing the reader a road that must start in the present, a dialectic that must begin from now-here […] provide us with the idea that ours is a journey which needs to be constantly re-planned, and which will never hopefully reach an end (Fortunati inVieira 2013:4).

It is my view that feminist, speculative dystopia speaks to the posthuman condition, offering the opportunity to engage in dystopian themes and characteristics beyond the scope of classical humanism as evident in the canonical works (both utopian as well as dystopian) of the previous century. Humanism, and to an extent classical dystopian fiction, view humanity on a predestined course, as masters of our own fate. In contrast, speculative fiction engages in an open-ended outcome, which corresponds to the posthumanist perspective that we exist in multiple systems of belonging. This multiplicity corresponds to Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the rhizome as it pertains to multiplicity: "multiplicities are rhizomatic, and expose abhorrent pseudomultiplicities […] There is no unity to serve as a pivot in the object or "return" in the subject" (Deleuze and Guattari in Rivkin & Ryan 2004: 381). This states that we are never in control or possession of anything but merely inhabit various mutable networks and "demonstrate the profound interconnections between all things in nature" (Pepperell 2003: iii). As Katherine Hayles (1999:290-291) argues, the process of becoming posthuman is essentially a relinquishment of the illusion of the human's ability to control everything, ranging from one's enviroment to one's fate. Speculative fiction often employs hybrid genres, incorporating sci-fi, crime and noir with the dystopian, thereby extending an alternative to the closed endings of the canonical dystopian novel, by offering the possibility for the reader to

move beyond a fatalistic world view, and engage with alternatives of hope for an ever-evolving (post)humanity.

Cheryl Stobie (2012:369), citing Pordzik, argues that postcolonial dystopian fiction offers alternatives to the closed form of what Pordzik terms "Western dystopianism" arguing that these works:

> contribute to an understanding of society that accounts for the interpenetration of cultural codes and attitudes, and acknowledges their important function in the process of creating new perceptual possibilities, of exploring and charting the multifarious relations between different systems of cognition (Pordzik quoted by Stobie 2012: 369).

I argue that this places post-colonial dystopian fiction firmly within the realm of posthumanism by offering the opportunity to engage in multiple perspectives; by encouraging a diversity in narratives and contributing to the awareness of alternative ways to exist in the world (Baccolini & Moylan 2003: 7). These capacities are paramount for a healthy world view in our changing social climate.

Classic utopian and dystopian fiction, in contrast, are therefore situated within the classic humanist paradigm, which view humanity as being in control of their own fate, nature and the world.

It is here, in the critical, speculative, post-colonial, dystopian-hybrid open-enclave that we find Lauren Beukes. Born in Johannesburg in 1976, Beukes traversed divergent spaces as a freelance journalist: from the Cape Town townships, interviewing electricity cable thieves and people dying from the "twin pandemic of TB and AIDS" (Lotz 2010: [sp]) to "six-star boutique hotels catering to international popstars and celebrities"(Lotz 2010: [sp]) , before publishing her first novel *Moxyland* in 2008 (Lotz 2010). Her second novel, *Zoo City*, published in 2010 won the Arthur C. Clarke Award and was shortlisted for the 2010 BSFA Award for best novel. A further two novels: *The Shining Girls* (2013) and *Broken Monsters* (2014), set in Chicago and Detroit respectively, cemented her break into the US market. Beukes's work has been labelled, despite her self-confessed dislike of labels, (Stobie 2012: 376) as hybrid-fiction (Alexander 2015: 157, 164) (Jamal 2013), due to her innovative combination of divergent genres. It is, however, her earlier novels *Moxyland* (2008) and *Zoo City* (2010) that most aptly speak to the dystopian zeitgeist of post-rainbow nation South

Africa. In this chapter, I shall discuss these novels in light of their dystopian characteristics, to establish the prevailing themes such as decay, identity and avarice, distinctive to speculative dystopian societies.

1.1 MOXYLAND (2008)

> If we're willing to trade away our rights for convenience, for the illusion of security, our very own bright and shiny dystopia is only ever one totalitarian government away
> ~ Lauren Beukes (Watson 2008).

Moxyland is set in near future[15] Cape Town and it can be viewed as a parallel reality to post-Apartheid South Africa. Described on her website as a "dystopian corporate-apartheid political thriller [16]" (Beukes 2018: [sp]) *Moxyland* introduces Beukes's by now signature, hybrid-style; using a mesh up of cyberpunk, slipstream[17] and dystopia as genre. Narrated from a four-character perspective, the novel introduces a multiracial, technologically advanced, seemingly utopian materialistic society.

Moxyland's characters are presented as hipster urbanites, deriving identity from their social networks, cyber-presence and corporate identities. Deidre Byrne and David Levy (2015) argue that Beukes's characters are presented as "fractured, riven and characterised by sharp edges" (Byrne & Levy 2015:71). Their paths often intersect through shared interests and

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15 (ten years into the future at the time of being published)

16 Beukes (2018: [sp])

17 Slipstream: "surreal and dislocating postmodernist style of writing which blurs the boundary between speculative and literary fiction, as seen in the work of Kathy Acker". (Stobie 2012:373)

mutual acquaintances. Kendra struggles with her new identity as "Sponsor Baby[18]" (Beukes 2008:1) as her existence shifts from embodiment toward technology. Kendra refers to herself as "Ghost girl" a name that summons the connection with spectrality and foreshadows Kendra's fate, that of becoming a spectre. Byrne and Levey (2015) argue that this 'spectrality' conforms to Julia Kristeva's concept of the Abject body (Kristeva 1982: 47-49). I shall examine the connection between the spectre, the abject and decay in identity. in Chapter 3. Tendeka and Toby adopt digital identities in their online dealings, thereby inhabiting a space between "Meatspace" and "Gamespace". This makes it almost impossible to define them as fixed identities. Toby eventually becomes so absorbed with technology that he loses his identity to it and Tendeka literally physically dissolves into nothing. From the start, Lerato is presented as ambitious and unscrupulous and she moves between the borders of corporate and civil legality. Lerato's genesis as an "Aidsbaby[19]" (Beukes 2008: 107;117) leads to a fractured sense of self, which makes her arguably the most complex character in the narrative. In Chapter 3, these characters will be analysed to determine how decay manifests within the secondary theme of identity, the loss thereof and subsequent dehumanisation.

The plot follows the four protagonists' interactions with each other, technology and the corporate government. Right from the start it becomes clear that *Moxyland* (2008) is a "shiny, happy façade over a fundamentally damaged society" (McGrane 2008). The novel opens with

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18 "Sponsor Baby" is a term Beukes creates to describe the practice in *Moxyland*, whereby individuals become walking advertisements for brands by either being branded with tattoos or ingesting nanotechnology, as in the case with Kendra (Beukes 2008:1).

19 "Aidsbaby" is a term Beukes creates to describe the fictitious practice in *Moxyland,* whereby large corporations create orphanages where Aids orphans are trained, raised and brainwashed to become cogs in the corporate machine (Beukes 2008:107;117)

Kendra's narrative and, throughout, the reader follows the story of her identity as Ghost Girl and Sponsor Baby. Kendra is a sensitive, creative artist, though insecure and needy. She accidently becomes involved in the proactive acts of protest of the other characters. We are silent witnesses to her transformation and ultimate demise at the hands of corporate greed and technology.

The second narrative introduces the reader to Toby. Toby's narcissistic character influences all the other protagonists; his self-centeredness eventually leads to the climatic open-ended conclusion of the novel. Driven purely by the thrills of the media and consumerism, Toby's character manifests as selfish, sexist and manipulative. Alongside Kendra's "brandedness", Toby's character exists within the theme of consumerism. Tendeka is by far the most endearing character in *Moxyland*. He is a black, Zimbabwean gay man and, together with his partner Ashraf, they embody the most stable and loving relationship in the novel. He works with street children and is married to a young pregnant Malawian refugee, providing her with citizenship. Tendeka's character brings compassion and a social consciousness to the novel. Unfortunately, Tendeka's passion, combined with his naiveté, leads him into an ambush set by Skyward* (sic), the agent provocateur. The fourth character, Lerato, is a young black woman raised in an orphanage after losing her parents to Aids. Proud of her "Aidsbaby" status, Lerato was head hunted from the "Eskom orphanage" and never looked back. Trained with exceptional computer skills, Lerato is callous, calculating and independent. She is approached by Toby to assist in Tendeka's act of civic protest.

The characters: Kendra, Lerato, Tendeka and Toby navigate futuristic urban Cape Town in "Meatspace" and in Online Utopia aka "Gamespace". We find ourselves in 2018 in a seemingly post-racial South Africa, governed by multi-national corporations. Poverty and disease have been banished from the urban areas, and apparently only exist in the abstract rural spaces. There are occasional susurrations of unspecified outbreaks of pandemics in the rural areas, but these are mostly viewed with disassociation, as medical advances are easily available to the corporate upper classes.

Cape Town is portrayed as a globalised, technologized city, free of racism but rife with consumerism. Controlled by several powerful corporations who exercise control over the general population through cell phone surveillance, consumer capitalism is propagated by

advertising countless expensive commodities, thereby whetting the population's appetite for an ever-increasing volume of consumption.   Following Raffaella Baccolini's (2003) definition of the critical dystopia and her view that utopia has been adopted into capitalism (Baccolini & Moylan 2003: 246), I argue that avarice represents the third characteristic theme found in the uniquely South African Critical Speculative Dystopian novel. In Chapter 4, I shall explore the theme of greed and its manifestations as Consumer and Advanced capitalism, as well as Neo-Liberalism, as apparent in the writings of such posthumanist theorists such as Braidotti, (2013: 58-63) Haraway (2008:45-67) and Wolfe (2010: xxiv).

> You can't play nice by society's rules? Then you don't get to play at all. No phone. No service. No life (Beukes 2008: 21).

Urbanites remain connected, both socially and economically, via their cellular phones. Each person's SIM card guards his/her currency, identity and history. Without a SIM card, one is disconnected from sustenance, shelter, communication and transport – in short, one ceases to exist. The corporations, supported by the complicit government and with the physical backing of an oppressive police force, exercise control over the population via these cell-phones. Apart from offering life-sustaining benefits, the cellular technology is utilised as a form of crowd-control. Cell-phones are programmed to defuse a form of 'shock treatment' in cases of anti-social or anti-political behaviour. Any action deemed unlawful by the owner will lead to either temporary or permanent disconnection. Civilian movements and actions are constantly monitored via their SIM connection, and public surveillance is carried out all over the city. The corporate-government collusion further exercises control in a Huxleyesque[20] sense by distracting the upper classes from socio-political issues like Aids, poverty and

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20 Referring to Aldous Huxley's (1932) novel *A Brave New World*,

homelessness while bombarding them with advertising in the media, encouraging consumer capitalism, and ensuring a continued state of definitive happiness among the elite.

The four protagonists' lives weave in and out of each other's narratives, intersecting at one critical moment. Tendeka is convinced by Skyward* (sic) to hijack the corporate advertising billboards in an act of civic terrorism. Toby convinces Lerato to assist Tendeka in his act of protest. Tendeka leads a group of disenfranchised and disconnected street children in protest into the underground demanding free transport and the right for all to share in the privilege of the elite. The police spray the crowd with the deadly M7N1, a variant of the Marburg virus, which will prove fatal if the infected individual does not report to a vaccination centre within 48 hours. Tendeka, Toby and Kendra are infected by the M7N1 Marburg virus. Tendeka refuses to be vaccinated, instead bombing the vaccination centres in the hope that this act will expose the brutality of the government through their failure to cure those they intentionally infected with a fatal disease. During a sexual encounter, Kendra unwittingly passes her healing nanotech to Toby. Severely distressed by the preceding events, Kendra returns to Ghost headquarters begging to be released from the "branding". The final scene in Kendra's narrative implies that she is released from her contract in much the same way the Inatec corporation deals with "damaged Aito police dogs" – by being euthanized. Meanwhile Tendeka is expiring from the M7N1 infection in the most gruesome possible manner. While in excruciating pain, Tendeka finds comfort in the fact that Toby is recording the entire process on his "BabyStrange" and transmitting it in real-time to all the billboards in the city. Toby, true to his narcissistic character, is not transmitting the footage but rather bargaining to sell it to the highest bidder. At the same time, Lerato discovers that her unobtrusive roommate Jane is, in fact, Skyward* (sic): the originator, controller and agent provocateur of Tendeka's mission. Lerato, Jane and Toby had been under constant corporate surveillance but Lerato is promoted and her role will be to identify, manipulate and entrap other potential activists.

The cyberpunk element of the plot centres around technological advancement. *Moxyland's* society runs on digital technology, as mentioned previously, and one cannot exist without being connected via your SIM card. Tendeka, Toby and Lerato all operate with equal ease as Avatars in cyberspace, and flesh and blood entities in "meatspace". Tendeka engages with Skyward* in the "Gamespace" Avalon, to discuss, organise and formulate their subversive

tactics to overthrow the corporate powers that be (Beukes 2008: 40-43). Tech-savvy Lerato uses her influence in the corporate Communique sphere to assist Tendeka, in hacking the advertising boards on the N2, as part of his planned corporate terrorism act. The name 'Moxyland' is derived from the name of the videogame character in which Toby competes for extra cash. Ironically the fuzzy, "vomitously cute" soft toy appearance of Moxy sports razor-sharp fangs and, fairly soon, Toby realises that it is "all claws and teeth" (Beukes 2008:72,104). Moxy, much like the seemingly utopian state of *Moxyland,* might appear nice, shiny and bright, but is in truth brutally violent and utterly unforgiving.

The cyberpunk style is complemented by elements of biotechnology. Nanotechnology and genetic engineering play important parts in the lives of both humans and non-humans alike. The police force make use of genetically modified dogs, called Aitos. These non-human animals are injected with nanotechnology and used to enforce control and inspire fear in the general population. Early in the novel, we are introduced to Kendra's role as "Sponsor Baby". She is injected with experimental nanotechnology that renders her physically and mentally superior. Not only does the nanotech increase her abilities and promotes physical healing, it also gifts her with an ultra-cool luminous light, Ghost-tattoo, leaving her physically branded, as well as a pesky addiction to the Ghost soft drink.

Stobie (2012) states that Beukes uses the slipstream genre to emphasise and "sardonically attack ethically indefensible" concerns like the Aids pandemic; the large number of children living on the street and unequal access to services and illiteracy (Stobie 2012:373). Beukes touches on these issues, without sermonising, in such a way as to provoke an emotional and intellectual response from the reader.   Similarly, Beukes points to the startling chasm between the "haves" and "have-nots" in contemporary South Africa, contributed by theorists to the rampant corruption within the ruling party (Visagie 2011: 96) (Grootes 2016). Beukes also evokes images of state control from our shared cultural memory - the ruling party's control through SIM connection is reminiscent of the Apartheid passbook. Similarly, the government's action of infecting protestors with the Marburg virus, reminds us strongly of the so-called "Purple rain" tactics [utilised by] the South African security forces" (Rosenfeld 2011) in the late 1980's.   The open-ended conclusion points to a fundamental characteristic of Critical dystopia, leaving the horizon of hope open to the reader. Despite the two most endearing characters' demises, the reader is left hoping that the remaining characters would

have learned from their companions and continue the "good work" started by them. These issues not only place *Moxyland* within the frame of a uniquely South African Critical Speculative Dystopian novel, but also point to the overarching theme of such a dystopia; namely that of Social, Moral and Physical Decay. This theme will be further explored in the second chapter.

1.2 ZOO CITY (2010)

> Traffic in Joburg is like the democratic process. Every time you think it's going
> to get moving and take you somewhere, you hit another jam (Beukes 2010: 84).

Zoo City is set in 2011, in alternate reality Johannesburg. Beukes's second novel, written in her typical hybrid critical dystopian genre, here termed 'muti noir', bridges the human-animal boundary into the posthumanist realm of becoming animal, by introducing the concept of aposymbiosis. Aposymbiosis, Acquired Aposymbiotic Familiarism (AAF) or merely being 'animalled' is described as a global phenomenon, causing a person to become mystically bonded to an animal as a physical manifestation for the guilt such a person must carry for some moral or criminal transgression. Mention is made of a possible patient Zero (Beukes 2010: 60-65) but, beyond stating the first appearance of an animalled individual as during the late 90's, little other explanation is offered. These animals serve as living breathing symbols of the guilt a person must carry, typically for taking (directly or indirectly) another human's life. While the animal and host are alive, they are inseparable, resulting in severe discomfort both physically and psychologically should they become separated. In *Zoo City* (2010), Beukes introduces a vital theme to the posthuman critical dystopia genre: that of Identity and, more specifically, becoming animal. Combined with Beukes's signature hybrid style, the theme of human-animal hybridity and its connection to becoming animal offers a uniquely South African interpretation on the posthuman premise of becoming animal/Other, as apparent in the writings of Braidotti (2013: 67-76), Haraway (2008: 27-35), Hayles (1995: 321-334) and Wolfe (2010:99-126). I shall explore these themes in greater detail in Chapter 3.

The animal functions as a protector from the 'Undertow' described as a dark mystic force that 'comes for' a person, moments after his/her animal passes from this plane of existence. We are informed that the Japanese view the Undertow as' hungry ghosts' whilst the Scientologists

suppose it is a 'physical manifestation of suppressive engrams' (Beukes 2010: 51, 158). Throughout the novel, we are introduced to different cultural takes on what the aposymbiotic phenomena might be and these explanations span the globe and differ greatly. The different interpretations converge at the point of view that the Undertow functions as a frightening manifestation of the execution of justice.

Being animalled does come with an advantage: the animalled person is gifted with a psychic ability, termed his/her 'Shavi', 'Mashavi' in the plural.

> **Mashavi** — a Southern African word (spec. Shona) used to describe both the preternatural talents conferred by an aposymbiot and the aposymbiot animal itself.
> The term first appeared in print in 1979 as «mashave» in an unrelated text (Myths and Legends of Southern Africa by Penny Miller, published by TV Bulpin, Cape Town) that nevertheless reflects today's common usage and meaning in contemporary Southern Africa."
> (Beukes 2010:177)

The Mashavi brings with it a possibility of redemption, offering the animalled individual an opportunity to redeem themselves by being of service to others. The possibility of grace, forgiveness and transcendence opens a horizon of hope, thus placing *Zoo City* (2010) firmly within the critical dystopian framework. Beukes further reinforces her place within the critical dystopia by making use of multiple perspectives and voices, consistently interrupting the first-person narrative of her main character with an array of technological intrusions, including a psychological analysis of the 'Undertow' interviews with animalled criminals: an IMDB account of a documentary exploring the possible genesis of aposymbiosis. This writing technique further places Beukes's novel within the hybrid framework, here termed 'Muti noir'. Her combination of the traditional noir genre, extending it beyond its original Eurocentric spectrum to encompass the traditional African belief system not only brings her

work into the postcolonial, feminist and, I would argue, posthumanist sphere, but offers the opportunity for noir to move beyond its traditional pessimistic genre into the critical dystopia's horizon of hope (Stobie 2012: 376).

Johannesburg is an especially apt setting for a South African critical dystopian novel and the fictional expression of Hillbrow[21] as Zoo City opens avenues of discussion around urban decay as a metaphor for social decay. Hillbrow has traditionally been the sanctuary to the dispossessed, being home to a continuous flow of immigrants as well as the only site of failure for the apartheid government's policy of racial segregation. In recent years, Hillbrow has been the scene of intense xenophobic hostility, resulting in a tangible fear of 'the other' (De Villiers 2017). Dystopian accounts of Hillbrow abound, being home to the homeless, street children and the urban poor. It is therefore an especially appropriate setting for *Zoo City.*

> "We're all about tolerance in Zoo City. Or mutually assured desperation" (Beukes 2010: 44).

Zoo City is a community of outsiders. There is no racial or ethnic tension - rather they are bound by the stigmatisation of being annimalled. It is apparent that the protagonists in *Zoo City* are by no means innocent as they "share a complicity in and shared responsibility" for their dystopian environment (Brown 2014: 37). The characters therefore become one with the decay that surrounds them. This identifies the principal theme of Decay as a catalyst for decay of identity and the manifestation of avarice as subsequent themes within a critical dystopian framework, and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

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21 For an accurate account of Hilbrow's trajectory from affluent suburb to inner city ghetto see https://johannesburg1912.wordpress.com/2016/01/07/history-of-hillbrow-pt-1/ (Latilla 2016: [sp])

In contrast, we find the main antagonist in *Zoo City*, Oddyseus (Odi) Huron, and his hench-human-animals: Amira, or Marabou and Mark, or Maltese in "the rotten heart of leafy suburbia" (Beukes 2010: 66-80). Beukes is quick to point out that the more affluent suburbs of Johannesburg do not present any less decay than Zoo City, "… gated communities fortified like privatised citadels. Not so much keeping the world out as keeping the festering middle-class paranoia in" (Beukes 2010: 84). Huron's opulent abode is revealed to be far from the promised tranquil sanctuary but, in fact, a façade concealing greed, corruption and exploitation. It is exactly here in the rotten leafy suburbs that we come across the third critical dystopian theme, namely human greed or avarice and its manifstations in Neo-liberalism, as well as advanced and consumer capitalism, which will be explored in full, with reference to posthuman theories, as evident in the writings of Braidotti, (2013: 58-63) and Hayles (1999 : 162-169) in Chapter 4.

The main protagonist, Zinzi December, resides in Zoo City[22], an inner-city ghetto rooted in Hillbrow, but, as stated earlier, with animals. The main narrative is recounted in the first person present tense, lending the novel a fast-paced tempo. Zinzi is a 32 -year-old recovering drug addict with a sloth on her back. Her shavi enables her to locate lost objects, which we soon realise is not her main source of income. Burdened by a debt to an undisclosed criminal organisation, Zinzi participates in 419 Internet scams. Her handler, Vuyo, convinces her to cross the cyber-bridge into the 'real-world' by introducing her to her mark(s) in an elaborate plot to assist Zinzi in paying off the astronomical debt at a faster rate.

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22 The name of the novel *Zoo City* is italicized throughout the text, While the name of the place, or location within the narrative Zoo City remains unitalicized.

Zinzi shares her dingy apartment in Elysium Heights with her Congolese lover, Benoît. He is *makwerekwere*[23], making him the most empathetic and arguably most relevant character from a contemporary socio-political point of view. These characteristics will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, where I shall be examining the abject body as presented in the work of Julia Kristeva (1982: 1-32). We learn that Benoît fled the Congo leaving his wife and three children to an unknown fate, thus his bond with Mongoose. Benoît's shavi enables him to dampen others' mashavi. He has a natural resistance to magic, which puts him at risk of being hunted both by the government and criminal world. This is also in part the reason for Zinzi's attraction to him. She cannot read him, which also explains her initial inability to "see" Benoît's lost family.

Zinzi is approached by a potential client to find a lost ring, only to discover shortly thereafter that her client has been murdered. She is approached by two animalled individuals, Amira and Mark (sporting a Marabou and Maltese respectively), to help their employer (the reclusive music producer Odi Huron), to locate one twin, Songweza (Song) Radebe (half of the singing duo called IJusi) comprising of twins; S'busiso (S'bu) and Songweza (Song) Radebe. Song, we learn, has gone missing and Odi Huron employs Zinzi at a handsome rate to locate the girl with as little media involvement as possible. She consults a *sangoma* to assist her in locating Song. While initially sceptical of the power of the sangoma, Zinzi reacts with humility and trust when confronted with the wisdom and authenticity of the traditional belief system. Beukes thus successfully moves into both the critical dystopian as well as posthuman realms. By including a traditional belief system, she moves "*Science*" Fiction from the Eurocentric paradigm of the canonical dystopia into a new posthuman interpretation

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23 Makwerekwere: Magolego defines the meaning of the word "makwerekwere," as a slang for foreigners in South Africa, specifically black Africans who were not born in South Africa. It is a derogatory term, referring simultaneously to the "coal black" colour of the individual's skin, as well as a pungent smell (Magolego 2008).

of "being in the world". During her investigation, Zinzi receives several emails from dead 'aposymbiots' and inadvertently becomes entangled in a series of muti-murders targeting the animalled. This hints at the possibility that Zinzi herself might possess powers similar to the sangoma, which she supresses due to her modernist perspective. This creates a tension between the eurocentric humanist point of view and the non-anthropocentric posthuman position.

Zinzi manages to locate Song, who initially claims to be fine and simply wanting to be left alone, but she soon admits that someone is trying to kill her. Before Zinzi can learn more, Marabou and Maltese arrive at the scene to whisk Song away, claiming that since her disappearance she has not taken her medication and has therefore become unbalanced. Although the duo are visually grateful and pleased with Zinzi's detective work, Zinzi remains suspicious of their involvement and decides to investigate Song's claims. Having received the promised compensation for her work, Zinzi settles her remaining debt and impulsively notifies all her marks that they are being conned.

Whilst investigating Song's claims, Zinzi starts making a connection between the case and the string of fractured emails from dead aposymbiots that she had been receiving. Realising that the animal companions was the true victims in these murders, Zinzi makes the connection between the murders and *Umthakathi.*[24] As Zinzi's investigation progresses, it becomes apparent that Huron, Marabou and Maltese are all premeditated participants in the unfolding drama. After returning home, Zinzi finds an agitated Vuyo who claims that Zinzi used counterfeit currency to pay her debt. Zinzi also notices an unfamiliar knife on the

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24 "The verb, ukuthakatha, means 'to practice witchcraft, deal in nefarious charms, concoctions, poisons, etc.'. The related agent-noun is 'umthakathi' (plural 'abathakathi'), meaning 'one who practices witchcraft', whereas the concept noun 'ubuthakathi' simply means 'witchcraft'". (Zulu 25 June 2012).

kitchen counter and, hearing sirens approaching, she realises that she is being framed. Zinzi advises Vuyo to leave before the police arrive, but not before Vuyo triples her debt. While fleeing, Zinzi receives a panicked phone call from S'bu's friend, Arno screaming that 'they' have come for them. Zinzi rushes over to the twins' place to find it ablaze. She leaves certain that Marabou is behind the fire.

Zinzi contacts Benoît to take her to Huron's place as his guard uniform can gain entry to the property. Once inside, they find a drugged and traumatised Carmen (Huron's love interest and set to become the next animalled singing sensation) being tortured by Mark/Maltese. Zinzi confronts Maltese, who admits that Zinzi has been framed for the aposymbiot murders as well as those that are about to take place. At the critical moment where Benoît and Mark engage in combat, Zinzi notices a "something, sickly white and huge with scales" (Beukes 2010: 287) leaping out of the pool. In that instance, she realised that Huron is himself animalled, and that his animal companion has just submerged her human companion as Benoît is now missing. It becomes apparent that Odi Huron hid from the public eye as a result of his being animalled. His familiar giant white crocodile was likened to P.W. Botha in Chantelle Gray van Heerden's (2011) review of the novel.

Zinzi dives into the rotting water after him and emerges into an underground grotto just in time to drag Benoît's body to shore. She identifies the drugged and disorientated S'bu and Song as well as many other animals, which she recognises from the muti murders. Whilst hiding with Benoît's unconscious body, Zinzi witnesses Huron and Marabou killing the now human-less animals, while calmly discussing the power of the twins. Zinzi realises that they are performing a type of binding spell. Once the spell is concluded, Amira and Huron hand the twins both a knife convincing them (in their drug-induced states) that they are participants in a video game, and S'bu is convinced to kill Song. In doing so, the Undertow is transferred from Odi Huron to S'bu, releasing Huron, leaving him free to instruct Amira to kill S'bu. Zinzi manages to convince the crocodile that Huron will use it for muti, so the crocodile allows Zinzi to leave. The creature swims to the surface where it grabs a freshly-showered satin-robed Huron, as Mark gently flips Carmen's now lifeless body into the pool. Huron calls to Amira and Mark for help but they ignore his pleas. As he manages to shoot the crocodile, Huron reaches out to his hench-animalled (wo)men once more, but turning their back on him, Amira says: "I think our business here is done" (Beukes 2010:303) and shoves him away, while the weight of the dead humanless crocodile drags him underwater. At the

sound of approaching sirens, Amira and Mark flee the scene so the armed response find Zinzi next to the pool with an exhausted Mongoose and Sloth by her side.

The narrative concludes with Zinzi at the Beitbridge border. She is en-route to Kigali in the hope of locating Benoît's wife, Celvie and children: Armand, Ginelle and Celestin by using her *Shavi*.

Both the police and Vuyo are still pursuing her but, armed with a new Zimbabwean identity and an *amaShangaan* bag full of counterfeit currency, Zinzi is hopeful that she will redeem herself by doing the right and most unselfish thing: "…the best thing I've done with my miserable life" (Beukes 2010: 309). This therefore ensures an "utopian enclave" (Chang 2011:4) despite the decay, dehumanisation and greed that manifests itself within *Zoo City* (2010), placing it at the very pinnacle of the South African critical dystopian genre. Furthermore, the innovative use of 'muti-noir' as a hybrid-genre incorporating traditional African belief systems with traditional dystopian and noir themes, places the novel in the unique position to bridge the Eurocentric and Post-colonial chasm and placing it firmly within the posthuman paradigm.

It is not only in the field of literature that one finds the critical, speculative, post-colonial and dystopian-hybrid genre. In the realm of film, Neill Blomkamp reached critical acclaim for his 2009 live action film, *District 9*.   Blomkamp employs a documentary-style, hand-held cinéma vérité[25] style, combining naturalistic and photo-realistic computer-generated effects. Born in Johannesburg in 1979, Blomkamp emigrated with his parents to Canada at the age of eighteen, where he attended the Vancouver Film School. *Time* magazine named Blomkamp

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25 Cinéma vérité 'Truthful cinema' Translated from the French [sinema veʁite] (Berthe 2009)

one of the 100 Most Influential People of 2009. *Forbes* magazine named him as the 21st most powerful celebrity from Africa.

Having worked mainly in the field of 3D animation on several television series, Blomkamp was approached to film a series of live-action short films, titled *Landfall,* in 2007. Set in the *Halo* universe, these were set to promote the release of *Halo3,* followed by his first feature length film (an adaption of the *Halo* series) produced by LOTR director, Peter Jackson. When funding for the project collapsed, Jackson decided to produce *District 9* (Blomkamp 2009) instead. The film was an adaption of one of Blomkamp's earlier short films titled *Alive in Joburg* (2005). His other short film, *Tetra Vaal* (2004)*,* would later be developed into the director's 2015 dystopian film, *Chappie* (2015)*. District 9* was nominated for four Academy awards in 2010, including Best Picture and Best Visual Effects. Blomkamp went on to direct the 2013 Hollywood blockbuster, *Elysium* (2013). It is, however, Blomkamp's earlier film, *District 9* and his latest offering, *Chappie* that speaks most effectively to the critical dystopian characteristics of the current zeitgeist as described earlier in this chapter.

1.3 DISTRICT 9 (2009)

"He was an honest man, and he didn't deserve any of what happened to him" (District 9, 2009).

District 9 is set in an alternate reality Johannesburg in 2012. We are informed that an alien ship arrived on earth thirty years ago, in 1982, fleeing a decaying planet. Rescue teams stumbled upon the inhabitants, finding them sick and dying of malnutrition. In *District 9*, Blomkamp introduces his hybrid cinematic genre combining science fiction, action and video-game style filming. As with *Alive in Joburg* (2005), Blomkamp incorporates certain 'mocumentary' elements in the form of interviews and news broadcasts as a supplementary narrative. This blurring of traditional film elements characterises a hybrid film genre, placing

District 9 within the critical dystopian framework. The hybrid nature of the films' genre mirrors the hybrid nature of the protagonist, distorting the line between human, alien/animal[26] and object (Abley Sa). Following Wagner's (2013) argument that "Hybridity […] is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (Wagner 2013: 124), I argue that the hybrid genre, as seen in *District 9*, can be utilised as a means for examining anti-humanist movements such as the women's right movements, anti-racism, and de-colonization movement, as part of the larger posthuman predicament, as theorised by Pepperell (2003: 171-172).

The refugees have been settled in a shanty town named District 9*,* now earmarked for development. A private military corporation, Multinational United (MNU) have been assigned to handle the relocation process of these refugees to District 10, which resembles a prison camp, and conjures images of the refugee camps erected by the government for the victims of violence during the xenophobic attacks of 2008. District 9[27] is a place of squalor - its occupants live in a state of physical decay, with rubbish and decaying animal carcasses littering the environment. Beyond the physical manifestation of decay, the scene evokes recollections of the forced removal of the inhabitants of District 6[28] including the injustices of Apartheid's regime: segregation, dehumanisation and racism. The theme of decay, as it

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26 Alien/Animal Other here refers to Julia Kristeva's (1982) work on the Other, whereby "Otherness" is described as the defining quality of that which renders one as different or "other" to that which is considered the norm. The Other is used to encompass entities such as the abject, grotesque, spectre, animal, alien, cyborg. In short, all identities that differ from the liberal humanist definition of subjectivity.

27 The name of the film *District 9* is italicized throughout the text, While the name of the place, or location within the narrative District 9 remains unitalicized.

28 District 6 was a former inner-city residential area in Cape Town, South Africa. Over 60,000 of its inhabitants were forcibly removed during the 1970's by the apartheid regime.

manifested physically as well as socially (racism, xenophobia and colonialism) will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

 The responsibility of relocating 1.8 million aliens falls to the Afrikaner middleclass white male bureaucrat, Wikus van der Merwe, portrayed by Sharlto Copley. We soon realise that Wikus came to this position through the nepotistic promotion by his father-in-law, MNU big shot Piet Smit, portrayed by Louis Minnaar. Wikus' wife, Tania (Vanessa Haywood) arranges a surprise party to celebrate Wikus' promotion, blissfully unaware of the harrowing road that lies ahead for her compliant husband.

The aliens are portrayed as extremely strong eight-foot-tall humanoids who pose no threat to the human inhabitants and appear a peaceful if unappealing species. The aliens are soon subjected to the concept of "otherness", being referred to by humans as 'Prawns': a species-slur directly linked to their appearance, being described as similar to 'Parktown Prawns'. We learn that these aliens act in inappropriate and physically repulsive ways: gorging themselves on cat food and rotting livestock carcasses, vomiting, urinating, excreting other foul-coloured body fluids in public and scavenging through rubbish. The theme of identity and "otherness" and its manifestation in terms of dehumanisation and the abject body, as evident in the work of Julia Kristeva (1982) will be examined in greater length in Chapter 3.

Meanwhile the narrative moves to three aliens: Christopher Johnson (portrayed by Jason Cope), his son and a friend who are scavenging for pieces of technology. We assume that Christopher Johnson is his given name, reminiscent of the colonial practice of renaming indigenous individuals with Eurocentric names – usually because Westerners lacked the necessary knowledge to correctly pronounce local languages. The group of aliens distil a fluid from their scavenged finds, placing it in a small canister. Wikus, while serving eviction

notices to the local population, raids Christopher's friend's shack where he stumbles upon the canister. Due to Wikus' clumsy handling of the container, some of its contents spray onto his face. At this point, Christopher's friend is killed by the sadistic mercenary, Koobus Venter (David James).

Infected by the alien fluid, Wikus' DNA undergoes a Kafkaesque metamorphosis – like Gregor Samsa[29], Wikus finds himself in the process of being turned into a monstrous insect-like creature. His injured arm starts decaying and transforming into alien tissue. Wikus' transformation becomes one of (body) horror, resonant to that of abjection (Kristeva 1982). He vomits in public, his fingernails become detached and his colleagues point out that black fluid is leaking from his nose. In a particularly horror-filled scene, Wikus enters his darkened house, telling his wife that he thinks he has defecated and soiled his trousers, only to hear loud shouts of 'Surprise!' as he is greeted by friends and family gathering to celebrate his promotion. In this moment, the visual effect of the film becomes distorted and for a moment we experience the sheer disorientation and horror Wikus experience. He vomits again on the celebratory cake. And, as he loses consciousness, the camera focus on his now distorted, alien claw.

Wikus is detained by MNU after the nature of the infection is diagnosed at a hospital. Corporate greed takes precedence as MNU realises the monetary value that can be placed on Wikus' now chimeric DNA. Here the process of Wikus' hybridization mirrors the hybrid genre of the text. I shall discuss the significance of his transformation in light of the theme of

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29 In Franz Kafka's novel Metamorphoses (Kafka, 1972), the protagonist, Gregor Samsa, awakes one morning to find that he is metamorphosing into a giant insect. Gregor's previous monotonous existence, his gruesome transformation and the devastating impact it has on his family, his sense of isolation and desperate attempts at re-establishing his humanity and subsequently his intimacy with those who shared his life during his former embodiment, all closely resemble Wikus' fate in *District 9*.

identity, becoming 'other' and hybridization in greater detail in Chapter 3. His transformation lends him the ability to operate Alien technology, previously of no use to humans. Here the third established theme, that of human avarice, emerges as the driving force that will lead to the catalyst in the narrative. Driven by greed, Wikus' father-in-law instructs his scientists to vivisect Wikus in order to harvest his organs and tissue. Fortunately, Wikus manages to overpower the scientists and flee the facility. Piet Smit engages in a public smear campaign, broadcasting on local media that Wikus, now a fugitive, has contracted an alien STD, due to prolonged sexual activity with aliens. Venter and his team are deployed to hunt Wikus down. The theme of avarice as it is manifested in advanced, consumer capitalism and Neo Liberalism will be examined in Chapter 4.

Wikus flees to the only place that might accept him and in District 9 he manages to find Christopher's shack. He discovers that Christopher is in possession of the lost command module from the alien spacecraft and that the contents in the canister will enable them to reactivate the dormant command module of the ship. Christopher promises Wikus that, once aboard the functioning craft, he will be able to reverse Wikus' mutation, thereby convincing Wikus to help retrieve the canister from MNU's laboratory. Wikus procures weapons for the operation from Nigerian arms-dealer, Obesandjo, portrayed by Malawian actor, Eugene Khumbanyiwa. At the laboratory, Christopher is confronted with the scorched and brutalised bodies of his fellow aliens, so he decides that he cannot spare the fuel to heal Wikus but instead wishes to board the spacecraft and seek help as soon as possible. A furious Wikus betrays Christopher which leads to their arrest by Venter's men. Obesandjo's gang intervene, hoping to harvest Wikus' transformed arm for muti which will enable them to operate alien technology.

Christopher's son, in the command module, activates the mothership as well as an alien mechanised battle suit in Obesandjo's possession, killing the entire gang. In a sacrificial moment, Wikus, takes control of the battle suit, distracts the armed forces and allowing an injured Christopher to escape. Christopher promises Wikus that he will return in three years' time with a cure. Wikus manages to eliminate all the soldiers before Venter disables the suit, ejecting Wikus. Venter closes in on Wikus but is attacked and torn limb from limb by a group of aliens.

The command module shielding Christopher and his son is transported to the waiting mothership as stunned humans and aliens alike look on as the spacecraft departs.

The film ends with interviews and news reports speculating on Wikus' whereabouts and whether the spacecraft might return. Wikus' assistant Fundiswa, portrayed by Mandla Gaduka, expose MNU's illegal operations, District 9 is demolished and the aliens are relocated in District 10. Tania finds a delicately crafted metal flower on her doorstep, and instinctively knows that it is from Wikus. The final scene shows a fully transformed Wikus sitting amidst rubbish crafting a similar flower.

This open-ended conclusion allowing for a glimmer of hope (that Christopher will return with a cure and that Wikus will be reunited with Tania), together with its hybrid genre, places *District 9* within the framework of a critical dystopia. Blomkamp has been criticised for perpetuating a eurocentric, masculine point of view in his films (Pappademas 2015) (Loza 2013) (Abley Sa). The theoretical framework of posthumanism will be applied to the analysis, evaluating whether *District 9*'s use of the above themes can be termed dissident as it relates to issues of 'otherness', becoming animal/alien and specifically the problematic approach to racial stereotypes in Blomkamp's treatment of Nigerian individuals.

1.4 CHAPPIE (2015)

"People are always fearful of something they don't understand" (Chappie 2015).

Chappie (2015) is set in near future Johannesburg. As with *District* 9 (2009), Blomkamp's latest offering does present itself in a number of critical dystopian methods. *Chappie's* opening sets the scene using mocumentary interviews, casting CNN journalist Anderson Cooper as himself and thus utilising his signature hybrid genre. Most notable, of these dystopian methods is the cyborg human hybrid apparent in the work of Donna Haraway (2006:117-158). As in *District 9,* Chappie deals largely with the fear and mistreatment of the 'other'. I shall examine both the concept of the hybrid as well as the concept of the 'other' in greater detail in Chapter 3.

The South African crime rate has soared to such an extent that the police force simply cannot justify the massacre of police officers' lives. Civic protection is executed by a squadron of

technologically advanced, weaponised 'scouts' manufactured by the Tetravaal corporation. At the helm of this innovative task is software engineer Deon Wilson, portrayed by Dev Patel, who becomes fixated on creating a sentient version of the scouts. He achieves a great measure of success working on artificial intelligence in his own time. However, Tetravaal CEO, Michelle Bradley, portrayed by Sigourney Weaver, prohibits Deon from upgrading the scouts with artificial intelligence, stating that the investors and clients are both satisfied with having unthinking, unfeeling scouts in the field. Undeterred by Bradley's rejection of his genius, Deon procures a damaged scout, scheduled for demolition, and decides to download his consciousness algorithm into the rescued husk. Here the theme of human avarice, capitalism and Neo Liberalism come to light as fundamental characteristics of the critical dystopian genre which will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 4.

On his way home, Deon and the robot are hijacked by gangsters, portrayed by the South African rap group *Die Antwoord*[30]'s *The Ninja* and *Yolandi Vi$$er*, (playing metafictional versions of themselves) and America, portrayed by Jose Pablo Cantillo. They threaten to kill Deon unless he remotely deactivates the scouts which he tells them is impossible but he finally concedes under threat to program the police scout to fight for them. Deon installs the consciousness software into the damaged robot and, when the robot gains consciousness, he responds with childlike terror and an infant-like desire to assimilate and absorb his surroundings. Deon and Yolandi manage to pacify and reassure the robot, teaching it basic communication and naming it Chappie. Chappie is voiced and performed by Sharlto Copley, who also played *District 9's* protagonist, Wikus van der Merwe. Despite wanting to stay and 'take care' of his creation, Deon is forced to leave the hideout. Yolandi immediately assumes a nurturing role, speaking to Chappie in an infantile voice, teaching him to call her Mommy

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30 Antwoord is Afrikaans for The Answer. The group consist of Watkin Tudor Jones as Ninja and Anri du Toit as Yolandi Vi$$er

and reading him bedtime stories. Ninja, as the ultimate "bad-surrogate parent", (Corliss 2015) is hell-bent on exploiting Chappie and plans to use Chappie in an armoured-car-heist. He teaches Chappie how to do a 'loose-hipped robot Crip-walk and drapes him in a B.A. Baracus–worthy assortment of gold chains' (Pappademas 2015). In contrast Deon, referring to himself as Chappies' 'Maker' occupies him by teaching him to read and paint, warning him to avoid crime and violence. A cunning Ninja thwarts Deon's warning by introducing Chappie to knives and teaching him about the 'dog eat dog' morality of the slums.

Meanwhile at Tetravaal, mercenary turned engineer Vincent Moore, portrayed by Hugh Jackman, is working on a competing project: the remotely controlled weaponised MOOSE. Moore has been growing increasingly envious of Deon's success, mainly as the police force refuse to give his heavy weapons platform (HWP) the same attention as Deon's scouts receive. After Moore's project is rejected (presumably as result of the scout's success), he decides to deactivate all the Tetravaal scouts except for the MOOSE.

Ninja's gang is under pressure to pay a debt of 20 million rand, to Hippo, portrayed by Brandon Auret. Due to the looming deadline, and possibly Chappie's limited battery life, Ninja becomes impatient with Chappie and abandons him in a dangerous neighbourhood to fend for himself. Here Chappie encounters the worst of humanity, when he is ridiculed and attacked by thugs who brutalise him by throwing rocks at him and hitting him with pipes, eventually they break a Molotov cocktail on him. Moore manages to track down Chappie, and extracts the Guard key, necessary to deactivate the Tetravaal weapons. A traumatised Chappie manages to escape and returns to the hideout where Yolandi admonishes Ninja for neglecting Chappie. He manages to redeem himself in Chappie's eyes by teaching him martial arts, and deceitfully tells him that they need to steal money to replace Chappie's dying body. Throughout the film, we find that Chappie's character becomes animalised and there are numerous other references to 'becoming animal' throughout the plot: Ninja's rival is called Hippo; Moore's HWP is named MOOSE; Chappie's one antennae droops like the ear of a rabbit and he acts like a frightened animal after gaining consciousness for the first time (Abley Sa). The concept of 'otherness' and becoming animal will be explored further in Chapter 3.

At Tetravaal, Moore uses the guard key to upload a virus onto the system, deactivating all the police scouts including Chappie. The criminal elements immediately start rioting and pillaging the streets as Deon takes Chappie back to Tetravaal to restore him. As Chappie is revived, he notices the headgear used to control MOOSE, taking it back to the hideout. In a transhuman act, Chappie re-engineers the headgear to allow him to transfer his consciousness into a computer, enabling himself to be uploaded into a different body after his limited battery runs out.

Ninja's gang, along with Chappie, raid a police vehicle and finally procure the money to pay Hippo's debt. The raid is broadcast on the local news, causing Tetravaal to pursue them. Chappie realises that Ninja has been deceiving him all along, having had no plans of finding a replacement body and he plans to kill Ninja for this final deceit. Deon arrives, warning the gang that Tetravaal CEO Michelle Bradley has ordered Chappie's destruction. At the same moment, MOOSE (controlled remotely by Moore) as well as Hippo arrive at the hideout. MOOSE is deployed to assassinate both Deon and Chappie and a battle ensues. Both America and Hippo are killed in the skirmish while Deon is mortally wounded. Just as Ninja is about to be killed, Yolandi sacrifices herself to save him. Chappie destroys MOOSE by detonating a bomb.

Distraught by Yolandi's death, Chappie drives a dying Deon to the Tetravaal laboratory. When confronted by Moore, Chappie beats him within an inch of his life and transfers Deon's consciousness into a deactivated robot using the modified MOOSE headgear. As Chappie's battery finally gives out, Transhuman Deon wirelessly transfers Chappie's consciousness into another deactivated scout. The pair go into hiding. The police force cancel their contract with Tetravaal. Ninja finds a flashdrive marked 'Mommy's Consciousness Test Backup' presumably containing a backup of Yolandi's consciousness, made by Chappie. In the final scene, Chappie is shown hacking into Tetravaal's manufacturing plant and uploading Yolandi's consciousness into a robot resembling her.

"What we need now is to build the right lives for ourselves against a neoliberal, late capitalist system that makes violence, profit and human creativity, identical" (Sculos 2015). Will Deon, Chappie and Yolandi re-emerge in a transhuman state to bring humanity back to a dystopian Johannesburg?

Although I shall not entertain transhuman fantasies of disembodiment as part of the theoretical framework of this study, I shall accept this open-ended conclusion as a utopian enclave.

Sculos (2015) argues that 'human beings have not become less violent because our social conditions have not become less violent' (Sculos 2015: [sp]).   I would argue that it is exactly this violent social environment that places humanity within the realm of the critical dystopia and that the decay evident within this violent social environment (manifesting as racism, xenophobia and fear of all 'others') is merely the signifier for the end of an age, which left in its wake destructive systems such as colonialism, racism and sexism all in the name of "the infallibility of human power and the arrogant belief in our superiority and uniqueness"(Pepperell 2003: 171). Most importantly, I would argue that the open-endedness of the conclusion of the age of Humanism allows for the 'horizon of hope' in the dawn of the posthuman era.

1.5 THE POĒSIS[31] OF THE DYSTOPIAN AESTHETIC

From the outset, the objective of the body of work titled *Poetry of Decay* has been to challenge classic assumptions regarding the aesthetics of art and, specifically, painting. It should be noted that my definition of painting is directly linked to my painting praxis, whereby the largest portion of the painting is achieved through meticulous venetian glazes[32]

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31 Poēsis: The process of making; production, creation; creativity, culture. (Simpson 2018: [sp])

32 The Venetian glazing method is characterised by the use of numerous (often up to 40 layers) thin colour glazes applied meticulously over the underpainting, emphasising naturalistic atmospheric effects. The preliminary drawing and underpainting often showed a great deal of detail and provided a ground for the glazes to follow. Once the desired luminosity in the shadow areas were achieved, the painter proceeded to introduce scumbling (diluted opaque colour) glazes. The painting is presented as having strong chiaroscuro and numerous lean glazes which results in the hues in the work appearing to be luminous as result of the light reflecting off the various colour glazes (Wilcox 2014: 80-81).

applied over each other and then wiped partially or (in some instances) completely away. This process is applied to all work, even those executed in charcoal or pastel – luminosity is achieved by laying down pigment and then eroding certain areas of hue to reveal the structure beneath.

The early works in the body of work: *Poēsis of Decay,* consist of a series of three paintings titled *Decay, Identity* and *Avarice.* Each of these works address one of the key concepts and draws strongly on the visual signifiers identified in the works of Beukes and Blomkamp. These works function as a preamble to the exploration of the dystopian aesthetic in the works to follow. More importantly, however, is how the studio praxis finds its ontogenesis[33] in initially expressive techniques employing a wide variety of Dionysian[34] (Pepperell 2003:107) approaches: from dripping diluted acrylic paint onto the canvas, decalcomania and stencilling to blocking out large areas by masking them off which creates rigid boundaries that signify the dichotomy characteristic of the liberal humanist subject. The work utilises classic compositions combined with vivid acidic colours, challenging the classic assumptions reminiscent of liberal humanism (typified in High Renaissance art). The work also appears figurative, without depicting actual human figures, thereby challenging the human/object dichotomy characteristic of the liberal humanist mindset. The work is intended to disrupt and subvert classic assumptions not only in painting aesthetics but also in liberal humanist thinking. The ambiguous nature of this practice, whereby chaotic Dionysian actions are

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33 Ontogenesis – a neologism meaning the nature (onto, from ontology) of the start (genesis) of the creative process. The term has been co-opted from the biological sciences to serve as a useful description of the change in nature of things, not necessarily visual or material, but informed by intentionality

34 The concept of Dionysian and Apollonian artistic impulses originates from Frederick Nietzsche's work The Birth of Tragedy, wherein he postulates that man's creative impulses consist of both the chaotic (Dionysian) and ordered (Apollonian), and that one should not be pursued above the other, but that a balance between the two needs to exist in order for a creative environment to succeed (Nietzsche 2000).

employed in order to establish structures and systems of order, not only reminds us of the impact of chaos and quantum theory on postmodern thinking (Pepperell, 2003:167), but is also ambiguously emblematic of the changing social reality, whereby the rigid systemic violence enforced by the "utopian[35]" apartheid system is gradually being eroded by the new social reality. This process speaks to the posthuman condition whereby the liberal humanist paradigms are being eroded by the new posthuman paradigm. Theories, systems and world views are falling – allowing for new ways of being to evolve. Morse Peckham (2004) argues that the human default is order and, as sentient beings, we search for disruption of order in order to grow. I argue that it is exactly this "Rage for Chaos" (Peckham 2004) which manifests as humanity's fight against stagnation, and specifically against the order humanist ideals strive to enforce upon society. From our rage for chaos, true creativity and freedom from rigid systems are born.

Once the structural composition of the work has been established in acrylic underpainting, the malleable agents are introduced. This is executed by applying numerous venetian glazes of pure transparent hue and wiping certain areas back into the static acrylic underpainting. This process is present throughout the body of work. However, as the theoretical research progressed, iconography and narrative evolved to become increasingly more deconstructed and fragmented, reflecting the increased tension evident in contemporary society. Measures were taken to introduce ontogenetic techniques that followed transfers, digital media and techniques that speak conceptually of decay manifesting within the creative process. In these works, the viewer is confronted by a number of spaces in various states of decay. They show isolated figures and dilapidated structures and the viewer is led to question their assumptions

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35 Utopia usually speaks to a system that is promised as offering to be 'good place' but ironically only offers a better solution for some, while proving a decidedly bad place for the majority.

on aesthetics. This leads the viewer to ponder the cause of the prevalent decay and its influence on contemporary society.

1.5.1 Glazing as Metaphor and Methodology

During the glazing process, there is inevitably a certain degree of damage to the underpainting. As with the academic approach to painting, very little to no white or opaque hues are used in the early stages of the painting process. The process therefore becomes both technical as well as metaphorical: the wiping away of work laid down before speaks to the theme of decay, which runs through the very concept of dystopia. My work views the materiality of paint, whereby oils are applied in an impasto fashion, emblematic of the solidity and fixedness of the liberal humanist paradigm. In my mind, the materiality of paint speaks to those paradigms viewed as 'cast in stone'; solid and static and therefore defies the fluidity and malleability of the posthuman paradigm. Those sections of the painting, executed in impasto or alla prima, therefore signify remnants of the liberal humanist mindset, which will either have to be completely eroded by the posthuman paradigm or become assimilated into the new mindset over time. The very act of glazing and wiping away becomes symbolic of the wave of posthuman thinking that is gradually washing over and eroding the static, liberal humanist system. Glazing as painting praxis is an extremely time-consuming and gradual process, as opposed to the swift and fleeting nature of the impressionist's impasto and alla prima approach. I argue that the deliberate and prolonged nature of the glazing process echoes the lingering progress of the posthuman condition. I am aware of the paradox that this hypothesis creates in that academic art techniques (mostly employed during the pinnacle of liberal humanism) are utilised as a metaphor for the corrosive agent wearing away humanist principles while those exact humanist ideals are paradoxically represented by a technique (alla prima and impasto) characteristic of the modern age. I would, however, argue that this very paradox is emblematic of the ambiguous and fluid nature of the posthuman condition while taking into consideration that academic art has been significantly modernised over the past two centuries. The postmodernist movement has drastically informed and influenced the academic approach to art (Wilcox 2014:3, 8-9). I argue that my painting praxis, although presented with a certain degree of academicism, combines the traditional approach with radical postmodern techniques (in the high chroma geometric

underpainting) and therefore is presented as an altogether new methodology: a hybrid of traditional and postmodern praxis.

The painting style can be termed hybrid, insofar as the iconography incorporates Surrealist tropes while also drawing deeply from the speculative dystopian and Magic Realism genres. The works are intended to create an alternative reality where everything seems familiar, yet out of kilter. All the works are profoundly speculative - in certain instances even whimsical. The intention remains to urge the viewer to question reality; the current social climate and the systemic paradigms to which we have been accustomed. Though I actively resist categorisation, the hybrid style employed by Beukes and Blomkamp has a profound influence on my work.

The visual language employed takes the form of a loaded discourse whereby early works appear claustrophobic in composition, leaving the viewer with almost too much to process at once. This trope is employed to evoke the feeling of being overwhelmed by a sense of a loss of control (Hayles 1999) with the viewer, which is characteristic of the posthuman condition. Paradoxically, the images may seem literal in their interpretation. However, it is precisely this overwhelmingly claustrophobic environment that leaves the viewer to draw his/her own conclusions, leaving the narrative essentially open-ended in its refusal to prescribe meaning. This claustrophobic open-enedness alludes to the posthuman horizon of hope within the critical dystopia (Viera 2013:4).

1.5.2 Transference as Metaphor and Methodology

The visual narrative within the body of work is marked by a sense of unravelling, whereby the compositions progressively become less claustrophobic and more open. At the same time, the visual signifiers become less prescriptive and more ambiguous which implies a gradual "unmaking" of the painting process. The viewer is led to experience this sense of unravelling as they move through the exhibition space: viewing the early controlled works of the Dystopia Series first and then moving through the works to view the ultimate unravelling in the completely deconstructed works in the #PostFall Series. As the iconography gradually unravels, the process also becomes less formal, less static and more fluid. After the preliminary works, my praxis shifted to the use of acrylic transfers as ontogenesis. This methodology signals a final break from the formal approach and the process becomes

increasingly fluid, culminating with the final works in a complete state of fragmentation as far as both the iconography and process are concerned. Therefore, the studio praxis mimics the posthuman condition in that there is a progressive loss of control; a growing sense of fluidity and an eventual state of ambiguity, with absolutely no telling where the process may lead.

The use of transfers adds another layer to the painting process, resulting in the reflexive relationship between artist and painting. This further signal a loss of control and an unravelling of the process. The process consists of transferring existing photographs featuring instances of civic unrest (taken from news media) onto the canvas surface and then overlaying these with countless oil glazes. Metaphorically the act of transferring these images speaks to the transference of the legacy; the history and the 'baggage' of the shared past and its transference from one era to the next - from one generation to the following. By manipulating these transferred images: adding statuesque figures and especially overlaying them with layer upon layer of first acrylic and then oil glazes (creating a physical palimpsest[36,] which echoes the metaphorical palimpsest), I am speaking of how our shared history is influenced and eroded by new paradigms, new systems and new ways of existing in the world. The use of these transferred images, showing scenes familiar to the viewer, is intended to encourage the viewer to contemplate how history overlays current events and how everything is informed by that which has happened before - thereby guiding the viewer into the process of making meaning of the materials and processes used. There is a very natural progression within my painting praxis, as far as the technique of transference is concerned, where acrylic transfers are employed and then, in later work, the acrylic transfer process is left behind in favour of the actual printing of manipulated images onto the canvas.

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36 Palimpsest is an object or image that reveals its history, such as found on the Archimedes Palimpsest (discovered in 1899): a document revealing traces of the writing that went before.(Artopium.com)

The acrylic is thereby replaced by printing ink, making the process far more technologically advanced - adding additional layers to the praxis and making it far more posthuman in nature. The print is then treated with oil glazes, obliterating certain areas and accentuating others. This essentially speaks to the same concept of the overlaying of histories and shared experiences that are gradually eroded by the new glazes - signifying the new era or the new zeitgeist. This use of transference as methodology and metaphor reminds me of Gerhard Richter's praxis, specifically in his *Florence Series* (1997-2001) whereby he used photographs taken during a family holiday and overpainted these images by adding layers upon layers of paint and then scraping the oils over the images thus effectively creating an alternative reality - a world out of kilter (Richter 2018: sp).

CHAPTER TWO: Decay

All we find are altars in decay

And profane words scrawled black across the sun.

Still, stubbornly we try to crack the nut

In which the riddle of our race is shut.

Doom of Exiles - Sylvia Plath (1981: 318)

Decay[37](Simpson 2018: [sp]), from the original French 'decair' based on the Latin decidere (from de- + cadere, meaning 'fall') thus literally meaning to 'fall down or off'. Every existing entity finds its conclusion in decay. Simultaneously, for anything to grow, it is vital that decay should transpire first. From the moment of conception, the new creation's roots are literally grounded in the decaying remains of what went before. As explored in the previous chapter; critical dystopian fiction is inherently rooted in decay; characteristically originating from a society in various states of decline. In this chapter, I shall argue that the decline evident in contemporary South African society, as manifested in the works of popular fiction by Lauren Beukes and Neill Blomkamp, are essentially manifestations of the decline of Eurocentric Humanism. For all its positive attributes (Wolfe 2010: xvi), it has become clear that humanism in its purest form – as the ethical stance that places humanity at the centre of the universe, as master and conqueror of nature and all other existence, is failing (Herbrechter 2013). Critical posthumanist theory decentralises humanity as the centre of the universe. During the second half of the previous century, the philosophical death of Man (Pepperell 2003:171) led to the rejection of the Eurocentric identity and, by extent, the fall of liberal humanism. What followed was the anti-humanist era, which heralded a re-evaluation of the 'other' (Kristeva 1982), a concept that will be studied in greater detail in the next chapter. As Robert Pepperell (2003) explains; it is a historical fact that all the great emancipatory

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37(Simpson 2018: [sp])

movements of the previous century were fuelled by the growing awareness of the 'other' – those who fell outside the classic humanist definition of 'Man'. These movements include the feminist, decolonization, anti-racism, LGBT movements as well as such environmental movements as the anti-nuclear and pacifist movements. (Pepperell 2003: 171-172). Similarly, Braidotti (2013) argues that these movements are "simultaneously the symptom of the crises [the fall of humanism, as well as] its cause'" (Braidotti 2013: 37). It stands to reason then that the gross human rights violations, evident in societies in decay, including, but not limited to, racism, xenophobia, colonialism and sexism is a result of the Eurocentric mindset originating in and perpetuated by classical humanism. Granted liberal humanism and its fundamental belief in the sanctity of the individual, serves as the foundation of many beneficial ideologies such as human rights, egalitarianism and liberty. However, it is undeniable that humanism as an ideology continuously feeds into the human superiority complex and, coupled with the human characteristic of avarice evident in our insatiable need to consume, has resulted in free market capitalism, with all its horrors of exploitation of both other humans (slavery) and nonhuman animals (factory farming) (Harari 2011: 254-263). This relationship between humanism, human avarice and capitalism will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 4.
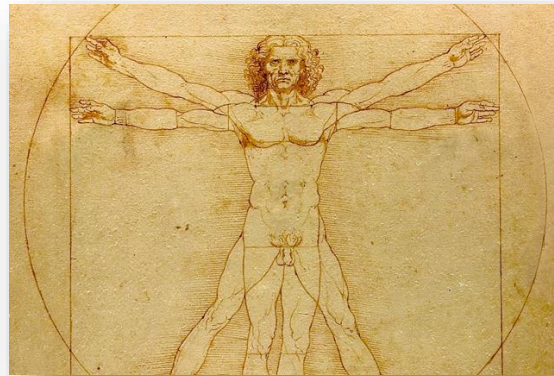
Figure 1: The Vitruvian man by Leonardo da Vinci

Both Braidotti (2013: 13-16) and Haraway (2008: 7-8) cite Leonardo da Vinci's *The Vitruvian man* (c.1490) as the "iconic emblem" (Braidotti 2013) for classic or Renaissance humanism. Haraway (2008) states that The Vitruvian man has come to imply "High Art, High Science: genius, progress, beauty, power, money" (Haraway 2008: 7). Braidotti states that it upholds "a specific view of what is 'human' about 'humanity' emphasising the "almost

boundless capacity of humans to pursue their individual and collective perfectibility"
(Braidotti 2013: 13).

On the 9th of April 2015, following a month of protest and centuries of colonialism, the now
infamous Rhodes statue, situated on the campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT),
finally fell. A month before this historical event, another symbolic act occurred on the same
site, (Bester, 10 March 2015) when Chumani Maxwele, a UCT student, smeared excrement
on the statue of the British imperialist. In her article, Karin Murris (2016) gives a profound
posthumanist analysis of the symbolism behind this embodied action (Murris 2016: 274-294).
This moment was the birth of the #Rhodesmustfall movement, from which flowed the
#Feesmustfall movement. Decolonialisation became a household, albeit highly poignant term
and the ripple-effect continues, having spread abroad as far as Oxford.

> Don't let anyone tell you that Apartheid has nothing to do with South
> Africa now. Those roots run deep and tangled and we'll be tripping over
> them for many generations to come. ~ Lauren Beukes (Watson 2008)

There is much anger and frustration about the fact that twenty-three years after the fall of
apartheid, the majority of South Africans still live in poverty; lacking basic services, clean
living conditions and equal employment (Murris 2006: 275). Combined with the high crime
rate and rampant corruption (Grootes 2016) within the ruling party, it is not surprising that
this 'moral anger' is serving as a catalyst for action against the social decay evident in
contemporary South African society. Recently this action spread beyond student protest to
the general population (African News Agency 2017). Just as Maxwele found it "unbearably
humiliating to have to walk past a statue glorifying someone now regarded as a racist" (Murris,
2016: 275), thousands, if not millions of South Africans are finding it unbearably humiliating

to face the fact that their president[38] is complicit in the pillaging of the National treasury (The Times Live 2017).

After Maxwele's act, the statue was covered with black plastic and students were invited to post their opinions as to what should be done. An unknown student painted a dark shadow being cast by the statue onto the surrounding pavement. Provocative photographs of a partially-covered Rhodes flooded the media, providing rich soil for the imminent decay to germinate in the minds of artists. A noteworthy example is the performance art piece by UCT fine arts student, Sethembile Msezane, discussed skilfully by Murris (2016: 279-282). Likewise, the image of a partially covered Rhodes statue evoked in my mind that of the Vitruvian Man. In many respects, Rhodes is to South Africa what the Vitruvian Man is to Eurocentric humanism: the embodiment of the European, white, male and the symbol of perfectibility against which all non-subscribing are classified as 'other'. Quoting Tony Davies, Braidotti states that "All humanisms until now have been imperial" (Davies quoted by Braidotti 2013:15). Katherine Hayles (1999) interprets the fall of the liberal humanist subject in much the same terms. Subsequently the fall of humanism, as emblematic in the Vitruvian Man, can be interpreted as the fall of such systems as imperialism and colonialism, and therefore the fall of The Vitruvian Man moves beyond being a mere visual metaphor for the decline of liberal humanism but ironically mirrors the fall of the Rhodes statue (Hess 2015), which has become the uniquely South African symbol for the fall of colonialism.

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38 This was written during the time when national protest action was launched against alleged corruption charges against the then President Jacob Zuma. With President Zuma's resignation early in 2018 and the subsequent spirit of "Ramaphoria" following Pres Cyril Ramaphosa's inauguration as president, matters are definitely not what they were at the dawn of the rainbow nation – the road to recovery, if indeed possible, will doubtlessly be a long and strenuous journey.

Figure 2: The Rhodes Statue, partially covered

The Vitruvian ideal of Man as the standard of both perfection and perfectibility […] was literally pulled down from his pedestal and deconstructed. (Braidotti 2013: 23)

And so, as the statue fell on the 9th of April 2015 it became the South African metaphor for the fall of humanism, and yet Rhodes still cast a dark shadow over Southern Africa. On Friday the 7th of April 2017, almost 2 years to the day after the Rhodes statue fell, South Africans across all races, cultures and political affiliations took to the streets in protest against State President Jacob Zuma's (seemingly unsanctioned) (Morais 2017) cabinet shuffle, resulting in Standard and Poor's downgrade of South Africa to junk status (Business day 2017). For the first time since the end of Madiba's presidency, the remnant of the

Rainbow Nation was visible, creating in the public mind "a horizon of hope", I argue that at this point in time, South Africa is finding itself on the summit of a critical dystopian society.

As stated at the start of this chapter, the root of the word decay, from the Latin 'decidere' literally means to fall off. I therefore argue that the physical manifestation of decay in South Africa is evident now, since the Rhodes statue 'fell off' its pedestal. I further postulate that the fallist movement[39], in itself, is an indicator of the social decay evident in contemporary South African society, in that it calls for the decay (fall) of a wide range of systems that are grounded in the liberal humanist paradigm.

This decay (or falling) of the archaic systems is not a negative occurrence, but rather heralds a new posthuman age. This age is characterised by humanity's acknowledgement of its loss of control over consciousness, nature, boundaries and the environment (Hayles 1999: 288) and therefore constitutes a condition that supersedes liberal humanism - a condition that must necessarily be termed the posthuman condition Pepperell 2003: 167-172). I shall now proceed to deconstruct the concept of decay by analysing its physical and social manifestations as apparent in the critical dystopian South African works of Lauren Beukes and Neill Blomkamp.

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39 Fallist: the term attributed by the South African Press to a number of movements, calling for the fall of everything from the Rhodes statue, university fees, Afrikaans as higher education language and President Jacob Zuma (Davis 2016).

2.1 PHYSICAL DECAY

2.1.1 Urban Decay

One of the most observable and conventional manners in which physical decay manifests itself is urban decay, extremely prevalent in pop culture, significantly due to romanticised images of desolated spaces, for instance that of Pripyat: the abandoned city within the fallout zone of the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Ukraine. Referred to universally as 'ruin porn' (Beukes 2014), ruin photography is a contemporary movement in photography which documents the decline of urban environments, most notably cities, buildings and infrastructure (Behind Closed Doors 2015).

> You can map out a whole city according to the weight of memory, like pins on
> the homicide board tracking the killer's movements. But the connections get
> thicker and denser and more complicated all the time (Beukes 2008: 58).

In *Moxyland* (2008), Beukes toys with the concept of urban decay, largely through her exploration of graffiti as social commentary (Beukes 2008: 32-33). Tendeka, "involved in numerous civil protests", (Roos 2010: 36-56) is passionately involved in an art project, allowing street children (the disenfranchised) to "let them make a mark on the city that usually filters them out like spam" (Beukes 2008: 32). The project runs out of funding and is doomed but this doesn't keep Tendeka from 'making his mark' on the city'. Tendeka's delayed act of protest in the 'underway' turns the city into a full-blown 'warzone' (Beukes 2008: 207). The Cape Town of 2018 is divided by concrete boundaries, the 'underway' and 'overpasses' separating the elite from the masses. The urban setting is further removed from the rural: rampant with pandemics and poverty.

In *Zoo City* (Beukes 2010), as the title suggests, the city portrays an even more meaningful role. In true magic realism style, Beukes's Johannesburg is not that far removed from today's city. As discussed earlier, Zoo City is Hillbrow with animals – the narrative describes an urban landscape pockmarked by decay. The narrative depicts a future Johannesburg, not too far removed from reality, where unrestrained mining practices have left the landscape environmentally scarred, its surface flooded with refugees of both the human- and non-human animal variety.

I drive south to where the last of the mine dumps are – sulphur-coloured artificial hills, laid waste by the ravages of weather and reprocessing, shored up with scrubby grass and eucalyptus trees. Ugly valleys have been gouged out…" (Beukes 2010: 255).

Beukes's use of vivid colour to describe the toxic environment, both physically as well as metaphorically, functions as a significant influence in the use of acidic colours in my dystopian landscapes.

The countless caverns not only run underneath the decaying exterior of buildings like Elysium Heights (Beukes 2010: 50) but also emerge underneath the lush pools in the suburbs (Beukes 2010: 288). Henriette Roos (2011:59) gives a harrowing interpretation of the environmental decay present in *Zoo City:* "Humans are responsible for the all-encompassing decay and ecological crises, but there is no human accountability." (Roos 2011: 59). Here the realm of urban decay run into that of environmental decay and its relevance to the influence of advanced capitalism, but I shall devote more attention to this in Chapter 4.

From the urban decay described in the novel, the ironically named Elysium[40] Heights emerge as the ultimate site of dereliction: "there was something comforting about the barbed wire and the broken windows, the way all the buildings connected via officially constructed walkways or improvised bridges to form one sprawling ghetto warren" (Beukes 2010: 50). The hallways are black and smell of the 'Undertow' (Beukes 2010: 4) and crime is rampant. Elysium and other buildings on the same side of the street fall outside the boundaries of privatised law: "Our landlord is too snoep to pony up for protection" (Beukes 2010: 206).

It is discernible that urban decay is closely linked to social decay. Beukes illustrates how this "sprawling ghetto warren" (Beukes 2010:50) refers both to the material structures as well as the social state of the inhabitants. The sites around the decaying buildings are often the scene of

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40 Elysium from Greek mythology; A place or state of perfect happiness. Origin via Latin from Greek Elusion (pedion) '(plain) of the blessed' (Simpson 2018: [sp])

crime, extortion and corruption. Even in the affluent, gated communities, decay lurks beneath the depths: "The smell of damp and rot is overwhelming. Old vase-water" (Beukes 2010: 289). Zinzi speculates that the function of the gated communities is not so much to keep the criminal elements out, as it is to "keep the festering middle-class paranoia" in (Beukes 2010: 84).

Ashraf Jamal writes that cities are Beukes's "psycho-geographies cities as visceral as they are imagined" (Jamal 2013), describing her world as a 'cool ghetto'. However, Beukes explores the urban not merely as a backdrop for her dystopias but as living, breathing, decaying characters with equally vital roles to play within the narrative. I therefore argue that Beukes successfully utilises the concept of urban decay as a metaphor for the social decay, not only evident in her narratives but also in contemporary South Africa. It is noteworthy though, that these decaying structures are not manifestations of decay in the sense of decomposing matter, as much as they are signifiers of a changing social reality. The decay evident in the buildings and infrastructure of Beukes's novels functions as a metaphor for the falling systems that have failed its inhabitants in the past. Rather than calling for a defeatist sense of surrender, decay functions as a preamble for the new to come.

While urban decay portrays a vital role in Beukes's urban dystopia, Blomkamp engages less visibly with urban decay as a metaphor. In *District 9* (2009)*,* the camera work focuses on the 'slums' of District 9, showing the sprawling settlement from above. True to magic realism, Blomkamp filmed in the informal settlement of Chiawelo, Soweto which was abandoned when the inhabitants were moved to RDP housing[41] (Stobie 2012:134). Blomkamp pushes the theme of urban decay into the realm of social realism, by employing authentically abandoned spaces, thereby satirising the 'ruin porn' movement. In *Chappie* (2015)*,*

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41 'Reconstruction and Development Programme' housing built after 1994, to provide low cost housing for previously disenfranchised communities.

Blomkamp filmed a scene in the Ponte City Apartments, widely perceived as the epitome of urban decay during the 1990's. Increased gang activity and crime ensured that the apartments became symbolic of the urban decay that gripped Berea and surrounds during the 90's. At one stage the 'core' was filled with rubbish and debris up to the fifth story. As dereliction and decay intensified, there were even proposals to convert the building into a high-rise prison (Smith 2015). On the concept of rubbish and debris, Mireille Rosello (2016), discussing *District 9,* pushes the envelope further by remarking how the camera focusses on the "absence of distinction between what is thrown out and what is kept" (Rosello 2016:36). By focussing on the waste and rubbish, as well as the decaying nonhuman-animal carcasses, Blomkamp entertains the concept of decay visually. However, it is his engagement with the decaying body that becomes the most significant metaphor within his work.

2.1.2 Decay of the Body

> Something rips free inside me. Mouth full of molten copper. I can taste the light.
>
> Force my eyes open. (Beukes 2008:278-279)

Body Horror[42](Collins Online Dictionary 2018: [sp]) can be classified as a horror genre elicited by the graphic depiction of the degeneration or decay of the human body (Boss, 1986). Both Beukes (2008: 278-288) in *Moxyland* and Blomkamp in *District 9* (2009) employ body horror as metaphor.

In *Moxyland*, Tendeka dies an excruciating death when, after contracting the M7N1 virus, "his internal organs are liquefied" (Stobie 2012: 373) and expelled through his orifices. The gore is intensified by Toby's description, accurately conveying his revulsion, as Tendeka

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42 originated in the 1980's. (Collins Online Dictionary. 2018: [sp])

dissolves in front of him, soaking into his shoes. When Toby eventually vomits, he tries desperately to scoop "his mess" away from Tendeka "pooling" around him. Toby admits that he cannot handle how he violates Tendeka's remains. Here we see a glimmer of hope: narcissistic Toby is inspired by martyr-like Tendeka to 'do the right thing'. Tendeka's liquefying body signifies the dissolving of boundaries between the body and what is outside – effectively working in contrast to the concrete boundaries of the city. As Tendeka dissolves, he believes that the broadcasting of his gruesome end will facilitate the dissolving between the periphery of the haves and the have nots.

Blomkamp engages with body horror to a different degree in *District 9* (2009). We witness Wikus's body slowly 'decaying' in the process of becoming alien. His shameful transformation begins: he vomits in public, black liquid leaks through his nose, at one point he confesses to soiling himself and his bodily fluids are expelled through his orifices – behaviour frowned upon by 'normal humans'. Much like Tendeka, Wikus's transformation functions as a crossing of boundaries from human into 'other'. Metaphorically this transformation can be viewed as a posthuman rebirth into 'otherness[43]'. At a later stage, Wikus twists his finger nails off with his teeth – an act that fills the viewer with utter revulsion but signifies his physical participation in the process of becoming alien (Stobie 2012:137). When his left hand transforms into an alien claw, the viewers, and possibly Wikus himself, realise that he is finally becoming 'other'. The concept of 'other' as evident in the theory of Julia Kristeva (1982) will be further explored in the following chapter when I examine decay in identity and its manifestation in the abject body.

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43 'otherness' here refers to Kristeva's (Kristeva 1982: 3) concept of the corpse being the ultimate 'other' to which we all succumb eventually.

At this stage the focus remains on the visceral body and the boundary of the body is the skin (Van Veuren 2012). As both Wikus and Tendeka cross this boundary, the rupturing is accompanied by excruciating pain and horror. I therefore argue that the metaphorical rupturing of boundaries relating to the skin and its pigmentation, mirrors the social decay within not only the dystopian societies of Beukes and Blomkamp, but also contemporary South African society. In short, the process of decay as the end of the era of humanism, and by extent colonialism/imperialism, brings with it a metaphorical 'body horror' within the collective mind of society.   The concept of 'body horror' and its application in the abject as it relates to the posthuman identity will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

2.2   SOCIAL DECAY

Social decay or social disintegration is the tendency of a society to decline or disintegrate over time: 'social' here referring to 'social order[44]' and decay referring to 'collapse' or 'decline'. (Simpson 2018: sp)

In the following section, I shall review the works of Lauren Beukes and Neill Blomkamp to determine how social decay is demonstrated in these contemporary narratives. I shall draw parallels with instances of social protest, as evident in the South African xenophobic attacks of April 2015 (Tromp 2015), resulting in the brutal death of Mozambican street vendor Emmanuel Sithole in the Alexandra township (Swails 2015). Other examples are the recent #Feesmustfall protests of 2015 – 2016 (Msila 2016), wherein students demanded that student fees should not increase in 2016, and thereafter for a complete eradication of study fees in general. And lastly, I shall examine the Tshwane riots in June 2016, (Quintal 2016) which was sparked following dissatisfaction over the proposed ANC mayoral candidate, Thoko

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44 "Orderliness within society. The way in which society is organized, the network of human relationships in society". (Simpson 2018: [sp])

Didiza, for the 2016 municipal election. I shall argue that these instances of civil unrest are an indicator of larger issues of discontent and disillusionment with the fall of the rainbow nation as utopia and, by implication, is the manifestation of the decline of humanism.

2.1   Racism and colonialism

Racism is defined as the "belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities or qualities specific to that race, especially to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races"(Simpson 2018:[sp]).[45]   Although in itself a human psychological predicament, this definition of racism renders it effectively as a condition for 'othering' by separating biological entities into different races, and attributing certain sets of characteristics, traits, qualities and behavioural norms to a specific race. The concept evolved to include traits of intellect, morality and personality, thereby leading certain races to perceive themselves as superior to others. What evolved from this belief was a paradigm of 'white supremacy[46]' which, in turn, led to many human rights' violations such as slavery and colonialism[47].

Liberal humanism, therefore, supported the paradigm whereby Eurocentric Man viewed themselves as superior to all other humans, nonhuman animals and life forms. This

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45 (Simpson 2018: [sp])

46 White supremacy is an ideology centred upon the belief, and the promotion of the belief, that white people are superior in certain characteristics, traits, and attributes to people of other racial backgrounds and that therefore white people should politically, economically and socially govern. This paradigm has allowed for such instances of white supremacy as evident in colonialism, slavery and apartheid (Friedersdorf 2016: [sp])

47 During the colonial era, the slaves, usually African in origin, were viewed by the imperial coloniser as inferior, or subhuman beings and were therefore reduced to the ontological status of possession rather than an independent 'human' being. Likewise, the foremost ambition of colonising land was the acquisition of both the terrain as well as its components; the human beings inhabiting the land were viewed as 'inferior, ontologically subhuman and therefore reduced to mere possessions. One could therefore argue that slavery and colonialism are the result of racism

paradigm, coupled with humanity's insatiable greed, has left us in the predicament we find ourselves in at present, with the environment, nonhuman animals and Other humans suffering at the hands of Eurocentric man's superiority complex.

> [T]he recognition that none of us are actually distinct from each other, or the world, will profoundly affect the way we treat each other, different species and the environment. To harm anything is to harm oneself (Pepperell 2003:171).

Robert Pepperell (2003) argues that we find the most obvious indicators to the end of the era of liberal humanism in movements that oppose the worst attributes humanism had to offer. Therefore feminism, animal rights, environmentalism, anti-racism and anti-colonialism signal the ongoing demise of humanity's anthropocentric mindset.

Moxyland (Beukes 2008) is in every sense of the word a postcolonial novel offering a wide range of perspectives and an equal amount of white and black characters, while painting a post-apartheid technological utopia. However, as quoted earlier, Beukes herself reminds us that the roots of apartheid run deep (Watson 2008). The autocratic corporate government in *Moxyland* serves both as an allegory for everything that was wrong during apartheid, as well as a vehicle for addressing areas where the roots are still evident in contemporary South Africa: children living on the streets, the HIV/Aids crises, illiteracy and unequal access to basic services. All these issues correspond to the racist and colonialist legacy but, as with the roots still hidden 'underground' out of the public eye, they run deep (Bethlehem 2014: 530).

In *Zoo City* (Beukes 2010), we find numerous references to crime and discontent: "Gunfire has always been part of the nocturnal soundscape of Zoo City, like cicadas in the countryside" (Beukes 2010: 49). In *"Guilt, guns, girls and ghettos: Adjacent futures in selected post-apartheid fantasies",* Molly Brown (2014:37) argues that *Zoo City* presents a future linked to contemporary South Africa as it pertains to "paradigms violence, corruption, segregation and crumbling infrastructure" (Brown 2014:37). Here we again find that 'those roots' run deeply beneath the surface. We can argue that crime is a product of poverty which, in turn, is a product of unequal opportunities, which is a product of segregation. This can be seen as a product of colonialism which is a product of racism which is enabled by a liberal humanist mindset. Crime is therefore an ancillary consequence of the ripple effect of the humanist

paradigm. Perhaps Lauren Beukes articulates it best in an interview with Clarkesworld magazine:

> I'm angry about the threat of crime that's always lurking in the background in everyone's lives, but especially the poor. I'm angry about how badly apartheid fucked up this country and furious with the people who won't admit that or how terrible it was — with government assassination squads and disappearances and freedom fighters committing their own atrocities. I'm angry about how long it's going to take us to recover and that we seem to be heading in the wrong direction, the new regime replaying the corruption and nepotism and stupidities of the old regime like we're stuck on a loop (Jones 2013).

District 9 (2009) has been widely praised as an allegory for apartheid racism and xenophobia, considering that 'the aliens' arrived in Johannesburg merely four years after the Soweto Uprising (1976) and considering that this historic event is widely regarded as a turning point in South African history. In the 1980's South African townships were in the grips of radical resistance, with an atmosphere of fear and tension prevailing as the National Party government declared two consecutive states of emergency. Activists were murdered and numerous individuals were detained without trial. It was a decade characterised by dehumanisation and gross human rights violations. It is therefore a perfectly reasonable assumption, that should a spaceship filled with 'revolting' aliens have landed in Johannesburg in 1980, they, like the black inhabitants of the city, will have been ghettoised, with forced removals being the order of the day. The removal of 60 000 inhabitants in District 6 undoubtedly serves as a reference for the film's title. It therefore stands to reason that Blomkamp set out to make an apartheid analogy sci-fi film, despite claims to the contrary (Pappademas 2015:[sp]).

District 9's criticism of the postcolonial nation state (hinting at South Africa's specific colonial and apartheid history) has, however, solicited an equal amount of criticism. The Nigerian government banned the film and demanded a public apology from Sony, citing the film as an "unwarranted attack on the country" (McMillan 2009:[sp]). Carina Ray and Laura Murphy called the film "yet another racist movie about Africa" (Ray and Murphy quoted by Gunkel 2010). Daniel Magaziner argued that *District 9* was less about apartheid in South Africa (and by association racism), and more a question of "how South African history is

packaged and sold, to both the international and domestic markets" (Magaziner quoted by Gunkel, 2010). Susanna Loza (2013:62) argues that *District 9* is a "dark fantasy of pure racial difference" that Europeans have "nurtured since they began colonizing, killing and displacing the original inhabitants" (Loza 2013: 62). Keith Wagner (2013:140) accentuates these criticisms and comments that Blomkamp is "careful not to place any black South African characters in compromising roles", remarking that the "political correctness of the film is somewhat heavy-handed" (Wagner 2013:140).

In her article "*Aliens and Artificial Intelligence in Johannesburg: The Animalized and Racialized 'Other' in the Films of Neill Blomkamp*", Megan Abley ([Sa]), extends the criticism to include Blomkamp's treatment of women, and his use of the 'animalisation' of characters to subject them to 'othering', specifically with reference to *Chappie* (2015). She also criticises Blomkamp's portrayal of the 'Nigerian others' in *District 9*, stating that Blomkamp "replicates the racism of his ancestors who portrayed black Africans as less-than-human to justify imperialism" (Abley [Sa]:12). These critiques notwithstanding, one should consider that Blomkamp might have purposefully incorporated these seemingly racist concepts in order to accentuate the lingering racial tension still prevalent in contemporary South African society, 20 years post democracy.

In *Chappie* (2015), Blomkamp portrays few characters of colour, and casts actors from Indian and Hispanic heritage. The only black characters are villainised such as the crude and violent drug lord, 'The King', portrayed by Eugene Khumbanyiwa, the same actor who plays the Nigerian arms dealer in *District 9*. Numerous reviews for *Chappie* criticise Blomkamp for his inaccurate portrayal of black characters and his yielding to colonial narratives (Pappademas, 2015). The most notable is perhaps Richard Corliss (2015), stating that *Chappie* sports "less black actors than Disney's new live action *Cinderella"* and that Blomkamp has "re-imposed Apartheid on his own movie" (Corliss, 2015).

While Blomkamp received criticisms for succumbing to racist and colonial stereotypes (Pappademas 2015) (Corliss 2015) (Abley [Sa]), I would argue that Lauren Beukes better succeeds in painting a postcolonial, post racist South African landscape still plagued by crime and 'the roots' of Apartheid. Blomkamp's inability to rise above the colonial narratives of his ancestors (Abley [Sa]:12) problematises the film as a posthuman narrative. Blomkamp may

have intentionally resorted to racial stereotypes in order to accentuate the viewers' flawed perceptions, but this attempt to highlight stereotypes failed, as is apparent from the criticism his film evoked from both academic as well as journalistic sources (Abley [Sa]), (McMillan 2009). It becomes painfully obvious that in certain instances both *District 9* and *Chappie* succumb to the anthropocentric humanist paradigm. However, there are aspects of *District 9* wherein Blomkamp shows exemplary posthuman traits; most notably Wikus' transformation and how it translates in terms of the posthuman identity. This will be examined in the following chapter. I postulate that the ambiguity we find in Blomkamp's approach to racial and colonial stereotypes in itself speaks to the ambiguity of the posthuman paradigm. The flawed nature of the film serves as a potent reminder of the flaws we encounter in those commendable humanist ideals of equality, liberty and human rights, which ironically still only serve humanity and neglect all 'others'.

Lauren Beukes, in contrast, expertly wields the hybrid genre incorporating traditional African belief systems with crime noir and cyberpunk with slipstream, while by no means clinging to a denialist paradigm as far as crime and other social issues are concerned. Her narratives allow for a horizon of hope signalling, in my opinion, a posthuman stance. This position involves looking towards the future, towards the horizon of hope and working actively to realise 'other ways of being' in an everchanging world (Braidotti 2013: 11,193) (Pepperell 2003:171-172).

2.2.2   Xenophobia

Xenophobia stems from the original Greek word 'xénos', meaning 'the stranger' or 'the guest' and 'phóbos', meaning 'fear'. Thus, literally meaning the fear of strangers although, in contemporary terms, it is often translated into 'the hatred of strangers'(Simpson 2018: [sp]). Therefore, xenophobia can be interpreted as an attitude of hostility towards non-natives in a given population (UNESCO 2018: [sp]).[48]

The most distinct difference between xenophobia and racism is that incidences of xenophobia may occur against individuals of the exact physical characteristics as the people of a state or region to which they migrate, yet the inhabitants of such a state or region will still regard these migrants as 'outsiders'. According to UNESCO the two principal causes of xenophobia can be characterised as firstly, the new migration patterns, resulting from the internationalisation of the labour market during the postcolonial era. Therefore, in the now decolonised countries, the social groups in a disadvantaged position (i.e. the 'poor') will view newcomers as competition for employment, public services and even housing. This promotes a social environment that is ripe for xenophobia (UNESCO 2017).

The second factor contributing to xenophobia is globalisation. The increased competition between states has led to the decrease of services offered by the state in terms of social welfare, education and healthcare (UNESCO 2017). This results in a situation where those marginalised by society are placed in direct competition with migrants for these (now limited) services. Tisdell and Svizzero (2003: [sp]) argue that:

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48 http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/xenophobia/

globalization is strongly linked with technological change more significantly even if globalization increases economic efficiency and growth in high-income countries, it can raise income inequality and reduce social welfare (Tisdell & Svizzero 2003).

In a society where the margin between the affluent and the underprivileged is gigantic to begin with, the influx of migrants provide a rich breeding ground for xenophobia. Former Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan recently stated, in his key note address at the University of Johannesburg, that one of the key disadvantages of globalisation is the inequality created by a 'new global economy' causing "millions across the globe who march barefooted from one country to another while at the same time becoming victims of xenophobia and other forms of attack" (Thamm 2017).

The Eurocentric humanist paradigm, whereby 'otherness' is deemed infrahuman, is again at the core of xenophobia. One should consider the recent European resurgence of xenophobia, following the influx of Syrian refugees, to realise that xenophobia is a universal phenomenon (Unesco 2017). Since 2008, the humanist perspective of 'not welcome here' has rapidly been taking root in South Africa. On the 12th of May 2008, a series of uprisings started in the South African township of Alexandria when inhabitants attacked migrants from Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique, killing two people and injuring forty (BBC 2012). In May 2009, xenophobic attacks flared up in Gugulethu, Khayelitsha and Philippi and reports of intimidation and violence against Somali shopkeepers surfaced (Mtyala 2009). On 30 May 2013, Somali entrepreneur, Abdi Nasir Mahmoud Good, was stoned to death - the gruesome act was captured on video and circulated on the internet (Essa 2013). On 7 June 2014, a Somali national was stoned to death and two others were seriously injured. There were also reports of their shops being looted (World Bulletin News 2014). In April 2015, xenophobic attacks flared up in KwaZulu Natal; Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini was accused of fuelling the attacks by saying that foreigners should "go back to their countries" (Buluwayo Bureau 2015). On 18 April 2015 *Cape Times* photographer, James Oatway, photographed the brutal attack on Emmanuel Sithole, a Mozambican man who later passed away due to his injuries. The government insisted that Sithole's death was not a result of xenophobic violence and Sithole's name is not included in the official list of seven victims killed in the April 2015 attacks which include an Ethiopian, a Mozambican, a Bangladeshi, a Zimbabwean and three South Africans who were all killed in KwaZulu-Natal. A demonstration of several thousand protestors marching through the streets of Johannesburg followed on 23rd of April 2015. The

demonstrators carried banners stating: "We are all Africans" and sang songs denouncing xenophobia while migrants shouted their support.

Braidotti (2013:53) argues that the post-nationalist approach, expressing the decline (fall) of Eurocentrism as a historical event, "calls for a qualitative shift of perspective in our collective sense of identity". It is evident that the concept of 'being other' as it appears in the work of Julia Kristeva (1982), lies at the root of racism and xenophobia, this concept will be explored in detail in the chapter on Identity. It is equally obvious that humanity has entered a time of great turmoil, as we struggle to make sense of our place in a world where our perception of having been the centre of creation is flawed. I argue that racism and xenophobia are the backlash of humanity's growing awareness of the end of the anthropocentric paradigm, that brings about the realisation that we are not superior to the other lifeforms that share our macrocosm.

Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009), although being criticised as racist towards Nigerian nationals and for its shortage of complex black characters, emerged as a vivid allegory for the 2008 xenophobic attacks. Most likely since, in subjecting the aliens to 'othering', it evoked in the public's mind the instances of 'black on black' violence of the year before. Drawing from his previous film *Alive in Joburg* (2005), Blomkamp utilised interviews of irate black actors insisting that the 'aliens' must go, even though the stereotypical portrayal of the 'Nigerian arms dealer' somewhat offsets the message. In the *District 9* (2009) director's commentary, Blomkamp recounts how filming in Chiawelo coincided with the attack on Zimbabwean nationals calling the occurrence "completely barbaric": - "the same day we started rolling cameras on a film that was about the residents of Joburg wanting a foreign race out". He remarked how he'd suddenly found himself "making a film which within South Africa has this massive political point of view but really that isn't what we set out to do" (Walder 2014: 154).

Gunkel and König (2010) noted that a third of those killed during the 2008 xenophobic attacks were South African citizens, leading one to realise the fickleness and absolute failure of accuracy in distinguishing between black South Africans and black nationals from other African countries. Where polarisation under apartheid was established based on race, theoretically, the only distinguishing factor in the rainbow nation is citizenship. The process of identifying citizenship has been labelled 'negrophobic xenophobic violence' – the violence

often being preceded by a Shibboleth[49] or language test, to determine nationality or distinguish South Africans from other black inhabitants of Africa (Gunkel 2010).

Another significant South African source for xenophobia is the perpetuating media reports sighting cult practices, non-human animal sacrifices and slaughtering of non-human animals in residential areas, black magic and 419 scams, performed by Nigerian nationals specifically (Wagner 2013: 122). I share Wagner's view that Blomkamp succumbs to these prejudices in his portrayal of Nigerians as brutal villains. However, this argument does not negate the poignant arguments the film addresses on hybridity and the posthuman identity. These concepts will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter to follow. Though Beukes's (2010) character, Zinzi December, is herself involved in swindling money from unsuspecting victims through a 419 scheme, Beukes's portrayal of the character is sympathetic in nature, 'humanising' the 'other' thereby offering a more posthuman manner of engaging with the subject of the 'other'.

Lauren Beukes (2010), in the interview with Clarkesworld magazine, declared xenophobia a catalyst for writing *Zoo City*:

> I'm angry about the xenophobia by black South Africans against black Africans that spilled into horrific violence in 2008 and might yet again because the underlying tensions, which boil down not to racism but lack of opportunity, lack of jobs, lack of education – all apartheid-legacy stuff – are still there, still simmering (Jones 2013).

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49 A shibboleth (/ˈʃɪbəˌlɛθ, -əlɪθ) "is either a saying that people repeatedly cite but which is wrong (or thought to be wrong by some), or a word or custom whose variations in pronunciation or style are used to distinguish members of ingroups from those of outgroups, with an implicit value judgment based on familiarity with the shibboleth." (Dictionary.com 2018).

Congolese Benoît is referred to as *makwerekwere* which means 'foreigner', but it is implied that the aposymbiots are all treated as foreigners (Beukes 2010: 177). As discussed earlier in the urban decay section, Hillbrow has been a refuge for successive waves of immigrants. We learn that Zinzi buys a cigarette from a Zimbabwean street vendor and Benoît's friend, Emmanuel, is identified as being from Rwanda. Later in the novel, Zinzi returns a set of lost keys to a Cameroonian shopkeeper. Throughout the novel, we are aware of the fact that aposymbiots are not welcome everywhere. There is a scene where Zinzi must hide Sloth in a bag, when she meets a prospective mark in The Rand Club (Beukes 2010: 34). Elsewhere it is mentioned that she meets someone in a Kauai restaurant because it is one of the few places which allows animal familiars (Beukes 2010: 111). In the interview reprinted at the back of the 2011 Jacana edition, Beukes recounts how Benoît's character was conceived after the 2008 xenophobic attacks - he was the manifestation of her "shame and horror" after learning of these acts of violence. Stating: "It's horrific that people fleeing war and rape and famine and genocide, giving up everything they know should be treated this way" (Beukes 2010:[sp]). Beukes is referring to immigrants coming to this country for asylum, only to end up being stoned and burned alive. Expressing her interest in the DRC she cites a long list of atrocities, including the recruitment and manipulation of child soldiers, cannibalism, and rape. She explains that she wrote Benoît's character in an attempt to find a measure of 'normalcy', effectively trying to 're-humanise' the characters (the refugees or migrants) to show that they are indeed 'real people'. She describes interviewing two Congolese refugees to "distil' the humanity from the headlines" (Beukes 2010:[sp]).

From these interviews, it becomes apparent that Beukes wrote *Zoo City* specifically as allegory for these periodic outbreaks of xenophobia that have been plaguing South Africa since 2008. It is my view that her use of animal familiars, to subject the characters to a process of 'othering' is not intended to satirise nor is it an oversight, as with Blomkamp's (2009) criticised lapse into racism. Instead it is a postcolonial, posthuman endeavour to engage with alternative African narratives and to spread awareness of the humanity of those our society are increasingly subjecting to dehumanisation.

2.3 THE POĒSIS OF DECAY

I argue that all the above physical manifestations of decay, as evident in the work of Beukes[50] and Blomkamp are effectively visual metaphors for a society in decline. The common denominator in the work of these artists is the manifestation of decay and, where it manifests in physical form, it functions as a visual metaphor for the social decay that runs deep beneath the surface, like the roots of apartheid still feeding the decay. I further argue that physical corporeal decay continues to be an effective and potent posthuman metaphor to address issues surrounding social decay in contemporary society. Regimes and systems might rise and fall but the decay of the human body remains a lingering fear in the subconscious of society, therefore lending itself to an enduring metaphor for addressing issues of decay in a changing social reality.

However, where decay is evident we encounter a critical dystopia, which allows for a measure of hope. We may find ourselves within the age of decay, but this does not signal the end - it merely announces the beginning, as we walk towards a horizon of hope.

The early works in the body of work titled *Poetry of Decay* (2015-2018)*,* focus strongly on urban decay as a metaphor for social decay within the changing social reality in the post Rainbow Nation, South Africa. In this series of works, desolated spaces are employed as visual signifiers for the social decay evident in South African society, leading the viewer to consider the nature of decay evident not only in these paintings but in society as a whole.

50 In *Zoo City* (2010) the urban decay of the city translates as a living breathing character mirroring the social decay which underlies the dystopian society. Although distinctions does exist between image and text, Beukes possesses an exceptionally visual writing style. Her descriptions of the vivid colours in *Zoo City:* the sulphur coloured mine hills and acidic blue polluted sky read as visual. These instances of urban decay are discussed in length on pages 48-49 of this dissertation

The decision to use decaying spaces was largely influenced by the use of urban decay as metaphor for social decay in the works of Beukes and Blomkamp. These spaces were sourced as found objects in the public domain[51] in order to signify that dystopia is not always site specific, but that dystopia is everywhere and therefore a zeitgeist. Should the viewer recognise some of these spaces, a familiarity of environment is communicated, contributing to the sense of being part of the zeitgeist.

Figure 3: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Decay* (2015) by Laurette de Jager

This process is especially evident in the work titled *Decay* (2015) (fig 3). The composition shows a school classroom devastated by an unknown catastrophe. This work shows a strong overtone of being post-event and is intended to impart on the viewer the sense that they arrived at the scene too late for whatever might have happened. The composition was borrowed from a site in Pripyat near Chernobyl and depicts an actual school cafeteria. The urban decay is evident and emblematic as a visual signifier for social decay. This narrative also strongly alludes to sights of destruction seen during the #Feesmustfall protests. It is,

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51 Form social media websites like Flickr, Pinterest and Instagram.

however, the creative process that speaks most accurately to the essence of this piece: fragments, shattered plates and other pieces of debris are executed in painterly, monochromatic impasto style. These are overlaid by various glazes in pure hues, ranging from Prussian blue, through the cool spectrum to Viridian green and eventually Perylene black. As explained earlier, these glazes function as a metaphor for the eroding effect the posthuman condition exerts over the liberal humanist ideals: implicit in the impasto structures which lie beneath the surface. Although this work shows a deeply ambiguous, loaded narrative with elements (easily recognisable to the viewer) alluding to concepts such as consumer capitalism (in the discarded McDonalds container); environmentalism (the broken globe resting on the table) and human rights (a child's right to education and nourishment), I choose to refrain from explaining the personal symbolism, but rather create an open-ended narrative where viewers are invited to draw their own conclusions. Therefore, it is the subtlety of the praxis, whereby the viewer is invited to participate in making meaning of the material used, that does most of the work in capturing the essence of this painting.

Figure 4: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Identity* (2015) by Laurette de Jager

The central piece to the series, titled *Identity* (2015) (fig 4), is emblematic of body horror as a signifier for decay. Both Beukes and Blomkamp use body horror as a metaphor for social decay in contemporary South African society. This metaphorical rupturing of the skin as a boundary also speaks of the crossing of boundaries within the posthuman identity and the malleability and fluidity of identity presented within a posthuman society. Yet the ultimate crossing of boundaries into the abject body of the corpse is viewed as a symbolic break with the liberal humanist paradigm. The viewer is led to contemplate his/her own finitude, thereby

actively engaging in making meaning of the symbolic value of the corpse as a signifier for psychological decay. The tiled background was painted using a grid comprising of carefully masked auto-tape, and then vigorously painted using a roller and acrylic paint in the Dionysian stage of the process. This action is emblematic of the erosion of the boundaries cast by the age of apartheid. Ultimately, however, the body horror in this work calls to mind the metaphorical body horror within the collective minds of South African society. Unfortunately, though the rigid grid formed by the tiled background looms over the ruptured husk of the body, even in this final release the systemic violence of apartheid still looms.

Figure 5: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Avarice* (2015) by Laurette de Jager

The work, titled *Avarice* (2015) (fig 5)*,* utilises similar tropes: the urban decay evident in the large Soviet style building and the sprawled human hybrid figure in the foreground with its corpse-like pallor all allude to physical decay in its corporal and urban manifestations. This also ambiguously alludes to the zombie metaphor for consumerism, which will be examined in Chapter 4. Although the viewer might not immediately make sense of the hybrid figure as a zombie, all the figures in these works are recognisable as not purely healthy human forms and each figure bears a mark of the abject, which is intended to cause the viewer to question the state of humanity as a whole. As with the preceding works, this painting presents a claustrophobic composition, a loaded narrative and high chroma - all intended to push viewers to reassess their assumptions regarding the aesthetics of paintings but also to heighten the sense of a loss of control. Here again, the structural acrylic underpainting is gradually being corroded by layer upon layer of Venetian glazes. There are visual signifiers alluding to urban decay, the fragmented posthuman identity and consumer capitalism. However, more importantly, this work introduces a new trope: the signifier for the fall of

liberal humanism: the monument. All three works in the *Dystopia Series* (2015) address issues of social decay by using physical decay as visual metaphor, either through urban decay or decay of the body. Likewise, each of these works speak to a number of subsequent themes of identity and human greed although, at this stage, these remain undercurrents to the visual narratives.   This trope will be examined in the following chapter.

As the theoretical research progressed and with the emergence of the Rhodes Must Fall, Fees Must Fall movements and other civil unrest during 2016 and early 2017, my focus shifted homeward to site specific incidents of discontent relayed by the South African media. Provocative images of a partially covered Rhodes statue at UCT (fig 2); a vandalised Louis Botha statue in front of Cape Town Parliament as well as Afrikaner protest at the Paul Kruger statue on Church Plain Pretoria surfaced in news media. This provided rich soil for the investigation of these images as metaphors for the changing social reality. From this point onward, my work started with an earnest investigation of the totemic quality of statues. I view the contemporary phenomena whereby the validity of these statues is being questioned not only as symbolic of the changing social reality, post Rainbow Nation, but as a global zeitgeist (Hubby 2017). It is of vital importance to state that my work does not investigate these effigies as mere monuments but utilises them as emblematic of the monolithic liberal humanist ideals which are failing as the monuments that embody them are falling. The nature of these paintings has never been the mere reproduction of various South African monuments in states of dispute or decay, but rather functions as an enquiry of these sites as the emblematic embodiment of falling humanist systems. Although these statues may appear easily recognisable to the viewer, the context in which they are placed begs further interpretation and contemplation on the part of the viewer.

The result is a series of three paintings, titled *#RiseoftheFallists* (2016) (fig 6,7,8) which address these specific sites of protest. The painting praxis followed the same process as the

preceding *Dystopia series* (2015) (fig 3,4,5). Structural acrylic underpainting symbolising the liberal humanist ideals were fastidiously overworked and 'eroded' by layer upon layer of venetian glazes, thereby manifesting the concept of decay in the physical painting praxis. The final painting phase was executed using verdaille[52], with the main difference being that the tones, tints and shades were not merely worked into a wet ground (in this case a viridian glaze) but were mixed on the palette using the glaze as a medium and then applied alla prima to the canvas. The rationale behind this practice was to obtain a rich variety of perylene black showing subtle nuances in colour to signify the almost 'living' quality of these effigies, as relevant in the writing of Karin Murris (2016), which creates a lasting impression for one to virtually feel "sorry for a statue" that is about to fall.

> Rejecting the possibility that one can feel sorry for a statue that is about to be violently removed by a crane, because it could be argued it has been infused with colonial baggage, amounts to valuing the discursive more over the material. This prioritisation would deny the ontological fact that they are always entangled, and fails to acknowledge the power of the object and the marks 'it' can leave on one's body that is always multiple (Murris 2016:291).

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52 Verdaille is a painting technique, dating from the 12th century AD, whereby the painting is executed mainly in tints, tones and shades of Green. It is usually achieved by starting with a transparent green glaze and working the whites, greys and blacks into the wet ground (Wilcox 2014: 47).

Figure 6: Photographic record of studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Nolite te Bastardes Carborundorum* (2016) by Laurette de Jager

The work titled *Nolite te Bastardes Carborundorum* (2016) (fig 6) depicts a partially covered Rhodes statue, taken out of a site-specific context and placed in a generic environment of urban decay. As discussed earlier, this image is emblematic of Leonardo Da Vinci's iconic image of the *Vitruvian Man* (c.1490) (fig 1), which has been co-opted by both Braidotti (2013:23) as well as Haraway (2008:7) to become the symbol of the European Humanist ideal of man. As argued earlier in this chapter, the fall of the Rhodes statue has become emblematic within my metaphorical oeuvre as the symbol for the fall of such monolithic systems such as imperialism and colonialism. Therefore, the Rhodes statue, its history and subsequent falling, moves beyond a mere visual signifier mirroring the fall of liberal humanism, to ironically embodying the uniquely South African symbol for the fall of colonialism.

The work depicts the Rhodes statue Pre-falling. As with earlier work, the ontogenesis of this piece takes the form of acrylic underpainting executed in alla prima, high chroma, rendering the image in pop art fashion. This action alludes to pop art's criticism of consumer

capitalism and is echoed in the Checkers' plastic shopping bag wrapped around the statue's head. The graffiti reads "Sixole Kanjani?" and was taken from site specific graffiti at the Rhodes statue. This loosely translated reads as "How shall we find peace?" and necessarily begs the larger question of the changing social climate. The use of a heavily polluted sky, which in later praxis evolved into polluted sunsets[53], initially alluded to the toxic environment created and perpetuated by such monolithic systems like apartheid and colonialism but, paradoxically, also came to be emblematic of the end of the era of humanism with the sun effectively setting on the toxic environment. The vivid use of acidic colours is greatly influenced by Beukes's visual writing style, specifically where she describes the sulphuric sky and other instances of humanity's toxic impact on the natural world (Beukes 2010: 225). As with earlier work, this painting presents a loaded narrative but a somewhat less claustrophobic composition. The image teems with iconography speaking not only of the overarching theme of decay but also of the underlying themes of consumer capitalism, environmentalism and human avarice. However, I choose to resist prescribing definite meaning to the underlying symbolism, in order to actively invite the viewer to contemplate an open-ended horizon of hope.

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53 The use of a polluted sky is a trope that originates from Beukes' use of vivid descriptions of environmental damage to signify social decay (as discussed on page).

Figure 7: Photographic record of studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Umlimi - aka Farmer, Warrior, Statesman* (2016) by Laurette de Jager

The work titled *Umlimi - aka Farmer, Warrior, Statesman* (2016) (fig 7) depicts the statue of former President Louis Botha situated at the entrance to the House of Parliament in Cape Town. This effigy, if only due to its proximity to the Parliament building, has historically been the sight of numerous protests and, as a result, has fallen prey to many instances of vandalism and iconoclasm. The initial inspiration for this work was after hearing reports that cell phone reception inside the parliament building was blocked during the eighth State of the Nation address by President Jacob Zuma, on the 12th of February 2015 (Van Heerden 2015:198). This occurrence paralleled the instances of state/corporate control exercised in Lauren Beukes's novel *Moxyland* (2008). The trope of introducing a pastiche of Beukes's Moxy, albeit a literal effort, was used to signify this analogy and heighten the sense that, at least as far as the contemporary South African social climate is concerned, dystopia is already here.

Figure 8: Photographic record of studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Mamelodi'a Tshwane (the whistler of the Apies river)* (2016) by Laurette de Jager

As with the previous two works in this series, the work titled *Mamelodi'a Tshwane (the whistler of the Apies river)* (2016) (fig 8) presents a loaded narrative, while offering a slightly more open composition. The viewer is therefore led to realise that the history is turning towards a more open-ended enclave, as opposed to the claustrophobic compositions of the previous series. In this painting the deterioration to the underpainting on the building is especially visible to the viewer. This is intended to communicate how the materials and the process make meaning - here manifesting physical decay on the surface.

It is imperative to note that the verdaille painting technique used to depict these effigies (Rhodes, Botha and Kruger) as well as their pedestals (which are painted in grisaille[54]) are intended as an ironic retort. Statues are traditionally depicted as solid, static and 'cast in stone' so one would therefore expect these effigies to be painted in an unyielding sculptural

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54 Grisaille is a painting technique, dating from the 12th century AD, whereby the painting is executed mainly in tints, tones and shades of Grey. It is usually achieved by starting with a transparent glaze comprising of French Ultramarine combined with Burnt Sienna and working the whites and blacks into the wet ground (Wilcox 2014: 45-46).

painting technique, like impasto alla prima for instance. Ironically these totemic effigies have proven, from research of the Fallist movements, to be everything but 'cast in stone' like Ozymandias[55]. They are nothing more than 'paper statues'. The lean painting technique is therefore intended to be an ironic statement of the totemic, yet ephemeral, nature of statues.

Therefore, all three works in the *#RiseoftheFallists Series* (2016) are intended to explore the totemic quality of South African statues as visual metaphor for the decay of the monolithic liberal humanist ideals that are failing as the effigies that embody them fall under the new paradigm.

Figure 9: Photographic record of studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Broken Monsters* (2016) by Laurette de Jager

The series of three works, titled *The Animal that Therefore I am* (2016) (fig 9,15,16), deals specifically with the human animal concept, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

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55 Ozymandias is a sonnet by English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelly, dealing with the inevitable decline of civilisations, empires and (I would argue) systems, despite any claims to immortality or greatness. (Poetryfoundation.org 2018: [sp])

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The ontogenesis of praxis in this series, however, speaks emphatically to decay as an overarching theme. Exploring ways to incorporate digital media into my creative process, while also investigating collage as a metaphorical practice relating to the fragmentation and malleability of the posthuman identity, led to my experimentation with acrylic transfers, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Various images depicting incidents of civil unrest and other instances of social and urban decay collected from news media, were collaged using photo editing software to create a fragmented altered reality. These images were digitally printed on large format paper (100cm x 70cm) in black and white. The monochromatic nature of these compound images is intended to speak to the binary unyielding logic characteristic of humanist systems. The digital prints were then transferred using the acrylic transfer technique, where the canvas is covered with a pure acrylic medium and the print is placed face down on the wet surface to bond to the surface of the canvas. Once dry, the paper on the back of the print is removed by vigorously rubbing and this physical process speaks metaphorically of decay as the surface of the canvas (covered with paper) is eroded to reveal the image underneath. Similarly, the transfer praxis speaks of the metaphorical transference of the legacy of apartheid into/onto the Rainbow Nation. (Beukes in Watson 2008). The metaphorical power of this process, as well as how the meaning of the process is communicated to the viewer are both discussed in length in the section on transference as metaphor and methodology. A secondary effect is achieved where sections of the transferred image deteriorates to such an extent that it seems to be peeling: a visual signifier that speaks strongly of the concept of decay. Another unexpected result of this praxis is how the acrylic fluid causes to paper to ripple so once the backing paper is completely removed, this ripple effect mirrors posters which have been pasted against inner city overpasses. These ripples were sanded down to accentuate the effect and, here again, the physical process reflects the concept of decay. These visual signifiers for urban decay are intended to lead the viewer to make the connection between how the material and the process make meaning relating to physical decay. Finally, the transferred surfaces were repeatedly overglazed in oils. The glazing process not only implies further decay on the transfer surface, but also becomes a metaphorical action signifying the layer upon layer of history or the passage of time that covers and impacts the underlying systems. This exact praxis was followed as far as all three paintings in this series are concerned. The figures were

lastly painted using alla prima oil paint overlaying earlier acrylic figurations. These effigies will be discussed in greater detail in the following section on identity.

Therefore, the acrylic transfer process becomes a powerful metaphorical action conceptually speaking about decay on a number of levels. This praxis was repeated from this point forward in the majority of the works, culminating in the series of paintings titled *#PostFall* (2018) (fig 26,27,28). In this series, texture was added to the canvas surface in all three paintings, rendering the surface visually topographic. Here the physicality of the surface is intended to prompt the viewer to recognise the physical decay exerted in the painting surface. Digitally printed images showing a fragmented reality of the works in the *#RiseoftheFallists series* (2016) (fig 9,10,11), (discussed earlier in this section) were transferred over the textured canvas surface and the resulting manifestation of decay was astounding. This series will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER THREE: Identity

> Every utopia […] faces the same problem: What do you do with the people who don't fit in? ~
> Margaret Atwood (Bland 2013).

In psychological terms, identity refers to individuality, self-esteem or self-image in terms of personal identity. Sociology ascribes identity in terms of gender, cultural and ethnic identity. In the field of cognitive psychology, the term identity typically refers to one's self awareness and capacity for self-reflection. The term can be further deconstructed, through the psychoanalysis method founded by Sigmund Freud, in terms of the id, ego and super-ego, or through Jungian Analytic psychology in terms of the Self and the Ego. Therefore, the concept of identity can be analysed in psychological, sociological, anthropological or philosophical terms, each yielding a different definition, depending on how the mapping applies to the particular field of study.

In philosophical terms, identity emerges as the concept of subjectivity, having its origins in the philosophies of Kant and Descartes. However, ultimately, the concepts of subjectivity[56] and identity[57] pertain to the analysis of what the 'individual' represents. Braidotti (2013:23) argues that the 'Vitruvian Ideal of Man' or humanistic ideal, was responsible for the establishment of the "core of [the] liberal individualist subject", which is not so much an inherent part of human nature as it is a "historically and culturally specific discursive formation" (Braidotti 2013:23). In this study the concepts of individuality, subjectivity and identity (as

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56 *Subjectivity:* The quality of being based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions. (Simpson 2018: [sp])

57 *Identity:* "condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing". (Dictionary.com 2018: [sp])

they emerge from various Humanist philosophies) will be addressed under the hypernym 'identity'.

We find the origin of the word 'identity' from the Late Latin; *identitatem* meaning 'sameness' or 'oneness', which is derived from a combination of 'ident- ', a form of the Latin *idem* meaning 'the same' and abstracted from *identidem* meaning 'over and over', from the phrase *idem et idem* (Dictionary.com 2018:[sp])[58]. French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, established the distinction between 'ipse' identity, translating to the Self and 'idem' identity, meaning 'sameness' (Ricoeur & Blamey 1995). It is in this interpretation that we find that which does not qualify as 'the same (as me)' - the opposite of 'the Self''. The state of being different from the identity of the Self, or being foreign or alien to the social identity within a given group is termed 'Otherness' (Miller 2008). The term 'the Other' was first introduced by 19th century German philosopher G. F. W. Hegel. In the mid-20th century, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan reviewed the concept of 'the Other' in terms of language and the symbolic order. In *Totality and Infinity*, Emmanuel Levinas (1979:291) argued that 'the Other' precedes the Self and is therefore superior to the Self. Levinas' (1979) ethical metaphysical interpretation of the face-to face encounter, maintained that previous philosophy had reduced 'the Other' to an object of consciousness by not maintaining its absolute alterity. This position allowed for Jacques Derrida's (2001:102) stance that 'the Other's' absolute alterity is compromised by 'the Other' being different from the Self and the group. Derrida (2001) not only opened the discussion into 'the Other', but also directed our attention to the epistemic violence implicit in the assignation of meaning. Post structuralist thinkers like Derrida (2001), in their process of challenging the assumptions of Humanist principles including the deconstruction of 'the Other', continue to lead posthuman theorists in the deconstruction and defiance of the liberal individualistic standard of identity. As Braidotti

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58 (Dictionary.com 2018)

passionately states: "individualism breeds egotism and self-centredness; self-determination can turn to arrogance and domination" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 30).

Braidotti (2013:15) states that the Eurocentric paradigm implies the dialectics of Self and Other, and that this binary logic serves as the driving force behind universal humanism. As evident in the work of Freud, Jung and Hegel, mentioned earlier, it becomes obvious that subjectivity and, by implication, identity is linked to the Humanist paradigm of a logic, self-reflexive, ethical individual, while 'Otherness' is associated with identity's dark or negative reflection.

"These are the sexualized, racialized, and naturalized others, who are reduced to the less than human status of disposable bodied" (Braidotti 2013). The anti-Humanist[59] movements of the previous century not only led to the rejection of the humanist paradigm but called attention to the exclusion of 'the Other'.

Feminist philosophers, most notably Julia Kristeva (1982) and Donna Haraway (2006), called for the inclusion of the 'other' into the 'European subjectivity', inviting women, immigrants, and others situated outside the liberal Eurocentric humanist paradigm to broaden the horizons by partaking in a diverse society by encouraging multiple paradigms of belonging. Kristeva's (1982) work on the abject, and its interpretation as the violation of the boundary between the Self and the Other, as it appears in her work *Powers of Horror* (1982), was instrumental in addressing the permeability of identity. This laid the groundwork for posthuman theorists', like Haraway (2006) and Hayles (1995: 321-335), stance of perceiving the postmodern identity as being completely decentred, multiple, fractured or fluid. Naomi Jacobs (2003:93) argues that the negative aspect of the fluidity of the modern subject, as evident in posthumanism, can be interpreted as a loss of self, whereby any illusion of an

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59 feminist, anti-colonial, and anti-racist amongst others

individual's independence or "sense of unity" (Jacobs 2003:93) is merely a sign of the individual's existence being thoroughly penetrated by a state of Otherness - "There is no self to be expressed". In the section on abjection, I propose that this "loss of Self" corresponds to Kristeva's writing on the abject, in that Kristeva states: The abject is "neither subject nor object" (1982: 1), leading to the argument that the process of becoming posthuman interlaces with the process of becoming abject – that in embracing the permeability of identity, including the process of abjection, the subject emerges as becoming posthuman. I shall argue that by embracing abjection, the posthuman subject can move from a fixed subjective state to that of a fluid subjectivity, thereby abandoning the humanist ideal of human superiority in favour of a decentred fluid posthuman identity. This argument will be examined by studying the development of abjection as it presents itself in *Moxyland* (2008) and *Zoo City* (2010) by Lauren Beukes, as well as through the character of Wikus van Der Merwe's transformation in Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009).

Jacobs (2003), citing Susan Squier, argues that the positive aspect of the fluidity of the posthuman identity is that this mutability opens the possibility for interspecies and "intrapsychic' connections, thereby ensuring "transformative encounters with difference" (Squier quoted by Jacobs 2003:94). Donna Haraway's (2008) work on "Becoming Worldly" with animals as evident in her book *When Species meet* (Haraway 2008) addresses exactly this facet of interspecies' dependence and relationships, as it pertains to the posthuman identity. By critically examining the earlier writings of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) on *Becoming Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible*, as well as Derrida's (published in 2009) work on *Say the Animal Responded* (Derrida 2009) and *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* (Derrida 2009), Haraway (2003) takes the argument for human and nonhuman animal interdependence further, arguing for a dynamic becoming with companion species. In the section on Becoming Animal/Hybrid, I shall examine this work of Haraway (2003; 2008), along with Cary Wolfe's (2010) writing on human animality, to explore the posthuman fluidity in the boundaries between human and animal subjectivity. By arguing that all subjectivity accounts for identity in a dynamic state of flux, there are no fixed identities within the posthuman realm. Citing Haraway's (2003) argument that with the co-evolution of humans and their companion species, there "are no pre-constituted subjects and objects" (Harraway 2003:6). Whatever relational subjectivity may exist between human and non-human animal rests on the basis of "significant otherness" (Harraway 2003:8). I shall argue

that by surrendering the humanist subject-position, we recognise that interaction (communication) between humans and nonhuman animals is a shared and mutual encounter, irrespective of how different the perspectives may be. Furthermore, all subjectivity (both human and non-human animal) is part of the greater whole. Not only is there no subjectivity within the posthuman realm, but we are also all interconnected and therefore dependent on each other. The concept of 'significant otherness' stretches beyond companion species to all living and non-living entities on this planet, to encompass what Braidotti (2013:60-66) refers to as *zoe*[60] . The argument will be examined by studying the concept of human-animal connections in *Zoo City* by Lauren Beukes (2010) as well as *District 9* (2009) and *Chappie* (2015) by Niell Blomkamp. By embracing the paradox of shared yet mutable identities, the posthuman paradigm allows for multiple subjectivities, stretching beyond specie specific boundaries, to embrace a zoe- egalitarianism, as described by Braidotti (2013:141).

The hypothesis of posthuman and feminist theorists on the decentred (Humanist) self and its role in the multiplicity of the posthuman identity, leads us to the examination of Othering, Abjection and Animalisation as modus for the dehumanisation of minority groups, as it presents in a humanist society. The contrast between racism and xenophobia, as examined in the previous chapter, as the negative manifestations of Othering, Abjection and Animalisation and the emancipatory conditions of embracing Otherness, Abjection and Becoming Animal under the posthuman paradigm is discussed in the third section of this chapter. I shall argue that Rosi Braidotti's (2013: 37-38) concept of "nomadism" as a hypothesis for embracing the mutability of boundaries is instrumental in the posthuman paradigm of embracing a fluid identity, thereby protecting the individual from oppression. As Naomi Jacobs (2003) states:

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60 Zoe as the dynamic, self-organising structure of life itself […] stands for generative vitality. (Braidotti 2013: 60)

When power is understood not as a monolithic structure that immobilizes all within its reach, but rather as a constantly shifting interplay of forces and tendencies, the self must be seen as a hybrid of many conflicting discursive formations; as a result of those very conflicts, spaces can open up for resistance, spontaneity, self-creation (Jacobs 2003: 95).

3.1   THE ABJECT: BECOMING OTHER

Julia Kristeva locates the abject as neither subject, nor object, that which used to be a part of me, but is no longer of me, that which used to lie inside but has been expelled to lie "outside the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable" (Kristeva 1982:1).

Tracing the origin of abjection to that which ultimately abjects all of us, namely the corpse, Kristeva (1982) theorises that we are seen as in the process of becoming an Other, at the expense of our own identity, ""I" become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit." (Kristeva 1982:3). We are all in the process of becoming the ultimate Other (the corpse). The root of the word *cadaver*, that which remains after death, can be traced back to the French *cadere* (the same as for decay; analysed in Chapter 2), meaning to fall. However, Kristeva states that decay is not symbolic of death, but that it signifies that which we "thrust aside" daily in order to stay alive. Decay becomes the boundary of our being a living entity and abjection is the permeability of this fragile boundary.

> These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being. My body extricates itself, as "being alive, from that border" (Kristeva 1982:3).

Life is thus a continuous process of keeping decay (defilement) at bay, until such a time as our 'becoming' is complete and we succumb to the ultimate abjection – that of our consciousness being thrust from the corpse. However, Kristeva (1982:15) argues that "abjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new significance".   Kristeva's (1982) concept of this ultimate form of abjection, the becoming corpse, corresponds to Kant's (2004: 48-49) and Burke's (1761) philosophical enquiry into the sublime in that the sublime essentially evokes overwhelming feelings of dread and melancholy in its terrifying infinity. Therefore, one might interpret the rupturing of the boundaries of identity as being absorbed into the posthuman whole and the subsequent loss of agency as being terrifying. Therefore, if the

body (corpse) as abject is viewed as a metaphor for the abject identity, decay is placed as an abjection firmly within the posthuman paradigm of death, being the prelude to 'that which is yet to come'. Following Robert Pepperell's (2000: 13-16) argument of extended being, and how energy can never cease to exist and merely changes, one could argue that, even after death, a remnant of the person's consciousness/subjectivity continues to exist, as part of the posthuman system. Kristeva (1982:53) rationalises that defilement (the lack of hygiene) is not what threatens abjection, but rather that which disrupts our identity within the system order, that which dishonours boundaries - the ambiguous. The process of abjection therefore becomes the porousness of the boundaries of the Self (Kristeva 1982:53). The tearing away of these boundaries is described as a "violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling" (Kristeva 1982:13). I postulate that this process of breaking away from the boundaries of Self, parallels the posthuman process of breaking with the liberal humanist paradigm. In her reading of Dostoyevsky, Kristeva (1982:18) states that abjection "wavers between the *fading away* of all meaning and all humanity, […] and the ecstasy of an ego that, having lost its Other reaches […] the height of harmony with the promised land". Along with Kristeva's (1982) assertion that the abject is neither subject nor object, and its counterpart, the loss of agency and identity as it presents in the posthuman paradigm, I argue that the process of becoming posthuman is essentially a process of abjection. I shall study this hypothesis in my reading of Beukes's and Blomkamp's dystopian narratives later in this section.

Abjection is closely related to the uncanny and the grotesque. However, Kristeva (1982:5) argues that it is more violent due to its failure to "recognize its kin". She concludes her essay by asserting that essentially abjection is seated in the "Power of Horror" (Kristeva 1982), on that fragile boundary where identity does not exist, or only barely so; whereas in the posthuman realm, boundaries have dissolved allowing for multiple subjectivities where all binary logic of inside/outside, signifier/signified, subject/object have been dissipated (Kristeva 1982:207-210).

Kristeva's definition deconstructs the Monotheist roots of abjection (tracing it from defilement as found in Judaism to sin as it presents in Christianity) thereby dividing becoming abject into three categories: defilement, incest taboo and sin (Kristeva 1982). For the purpose of this study, my reading of the works of Beukes will focus on abjection as it

presents in defilement and its relationship to decay as well as sin and how it correlates to the burden of guilt. In so far as the films of Blomkamp are concerned, abjection will be applied as it pertains to the defilement of the body as well as the burden of guilt, found in sin.

In *Moxyland* (2008)*,* Lauren Beukes (2008, 2010) introduces us to a number of fractured identities (Byrne & Levey 2015), most notable of these being Kendra who, due to her identity as 'Ghost Girl', hovers on the fragile border between human and spectre. As discussed earlier, Kendra's epithet alludes to her eventual fate as corpse. As she negotiates the streets of cyberpunk dystopian Cape Town, we follow her passage of becoming 'Ghost Girl'. The permeability of Kendra's identity corresponds strongly to Kristeva's description of the borderline identities succumbing to the abject (Kristeva 1982: 12). But ultimately it is Kendra's demise, her giving up the ghost, that pushes her identity across the border of the living, even if this happens as result of her life-energy changing form and her extended existence as energy forming part of the posthuman system which results in her ultimate abjection.

Toby occasionally toys with abjection. His narcissistic personality causes him to lapse into a "narcissistic crisis" (Kristeva 1982) and, as he stumbles around Cape Town with his nose running, he interacts with body fluids that should be inside the skin boundary: "I have to wipe it with the back of my hand and smear the snot off my jeans" (Beukes 2008:244). In the aftermath of the M7N1 infection, everyone but Lerato vomits or interacts with abject bodily functions as the permeable boundary between the inside and outside of the body, which disintegrates and, in certain cases, mends.

The most accurate portrayal of the crossing of boundaries and the permeability of the abject remains, however, Tendeka's final scene on the roof of Toby's apartment (Beukes 2008:274-279). Here the "Power of Horror" (Kristeva 1982) manifests in one of the most vivid descriptions of body horror as Tendeka's viscera liquefies and is expelled through various bodily orifices. Toby is confronted with not only his own horror at the abjection that is playing out before him, but also experiences, even though only momentarily, abjection within his own fractured identity (Byrne & Levey 2015:82).

In *Moxyland*, Beukes (2008) succeeds in utilising the abject body as a dynamic metaphor for the abject identity, focussing on the permeability of boundaries both physical (the body) as well as psychological (identity) as a signifier for the posthuman transmutability, leading to a process of redefining the individual's connection to a shared community opening up "multiple ecologies of belonging" (Braidotti 2013:193). Furthermore death, as it occurs for the characters of Kendra and Tendeka, should not be seen as the end of identity, but rather following the posthuman paradigm as crossing the final boundary on this plane of existence, thus being the ultimate posthuman step in becoming one with 'the Other'.

Zoo City (Beukes 2010) deals with the abject in wholly other terms. Kristeva (1982) argues that all crime is essentially abject, "as it draws attention to the fragility of the law" (Kristeva 1982:4). In *Zoo City* Beukes (2010) sketches an inner-city Hillbrow rife with crime. However, Kristeva (1982:15) argues that abjection is perverse because

> it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them. It kills in the name of life.

Zoo City presents itself as a lawless space, filled with disorder, neither accepting nor succumbing to the law.

It is, however, the inhabitants of Zoo City who engage most emphatically with abjection, and its manifestation with the guilt associated with sin. The aposymbiots in *Zoo City* carry their animals as physical manifestations of the guilt associated with their sin (Beukes 2010:50-51). Kristeva (1982:17) postulates that abjection manifests in Christianity through sin as becoming "integrated in the Christian Word as a threatening otherness" (Kristeva 1982:17). Initially the protagonist in *Zoo City,* Zinzi December, reacts to her sin with shame as she perceives her Sloth (perhaps alluding to slothfulness as one of the seven deadly sins) as a "threatening Otherness". It is only after encountering the other 'animalled' individuals in Zoo City*,* that she makes peace with her transgressions and embraces her Sloth as part of her identity. I shall examine the aposymbiots in Z*oo City* as metaphors for becoming animal, and how human animality corresponds to abjection (Kristeva 1982:147) in greater detail in the following section.

The 'Power of Horror' (Kristeva 1982:208) manifests itself in the climactic scene where Zinzi and Benoît confront the antagonist, Odi Huron at his suburban enclave. The reader is first confronted with Carmen's vicious self-mutilation (Beukes 2010:283-285), followed by Benoît's crocodile mutilated body, saved by Zinzi from the underground lair (Beukes 2010:295). In a series of visceral scenes, the permeability of the human body is exposed and explored - blood and mushy flesh (Beukes 2010:295), until the reader is confronted by the ultimate form of abjection: the decaying corpse (Beukes 2010:296).

Ironically, Huron is drowned by the signifier of his sin. Once he manages to kill his now separated symbiont, the crocodile corpse drags him underwater. Beukes employs abjection after abjection to push the reader over boundaries, dissolving the border between the inside and outside, between subject and object, ending in an exhausted crescendo of acceptance.

In *Zoo City,* Zinzi finds an accommodating community "all about tolerance" and "mutually assured desperation" (Beukes 2010:44). The multinational community consists of Cameroonian, Rwandans and Congolese immigrants, all united by their 'Otherness'. The suspension of borders here signifies the permeability of the Self in abjection and further alludes to the permeability of the posthuman subject. Beukes employs her signature 'hybrid-genre' to include magic realism so as to dissolve borders. Thus the style of the novel becomes in itself a disruption of genre purity. These characteristics places *Zoo City* firmly within the posthuman paradigm of multiple subjectivities as part of a larger boundless society.

In the final chapter of *Zoo City,* we see Zinzi at the Beit Bridge border which I find a very fitting conclusion for the novel from a posthuman perspective. Zinzi is about to cross yet another border: a dynamic metaphor for the permeability of not only African borders, but all human borders. The concept of crossing boundaries in posthumanity becomes a dynamic signifier for the expansion of the human subject to include multiple subjectivities. Here Zinzi does exactly that, by crossing the boundary into an open-ended conclusion with only the horizon of hope to lead her forward. Beukes's use of vivid visual signifiers, as discussed here, for the abject and becoming other, prove to be exceptionally successful and is therefore an effective exemplar of how the process of becoming abject/becoming other relates to the process of becoming in posthuman identity.

In Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009)*,* as with Tendeka's death in *Moxyland* (2008), we are confronted with the most visceral scenes of becoming abject: the transformation of Wikus van der Merwe's character into that of an alien. As the boundary between the human body and the outside is ruptured in various scenes of body horror (including vomiting, faeces and black body fluid seeping from his orifices) Blomkamp invokes defilement as a powerful device for abjection. Following Kristeva's assertion of the "horror within" (Kristeva 1982:53), we follow Wikus' transformation. As his corporal integrity is continually deteriorating, we witness the skin give way to reveal the horror that resides within his body.

> It is as if the skin, a fragile container, no longer guaranteed the integrity of one's "own and clean self" but, scraped or transparent, invisible or taut, gave way before the dejection of its contents (Kristeva 1982:53).

Figure 10: Wikus' transformation from human to Other

Through this process of abjection, Blomkamp utilises Wikus' metamorphoses to engage not only the viewer's horror at the abjection playing out in front of him but, more importantly, to evoke Kristeva's (1982:127) description of the subject being "into communication with the Other" as Wikus finds empathy for the Other (alien). I therefore argue that, before Wikus' transformation is complete, he has already crossed boundaries, not only through his physical abjection (through the seepage of bodily fluids) but also psychologically, by his already borderline identity shifting towards the Other. Unfortunately, this posthuman transformation of fluid identity is interpreted by society as Wikus' character regressing further into defilement. Wikus finds himself jettisoned from the 'social system' due to his perceived 'uncleanness' which climaxes when he is mocked by a group of Nigerian arms dealers for engaging in 'doggy-style' intercourse with a demon (alien) (Kristeva 1982:65).

The film's core fantasy thus seems to be one of a passage from a place of complicity and guilt, through trauma and punishment, to a redeemed white male subjectivity (Janse Van Veuren, 2012: 581).

In a uniquely South African context, Wikus' abject body becomes the signifier for the physical, geographical and racial expulsion of individuals under the *Group Areas Act*[61] (Janse Van Veuren 2012:579). One could therefore argue that beyond the obvious metaphor of the alien's displacement to District 10, Wikus' process of abjection mirrors the abject process of the forcible removal of individuals under the apartheid government. The crossing of borders extends to our shared history and the abject body of Wikus moves to a redemptive role. Wikus becomes the metonym for the typical Afrikaans stereotype and Janse van Veuren (2012) quotes Andries du Toit in describing Wikus as "a prat. He is thick as a plank. He is awful. […] and this is at least partly because he is Afrikaans. He is not just Afrikaans, he is a rockspider. He is a doos, a chop, a moegoe" (Janse van Veuren 2012:581). Hereby abjection as a theme within *District 9* moves from that of the abject body through defilement to the guilt associated with sin and ultimately to atonement for the sins of the father. This trajectory reminds us of the biblical account where Jesus tells his disciples that it is not that which you ingest that defiles you, but rather that which comes from within the body that defiles you (Bible. Matthew 15:11). I therefore argue that Wikus' abject act of expelling bodily fluids can be interpreted as his 'expelling' the sins of previous generations. An overwhelming urgency to abject the sins of the father from his physical body, it is therefore not only physical body fluids that are abjected, but also the guilt his generation carry within themselves that is abjected.

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61 "Group Areas Act was the title of three acts of the Parliament of South Africa enacted under the apartheid government of South Africa. The acts assigned racial groups to different residential and business sections in urban areas in a system of urban apartheid" (Johnson-Castle 2014: [sp]).

As with becoming animal, which I shall address in the following section, abjection is played out in *District 9* through the Self becoming hybrid (Stobie 2012:139). The process of becoming: be it through body horror, abjection or metamorphosis, alludes to the permeability of boundaries, the mutability of the Self and the fluidity of the social system as it presents itself in the posthuman predicament. Posthumanity calls for a dynamic fluidity in being and becoming (Braidotti 2013). I therefore postulate that where Blomkamp fails 'the Other' in terms of his portrayal of Nigerian nationals (as discussed in the previous chapter), he succeeds dynamically in interpreting the posthuman process of becoming a mutable subject, through the abject transformation of Wikus van der Merwe.

In this instance, Blomkamp's powerful visceral portrayal of Wikus' transformation proves to be as successful as Beukes's work - both as a visual signifier for the abject and how it relates to the mutability and fluidity of the posthuman identity.

In *Chappie* (2015), Blomkamp explores the abject through the fluidity of difference by focusing on the crossing of boundaries between mind/body, biological/technological and nature/culture. This places the narrative firmly within the posthuman, in that it focuses on the fluidity or permeability of boundaries, specifically the subject/object relationship. Chappie being neither fully subject nor completely object is, in itself, 'the abject Other' (Kristeva 1982:1). Following Donna Haraway's (1991) feminist cyborg theory that the cyborg in science fiction can be utilised as an emancipatory agent in the fall of humanism and its Eurocentric male-dominated vision, Chappie emerges as the ultimate abject, obscuring the line between human and machine, Self and Other. Throughout the narrative, Chappie is infantilised and animalised adding to his manifestation as 'the abject Other' (Abley [Sa]).
Deon (Chappie's creator in the movie) expands the abjection to reach beyond the boundary-blurring capacity to that of abjection as sin because of his moralistic treatment of Chappie. Chappie promises Deon that he will not engage in violence but he is fooled into believing that stabbing merely puts the victim to sleep. Once Chappie learns of the deception, he is mortified - his guilt adding to his abject state. The film ends with an explosive gunfight resulting in the crossing of the corporal boundary when "violence, blood and death" (Kristeva 1982:147) results in the abject "the principle of identity without admixture, the exclusion of anything that breaks boundaries (flow, drain, discharge)" (Kristeva 1982: 103). This is not the final act of abjection within the narrative as the final crossing of the boundary appears when

Chappie transfers a dying Deon's consciousness into a robot, thereby breaking through the boundary of human/object and nature/technology. This act of abjection of the permeable boundary between flesh and finitude continues in the closing credits when it is hinted that Yolandi's consciousness is being downloaded into a robotic physique. Therefore I argue that, while in its transhumanist fantasy Blomkamp may circumvent the ultimate abjection destined for us all (in becoming corpse), Chappie manifests the abjection of the boundary between human/other.

Abjection as metaphor for the traversing of liberal humanist boundaries of subject/object, natural/technological, inside/outside, human/machine and many more, results in moving from the binary terms of humanism to the mutable posthuman state of a multitude of systems of being. I argue that Beukes and Blomkamp both succeed in bringing the posthuman, in terms of the fluidity of identity and states of being, into a uniquely South African setting through their dystopian narratives. The abject can therefore be seen as a dynamic metaphor for the posthuman identity as it is presented within a critical dystopian society.

3.2   BECOMING ANIMAL / BECOMING HYBRID

> It is not by denying the special status of human being[s] but by intensifying it that we can come to think of nonhuman animals not as bearers of interests or as rights holders but rather as something much more compelling: fellow creatures (Wolfe 2010:77).

Human and non-human animal relationships have come a long way since Deleuze and Guattari (1987) first addressed the issue in *Becoming Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible*, with animal studies fast becoming one of the ground-breaking fields within the humanities. Both Beukes and Blomkamp engage with the concept of becoming animal/hybrid in their work. I shall illustrate how the concept of becoming animal/hybrid can be employed as a dynamic metaphor for the posthuman condition as it pertains to the crossing of boundaries and existing as multiple subjectivities within an interconnected posthuman macrocosm. With the fall of the liberal humanist ideal, and the subsequent ontological shift from human to posthuman, a radical rethinking of what it means to 'become animal' is called for. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) definition of the difference between 'being' and 'becoming' offers the foundation for the posthuman paradigm. The liberal humanist term of 'being' relates to a worldview wherein the subject views everything as divided in clearly

demarcated categories: binaries of male/female, human/animal and nature/culture. Whereas the term 'becoming' alludes to viewing everything in a dynamic state of fluidity; inhabiting a state without boundaries or permeable peripheries whereby male and female, human and animal exist alongside each other in a continuum that defies demarcation (Gordon 2009).

As Cary Wolfe (2010) explains, this shift entails far more than a mere 'animal rights' paradigm. The reassessment of the human-animal relationship calls for "our response to animals as our fellows in morality" (Wolfe 2010:77). Wolfe (2010:33) examines the confusion between consciousness and communication by deconstructing cognition in terms of the difference between language and communication, arguing that "you don't have to be able to talk to understand".

Citing Nussbaum, Derrida and Diamond, Wolfe (2010) argues that we share a "double finitude" with our non-human animal counterparts so that, by imagining the lives of animals, they become 'real' to us. It is exactly this finitude: "our vulnerability and mortality" as "embodied vulnerable beings" that results in our shared ethical bond as "fellow creatures" (Wolfe 2010: 80). Once the human subject ceases to view non-human animals as objects, their position as apparatuses to further human ambition is problematised. Wolfe argues against speciesism, stating that as long as it is possible, or acceptable for humanity to exploit and kill non-human animals, the humanist paradigm as man as dominator of the natural world will forever persist. Moving beyond the issue of finitude and morality, Wolfe looks toward Temple Grandin[62] to examine how a disability can become an enabling factor in interspecies communication. Describing affirmative encounters between Grandin and non-human animals, Wolfe (2010) illustrates the practical relevance of crossing species and technological

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62 Temple Grandin is an American Professor, with an Ph.D. in animal science, who has published three books reflecting on how living with autism has enabled her to cross the human non-human animal communication boundary (Wolfe 2010:128).

borders in terms of "organic and inorganic" and "biological and mechanical". He goes on to describe numerous practical instances where humans cross the human/nonhuman animal boundary to illustrate the dynamic interspecies relationship as it pertains to the posthuman condition.

> A shared trans-species being-in-the-world constituted by complex relations of trust, respect, dependence, and communication (Wolfe 2010:141).

Derrida's (2009) *Say the Animal Responded* and *The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)* opened the door for theorists, like Donna Haraway (2003, 2008), to rethink human and non-human animal interactions. Animal studies, being firmly rooted in feminism, can be traced to Haraway's (1991) *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century,* wherein she challenged hegemonic paradigm by postulating "permanent partial identities*"* (Haraway 1991:154), and advocated for crossing borders of subjectivity between liberal humanist binaries of human/machine and natural/technological. Though very critical of Deleuze, Guattari (1987) and Derrida (2009), Haraway (1991) analyses the human animal interaction beyond the point of arguing, as her predecessors did, that although we acknowledge the subject status of animals, we inevitably have to treat them as 'objects' of inquiry. Haraway (2008) goes on to argue that we share a kinship with our companion species and that, although we cannot (yet or always) know what non-human animals might be thinking, they undoubtedly have their own worldviews. Through her methodology of telling companion species' stories to illustrate interspecies kinship through ongoing co-evolution and "becoming worldly" with our companions, Haraway argues for "respecere" – respect "looking back, holding in regard" our companions (Haraway 2008:88).

Rosi Braidotti (2013) stretched the human non-human animal bond beyond that of animal studies, to include the anthropocentrism characteristic of the Humanist world view. In *The Posthuman* (Braidotti 2013)*,* Braidotti discusses three processes whereby perspectives for post anthropocentric study, in terms of subjectivity, may be conducted. She deconstructs 'Becoming animal' by displacing the anthropocentric humanist paradigm in favour of the acknowledgement of "trans species solidarity", tracing its foundation to the fact that humanity is "environmentally embodied, embedded and in symbiosis with other species" (Braidotti 2013:67). Braidotti (2013:68) goes on to draw parallels between the displacement of non-human

animals and "anthropomorphic others" arguing that "zoo-morphic" "organic" or "earth others" are depreciated and cast out of normality, and that this anthropocentric, gendered and racialized process upholds the Eurocentric world view. Braidotti states that for centuries, animals have been used by humans to "spell out the social grammar of virtues and moral distinctions", thereby turning animals into metaphorical objects. Braidotti (2013:69) argues that these metaphors feed into fantasising of the human-animal interaction, citing the hybrid creatures of *Avatar* as example. Siding with Haraway against the "infantizing" and "sentimental discourse about dogs' devotion and unconditional loyalty", Braidotti goes on to argue the need for a representational system that accurately reflects the contemporary proximity of humans to their "significant others" (Haraway 2008:208). She concludes her argument with advocacy for a deep '*zoe*-egalitarianism' between humans and non-human animals, stating that the strength of our bond with other species is rooted in the environment we share and no longer in the humanist hierarchy we inherited (Braidotti 2013:71).

Different as these theorists stances on 'becoming animal' may be, they all converge on the point where the human acknowledges non-human animal subjectivity (identity). I include Donna Haraway's cyborg theory under becoming animal, as it pertains specifically to the shifting of subjectivity across human and non-human borders, thereby introducing the mutability of the posthuman subject. Taking this into consideration, I argue that it is only by moving past the humanist paradigm of human subjectivity and non-human animal objectivity, in favour of multiple subjectivities; by crossing the human/non-human animal boundary and acknowledging a worldview of '*zoe*-egalitarianism' wherein we are all part of a bigger whole, that humanity can move towards a posthuman paradigm.

In *Moxyland* (2008), Beukes blurs the lines between becoming animal and becoming hybrid, by introducing the 'Aito' genetically-modified police dogs. Here the cyborg converges on the non-human animal - these dogs are genetically enhanced by nanotechnology similar to the technology that is injected into Kendra, signalling her transformation to 'Ghost girl'. The nanotechnology triggers a physical mutation in Kendra's body, transforming her to a biological advertisement and assigning her to cyborg status. Kendra's cyborg identity problematises the boundaries between human and machine, causing her to struggle in adapting to her new enhanced self.

At the same time, the other characters in the novel struggle with coming to terms with their 'technological' selves. Toby is completely dependent on his 'BabyStrange' coat for transmitting his vlog and he seamlessly adopts virtual identities in 'gamespace'. Tendeka lives half his life in 'Avalon' where virtual reality and social reality merge irrevocably. Lerato is forced by her employer to adopt an online persona as agent provocateur. These characters find themselves dancing on the border between social and virtual reality, necessarily causing them to adapt to the duality of their personae which corresponds to the permeability of subject identities in the posthuman paradigm. The characters in *Moxyland* (2008) are fractured, porous, existing and becoming across diverse boundaries, finding themselves in various ontological and social states, inhabiting a multitude of subjectivities at the same time (Byrne & Levey 2015).

It is, however, Kendra's transformation to an enhanced state that most accurately speaks to becoming hybrid. Donna Haraway (1991:143) states:

> we find ourselves to be cyborgs, hybrid, mosaics, chimeras. Biological organisms have become biotic systems, communications devices like others. There is no fundamental, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism, of technical and organic.

Unfortunately following her infection with the M7N1 virus, Kendra grapples with the question of what it means to be human, and following an existential crisis, chooses to surrender her cyborg status, resulting in her demise. This notwithstanding, Beukes succeeds in a very effective interpretation of the body as metaphor for the posthuman predicament of the transgression of boundaries and becoming, along varied subjectivities of belonging. Although there is no mention of becoming animal, all the characters in *Moxyland* find themselves in a fluctuating state of becoming. I therefor argue that, despite its transhuman overtones, Beukes places the characters in *Moxyland* firmly within the posthuman paradigm by accurately portraying various mutable subjectivities and being part of a *zoe*-centred whole.

In *Zoo City* (2010)*,* Beukes effectively succeeds in assimilating human and non-human animal subjectivities. Her inventive use of 'aposymbiots' as protagonists alongside their human counterparts, leads the reader to question what it means to be human if not posthuman. The human/non-human animal boundaries are not only transgressed but also seamlessly merged to the point where the consciousness of both human and symbiont become

so intertwined that the one cannot exist without the other. Separation from one's symbiont results in being taken by the 'undertow': a metaphor for being absorbed by guilt and eventually transported to hell (Beukes 2010:158).

Although the condition of 'being animalled' [is initially] compared to an illness" (Alexander 2015:166), the first case being referred to as 'patient zero' (Beukes 2010: 61), the narrative quickly evolves to the point where the non-human animals are presented with undeniable similarities to their human companions. At one point, Benoît's mongoose hisses at Zinzi and she reciprocates by returning the gesture (Beukes 2010: 1). The humans are described as displaying unconscious non-human animal behaviour: for example, Benoît "uncocoons" himself from the bed (Beukes 2010:3). The permeability of the human/nonhuman animal border by Beukes's characters (becoming porous in their human and animal attributes) not only speaks to the posthuman shift towards multiple subjectivities and multiple ecologies of becoming in the world, but it also alludes to the permeability and porousness of existing in Africa. Our borders are permeable. Zoo City is described as a refuge for immigrants and, although they still face xenophobia as discussed in earlier chapters, it is the one place where being animalled is irrevocably acceptable.

The process of being animalled[63] is described and investigated from numerous different possible points of view, without offering an absolute solution or cause to the phenomena. I therefore argue that by engaging with non-human animals in ambiguous non-binary terms, Beukes succeeds in moving the narrative firmly into the posthuman paradigm, thereby

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63 The concept of becoming animal as it presents in *Zoo City* strongly mirrors the earlier work of Jane Alexander, (See Appendix 1) most notably the *Butcher Boys* (1986) and *Bom Boys* (1998). In his article, *Spectacles of Dystopia: Lauren Beukes and the Geopolitics of Digital Space,* Phoenix Alexander (2015:167) interprets the work of Jane Alexander as being both political as well as transcending the historical moment, arguing that by distorting the human figure, specifically by merging the human and animal in any creative work, becomes in itself a political act

rendering the humanist tradition of "fantasising of the human-animal interaction" as criticized by Braidotti (2013: 69), moot. Beukes's writing engages with non-human animals in an ambiguous manner, actively defying humanist paradigms of prescribing generic metaphorical attributes to animals based on humanist characteristics (for example the sly fox), and exploring the system of aposymbiosis, wherein multiple subjectivities form part of a greater interconnected whole. The boundaries between human and non-human subjectivities expand and contract, negotiating the narrative terrain depending on the point of view of the first-person narrator, Zinzi December. Beukes also employs a scientific analysis of the aposymbiotic phenomena, or documentary inserts included in the narrative. In this way Beukes's hybrid writing style parallels the multiplicity of the posthuman perspective and is therefore regarded as an excellent exemplar of the visual signifiers for becoming animal/ becoming other as it pertains to the posthuman identity being in a constant state of flux.

In *District 9* (2009), Neill Blomkamp engages with the concept of becoming hybrid mainly through the transformation of the visceral body of the protagonist, Wikus van der Merwe. Wikus' transformation was studied at length in the previous section on abjection. I shall briefly discuss the transformation in terms of how it relates to hybridity. At the start of Wikus' transformation (after the plaster cast is removed to reveal an alien claw) it is evident by Wikus' horrified reaction that the integration of Self and Other will not be a seamless one. Wikus' reaction is a manifestation of his fear that his identity will be consumed by the alien Other. After some time, Wikus realises that his newly-found hybrid status attributes to him certain powers that he was not privy to before; he can now operate alien weaponry, which directly leads to the sacrificial act of his liberating Christopher Johnson and his son.

Because the aliens are referred to as 'Prawns' throughout the film, they are therefore animalised. I would therefore postulate that Wikus' transformation through abjection into hybridisation is ultimately a process of becoming animal. Wikus' transformation thus corresponds to Beukes's animalled identities in *Zoo City* (2010). This process culminates in his completed transformation and subsequent ability to cross the human/non-human animal boundary.

Here hybridity correlates to the grotesque, in that what makes it repulsive is its inability to conform to liberal humanist standards of aesthetics (Kriel 2015:22). Mid transformation,

Wikus exists between two states: that of human and that of alien. He defies classification, becoming in himself the ultimate embodiment of a (post)human in flux. No longer quite human and not quite alien yet, Blomkamp succeeds in accurately reflecting the variability of identity in the posthuman predicament. Although far more accurately discernible in terms of abjection, the visceral transformation of Wikus accurately reflects the posthuman paradigm in terms of his hybridity. Here, the boundaries between Human/Other are blurred, alluding to the permeability of the posthuman subjectivity.

In *Chappie* (2015)*,* we do not encounter hybridity until the final scene where Chappie downloads Deon's consciousness into a robotic body. It could therefore be argued that hybridity takes place off-screen.

Figure 11: *Chappie's* **closing scene -Yolandi's transformation from human to cyborg**

Megan Abley ([Sa]) strongly criticises Blomkamp for his "animalistic" treatment of aliens and robots in both *District 9* (2009) and *Chappie* (2015)*,* arguing that he does this to make them appear sympathetic and simultaneously infantizes them, thereby subjecting them to "Othering" (Abley [Sa]). Abley's ([Sa]) main critique of Blomkamp is his racialized representation of Nigerian nationals and his inaccurate, or complete lack of, representation of female characters. Listing numerous instances with references to animals in *Chappie* (2015)*,* none of these references succeed in crossing the human and non-human animal boundary as far as subjectivity is concerned – the references consist mainly of epithets such as "Hippo", "Moose" and photographs of animals. Abley ([Sa]) goes on to argue that Blomkamp missed the subversive potential of cyborg theory as postulated by Haraway (2006):

> my cyborg myth is about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work… a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints.

Though I agree with most of Abley's ([Sa]) assertions (echoed in previous chapters) as far as utilising hybridity and the cyborg as instruments in blurring the lines between human and non-human consciousness and subjectivity, it is my view that as with Beukes's animalled identities in *Zoo City* (2010), Blomkamp also succeeds masterfully in crossing the humanist boundary and entering the posthuman paradigm of shared subjectivity. Although not always successful in terms of multiple subjects being interconnected to a larger whole, the hybridity that is alluded to off-screen may likewise suggest a posthuman network of interconnectedness that may follow (Coughlin, 2016).

In view of the successful representation of abjection, hybridisation and animalisation as a means to engage in multiple subjectivities, across specie-specific boundaries (discussed in these critical dystopian works of fiction), I conclude that although conventionally interpreted as negative qualities, the abject, hybrid and animot[64] can be utilised as metaphor for the posthuman attributes of crossing conventional subject boundaries and opening new ways of becoming with Others in an interconnected posthuman whole.

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64 Animot: a term that Derrida coined to represent the "metaphysically-laden concept "animal" (Calarco 2009: [sp]).

3.3   DEHUMANISATION: THE NEGATIVE MANIFESTATION OF OTHERING

Dehumanisation[65] can be defined as any process used to undermine the identity of the Other. Although, as argued previously, the abject, hybrid and animot is instrumental in shifting subject boundaries beyond human subjectivity and to open multiple states of being in a posthuman world, under the Eurocentric humanist paradigm. These qualities have been exploited in order to subject individuals to "Othering" and subsequent dehumanisation.

Braidotti (2013:30) argues that these very same concepts that posthuman theorists utilise to liberate the Other, are at the root of racism, xenophobia and white supremacy. Stating that, across the spectrum, humanism lies at the core of the violence (both 'real' and epistemic), which was and still is being practiced against non-human animals and dehumanised others.

Donna Haraway (2008:18) traces the discursive connection between "the colonized, the enslaved, the noncitizen and the animal — all reduced to type, all Others to rational man […]is at the heart of racism and flourishes, lethally, in the entrails of humanism" (Haraway 2008:18). She goes on to say that freedom cannot be defined as the opposite of necessity, especially if the requisite for it includes the "vile consequences" for those who find themselves in bodily entrapment, such as women, the colonised, and all others who cannot live in the illusion that freedom comes once necessity is shouldered unto someone else (Haraway 2008:73). Thereby she addresses the subject of killing vs murder and the question whether only humans can be murdered. The subject of what constitutes a grievable life and how this relates to factory farming and the environment will be further examined in the following chapter.

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65 Dehumanisation: "to deprive of human qualities or attributes; divest of individuality" (Dictionary.com 2018)

Cary Wolfe (2010:74) likens the brutal treatment of non-human animals, as mere research tools, to the torture of political prisoners of war - both are being dehumanised and treated as mere things. Gary Steiner on Aristotle's humanist view indicates that "there is a cosmic scheme of things, and human beings are superior to animals in that scheme because only humans possess the contemplative ability that likens us to the gods" (Steiner quoted by Wolfe 2010:65). This humanist paradigm extends to all Others, by dehumanising them, likening them to animals or objectifying them and they become sub-human and therefore of less value.

Therefore, I argue that whereas posthumanist theorists have succeeded in turning the tables on strategies for Othering such as abjection, animalisation and hybridisation, as long as the humanist paradigm exists and power is viewed as a "monolithic structure that immobilises all within its reach" (Jacobs 2003:95), these strategies will continue to be exploited as a means of dehumanising Others, leading to humanist atrocities such as racism, fascism and sexism. However, should we follow the posthuman paradigm toward the 'horizon of hope', conceding that these forces are constantly shifting, and that humanity is consistently in a constant state of flux, and that the borders are permeable and changeable, there will be room for all subjectivities to exist in variable states of 'becoming with' in an interconnected world.

As is evident from the discussion on *Moxyland* (2008) and *Zoo City* (2010), as well as *District* 9 (2009) and *Chappie* (2015)*,* Beukes's and Blomkamp's characters are subjected to various forms of Othering. In every instance, these strategies have led to the dehumanisation of these subjectivities. However, true to their posthuman nature, these identities have managed to rise above dehumanisation through transcending the boundaries either through abjection (in the case of Kendra's transformation into the ultimate abject manifestation of corpse/spectre) or through Wikus' transformation (through abjection into alien/Other) or through embracing the process of becoming animal/Other (as in Zinzi's acceptance of her status as 'animalled' and Wikus' acceptance of becoming alien).

3.4   POĒSIS OF AN IDENTITY IN DECAY

From this exploration into the decay evident in the identity, as it presents itself in the work of Beukes and Blomkamp, and how it manifests in terms of abjection and the permeability of

the psychological boundaries of the identity, I argue that the posthuman identity is constantly shifting, changing and malleable, and therefore in a constant state of decay (falling/failing). This corresponds to the posthuman condition as a process of becoming. One of these processes necessitates the shifting of the humanist view of man as the supreme fixed identity being elevated above all other non-human lifeforms, into that of becoming animal, acknowledging non-human animal subjectivity. This acceptance of multiple subjectivities in multiple environments of belonging is successfully portrayed through Beukes's and Blomkamp's use of the non-human animal hybrid as well as alien-human hybridity. Thus, it becomes a powerful visual metaphor for the posthuman process of becoming and embracing multiple subjectivities.

The visual investigation into the posthuman identity within a dystopian society had its origin in the series of works titled *Dystopia* (2015) (fig 3,4,5), as discussed in the second chapter. The painting titled *Identity* (2015) (fig 4) addresses a number of factors relating to decay of the body, body horror (Beukes 2008: 278-288) (Blomkamp 2009) and how body horror relates to the crossing of boundaries[66] as a metaphor for social decay and the corpse as being the ultimate location of the abject identity (Kristeva 1982: 3;109) (Beukes 2008: 278-288). The visual signifiers for these concepts [67] within this work are all relatively literal and should be open to interpretation by the viewer so it will therefore not be discussed in detail. This work did, however, open a great many avenues of investigation into the abject and becoming

66 The crossing of boundaries, as a metaphor, is specifically interpreted in this work as the skin signifies the boundary of the body. Beukes' use of the spectral and death in *Moxyland* (2008); Blomkamp's visceral portrayal of Wikus' transformation in *District 9* (2009) and Kristeva's (1980:3,109) interpretation of the corpse as the ultimate form of abjection all allude to the crossing of boundaries.

67 The visual signifiers in *Identity* (2015) are all collected form those found in the visual writing style of Beukes and cinematic portrayal of Blomkamp. I choose, however, not to describe these in detail as I would prefer to leave their interpretations open to the viewers.

other, within the theoretical research, and therefore serves as a preamble to the investigation into identity being in a constant state of flux and, therefore, in a constant state of decay.

As pertinent in the theoretical research, the posthuman identity is shown to be in a constant state of unravelling. The trajectory of identity and how it is related to the visual narrative as being in a constant state of being made and unmade. This is signified by the concept of decay as it manifests in the painting praxis, discussed at length in the Chapter 1. However, the visual unravelling of the iconography employed speaks more accurately to the posthuman dystopian identity as being in a constant state of flux, especially as it relates to the loss of control by the liberal humanist subject (Hayles 1999:290-291). Early compositions and figures manifest a great deal of control (despite their Dionysian origins) painted in a realistic and restrained manner. However, as the body of work progressed, the images took on an increasingly more fragmented and riven identity. The work in the latter half of the body of work manifests as being in a perpetual state of unravelling.   I therefore argue that the visual narrative running through the body of work presents itself as a gradual unravelling of the liberal humanist subject, culminating in the final works being completely fragmented and fluid. Therefore, the painting praxis accurately mirrors the unravelling of the posthuman identity in a dystopian society. While some attention is given to the visual signifiers within the iconography, the literal images are not discussed in detail, leaving the narrative open-ended and therefore open to individual interpretations.

Figure 12: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Portrait of Jan van Riebeeck as a Posthuman* (2016) by Laurette de Jager

The series titled *Becoming Other* (2017) (fig 12,13) deals specifically with the concept of what might make one an 'Other'. In this series, a more whimsical, satirical approach is taken as traditional South African effigies are presented as malleable and fluid identities, while still clinging to their rigid roles. The painting titled *Portrait of Jan van Riebeeck as a Posthuman* (2016) (fig 12) speaks to issues of gender and race, as concepts used within the liberal humanist tradition to define who might be classified as an 'Other'. Photographic images of (what is generally accepted to be) portraits of Jan van Riebeeck and his wife Maria de la Quellerie were sourced from the public domain, and digitally manipulated using photo editing software, to merge the two identities into a single entity, thereby forfeiting the liberal humanist concept of identity as an autonomous being (Hayles 1999:86). The image was digitally printed and transferred using the acrylic transfer technique discussed in the section The *Poēsis of the dystopian aesthetic* (Chapter 1). The image was then painted using Baroque portrait painting techniques, starting with a wet on wet underpainting in tertiary colours and effectively rendering this new entity in sepia, thus depriving the individual of race. Finally, the image was painted in natural tones, this was done in order to emphasize to the viewer the ambiguity in the gender and race of the subject..

Figure 13: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Portrait of Paul Kruger as a Posthuman* **(2016) by Laurette de Jager**

The painting titled *Portrait of Paul Kruger as a Posthuman* (2016) (fig 18) follows a similar praxis as the first. The only difference was that the underpainting was executed in a cool palette, but the objective remained to deprive the subject of race and gender. A third painting in the series follows the same praxis and is titled *Portrait of Jacob Zuma as a Posthuman*[68] (2018). In all three works, care was taken throughout the praxis to keep the identity of the sitter as ambiguous as possible to invite the viewer to contemplate the ambiguity in gender, race and history of the subject.

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68 Laurette de Jager, *Portrait of Jacob Zuma as a Posthuman* (2018). Oil on canvas, 40cm x 30cm. Signed 'LdeJager' Artists collection.

Figure 14: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory for *The Wisdom of the previous generation (after Kiefer)* (2018) by Laurette de Jager.

The research for this series led to a studio experiment wherein lino cutting was combined with digital printing and painting. After the completion of the *Becoming Other series* (2016) (fig 17,18), the visual research called for an investigation into strategies to visually portray the consequence of the binary, liberal humanist paradigm. I found the lino cutting process to be emblematic of the liberal humanist systems (as examined in the theoretical research) due to its high contrast quality. The lino cutting process relies mainly on the carving away of a fixed substance which echoed the gradual carving away of the systems emblematic of the liberal humanist paradigm. When printed (in black and white as I have done here), the result still yields a very high contrast binary product which, in my mind, speaks to the binary nature of systems. Although the symbolic power of the process (the cutting away of a fixed material) may not be immediately evident to the viewer, the stark black and white quality of the portraits are intended to invite the viewer to question the static nature of these (black and white) identities. Three linocuts were carved portraying each of the non-binary identities portrayed in the *Becoming Other series* (2016). The decision was made not to follow the reduction cut process, but to rather cut a silhouette for each of the portraits. The reasoning behind this was that using two different linos for each print would speak more accurately of

the division caused by such binary systems such as apartheid. An edition of five of each of the linocuts was printed on digital prints depicting passages taken from a Dutch bible[69], dating from 1927. These passages address issues of morality, as well as what might be considered gender purity by some individuals and serve as powerful emblems of the devastating effects that liberal humanist systems could have on contemporary society, while still offering an ironic turn[70] to the visual narrative.

In the painting that followed this experiment; The *Wisdom of the previous generation (after Kiefer)* (2018) (fig 14), the printing praxis took the form of painting, in as far as the printing was executed using oil paint on a digital printed canvas but after the image was stamped onto the canvas rather than the canvas being placed face down over the linocut. Each individual silhouette was stamped in black or white oil paint on the canvas, creating a black or white shadow image and then allowed to dry. The composition is arranged in systematic lines to form a grid, alluding to the systematic nature of division. Once the shadows were dry, the linocut portraits were stamped over the initial silhouettes. The visual effect is a startling binary system emblematic of the separation and division characterised by the process of othering, as evident in such liberal humanist systems such as apartheid and colonialism. The overprinted sections were moved slightly over the shadows to create a dual image: the blurring of lines alluding to the posthuman break with binary logic. The monochromatic portraits are juxtaposed against a vividly polluted sunset, serving as a visual signifier for the end of the age of liberal humanism.

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69 The Bible is a family heirloom with inscription dating from 1929, the passages (Exodus 20 and Exodus 22) were scanned and then printed digitally on Fabriano Academia paper.

70 Izak Du Plessis offers an interesting account of the dubious transactions Paul Kruger was rumoured to have been implicated in during his term as President of ZAR. Many of these reminds us strongly of the recent 'Gupta -gate" scandal President Jacob Zuma was implicated in. Ironically Du Plessis titled the chapter dealing with these anecdotes #paulmustfall (Du Plessis 2017: 13-40).

This work was greatly influenced by a work by Anselm Kiefer: *Wege der Weltweisheit: die Hermansschlacht* [71] (1978). As Kiefer worked connection into his work by painting what resembles barbed wire over the portraits, I decided to superimpose linear shapes resembling razor wire over the prints. Ironically, the only unifying factor: the connecting lines, also becomes what separates us. Following Beukes's use of barbed wire (Beukes 2010:50), the razor wire also becomes a powerful visual signifier for the social decay manifested within a posthuman dystopian society.

The series, *The Animal that Therefore I am* (2016) (fig 9,15,16), consists of three paintings and focus on an investigation of the visual signifiers addressing the concept of becoming animal/becoming hybrid, specifically as it relates to the totemic quality of South African statues, their histories and continued controversies.

Broken Monsters (2016) (fig 9) addresses the emblematic quality of statues in a contemporary posthuman society. Iconographically, the decision was made to distort specific statues of iconic figures from South African history. The rationale behind this is both complex and contradictory. Firstly, the action of allowing these effigies to metamorphize into non-human animal/human hybrids opened an avenue into the investigation of the hybrid as a metaphor for crossing boundaries and the fluidity of identity in the posthuman condition. A section of the statue of Jan van Riebeeck, situated in Heerengracht, Cape Town, was manipulated and hybridised by adding buffalo horns. This literally altered the identity of a contested historical figure into a human/nonhuman animal hybrid. Simultaneously, this act turned Jan van Riebeeck into an effigy resembling Satan, demonising the identity of this figure by metamorphosing it into a concept which, ironically, it has become in the eyes of many South Africans. Paradoxically, the human/nonhuman hybridisation also interrogates

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71 Anselm Kiefer; *Wege der Weltweisheit: die Hermansschlacht* (1978) Woodcut with acrylic and shellac mounted on canvas. 343.54 cm x 348.62 cm

the practice of turning animals into metaphorical objects. Braidotti (2013:69) questions the liberal humanist assumptions that we hold whereby nonhuman animals are either infantized or demonised. *Broken Monsters* (2016) (fig 9) questions the impulse to associate the nonhuman animal metaphor as either sentimental, or else alludes to the bestiality of which humans are capable. This paradox is heightened by the introduction of a figure wearing a nonhuman animal mask in the foreground. This figure, directly inspired by the sculptural tableaux of Jane Alexander (See Appendix 1), was mirrored in news media by protestors wearing hoods during the Fees Must Fall protests at UCT[72]. The figure is neither human nor nonhuman animal. The fact that the face is obscured by a nonhuman animal mask leaves the identity completely open to interpretation. Likewise, this figure is neither victim nor perpetrator as the identity defies all classification, and therefore it becomes abject as well as a dynamic metaphor for the posthuman identity.

The works *Portrait of Jan van Riebeeck as "die duiwel van die Kinderbybel"* (2016) (fig 15) and *Portrait of Paul Kruger as Asterion* (2016) (fig 16) speak to the human/nonhuman animal hybrid in similar terms to *Broken Monsters* (2016) (fig 9).

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72 Stoddard, E. (2016) South African government demands end to violent student protests. *Reuters*. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-protests-idUSKBN12F061

Figure 15: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Portrait of Jan van Riebeeck as "die duiwel van die kinderbybel"* (2016) by Laurette de Jager

In *Portrait of Jan van Riebeeck as "die duiwel van die kinderbybel"* (2016) (fig 15), an ironic and satirical approach is taken with the purpose of emphasising the absurdity of ascribing monolithic qualities to these effigies. The title "*Duiwel van die Kinderbybel*" is an Afrikaans term which can be translated as "the devil depicted in a children's Bible". This is intended to point to the irrationality of demonising a granite statue, by effectively turning the effigy into a boogieman. This trope is intended to lead viewers to question the totemic quality of statues: what was revered as a high ideal or act of honour in 1899[73] has become an issue of dispute in 2016. Ironically, in the posthuman era, even statues constructed from granite are not cast in stone. The meaning assigned to a figure has become entirely malleable and fluid, as the identity in the posthuman paradigm has become fluid. The process of hybridisation mirrors Beukes's and Blomkamp's use of becoming animal/becoming hybrid, and therefore also alludes to the abject as it appears in the work of Kristeva (1982). These effigies become

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73 SA History Online (2011: [sp]) Available at: https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/jan-van-riebeeck039s-statue-presented-cecil-john-rhodes-unveiled-cape-town

abject hybrids, thereby transgressing traditional humanist boundaries and challenging humanist assumptions about morality and what constitutes being human.

Figure 16: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Portrait of Paul Kruger as Asterion* (2016) by Laurette de Jager

By the same token, the totemic character of the Statue of Paul Kruger on Church Plain, Pretoria has been subjected to hybridization in the work titled *Portrait of Paul Kruger as Asterion* (2016) (fig16). As with the identity of Satan depicted in the Children's Bible, the character of Asterion[74] serves in Greek mythology as an encumbered metaphor for the abuse of power, the beastly nature of man, and therefore becomes the embodiment of evil, according to the Eurocentric humanist paradigm. Paradoxically, as in *Broken Monsters* (2016) (fig 9) and *Portrait of Jan van Riebeeck as "die duiwel van die Kinderbybel"* (2016) (fig 15), the hybridisation of this figure is intended to question the humanist assumption alluding to the 'animal within man' whereby the animal nature of man is seen as the embodiment of evil. Paradoxically, it can be argued that the nonhuman animalistic character of these figures is, in fact, the least threatening thing about them as animals only kill for survival and not out of hate or avarice.

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74 Asterion is a pseudonym for the minotaur of Crete from Greek mythology (Kerenyi 1960:110-111). The minotaur appears in numerous literary as well as art works, most notably in Dante's Inferno, and works by Picasso, Dali, Magritte and Ernst.

CHAPTER FOUR: Avarice

> [T]here's a widespread view that things are not OK, but we live in a culture in which there is no confidence that things can be otherwise, so utopian energies are restricted to very personal levels. ~ Ruth Levitas (Baccolini & Moylan 2003: 23)

The origin of the word avarice, from the Old French, is derived from the original Latin "*avaritia*" or "*avēre*" meaning to crave or, more accurately, show an excessive or insatiable desire or greed. Humans have always been takers or consumers. It is in our DNA to take, consume and plunder usually at the expense of the Other and always at the expense of the environment. Popular Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari argues that this tendency of humanity to consume has moved us from being hunter/gatherers to the very top of the food chain, leaving a carnage of extinct species in our wake (Harari 2011:73-83). Holding firm to the Eurocentric Man's "superior noble nature", the exploration of new worlds led to one of the most horrific acts of avarice in human history; namely slavery. As discussed in the chapter on social decay, the dehumanisation of Others led to the commodification of the lives of those deemed outside the paradigm of what constituted 'humanity'. The exploration of unchartered worlds brought previously unheard-of resources and riches and served only to stimulate humanity's greed. However, the European conquest of the world, the colonisation of new continents and the acquisition of slaves needed to be financed and so capitalism was born. (Pepperell 2003:160) I would therefore argue that capitalism and its twin offspring: consumerism and neo liberalism are direct symptoms of human greed or avarice.

Braidotti (2013: 106) reasons that modernity emphasised the power of technology as a central component of industrialisation as it pertained to capital, power, consumer objects, social progress, imagination and subjectivity. She argues that the commodification process reduced

humans to "profit-driven technologically mediated objects". Therefore capitalism, even as it invests in scientific, technological and economic advancement, at the same time profits from the commodification of all living creatures. Donna Haraway (2008:47-79) explores the commodification of companion species through the pet consumer industry in North America. The global companion-animal industry, comprising of food, toys, healthcare, services and supplies, has grown exponentially over the past two decades[75]. Cary Wolfe (2010) examines the other side of human and nonhuman-animal relationships through the critical examination of the commodification of nonhuman-animals through practices like factory farming and biomedical research. Thereby arguing that Foucault's (2012:140) concept of biopower[76] has evolved beyond viewing sex as the defining object (Pearson 2009: 302). The commodification of nonhuman animals as a result of human greed will be explored in the following section on consumer capitalism.

Katherine Hayles (1999:167) effectively argues that capitalism infringes on the boundaries of the liberal humanist identity by turning the human into an object while, at the same time, manufacturing objects to act human.

> Capitalism encourages the inflation of desire, marketing its products by seducing the consumer with power fantasies. But when the realization sinks in that this is merely a capitalist ploy, the subject shrinks in inverse proportion to how much it had earlier inflated (1999:170).

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75 Haraway states that the global figure for pet related products in 2002 was U.S.$46 billion, The American Pet Products Association states that expenditure in the United States in 2016 has reached U.S.$ 66.75 billion. (http://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp)

76 Biopower is literally having power over other bodies, "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault, History of Sexuality, Vol.I, p.140).

I argue that the dehumanisation of the individual under capitalism - in an attempt to reduce humanity to an efficient consuming machine - results in man's alienation from the natural world. This, by implication, results in man's greed while consuming much of the natural environment, leading to the most disastrous environmental damage. Unlike the posthuman blurring of boundaries as it pertains to identity, consumer capitalism results in a complete loss of identity as a result of the disconnection between the human and natural environment. Humanity therefore becomes part of the production-consumption machine. In the following section, Donna Haraway's *The Cyborg Manifesto* (Haraway 2006) will be discussed as an effective feminist critique of the patriarchal capitalist society. The cyborg Haraway (2006:151) sketches may be the "illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism" yet at the same time the cyborg functions in a subversive capacity undermining what Haraway (2006:150) refers to as the "the traditions of 'Western' science and politics--the tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism".

Aldous Huxley's (1932) *A Brave New World* is generally considered the most notable dystopian novel to criticise consumer capitalism (Murphy 2009:474). Although relentlessly critical of consumerism, Fordism[77] and Taylorism[78], Huxley falls in the canonical dystopian

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77 Fordism: "A manufacturing philosophy that aims to achieve higher productivity by standardizing the output, using conveyor assembly lines, and breaking the work into small deskilled tasks. Whereas Taylorism (on which Fordism is based) seeks machine and worker efficiency, Fordism seeks to combine them as one unit, and emphasizes minimization of costs instead of maximization of profit. Named after its famous proponent, the US automobile pioneer Henry Ford (1863-1947)". (Business Dictionary.com. 2018: [sp])

78 Taylorism: "Production efficiency methodology that breaks every action, job, or task into small and simple segments which can be easily analysed and taught. Introduced in the early 20th century, Taylorism (1) aims to achieve maximum job fragmentation to minimize skill requirements and job learning time, (2) separates execution of work from work-planning, (3) separates direct labour from indirect labour (4) replaces rule of thumb productivity estimates with precise measurements, (5) introduces time and motion study for optimum job performance, cost accounting, tool and work station design, and (6) makes possible payment-by-result method of wage determination."(Business Dictionary.com. 2018: [sp])

genre and has been criticised for advancing the argument for "liberal humanist aesthetics" (Burling 2011: 241).

Raffaella Baccolini (2003:116) argues that once humanity's desires have been replaced by consumer demands, and thereby fulfilled by free-market liberalism, utopian longing has been co-opted.

Utopia has become indistinguishable from humanity's unquenchable search for materialistic attainment as Utopia is commodified, polluted and corrupted by human avarice. Baccolini (2003) quotes Fukuyama stating that "humans find it impossible to imagine a world which is not essentially democratic or capitalist" (Fukuyama quoted by Baccolini 2003:116). She states that "capitalism has co-opted Utopia [and] we need to reclaim it, […] the critical dystopia might be one way to do so" (Baccolini & Moylan 2003: 246). Tom Moylan (2003:136) sketches a similarly bleak image, a rendering of the "Iron Heel" of capitalism, citing it as anticipating the extreme form of fascism, naming it the "new regime of Fordism". Moylan (2003:246-247) argues that the critical dystopian genre offers the opportunity to discover an innovative new system, through critical and sceptical questioning of the status quo, with the hope of an alternate social reality. The dystopian theorist I consider by far the most critical of capitalism, Darko Suvin in Baccolini & Moylan's (2003:192-193) *Dark Horizons* argues that capitalism "co-opts all it can from utopia", in pretence of a realized "eutopia" when it should rather be termed an "Anti-Utopia", as it is undeniably far more dystopian in nature as far as 85 percent of the world's population is concerned. The state of current human society is classified as "Post Fordism" wherein the weaker members of society: women, children and the disenfranchised are continually exploited by an ever-increasing tsunami of trends and crazes to the detriment of human relationships - all in the name of profit, production and capital. Suvin (Suvin in Baccolini & Moylan 2003:193) locates Post-Fordism as the direct cause of globalisation and postmodernism, terming it the "killer whale inside which we have to live" (Suvin in Baccolini & Moylan 2003:193).

Whereas the Utopian genre might play well into the hand of consumer capitalism, other dystopian orientated SF genres, most notably Afrofuturism and Postcolonialism, remain critical of capitalism to the point of thematising it as a dystopian characteristic. Isiah Lavender III (2011) defines Afrofuturism as being concerned with the influence of techno science on black people both historically as well as futuristically. Quoting Ben Williams,

Lavender (2011) argues that race historically functioned as a "labour based technology" whereby human beings "coded as natural machines" were used to generate wealth, thereby altering black African slaves into "cyborgs in a white human world". "[These] mechanical metaphors […] extend beyond signifying post-humanity to embody a history that began with slavery [therefore being] the original unit of capitalist labor (sic)" (Williams in Lavender III, 2011:190). This argument could thus be equally applicable to Postcolonial dystopian fiction, as evident in Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009). Postcolonial dystopian fiction addresses slavery as a product of humanity's avarice, again harking back to mankind's consumer or taker mindset, thereby placing the blame for slavery directly at the doors of imperialism and capitalism. I would therefore argue that postcolonial and, by implication, posthuman dystopian fiction is, in itself, also anti-capitalist in character. It is worth noting that humanism in itself is not malicious. However, the humanist fallout, driven by human greed, negates many of the positive attributes of humanism.

In this chapter, the novels of Lauren Beukes (*Moxyland* and to a lesser extent *Zoo City*) and films by Neill Blomkamp (*District 9* and to a lesser extend *Chappie*) will be studied in order to examine how avarice manifests itself in a posthuman dystopian society. Focus will be given to how consumer capitalism and neo liberalism may be traced as indicators of human greed in a dystopian society.

4.1   CONSUMER CAPITALISM

As a result of global warming, natural resources disappearing, and the natural world increasingly being threatened by advanced capitalism – human ambition is encroaching on the very resources required for our survival and we will not stop until everything is consumed (Herbrechter:2013:7).

Aldous Huxley (1932) introduced us to the power of entertainment as distraction from the misery of the masses in his novel *A Brave New World*. Capitalism as a system has succeeded in keeping humanity distracted from its destructive impact on the environment by demanding ever-increasing sources of consumables. Rosi Braidotti (2013:58) defines advanced capitalism as an ever "spinning machine that actively produces differences for the sake of commodification". This translates as a reading of Deleuze's (Deleuze & Guattari 2004)

concept of deterritorialization being proliferated by an almost mindless consumption urge. Donna Haraway (2006:155) effectively explores this difference between the human and the technological other in her cyborg theory. She argues that cyborg theory offers an opportunity to take pleasure in the confusion of boundaries which in turn leads the subversion against the contradictory social reality imposed on us by "patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism".

In the field regarding animal studies, both Haraway and Wolfe have addressed the atrocities perpetuated against our nonhuman animal counterparts when it comes to factory farming. Cary Wolfe cites South African author J.M. Coetzee's novel *The Lives of Animals* and the work of visual artist Sue Coe (published in her book *Dead Meat*) to illustrate how an advanced process of Taylorisation[79] is being employed in the mechanistical breeding and slaughter of nonhuman animals with the exclusive purpose of feeding the consumer-driven fast food industry. Wolfe (2010:150-151) argues that this "systemic violence" against the animals is doubled by "a less brutal, though no less systematic violence that attends the [human] workers who are forced by the nature of capitalism itself to do such work". It is a well-known fact that organic farming techniques occur at higher costs and yield lesser dividends than factory farming. Essentially, better living conditions for farm animals are in direct opposition to the capitalist dogma. I argue that the continued exploitation of nonhuman animals is, in itself, a by-product of our consumer-driven social reality and can be traced back to capitalism born from human avarice.

I argue that it is evident that our present capitalist reality is essentially a consequence of Eurocentric humanism's influence. Therefore, in posthuman terms, the urgency to locate a

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79 Taylorisation: "The process through which efficiency is increased by evaluating every step in a manufacturing process and breaking down production into specialized repetitive tasks". (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary 2018: [sp])

better system to replace consumption-driven capitalism is essential to find better ways to exist in the world. This is essential not only for the sake of the environment, but also to allow for better connections between all living beings.

In Lauren Beukes's (2008) *Moxyland*, the reader is confronted with an ostensibly democratic South Africa governed by a large capitalist conglomerate. Government have been co-opted by capitalism; law is enforced by a corrupt police force and the chasm between rich and poor has widened. Medical care is only available to the wealthy while the disenfranchised (in the townships and rural areas) are dying from regular outbreaks of mysterious infections strongly reminiscent of the present-day epidemics of HIV and tuberculosis. In this alternate reality, division based on race has been replaced by an avarice-driven, class-based apartheid. The South Africa in *Moxyland* is in a state of consumer capitalist dystopia, divided into a blasé corporate upper-class; a placated middle-class and a defeated lower-class. In the seemingly utopian city, citizens are constantly bombarded with advertising - feeding the consumption impulse night and day in an effort to keep the middle-class subdued. This chilling dystopian novel offers us a glimpse of what might already be happening within our social reality.

Present day government corruption is mirrored in Beukes's reality. The entire governing system is driven by the perpetuation of human greed and the consumer impulse and no-one is exempt.

> [C]orrupting govts (sic) with their own agendas, politicians on their payroll, exacerbating the economic gaps. building social controls and access passes and electroshock pacifiers into the very technology we need to function day to day, so you've no choice but to accept the defuser in your phone or being barred from certain parts of the city because you don't have clearance (Beukes 2008:119).

Law and order are enforced through technology with an ever-present need to stay connected as trespassers are either electrocuted or disconnected. Without cell-phone connections, individuals cease to exist, effectively rendering everyone cyborgs. Simultaneously, identities are commodified. Kendra is chosen to act as a "Sponsor baby" sacrificing her human identity to become a "Ghost girl". Her selection offers her a chance of public recognition, but comes with a hefty price tag: physical dependency on the soft drink she is branded with. Alexander (2015:162) states that Beukes's "sciencefictional texts write neo-colonial, hypercapitalist spaces, where bodies are brands and brands are embodied". Kendra's flesh becomes a walking

advertisement while her increased dependency on the product ensures that the cogs of the consumption machine keep turning. Kendra's character becomes the living embodiment of the consumer capitalist feedback loop - a loop she is only released from on her death. Ironically, she is executed by the very same corporation that has co-opted her. Therefore, Kendra's identity becomes nothing more than a consumable product. Kendra's constant thirst for *Ghost* serves as a further metaphor for consumer culture. It is ironic that Kendra seizes the opportunity to become a "Sponsor Babe" with the intention of establishing her individuality when, at the end, she becomes merely another consumable in the never-ending cycle. Similarly, Toby's "BabyStrange" coat is always on his back, broadcasting 24/7. These characters have become completely commodified identities and each pay a very high price for it: Kendra with her life and Toby with his integrity.

Andries Visagie (2011) argues an interesting point in his analysis of *Moxyland,* citing Kendra's character as the personification of the correlation between wealth distribution and risk distribution. He argues that the Inatec corporation transfers all the risk to the participants, maintaining that the nanotechnology will enhance their immune system, rendering them invulnerable. When Kendra inadvertently transfers her nano-immunity to Toby at the end of the novel, it causes a "boomerang effect" which causes the health risk transferred from company to individual to then affect the general population which effectively threatens the corporate elite who had profited from the venture. Visagie (2011:105) argues how this demonstrates that wealth production and risk production are intertwined, effectively shifting the risk to the less privileged. I would argue that the shifting of risk factors onto the disenfranchised in society is a strong cause for the current atmosphere of discontent in contemporary South Africa. Therefore Beukes's strong critique of consumer capitalism through the use of "consumer branding" can be read as an effective metaphor for the scepticism towards human avarice in a posthuman dystopian society.

Human avarice manifests in a wholly different manner in Beukes's novel *Zoo City* (2010). It is set in a futuristic posthuman dystopian Johannesburg governed by a completely different class system: that of animalled and non-animalled. It insinuates that the wealthy cannot possibly be animalled. The antagonist, a wealthy music producer Odi Huron, hides his aposymbiot (a giant white crocodile) in a cave. The reader understands that it would be frowned upon should his animal become public knowledge. In geopolitical terms,

Johannesburg has always been a site of economic disparity. Historically, the city of gold's wealth has been built on the backs of predominantly black labouring mineworkers. The novel's protagonist, Zinzi, displays a sardonic mistrust of the leafy suburbs, wondering whether the gated communities exist to keep Others out or to keep the "festering middle-class paranoia in" (Beukes 2010:84). Zinzi also displays a scornful outlook on capitalism, even though she herself hails from the comfortable, if not wealthy middleclass, before her aposymbiotic event (Beukes 2010:160-162).

The novel does not deal with consumer capitalism as much as it addresses its side effects; namely poverty and crime. It is painfully apparent that the driving force behind the exploitation, corruption and crime in *Zoo City* is human greed (Beukes 2010:33). At one point Zinzi describes the city as "self-cannibalising". This phrase functions as a potent metaphor for the consumer nature of contemporary society, while also making sharp reference to our impact on the natural environment - in this case referencing the "sulphur-coloured artificial hills" as a result of mining for gold: the sustenance of human greed (Beukes 2010:255). Beukes's work displays a strong aversion to capitalism and human avarice. Her utterly human portrayal of posthuman identities functions as a subversive tactic for addressing exactly those atavistic qualities which make humanity consumers.

I argue that Beukes's posthuman dystopian realm functions as a powerful metaphor for addressing human avarice and, along with it, the role of consumer capitalism within a contemporary social reality which urges the reader to take heed of man's undesirable consumer impulse and its impact on the natural world. This, therefore, provides an accurate model for the visual signifier of human greed as an undercurrent for the decay present in a posthuman dystopian society.

In *District 9* (2009), Blomkamp deals with human avarice mainly through corporate greed, which will be examined in greater detail in the following section on Neo Liberalism and globalisation. As in Beukes's work, we find subtle references to the capitalist consumer culture which Blomkamp effectively uses to address human avarice. The most significant scene shows Wikus van der Merwe greedily consuming cat food and the shame evident on his face. This serves as a powerful metaphor for human societies' seemingly uncontrollable

urge to perpetually consume, even in shame as though we simply cannot prevent ourselves from doing so.

Once Wikus is infected with alien DNA, it makes him a target for human avarice. First Obesandjo, the Nigerian warlord, has his sights on Wikus, believing that the alien DNA will render him invincible. When MNU discovers that the alien DNA enables Wikus to operate alien weaponry, he becomes a consumable commodity. Like Kendra in *Moxyland,* Wikus' very flesh becomes a commodity, effectively not only dehumanising him but simultaneously objectifying his identity as that of a consumable product. A scientist states that "he became the most valuable business artefact on earth" (*District 9*, 2009). I argue that these portrayals of the dehumanisation of the human identity and its subsequent commodification of the flesh, serve as a powerfully subversive metaphor for humanity's consumer-driven avarice. Blomkamp's use of these metaphors serves as a strong posthuman critique on the commodification of identities in a consumer capitalist-driven dystopian state.

In *Chappie* (2015)*,* Blomkamp addresses the manifestation of human avarice through the trope of the cyborg (Haraway 2006:151). She states that cyborgs derive from militarism and patriarchal capitalism, calling them the "illegitimate offspring" functioning as a subversive metaphor against consumer capitalism. Chappie functions as the ultimate cyborg. He rebels against the system in which he was created, eventually overthrowing death itself in the ultimate posthuman fantasy of eternal life through disembodiment.

Although Chappie starts his life as a capitalist product generated by a multinational company under a neoliberal capitalist regime, he succeeds in saving himself and those he cares for from the oppressive consumer-driven system they were born into. Chappie actively fights his avarice-driven circumstances: first as a product and later as an exploitable commodity when Ninja plans to use him to realise his greed-fuelled criminal agenda. Blomkamp succeeds in appealing to humanity's better qualities by using the cyborg as a metaphor for his anti-capitalist agenda.

By using the metaphor of the cyborg in *Chappie* (2015) and the hybrid in *District 9* (2009)*,* Blomkamp succeeds is creating a dissident posthuman dystopian reality as a compelling critique of the contemporary consumer capitalist reality in South Africa. Thereby he

effectively uses the open ended posthuman critical dystopia as a vehicle for addressing the role of human avarice in our current social reality.

4.2   NEOLIBERALISM

For the purpose of this study, the term Neo Liberalism is defined as the 20th century revival of 19th century philosophy of free market capitalism. Neo Liberalism advocates the transference of economic factors from the public sector to the private sector.[80] It has been argued that neo liberalism is simultaneously the driving force behind globalisation, manifesting simultaneously as the symptom as well as the cause of global neo liberalism (Litonjua 2008). In this section, I shall examine the implications of neo liberalism and, by extension, globalization in a posthuman critical dystopian society.

Tom Moylan (2003) argues that since the 1990's there has been a marked shift in the critical dystopian genre: global corporations are now portrayed as the dominant power instead of the state. The global shift towards neoliberalism has resulted in a wariness toward government-controlled social, economic and democratic organisations, with neoliberal theorists arguing that state interference impedes market growth. Globally there is a marked trend towards the privatisation of health and public services. Moylan states that the "contradictory secret of neoliberalism" is that "economic viability is not a matter of eliminating the state but rather of restricting its activities to those that aid capital and not society" (Moylan 2003: 141). It is therefore not surprising that an anti-capitalist critique within the critical dystopia should now focus on multinational conglomerates as the oppressive antagonist, as opposed to the state-enforced 'Big Brother' of George Orwell.

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80 (Investopedia 2018: [sp])

Rosi Braidotti (2013:61) states that the largest disadvantage of neoliberalism is its insistence upon the responsibility towards individualism[81]. She argues that recent government campaigns against obesity, smoking and excessive drinking serve as evidence of this trend towards - what she terms "hyper-individualism" (Braidotti 2013:116). This "restoration of possessive individualism" counteracts the posthuman and postmodern victories against the binary logic that defines male/female human/animal (Braidotti 2013: 184). In essence, Braidotti (2013) argues that individualism betrays the fluidity of the fragmentation, hybridity and mutations of identity that mark our era.

Seemingly contradictory to Braidotti's (2013) stance on neoliberalism, Sherryl Vint (2013) explores the figure of the zombie as an effective metaphor not only for consumer culture but, more importantly, as the "abject posthuman figure" - a figure reduced to a thing by neoliberal governmentality. Vint (2013:135) states that zombies mirror how "humans living labour is turned into a dead thing, a commodity".

> "[G]lobal capitalism has made monsters of us all, reproducing the kind of subjectivity that guides corporate decisions that privilege profit above people [resulting in] organic people behaving with utter self-interest characteristic of corporate personhood" (Vint 2013:136).

Here we encounter a correlation between Braidotti and Vint's stances whereby individuals are reduced to commodities by consumer capitalism and essentially dehumanised. When it comes to neoliberalism, the globalised neoliberal system acts in utter self-interest becoming a self-serving individual as opposed to a corporate personhood.

I postulate that fragmented postmodern subjectivity (established and explored by poststructuralists like Foucault, Butler and Kristeva) leads us to question the obsolete ideal of

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81 Braidotti (2013:30) defines individualism as the malevolent factor of humanism, that leads to egotism, arrogance and domination of others, therefore individualism entails a misplaced sense of superiority.

the autonomous self and encourages the postmodern or posthuman to search for new ways of being. This will account for multiple stances on knowledge, politics and economics and the question of individualism will become moot. When consumer capitalism reduces humans to consumption commodities, the question of individualism is cast aside and only becomes relevant as a selling point. Humanity is already reduced to impersonal consumers - their individuality is only required when it serves to entice a commodity to establish its identity through purchasing some or other consumer product in a desperate act of regaining some semblance of individuality. Contradictory to the collectivism of consumer capitalism, neoliberalism appeals to the well-being of the individual as a motivating factor in order to divide human subjects into geographic, ethnic and class boundaries. This thereby effectively defies the posthuman crossing of boundaries discussed in the previous chapter.

As discussed in the section on consumer capitalism, in her novel *Moxyland* (2008)*,* Lauren Beukes exchanges the apartheid system with a neoliberal government state wherein the government have been co-opted by large capitalist corporations. This is a state similar to the neoliberalism advocated during Thabo Mbeki's presidency (Bethlehem 2014: 530).

Lerato, *Moxyland's* neoliberal success story, leads us to understand the extent to which this dystopian South Africa has become entrenched in neoliberal politics. Raised as an "Aidsbaby", Lerato was rescued as an aids orphan and homed in an orphanage run by a large corporation. Here her talents and skills were nurtured in the belief that she would contribute to the well-being of the corporation in the future. Lerato is fiercely individual and it is therefore not surprising that, till the end of the novel, she still believes in her autonomous individuality. Ironically when she is confronted by her fate as an impersonal cog in the corporate machine, the corporate master taunts her for her pathological arrogance - echoing the disadvantage of neoliberalism described by Braidotti (2013:30) which leads to self-centeredness, superiority and arrogance (Beukes 2008:280-282). One gets the impression that Lerato will function to optimal capacity in the neoliberal machine. She might even retain a measure of individuality despite running "multiple online subjectivities". The greatest loss to Lerato's character would ultimately be her humanity which might be interpreted as principles of no use to her in a neoliberal environment where people are reduced to things and the only semblance of individuality is to serve the consumer market. It is ironic that Kendra, the character who starts off seeking individuality, eventually dies in the consumer

machine - her principles intact but her individuality lost. Whereas Lerato, the fiercely individual character ends up thriving in the consumer capitalist machine - her individuality intact but her principles lost. I argue that in *Moxyland*, Beukes (2008) effectively utilises neoliberalist governmentality as a metaphor for the compromised gain of individuality through human avarice.

In *Zoo City¸* Beukes (2010) deals with neoliberal politics in a much more subversive manner. The characters in *Zoo City* are all fiercely individualistic, even more so due to being animalled, and each aposymbiot reflects the characters' own personal vices. Molly Brown (2014:37) argues that this fierce individuality is exactly what defines contemporary neoliberalism. She states that the individualism being peddled by neoliberalist governmentality is echoed in the contemporary South African scepticism towards power structures that continue to eradicate the needs of the marginalised on the fringes of society. Zinzi's character is "a poor female whose cultural identity seems to be at odds with her ethnicity" (Brown 2014:37) but therefore a type of subjective utopia is attained at the end of the novel. Thus, any hope of a collective utopia is abandoned in favour of a subjective individual utopia (Brown 2014: 37). This would also imply a moving away from community wherein the attainment of individual utopia moves the character to become self-centred which is in agreement with Braidotti's (2013:30) characterisation of individualism. I would, however, argue that Zinzi's redemptive act of searching for Benoît's displaced family goes far beyond selfish pursuits of individualism and rather points to *Ubuntu:* the African philosophy of a universal bond that connects all humanity. I argue that whereas the subversive neoliberal undertones of individuality in *Zoo City* could be interpreted as indicative of human avarice, Zinzi's redemptive act succeeds in moving the narrative into the critical dystopian genre.

Neill Blomkamp addresses neoliberalism using similar modus, in both *District 9* (2009) as well as *Chappie* (2015)*.*   In both films, we find a dystopian South Africa governed by neoliberal corporations. In *District 9* (2009)*,* the corporation is even named *Multinational United:* a corporation hired by the national government to evict the alien residents of District 9. The protagonist, Wikus van der Merwe, is merely a cog in the neoliberal machine. Driven by neoliberal business practices to removing the aliens in the most cost-effective method, Wikus is reduced to only an instrument, resulting in him not only dehumanising the aliens, but himself also. Wikus remains a non-entity to MNU, until he is infected by alien DNA

which effectively turns him into a commodity. Ironically through the contamination, Wikus gains individual identity in the eyes of the corporation. He becomes a unique, precious commodity that needs to be procured, researched, developed and exploited at any cost necessary.

Keith Wagner (2013:65-66) states that Blomkamp's use of a videogame mise-en-scène parallels neoliberalism. The use of gore and violence forces us to focus our attention on one action in order to distract us from another, effectively acting as a metaphor for neoliberalism's modus of distracting society from abject poverty by bombarding them with consumables (Wagner 2013:65-66). The aliens in *District 9* are doubly exploited by neoliberalist corporations, providing gainful employment by being evicted from their homes, yet not gaining any protection as the welfare state gradually disappears. The aliens are blamed for depleting the economy - mirroring a growing unwillingness in contemporary society to subsidize poverty-stricken segments of society. The film further depicts this exploitation by making it obvious that there is little to no chance of gainful employment for aliens. They are therefore devoid of individuality and become nothing more than anonymous consumers who fall prey to various nefarious capitalist schemes.

> "When automation, efficiency, and technical rationality become the driving forces of society, the danger is not that technology will become self-aware, empathetic or disobedient but that humanity will cease to be" (Sculos 2015[sp]).

Similarly, in *Chappie* (2015) we encounter a Johannesburg under neoliberalist rule. Blomkamp sketches a reality of what happens to humanity when materialistic gain and undemocratic neoliberal rule converge under the dictation of human avarice. William Sculos (2015[sp]) states that, while Chappie doesn't succeed in saving mankind from the "gluttonous, mass consumptive forces of late capitalism" (Sculos 2015[sp]), it does call society to envision new systems fighting against a neoliberal, capitalist system wherein violence, avarice, human creativity and ingenuity are implied to be the same thing (Sculos 2015[sp]).

I suggest that Blomkamp's blatant use of multinational corporations as the antagonistic autocratic agents in both *District 9* (2009) as well as *Chappie* (2015) effectively portrays a globalised neoliberal governmentality where individual subjectivity is reduced and objectified. Multiple paradigms of belonging (as in posthuman subjectivity) are not

encouraged and individual subjectivity is undermined in order to reduce the individual to a commodity or an effective cog in the consumer capitalist machine. In this instance, the loss of the individual acts as a loyalist embodiment of the corporation as a neoliberal agent to undermine the posthuman identity.

4.3   POËSIS OF AVARICE

I suggest that the posthuman dystopian works of Beukes and Blomkamp remind us that, although humans are intrinsically consumers, there exists within us the need to create, to form connections and build societies rooted in our connections to each other and the environment. We may take, plunder and consume but our connections to both humans and nonhuman others leads us also to create, restore and revive. Those of us willing to cross these permeable boundaries will also restore, revive and rebuild. It is in this reweaving of the human fabric that the essence of the posthuman paradigm resides on the horizon of hope.

The *Dystopia series* (2015) (fig 3,4,5) deals with consumer capitalism, as it pertains to human avarice, on a literal level. The concept of consumer capitalism is reflected in all three works through the incorporation of consumer labels or logos, either partially or completely. Thus, the following are presented: a McDonalds fries container in *Decay* (2015) (fig 3); a Peter Stuyvesant cigarette advertisement dating from the early 1980's in *Identity* (2015) (fig 4) and a partial Multichoice logo in *Avarice* (2015) (fig 5). Although literal representations of consumer marketing, each of these tropes also denote a myriad of other significances both personal and shared, as they correlate with specific dystopian fictions. Although these tropes offer easily recognisable signifiers to the viewer, their interpretations will, however, be left open-ended to allow for ambiguity and an open-ended enclave. The trope of the zombie as a

metaphor for consumer culture evident in Jane Alexander's Bom *Boys* (1998)[82] (See appendix 1) and as the ultimate abject posthuman identity (Vint 2013) is echoed in the ashen complexion of the hybrid figure in the foreground of *Avarice* (2015) (fig 5).

However, as the praxis progressed, measures were taken to incorporate the concept of human avarice into the body of work on a more conceptual level. This was greatly influenced by a growing personal awareness of the devastating effects that human avarice continues to have on humans and nonhuman Others, as well as the natural environment. The investigation into factory farming and subsequently into the classification of certain animals as vermin (specifically such predators and scavengers as the caracal, black backed jackal and even hyena due to the contested territory and food sources) as a result of humans encroaching on their natural habitat, led to the investigation of these animals as signifiers. This allowed for the victimisation of nonhuman others in the human pursuit of more consumable resources as a direct result of human avarice. The caracal was adopted as a metaphor for this conflict in the form of a nonhuman animal mask in *Broken Monsters* (2016) (fig 9) discussed earlier. Through this trope, the figure of the caracal becomes the embodiment of contested territories and identities in the posthuman paradigm.

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82 Jane Alexander's (See appendix 1) 2002 Daimler-Chrysler award-winning installation *Bom Boys* (1998) depicts nine childlike figures, all cast from the same mould and placed seemingly indiscriminately on a square grid surface resembling a chess board. The ashen pallor of their skin evokes images of the zombie, the mindless consuming effigy, into which consumer capitalism has turned us all (Vint 2013).

**Figure 17:Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Skull of my country*
(2017/2018) by Laurette de Jager**

Subsequent research led to the adoption of hyenas as ambiguous metaphors; serving as the embodiment of aggression and gluttony (as employed by many artists from the resistance art movement[83]) and, on the other hand, as naturalised victims of human avarice. As illustrated in the monumental work *Skull of my Country* (2017) (fig 17), the predominant theme of this work is that avarice is present in the rampant corruption within the national government of the time (Munusamy 2016) (The Times Live, 2017). The work incorporates nonhuman animals as signifiers, in the form of hyenas, but also in the form of a monumentised human/nonhuman animal hybrid skull. The skull becomes the embodiment of decay, as a direct result of avarice, across the human/nonhuman animal boundary. This skull is used to replace a section of The Women's monument[84] located in Bloemfontein. The metaphor is palpable - an effigy of the president replaces the women originally depicted which effectively turns the monument into a mockery. The encumbered narrative of this work points to the exploitation of all Others under human avarice, as evident in the pastiche of the bronze relief

83 (NLA Design Visual and Visual Arts 2013: [sp])

84 The Women's Monument or Vrouemonument is a monument commemorating the suffering of women and children in British concentration camps during the Second Boer War. It was unveiled on 16 December 1913 in Bloemfontein and designed by architect Frans Soff with sculpting by Anton van Wouw.

sculpture by Anton van Wouw, depicting the suffering of women and children under British imperialism and colonisation. The figures in the foreground are portraits of the four female students who participated in the 'Remember Khwezi' protest which was broadcast on national television during the President's announcement of the municipal election results in 2016 (Makhubu 2016). This protest act had a profound impact on my perspective and greatly influenced my work. What this work is essentially imparting to the viewer, is the devastating influence human avarice has on all living beings. The central sculptural figure becomes the embodiment of greed and towers over the landscape yet, paradoxically, seems frail and flaccid at the same time while consumed by avarice. The use of a pastiche section of Albrecht Altdorfer's painting *The Battle of Alexander at Issus* (1529) [85] placed above the horizon in the work is intended to emphasise the apocalyptic conclusion, which I believe would be the consequence of the perpetuation of human avarice under the anthropocentric humanist paradigm. Conversely, the posthuman paradigm calls for the recognition and incorporation of all others; a way of sharing the environment and a complete break with the liberal humanist paradigm that places humanity at the centre as superior to all others.

"To harm anything is to harm oneself" (Pepperell 2003:172).

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85 Albrecht Altdorfer, *The Battle of Alexander at Issus* (1529). Oil on panel, 158.4 cm × 120.3 cm. Signed and undated AA. ALBRECHT ALTORFER ZU REGENSPVRG FECIT. Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Germany. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Battle_of_Alexander_at_Issus#/media/File:Albrecht_Altdorfer_-_Schlacht_bei_Issus_(Alte_Pinakothek,_M%C3%BCnchen).jpg

Figure 18: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Double Finitude* (2018) by Laurette de Jager

The *Shared Finitude Series* and *Rhizomatic Artifice Series* (fig 19) are executed in mixed media and deal specifically with how the human/nonhuman animal relationship is shaped by human avarice. In *Derrida's Dilemma* (2018), *Double Finitude* (fig 18) and *Memento Mori* (2018), care was taken to incorporate plant matter and natural material into the practical process. Various twigs and decaying plant material were used to create a mixed media surface using decalcomania and mono-printing with natural objects. The resulting chaotic grounds were subdued, reflecting the human's constant need to control nature, by first applying a number of pastel glazes. The praxis follows a gradual decay of the resulting ground by erasing the section where the nonhuman animal figure appears. These voids were then filled by superimposing images of lifeless nonhuman animals. The metaphor is twofold: the corpses, readily recognisable to the viewer, signify man's continuous exploitation of natural resources driven by the ever-increasing impulse to consume as well as alluding to the general state of atrophy which prevails in contemporary society as systems fail.

Figure 19: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Rhizomatic Artifice* (2018) by Laurette de Jager

In the *Rhizomatic Artifice Series,* I experimented with photomontage using images of plant matter, which I photographed printed and then collaged to create a parallel reality, wherein the plant matter takes on a life of its own. The plants and their surroundings appear larger than life, presenting a reality where the natural world is exaggerated, but also a reality depicting a marked absence of humanity. These sections of plant life are recognisable to the viewer as flora, yet are intended to convey, to the viewer, the feeling of "nature being in control" rather than man dominating nature. Certain areas of the montage were overpainted with oil paint changing the natural local colour of sections of the plants into an acidic phthalo green, lending an alien quality to these plants. Most importantly, however, is how the praxis conceptually speaks about how the avaricious nature of humans impact the natural environment, by incorporating natural materials into the practice.
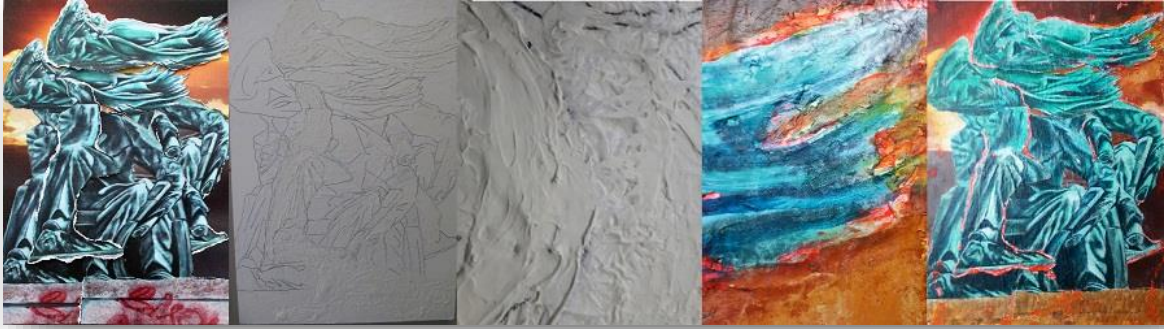
Figure 20: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Rhodes is falling* (2018) by Laurette de Jager

In the #*PostFall Series* (2018) (fig 19,20,21) the effigies depicted in the *#RiseoftheFallists series* (2016) (fig 6,7,8) are presented as completely fragmented and deconstructed. These monolithic structures investigated in the *#RiseoftheFallists series* (2016) are revisited and readdressed in terms of the themes of decay, identity and avarice. The result is a series that is presented as both visually and texturally riven. The underlying surface texture which translated topographically onto the canvas surface alludes to the influence human avarice has on the landscape, reflected in the work of Beukes (2010) and Blomkamp (2009). The conceptual implications of the textualization of the canvas surface were discussed individually under the sections on decay and identity. Visually the texture adds to the concept of decay as it physically impacts on the deteriorating quality of the acrylic transfers which overlays it. Likewise, it adds to the fragmentation and deconstruction of the visual representation of the identity (rendered on the acrylic transfer) as emblematic of the posthuman condition.

Figure 21:Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Umlimi is falling* (2018) by Laurette de Jager

The #*PostFall series* (2018) (fig 19,20,21) functions as a finale, as far as the unravelling of the narrative throughout the body of work is concerned. As discussed in Chapter 3, the visual narrative follows the concept of an identity in a constant state of unravelling. The research in the chapter on identity has shown how the posthuman identity presents itself as fragmented and riven, as opposed to the liberal humanist paradigm of identity as a fixed and autonomous subjectivity. This concept runs through the entire body of work, presented in the early work as controlled and fixed, as far as composition and style are concerned. However, as the research and praxis progressed, the nature of the works (in style as well as composition) has become increasingly less formal and presented as a narrative in the process of becoming undone. This process is paralleled in the composition becoming less claustrophobic, more open and eventually chaotic, as well as the painting process becoming increasingly less controlled. Though the glazing technique is still predominant in the final stages of the praxis, the underlying texture is presented as riven and fragmented. This quality functions as a dynamic metaphor for the concept that the world, systems and environment as we perceive it are not governed by what is seen, but rather by unseen, underlying forces.

Figure 22: Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory of *Mamelodi'a* is falling (2018) by Laurette de Jager

This series consolidates the three themes into a coherent conclusion. Decay is presented as the overarching theme and avarice as the underlying theme, essentially grasping the theme of identity suspended in between the other two themes. This is emblematic of the dystopian society as it is found to exist on the cusp of the posthuman condition. It is noteworthy that the conceptualisation for exhibiting the two series: #*RiseoftheFallists* (2016) (fig 6,7,8) and #*PostFall* (2018) (fig 19,20,21) entails displaying the corresponding paintings back to back

and suspended from the roof, thereby forcing the viewer to walk around the works in order to see both sides of the reality presented. This action is emblematic of the fact that no living creature can embody two realities at the same time, thereby heightening the contrast between the liberal humanist and posthuman paradigms.

Figure 23:Photographic record of the studio praxis tracing the trajectory *Horizon of Hope* (2018) by Laurette de Jager

In the painting *Horizon of Hope* (2018), the iconographical unravelling and conceptual transference process is brought full circle. The conceptual praxis for this work consists of numerous layers, whereby the reflexive relationship between artist and work is continually being pushed further and grows more complex. My praxis started by compositing various images taken from my own photographs which resulted in an ambiguous utopian/dystopian scene. Both family photographs, as well as spaces that speak to me on a personal level, were incorporated. My objective was to move the visual symbolism into a personal field, thereby investigating how the posthuman dystopia impacts my surroundings on a personal level, while still speaking to a greater social whole. This image was then digitally printed on canvas to produce a maquette, effectively moving the transfer process from the acrylic approach into the digital. The underlying structures (now rendered in digital printing ink) replace the acrylic underpainting. The printed image was treated with various oil glazes: alla prima painting and also impasto oils mixed with pulverised elephant dung.

The completed maquette was photographed; further digitally manipulated to remove problematic compositional elements and printed on a large scale (1.8 meter x 1.2 meter). This printed work is then treated with various oil glazes - muting certain hues while accentuating others. Certain elements will be completely obliterated while others will be reaffirmed. Conceptually this process speaks of the perpetuation of systems: as they rise and fall, certain

aspects are demolished while others are reasserted. The large version of this work will be exhibited as part of the exhibition, with a photograph of the maquette being projected over the large work, resulting in a double image, rendering the perpetual rise and fall of systems and mindsets. The viewer becomes complicit in the process because, as they move in front of the projection, they influence the image. Ironically, the marks left by avarice (the plastic bags) remain unaltered despite human intervention.

Visually speaking, *Horizon of Hope* (2018) is intended to present a personal interpretation of how the ultimate posthuman landscape might appear in terms of decay and identity as a result of the impact of centuries of human avarice perpetuated on the planet. Conceptually the praxis speaks to the posthuman condition as a natural progression rather than an end - how the decay of one system gives birth to the new. I reason that this perpetual rise and fall of systems, identities and paradigms is the essential nature of the dystopian zeitgeist and, that the spirit of discontent that we are witnessing, is the backlash of humanity's last effort to kick against the pricks of a changing world. The objective is to steer towards the middle ground: refraining from unattainable utopian ideals, while abstaining from overly pessimistic nihilism to present a world at the dawn of a new age, still pock-marked by the effects of humanism. Nevertheless, it would be a world inhabitable to all surviving creatures in harmony and as part of a greater macrocosm.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Horizon of Hope

At the outset of this study, the research question was posed: to what extent does the perception of South Africa declining into a dystopian society exist? The purpose of the study was outlined to investigate the aesthetic value of decay as it manifests in the literary narratives of Lauren Beukes and Neill Blomkamp, and to test its validity as a metaphor for the changing social reality in contemporary South Africa. The objective of the study, for myself as a contemporary painter, was therefore established to test the premise that the perception of South Africa is declining into a dystopian society and, that the manifestation of the dystopian phenomena through a number of social and visual signifiers, therefore indicates that dystopia has become a zeitgeist.

Chapter 1 served as a framework: setting the parameters for the characteristics of a critical posthuman dystopia and the methods for investigating these signifiers from a visual and conceptual point of view. It was established that the fiction of Lauren Beukes (2008) (2010) and films of Niell Blomkamp (2009) (2015) provide abundant visual as well as metaphorical matter for exploration in contemporary painting. The materiality of paint was found to provide a persuasive metaphor for the monolithic systems characterised by the liberal humanist mindset. Likewise, the conceptual implications of the glazing process as a metaphor for the eroding effect that the zeitgeist perpetuates upon these systems, proved to be compelling. I believe that the hybrid technique of academic painting techniques with radical postmodern interventions, such as transfers and digital printing, provide an enticing opportunity for further exploration in the field of contemporary painting.

In Chapter 2 decay, as a visual signifier and overarching characteristic of a critical posthuman dystopian society, was examined and documented. Decay as metaphor for the fall of liberal humanist systems was established. The use of the fallist movement, specifically the fall of the Rhodes statue, as a metaphor for the fall of humanism within my own oeuvre was established. The application of decay both as a conceptual device as well as a visual metaphor within my own body of work proved to offer interesting avenues for further exploration in terms of contemporary painting. The use of the acrylic transfer process as a metaphor for the transference of our shared history and legacy presents an interesting concept for further experimentation in my own work, as well as the work of my peers.

Chapter 3 set out to examine the concept of the posthuman identity within a critical dystopian society. Investigation into the abject identity (Kristeva 1982) and the concept of becoming animal/becoming other (Haraway 1991, 2003, 2008) (Braidotti 2013) (Wolfe 2010) proved to be a dynamic metaphor for the identity within a posthuman dystopian society as being riven and fragmented. The application of these concepts to the nature of the posthuman identity provides rich ground for further study, as research into this concept proved limited. My investigation into the totemic natures of statues, as metaphors for the fixed liberal humanist identity, opened new avenues of exploration in terms of the abject human/nonhuman animals as metaphors for the changeability of the posthuman identity. I believe that this application of the human/nonhuman animal hybrid in terms of traditional South African effigies provide course for further experimentation within my own work. Technically the use of visually riven surfaces (achieved by applying texture under transfers to intensify the metaphorical sense of a perpetual loss of control and growing ambiguity within the posthuman condition) provide interesting possibilities for further exploration in the field of contemporary painting.

In Chapter 4, the concept of avarice was examined, and its origin traced to humanity's deep-rooted need for continual consumption. The connection between human greed, consumption and the devastating effects our consumer impulses are having on the natural environment was established. The juxtaposition of natural materials (such as decaying plant matter and elephant dung) with non-biodegradable human waste (such as plastic shopping bags) used in decalcomania on the painting surface proved a powerful metaphor for the conflict between man's consumption urge and the survival of the environment. The combination of natural and unnatural material into the painting process, provides enticing possibilities that merit further exploration within my own work and the field of contemporary painting.

The interrelationship between decay, identity and avarice was established as follows: decay as a concept encapsulates the overarching theme of the posthuman critical dystopia and can be seen as the defining factor which points to the perpetual cycle whereby systems, perceptions and mindsets rise and fall - to be replaced by new systems, paradigms and perceptions. This process is neither catastrophic nor apocalyptic in nature, but merely a natural progression found in all things such as atrophy and regeneration.

As part of the process of decay within a posthuman dystopian society, we find that the former fixed perceptions surrounding identity is subject to the same decay we find exerted on the systems, paradigms and mindsets mentioned earlier. Whereas liberal humanism perceives the identity of man to be fixed and cast in stone, the posthuman critical dystopia views the concept of identity as fractured, malleable and fluid. The process of decay (a pervasive theme) of the fixed identity is neither catastrophic nor apocalyptic, but rather signals the opportunity for growth and the opening of new paradigms of the world and our places within it.

The exacerbating influence that human greed and the impulse to consume have on both the natural environment as well as the human identity, was found to serve as undercurrent for the negative manifestations of decline evident in a contemporary dystopian society. The point is made that, while decay of previous systems and paradigms relating to fixed identity is not necessarily catastrophic to the posthuman dystopian society but rather signals the turning of the tides, the human impulse to consume, destroy and devour (driven by human avarice) may very well lead to an apocalyptic or catastrophic end. This nuance is established as a subtle motive in the body of work to serve as a warning that, though a posthuman dystopian society is not to be feared, the human avarice that perpetuates the view of humanity as master and dominator of all things, should be feared.

To summarise:
- The perception of South Africa lapsing into a dystopian society in the fiction of Lauren Beukes and films of contemporary filmmaker, Neill Blomkamp does exist and this provides fertile soil for the interpretation in a body of contemporary paintings.
- Aesthetically speaking, physical decay does provide a rich and powerful visual metaphor for the social and psychological decay evident within the current social climate.
- The psychological decay within the (post)human identity, as visible in the fragmentation and fluidity of the contemporary concept of identity, provides a dynamic metaphor for what it means to be (post)human in a changing world and, therefore, also presents a valid visual metaphor for the changeability of identity.
- Our future within a changing world remains uncertain, mainly as a result of human greed and the negative influence it exerts within the social system.

- The conclusion of this study can be summarised as follows: while there are definite signs of South Africa declining into a dystopian society, there remains a horizon of hope. This hope is largely dependent on whether humanity can set aside its avarice and allow us to become fully posthuman.

In closing, I would argue that while the perception of South Africa lapsing into a dystopian society does exist, it is a complex subject in the following ways: research into the posthuman condition has proven that a multitude of systems of belonging exist and, awareness of the malleability and fluidity of these systems and the perceptions that accompany them, grow with each passing day. It has become clear that a multiplicity of perceptions remains possible, and that no one individual can possibly inhabit more than one perspective at any given time. Therefore, what might seem to be dystopic to some might seem utopic to others. However, the numerous instances of civil unrest and discontent relayed in the news media and examined in the study does indicate that dystopia is a relevant and prevalent phenomenon in contemporary consciousness and should therefore be termed a zeitgeist.

The research has also proven that the decay evident in contemporary society does provide rich soil for the growth of a dystopian zeitgeist. Thus, decay and its manifestations within the social order, in both physical as well as psychological terms, provide a dynamic metaphor for the aesthetic interpretation of the dystopian zeitgeist. I postulate that what is viewed as the dystopian zeitgeist does not necessarily signal an apocalyptic end but is emblematic of the fall of the liberal humanist system and the dawn of the new posthumanist age. Furthermore, what is perceived as negative manifestations of the dystopian zeitgeist: crime, racism, xenophobia etc. is, in fact, the reaction of humanity, driven by avarice at the end of the humanist era and is therefore, in essence, a metaphorical kicking against the pricks.

APPENDIX 1: The Critical Posthuman Dystopia as reflected in the work of Jane Alexander

> On close inspection, all literature is probably a version of the apocalypse that seems to me rooted, no matter what its sociohistorical conditions might be, on the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities (subject/object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so—double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject. (Kristeva 1982:207)

Identity in decay, most notably the changeability of a fluid or fractured identity, has provided rich soil for investigation in a range of creative practices. Kristeva (1982) argues that all literature (and I would add all art) is likely a version of the apocalypse and, by association, a society in decay and seems rooted in the "fragile border" where these fractured, fuzzy, fluctuating identities exist. I would expand her argument to add that all art that exists in the permeability of that border, is necessarily rooted in a decadent (dystopian) society.

> the Butcher Boys…[is] probably the most enduringly iconic image of the sinister and apocalyptic brutalisation of apartheid (Powell 2011).
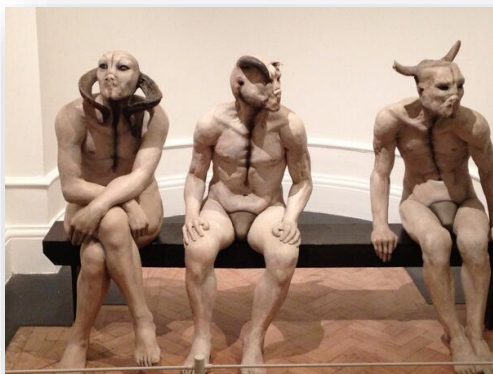

Figure 24: Jane Alexander, *Butcher Boys* **- detail (1986)**

Figure 25: Jane Alexander, B*utcher Boys* **(1986)**

As compelling today as they were 33 years ago, these figures speak to us not only on a political level, but they have also come to embody the abject within. Our second order systemic reaction to these figures is that they continue to disturb, provoke and coerce not only because they bring us face to face with the dehumanisation effect of our shared social history, but also because they compel us to acknowledge that the characteristics which make the *Butcher Boys* (1986) (fig 24,25) so fundamentally inhuman, are essentially attributes that

come from within each of us. They evoke an abject response, not only because of the overwhelming human response of saying, "This is not a part of me" but because of the whispering deep within that echoes, "This could be me". Alexander's use of non-human animal parts leads to an ambiguity that defies the humanist metaphorical paradigm of prescribing human attributes to animals. It is rare for Alexander to share any of the first order systemic foundations to her work, as she usually insists that the power of her work resides in the second order response of the viewer. However, in an early interview with Sue Williamson (1989), Alexander revealed that she models her figures on the frames of friends and colleagues. Thereafter she paints her figures in life-like oils to make their skin appear human. The ambiguity of modelling these figures of fear and hate on those of loved ones deepens the ambiguity and blurs the lines of subjectivity even further. By using deeply intimate and familiar figures, Alexander compels us to acknowledge that it is not the bestiality, the alien/animal/other in these figures that horrify and abject us, but the recognition that this could be us. It is not the horrific features of these figures that repels us, but the recognition of the banality of the human inside them that abjects us.

Alexander takes the intimacy of her work further, deepening the human encounter with these figures by placing them within the same embodied space as the viewer. This borderless inhabited space not only serves in intensifying the ensuing sense of abjection experienced by the viewer but succeeds in placing the *Butcher Boys* (1986) within the same identifiable subjective space as the viewer. Much like Derrida's cat, these *Boys* are looking back. The figures exist in the permeable border of human subjectivity, generally interpreted as signifying both the victims as well as the perpetrators of apartheid (Bick, 2010). The ambiguity of this statement accurately reflects the malleability of the subject border. Being both victim and perpetrator, the *Butcher Boys* (1986) embody the abject fluidity of a posthuman identity in flux, ever changing and defying the binary humanist paradigm of white/non-white, human/animal, coloniser/colonised.

I therefore argue that Alexander's work succeeds in becoming a catharsis for an abject reaction within the viewer, responding with the fundamental reaction: The *Butcher Boys* (1986) are NOT like me. There remains however, within each of us, a humanity that the viewer can never fully abject, thereby forcing us to come to terms with the abject that is within all of us, acknowledging that we carry within ourselves the capacity for hate, violence

and dehumanising strategies. This process of abjection compels us ultimately to accept that these figures may very well be us. We find ourselves overcome by the guilt of our shared history, resulting in a visceral response where we desperately wish we could abject ourselves from the sins of our fathers, which resides deep within us. It is indeed not the outward physical appearance of these figures in which we find abjection, but that which they evoke from within us.

However, eventually we concede that that which defiles us does not come from external factors, but that it comes from within us.

We are all abject.

We are all Other

We are the Monster within.

> The Poetics of interspecies combination lies at the heart of Jane Alexander's sculptural tableaux, which summons us into the imaginative domain of the "humananimal (Mercer 2011).

As Kobena Mercer (2001) remarks, the *Butcher Boys* (1986) are not only abject, they are human-animal hybrids. Alexander does not merely disfigure her figures by fusing their mouths, wounding their torsos and castrating them, she adds to them a non-human animal element. Initially theorised as being a signifier for the "sinister inhuman animal nature of the apartheid society" (Peffer 2003:75) posthumanity advocates instead that we take a long hard look at the animal as signifier.

Rather than speaking to humanity's 'sinister' animal nature, I postulate that their animal hybridity is exactly what lends these figures a vulnerability. The least menacing feature about these figures are their animality: their horns are damaged making them incapable of being used as defence mechanisms. The name *Butcher Boys* (1986) alludes to the merciless slaughter of non-human animals. These figures, being both human and animal, being both butcher and butchered, lead the viewer into a domain open for the reassessment of humanist binary logic - a space for open contemplation regarding the sharp-edged logic of liberal humanism. In short, the *Butcher Boys* (1986) challenge our conception of how we view both humans and animals. Cary Wolfe (2010: 47) states that

the human occupies a new place in the universe, a universe now populated by what I am prepared to call nonhuman subjects. […] posthumanism means not the triumphal surpassing or unmasking of something but an increase in the vigilance, responsibility, and humility that accompany living in a world so newly, and differently, inhabited."

Mercer (2011) argues that "In logical or intellectual terms, the humananimal is a violation of the classificatory system by which we distinguish among species". Therefore, the human-animal becomes the metaphor for the reassessment of humanity's anthropocentric humanist paradigm in favour of a radical rethinking of the human condition. We must reconsider our ways of being in the world with a whole range of other subjectivities and of other living beings. Furthermore, this revaluation leads us to acknowledge our interconnectedness to the greater whole. Ivor Powel (2011:36-38) has described an "overwhelming sadness" which awakens in us a "painful compassion". When confronted with Alexander's work, are we moved to compassion because we relate to the humanity we see reflected, or is it the animal that we recognise as our vulnerability? In *Becoming Animal,* Nato Thompson (2005) states that human-animal hybridity "breeches one of the longest standing human boundaries […] [forcing us] to reformulate what it means to be human". Therefore, from a posthuman perspective, Jane Alexander's work forces us not only to question humanity but, more importantly, to question our attitudes to nonhuman animals. This opens the dialectic to circumvent the liberal humanist paradigm, whereby all identities are absorbed into sameness and to engage on a posthuman level of respect for and respect with difference (Haraway 2008:20).

> Living between dusk and dawn on the streets of central Cape Town […] are the progenitors of the *Bom Boys.* Children prematurely thrust into surviving as adults, they seek their own society: sleep piled up in doorways, run feral, eat begging, stealing, or selling, enfolding themselves in the dulling blanket of narcotic solvents, live by their wits (Alexander 2011).

Figure 26: Jane Alexander, Bom Boys (1998)   **Figure 27: Jane Alexander, Bom Boys (1998)**

Vint (2013:136) states that "global capitalism has made a monster of us all" and nowhere is the monstrosity of human avarice more startling than where the disenfranchised are concerned. Contemporary society has a way of pushing those who are unable or uninterested in playing the consumer game out to the fringes to fend for themselves. Alexander's 2002 Daimler-Chrysler Award winning installation *Bom Boys* (1998) (fig 26,27) depicts nine childlike figures, all cast from the same mould and placed seemingly indiscriminately, on a square grid surface resembling a chess board. Interestingly the board is not divided into black and white squares, but rather shows a uniform generic grey surface divided into squares. There are no binary definitions here, just generic monotony.

The figures or boys are stationary standing with their arms turned outwards in a defeated gesture of surrender, or perhaps to suggest that they are harmless. To emphasize their innocuous nature, they are modelled to be the height of children, forcing the viewer to look down on them, almost condescendingly. It is undeniable that these figures manifest as children on a physical level yet what they represent psychologically is a different matter entirely.

The boys are all wearing animal masks and blindfolds. They are all disparately dressed. Two of the boys are naked save for their masks. One's face is covered by a cloth and the other is wearing a mask resembling the face of a monkey. Nearby stands another boy naked except for a pair of shiny black shoes but wearing a similarly unsettling and grimacing mask. Three

of the boys are fully dressed. These boys are wearing animal masks: a rabbit, a rodent/baboon hybrid and something altogether Other. The remaining boys seem to be in the process of undressing while wearing only pants and masks. The only similarity one recognises is that they are all masked, which leads us to ask; Why are they wearing masks? They may seem unthreatening at first glance, but we are soon led to question if they are truly harmless.

Alexander finds her inspiration specifically from her socio-political environment, so it is therefore unsurprising that the *Bom Boys* (1998) were created after her encounters with various gangs of displaced children living in Long Street, Cape Town, where she lived and worked at the time. The title was derived from graffiti in an alley off Long Street: Bom meaning 'bomb' in Afrikaans and Boys originating from Capetonian gangster slang[86].

Whether part of a gang or not, the children living on the streets of Cape Town often appear younger than they are, due to malnourishment and often drug (specifically solvent) abuse. Their lives speak of living on the fringes of society; they survive by begging, dealing and stealing, relying largely on their small size and inconspicuous appearances to survive. They are forced to live as adults, fending for themselves from a young age so their actions often demand adult behaviour. Yet, paradoxically, this is coupled with juvenile responses when they are offered care (Subiros 2011:80). These Boys exhibit fractured identities, existing between the boundaries of criminal/child, violent/innocent and perpetrator/victim. As with all Alexander's work, the *Bom Boys* (1998) manifest as truly posthuman in its fractured, malleable character. I argue that they are not only fully posthuman entities existing on the boundaries of society, but that they are the metaphorical manifestation of what happens to

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86 The inner-city gangs, and others on the Cape Flats, often identify themselves by including "Boys" in their titles. The Cape Peninsula is clearly marked with graffiti which tag various gang territories: one finds the "Sexy Boys", the "Fancy Boys" the "Junky Boys" even the "Stoepa Boys" (Dolley 2012) spray-painted on urban overpasses and at train stations.

identities forced to function on the fringes as a result of human avarice brought on by consumer capitalism.

Looking back at the generic "sameness' of the *Bom Boys* (1998), one soon realises that they embody a loss of identity under consumer capitalism. Furthermore, they mock the liberal humanist tenet of individualism, urging us to concede that, underneath the masks and ill-fitting clothing, they all look the same[87].   The ashen pallor of their skin evokes images of the zombie, the mindless consuming effigy, into which consumer capitalism has turned us all. Yet at the same time, we realise that while these are others, they are also us. In non-binary posthuman terms, they are both us and not us simultaneously. They bring fear and abjection and more than a measure of guilt, if only to force us to question whether they would still be displaced if not for the capitalist system. The masks worn by the *Bom Boys* (1998)) are both obscure yet reveal that, even while there is no such thing as human nature, it is the myth thereof that shames and propels us at the same time.

Much has been theorised about this tableau. Nicol (2009: 103) reads this tribe of boys as representative of the so-called lost generation: caught in a liminal present that is suspended between our shared past and the future. I argue that this tribe of boys represent the forgotten youth or the displaced children who have been forgotten by both the government and society. Blame is shifted from the missing parents to lacking social services; to the former regime and to the capitalist system. The most relevant issue remains, however, that these youths remain displaced, unwanted and neglected. Jamal (2010:47-55) explores the concept of individuals who remain perpetually hungry in *"Jane Alexander: Hunger Artist"* stating that the government's persistence in "throwing money at the problem" becomes painfully obvious

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87 This being the single most dehumanising phrase when it comes to all others; we are left feeling ashamed by our objectification of these figures.

(Jamal, 2010: 47). The ill-fitting clothing or lack thereof suggests that these children need to scavenge to remain warm and fed. The little assistance that might be given by social services can never provide the nurturing care children need to become well-adjusted human beings. In short, the *Bom Boys* (1998) hardly stand a chance at a full existence in the consumer capitalist machine. They are doomed to an existence on the outskirts - looking in towards the shiny façades of those functioning optimally in the consumer system.

I argue that Alexander's work provides a poignant social commentary on the fate of those who find themselves outside the consumer capitalist system. By placing this particular tribe of boys within the gallery space, she forces the viewer to acknowledge critical issues we would rather shy away from. She forces us to place ourselves in these children's shoes and the simple act of our last meal becomes an issue for our conscience. We soon realise that our primary reaction is not fear of the imminent threat of violence or crime, but rather shame for our wasteful, consumer tastes. The gallery space evokes an atmosphere for self-inspection, empathy and wonder.

These disenfranchised children do, however, build their own communities and, as Lucy Alexander (2011:168-169) states, the greatest threat they embody is to disrupt the middle-class equilibrium. These individuals might appear displaced, they might appear nonhuman but, in many contexts, they lead similar lives to those within the capitalist system. I argue that these individuals living on the fringes open multiple paradigms of belonging in a posthuman society: a society wherein one's standing within the social system is not necessarily determined by one's consumer activities. These boys may appear to all look the same: they might be both victim and aggressor underneath those masks but, ultimately, they urge us to ask ourselves if these others are necessarily worse off than we are. They remind us of our foraging roots: a time before human society was governed by human avarice when we took only what we needed to survive. Alexander succeeds in transporting the viewer to a space outside the system driven by capitalist avarice: a reality wherein the value of a human life in not determined by its spending power, but rather by its connections to others and the environment.

APPENDIX 2: Poetry of Decay – Digital Catalogue (Pdf copy attached)

Glossary

Animot: a term that Derrida coined to represent the "metaphysically-laden concept "animal."" (Calarco, M. 2009)

Anthropocentric: regarding humankind as the central or most important element of existence, especially as opposed to God or animals. (Simpson. 2018)

Anthropomorphic: ascribing human form or attributes to a being or thing not human, especially to a deity resembling or made to resemble a human form: an anthropomorphic carving. (Dictionary.com 2018)

Asterion: a pseudonym for the minotaur of Crete from Greek mythology (Kerenyi 1960:110-111). The minotaur appears in numerous literary as well as art works, most notably in Dante's Inferno and works by Picasso, Dali, Magritte and Ernst.

Biopower: literally having power over other bodies, "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault, 2012:140)

Cinéma vérité: 'Truthful cinema'- translated from the French [sinema veʁite] (Berthe 2009)

Decay: from the original French 'decair' based on the Latin decidere (from de- + cadere, meaning 'fall') thus literally meaning to 'fall down or off'. (Simpson 2018)

Dehumanisation: to deprive of human qualities or attributes; divest of individuality (Dictionary.com 2018)

Elysium: from Greek mythology; a place or state of perfect happiness. Origin via Latin from Greek Elusion (pedion) '(plain) of the blessed'(Simpson 2018).

Fallist: the term attributed by the South African Press to a number of movements, calling for the fall of everything from the Rhodes statue, university fees, Afrikaans as higher education language and President Jacob Zuma (Davis 2016).

Fordism: A manufacturing philosophy that aims to achieve higher productivity by standardizing the output, using conveyor assembly lines, and breaking the work into small deskilled tasks. Whereas Taylorism (on which Fordism is based) seeks machine and worker efficiency, Fordism seeks to combine them as one unit, and emphasizes minimization of costs instead of maximization of profit. Named after its famous proponent, the US automobile pioneer Henry Ford (1863-1947).   (Business Dictionary.com. 2018)

Grisaille: a painting technique, dating from the 12th century AD, whereby the painting is executed mainly in tints, tones and shades of Grey. It is usually achieved by starting with a transparent glaze comprising of French Ultramarine combined with Burnt Sienna, and working the whites and blacks into the wet ground (Wilcox 2014: 45-46).

Humananimal: a term coined by Kobena Mercer in describing Alexander's figures.

Hypoethical: Something which is presumed to be ethical. Where it pertains to speculative fiction, it is intended to question the ethicality of certain actions throughout history and how it impacts the world we live in today

Identity: condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc. that distinguish or identify a person or thing (Dictionary.com 2018)

Makwerekwere: Magolego defines the meaning of the word "makwerekwere" as a slang for foreigners in South Africa, specifically black Africans who were not born in South Africa. It is a derogatory term, referring simultaneously to the "coal black" colour of the individuals skin, as well as a pungent smell (Magolego 2008).

Mythopoesis or **Mythopoeia**: after Hellenistic Greek μυθοποιία, μυθοποίησις, literally meaning 'myth-making' (Chance 2004:62-63).

Neo Liberalism: the 20th century revival of 19th century philosophy of free market capitalism. Neo Liberalism advocates the transference of economic factors from the public sector to the private sector (Investopedia. 2018).

Ontogenesis: a neologism meaning the nature (onto, from ontology) of the start (genesis) of the creative process.

Poēsis: The process of making, production, creation, creativity, culture (Simpson 2018).

Shibboleth: (/ˈʃɪbəˌlɛθ, -əlɪθ) is a word or custom whose variations in pronunciation or style are used to distinguish members of ingroups from those of outgroups, with an implicit value judgment based on familiarity with the shibboleth (Dictionary.com 2018).

Slipstream: surreal and dislocating postmodernist style of writing which blurs the boundary between speculative and literary fiction, as seen in the work of Kathy Acker (Stobie 2012:373).

Speciesism: the assumption of human superiority leading to the exploitation of animals (Simpson, J. 2018)

Subjectivity: The quality of being based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes or opinions (Simpson 2018).

Taylorism: "Production efficiency methodology that breaks every action, job, or task into small and simple segments which can be easily analysed and taught. Introduced in the early 20th century, Taylorism (1) aims to achieve maximum job fragmentation to minimize skill requirements and job learning time; (2) separates execution of work from work-planning; (3) separates direct labour from indirect labour; (4) replaces rule of thumb productivity estimates with precise measurements; (5) introduces time and motion study for optimum job performance, cost accounting, tool and work station design and (6) makes possible payment-by-result method of wage determination." (Business Dictionary.com. 2018).

Taylorisation: The process through which efficiency is increased by evaluating every step in a manufacturing process and breaking down production into specialized repetitive tasks (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary. 2018).

Transhumanism is the theory that humanity can transcend its current form, beyond the physical body and its accompanying mental limitations, by implementing new technologies. It advocates the disembodiment of humanity through the downloading of consciousness into an automated physical form, be it a cyborg or machine (Dictionary.com 2018).

Ukuthakatha means 'to practice witchcraft, deal in nefarious charms, concoctions, poisons, etc.'. The related agent-noun is 'umthakathi' (plural 'abathakathi') meaning 'one who practices witchcraft', whereas the concept noun 'ubuthakathi' simply means 'witchcraft' (Zulu 25 June 2012).

Venetian glazing: a painting method characterised by the use of numerous (often up to 40 layers) thin colour glazes applied meticulously over the underpainting. The preliminary drawing and underpainting often showed a great deal of detail and provided a ground for the glazes to follow. Once the desired luminosity in the shadow areas were achieved, the painter proceeded to introduce scumbling (diluted opaque colour) glazes. The painting presents as having strong chiaroscuro and numerous lean glazes and results in the hues in the work appearing to be luminous as result of the light reflecting off the various colour glazes (Wilcox 2014: 80-81).

Verdaille: a painting technique, dating from the 12th century AD, whereby the painting is executed mainly in tints, tones and shades of Green. It is usually achieved by starting with a transparent green glaze and working the whites, greys and blacks into the wet ground (Wilcox 2014: 47).

White supremacy: an ideology centred upon the belief, and the promotion of the belief, that white people are superior in certain characteristics, traits and attributes to people of other racial backgrounds and that therefore white people should politically, economically and socially govern. This paradigm has allowed for such instances of white supremacy as evident in colonialism, slavery and apartheid.

Xenophobia: from the original Greek word 'xénos', meaning 'the stranger' or 'the guest' and 'phóbos', meaning 'fear' (UNESCO. 2017 :[sp]).

Zeitgeist: The defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time (Simpson 2018).

Zoe: the generative power that flows across all species (Braidotti 2013: 103).

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