

“Something Past Provoked by Something to Come”: The Dystopian Complex in Selected
Texts by Lauren Beukes.

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Abstract

This thesis examines Lauren Beukes's novels, *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*, in relation to spectral theory, a tool of critique which enables an inspection of the author's fictional societies, by looking at the return of that which has previously been repressed. It will be argued that, by portraying the country's future imaginaries in a dystopian light, Beukes predicts the dissatisfaction that continues to be felt in the urbanised present as having extended into the near-future. Such discontent results not solely from the country's history of apartheid and the poverty-stricken period of recovery that has followed, but in the lack of agency found in the future subject.

The concerns of this thesis lie with the programmed conditions placed on the societies depicted in Beukes's novels and the citizens that are made to inhabit these predetermined spaces. Arising from these fixed conditions are spectral subjectivities, protagonists who, having been denied recognition by the hegemonic powers at hand, are made inherently aware of the discourse of othering imposed upon them.

Constructed from the writings of Jacques Derrida and contemporary spectral theorists, I present a framework capable of dealing with the popularity of ghosts/spectres, and the propensity for haunting, within post-transitional literature. Spectrality, then, is understood as a conceptual metaphor and a mode of characterisation that Beukes employs in her writing to highlight various inconsistencies about the spectralised subject and the future. By working with a theory capable of blurring the divide between the living and the dead, the self and other, it is possible to read Beukes's fiction as possessing the potential to destabilise supposedly secure positions on otherness and alterity.

Furthermore, it will be argued that, by tracking the spectre's capacity to haunt and the multiplicity of responses which it invokes, it is possible to conceive of alterity, and the response which it generates, as responsible for determining the conditions for the coming of a radically unknowable and therefore open future.

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Introduction: Looking Towards the Future

In the spectral, something past, itself provoked by something to come, something outstanding and as of yet still in arrears, demands its rights here and now.

(Hamacher 181)

Lauren Beukes's South African fiction, and its interrogation of the country's dystopian future, has amounted to her status as a post-transitional author. Her work differs from the types of fiction produced during, as well as after, the apartheid era for, rather than stemming solely from South Africa's traumatic and contested past, it will be argued that her writing is more interested in the possibility of the future's arrival and the uncertainty that surrounds its coming into existence. This uncertainty is reflected in her novels *Moxyland* (2008) and *Zoo City* (2010), both of which portray the future of South Africa as being intensely regulated by its history and, subsequently, possessing a present indistinguishable from its past.

Beukes's near-future fiction reveals the dangers of historical recurrence by unsettling the notion that the past and present are isolated phenomena. Her dystopian societies, and the issues that plague them, mirror present-day South Africa and, it is through these recurring themes, that Beukes works to reveal the present as continuously acted upon by the past. She writes from the near-future perspective to critique dystopian societies and their utopian desire for a complete break from history, an impulse which is inherently reliant on apocalyptic myths of regeneration and renewal. The utopian impulse, evident in the societies she depicts, is reminiscent of what Hope Jennings, when referring to the writing of Jeanette Winterson, identifies as "a more 'pure' beginning, which always requires a forgetting or repression of the material conditions (and mistakes) of the past, a cultural loss of memory that inevitably leads us back to the same endings" (133).

Dystopian societies, and the instances of historical recurrence which so often characterise them, possess what I refer to in this thesis as a closed future: one that is essentially programmable and determined in advance. Beukes's critical dystopias can be read in response to the utopian ideal of predetermination that would rely on the master discourse of absolution, the dissolution of memory and the proliferation of forgetting, and which nevertheless demands repetition as a prerequisite for its success. It will be argued that her fiction advocates for a spatio-temporal alternative to this rhetoric and for the relocation of the utopian impulse so that it is directed towards an open future and not at the expense of the past.

The relocation of the utopian impulse (which is directed towards the future), evident in the socio-political and ethical conditions making up *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*, will be examined in light of Jacques Derrida's spectral theory. The spectre, in relation to the author's dystopian societies, reveals how the past can interrupt the present by means of haunting. It takes up a two-fold position which enables the spectre both to emulate the way the past continues to inform the future and disrupt it. This spectral disruption exposes Beukes's dystopic societies in terms of their culpability in the repetition of history and the evocation of a closed future. It is possible, then, to read spectrality as a mode of characterisation, capable of highlighting various 'blind spots,' both in the form of those that are persistently overlooked and the inability to think the future into being.

By stating an investment in the ethical properties of spectrality, and welcoming its disruption, it is possible to direct the utopian impulse away from its exclusionary politics and towards an engagement with alterity. To do so, would allow one to read Beukes's dystopian societies as looking towards the future and demanding a space for a different reality that cannot, as yet, be comprehended. It is in consideration of these future-orientated concerns that Cheryl Stobie asserts that Beukes's fiction can explore "the interface between present and future, rather than the all-too-familiar borderland between past and present [and this] contributes to the amplification of South African writing beyond the limits of realism" ("Postcolonial Pomosexuality" 349).

Beukes's ability to go beyond these limits of realism in her exploration of the interface between present and future has resulted in her loose categorisation as an author of dystopian fiction. Her dystopian outlook is not only characterised by the freedom of play given to her by the genre, as will later be expanded upon, but provides her with a critical position from which to write a commentary on future South African society. The author's focus on the future can be understood as a response to post-apartheid nationalism that, according to Moonsamy, "does not extend out of the past but, instead, seeks distance from it" resulting in the present being conceived as "an ideological vacuum" ("Longer Future" 69). Beukes's writing is set against such forces, or any entity inspiring the belief that the future is no longer in need of being imagined, and who do so at the expense of the past.

The elimination of the future, an event synonymous with the elimination of the spectre and a central theme of this thesis, is achieved through the manipulation of the past, which occurs when the discrepancies and aggressions that make up history are reconfigured to portray

the present as infinitely better than what has come before it. Subsequently, the events of history are reduced to their political value, used to inspire mass coercion, instead of undergoing interrogation or any attempts at resolution. It is on account of the past's misrepresentation that Beukes's writing deals extensively with the problems of the past that have come to define South African history and their innate ability to continue affecting future generations. Furthermore, her fiction demonstrates that refusing to acknowledge the events that make up the past is a futile act in that such a rejection does not produce the desired results of reconciliation and healing. Instead, it causes more isolation and dislocation, further entrenching South Africa's deep legacy of apartheid. It becomes evident, then, that the presence of the past, and a truthful acknowledgment of its role in determining the present, is vital for imagining the future.

I argue that it is because of Beukes's future-orientated concerns that her writing can be considered as post-transitional and newly invigorated, possessing a different relationship to the past. One that is "not cowed by tradition and what in the apartheid era drew respect (moral earnestness, political correctness and ethical high-mindedness), [but] willing to take risks (both ethically and formally)" (Frenkel and Mackenzie 4). Chris Thurman, in opposition to Beukes's status as a post-transitional author, contends that the literary allegories found in her South African texts fail to be post-transitional in that, for instance, "the future South Africa depicted in *Moxyland* is, in many ways, an allegorical rendering of the country's present; and that present is, of course, heavily inflected by the past" (99). While Thurman is correct in suggesting Beukes's writing is heavily influenced by the past, I argue that the author references history not solely to revisit the time of apartheid, but to intimate what can occur when regimes, like that of the latter, forgo any response to the past and the impact such neglect has upon imagining the future.

A central tenet of my study is the argument that Beukes's fiction disrupts all claims that would have us conceive of the future as no longer in need of being imagined, and that it can do so through her depictions of near-future South African society. While never explicitly stated in the novels, belief in the present as the ultimate achievement, in terms of society's success, accompany certain ideologies and ways of thinking in Beukes's modern societies. In a similar regard, it is possible to read the 'official' end of apartheid and the advent of democracy as an attempt to 'put an end to history,' if one were to read that historical event as Frances Fukuyama describes the end of the Cold War: as "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (4).

Fukuyama's assertion that to reach democracy is to cross the finish line of the ideological race is extremely limiting in that it dissuades further exploration of future imaginaries and presents the future as that which is determined in advance. It is, for these reasons, by its very definition, teleological and therefore conservative in nature.

Derrida rejects the triumphant stance of Fukuyama by asserting that "no degree of progress allows one to ignore that never before, in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved and exterminated on earth" (*Specters* 85). Beukes, too, critiques the attitude of future societies in South Africa which would claim that "the world has evolved for the worst, although at least crime is down" (*Moxylant* 59). Accordingly, her fiction alludes to the ever-present threats to the democratic structure that could possibly take the place of apartheid, and the dubious practises capable of infiltrating supposedly democratic regimes. In doing so, her work implies that Fukuyama's definition of history's end is problematic and inconsistent, that this kind of thinking, which implies the implicit good of the arrival of democracy to South Africa, has rendered futile the need to continue reimagining the future.

Beukes's fiction disrupts this limited view of the future by showing the possibilities of what can occur at the supposed 'end of history.' She upsets the notion of a stable democracy by writing from the perspective of disillusioned post-apartheid societies, making known just a few of the problems that continue to haunt the country. Instead of accepting the mood of reconciliation that has supposedly governed the post-apartheid era, Beukes writes from a space and time which allows her to demonstrate the past and its ability to come back. Such a task not only requires a transformation of how the past is perceived, but a revolution of perceptions in general – and Beukes achieves this through her adoption of the dystopian viewpoint. By employing this vantage point, capable of capturing the disturbing mind-set of the citizens of these dystopian societies, this author reveals to her readers what occurs when the future is viewed as that which is no longer in need of being imagined. Such an outlook is what accompanies the advent of democracy in her societies, a neoliberal agenda whose very structure is underpinned by ideologies, which calls not only for 'the end of history' but, as I will argue, for the end of the future as well.

By situating the respective novels at the centre of two of South Africa's major cities, Beukes can identify, in the country's metropolises, aspects of the modern condition which allow for the future's annulment to take place. In *Moxylant*, it is the complacency shown by

city-dwellers towards their oppressive circumstances which indicates the future's postponement. While the novel focuses on the commodification of everyday life and the transferral of power from the state to the corporation, it is the uncritical acceptance demonstrated by the populace which prevents the future's arrival. Such acceptance reflects a desire by the people to be 'spectralised' by the conglomerate that is Cape Town. The result being that "everyday life in the new dystopia is still observed, ruled, and controlled; but now it is also reified, explored and commodified" (Moylan, "The Moment" 136).

In *Zoo City*, however, the neoliberal framework that characterises *Moxyland* is exchanged for the presence of Acquired Aposymbiotic Familiarism (AAF). The presence of animal familiars, and their relation to violence, provides the dystopian society with the official structures necessary for the permeation of difference. The overt presence of magic in the text allows for difference to be solidified in the social sphere as inhabitants are governed by the need to explain the phenomenon responsible for the presence of animal familiars. And, while both novels depict the present as being heavily regulated, it is the collective response to otherness which will be argued as responsible for the closed future of Beukes's eponymous societies. In the same manner as the subjects of *Moxyland* comply with the rules laid down by their suppressors, in *Zoo City*, the uncritical adherence to popular conceptions of AAF forecloses on the possibility of thinking about difference in alternative terms.

In both novels, the characteristic condition of each city has resulted in the very real emergence of issue fatigue, which, like the effects of desensitisation, is caused by the overwhelming amount of problems that arise within a global context. The pressure placed on the individual to deal with these concerns, along with the ability of social media and telecommunication to render time and distance irrelevant and inconsequential, allows for the possibility that crises from all over the world to be comprehended at the same level of intensity and importance. In the face of such broad exposure, often a state of hopelessness, general disinterest and advanced dissociation arises within the psyche of the general population (the result of the inability to contribute towards major reform at an individual level). It is considering this inability to imagine oneself as an agent of change that it becomes evident that the modern condition does not require the future to be reconceived, only for the present to be endlessly replicated.

Reimagining Difference

Beukes's concern for ethics, and particularly as it relates to how one imagines the future, resonates with Derrida's thoughts pertaining to an interminable responsibility to all others. Such responsibility respects the alterity of the individual and can do justice to the future generations as well as the past (see *Specters of Marx*). Derrida's call for an ethical stance of open expectancy to and for alterity is reflected in Beukes's writing as the reader encounters, in her novels and through her depictions of othering, the need to procure a new and unhindered manner of dealing, or coming to terms, with the human condition of difference. This new method for encountering difference should be one that does not include violence and fear and, therefore, must manifest itself in ways unfamiliar to the past and unrecognised by the official form of historical discourse.

The reimagining of difference and otherness, according to Luiza Caraivan, is made possible by the unique position of South African speculative fiction. She sees such fiction as having been marked by apartheid and the country's turbulent history which, in turn, renders the genre capable of "offer[ing] different perspectives on the sensitive issue of otherness" (94). Caraivan contends that South African science/speculative fiction "redefines otherness and points to futuristic landscapes, making use of the Other's point of view, that is, the point of view of the former subject" (94). It is interesting to note that, in her article, she specifically rejects the premise that blackness is the distinctive feature of the other and asserts that "the contemporary representations of otherness are based on the fact that the Other is a former product of the colonised society, the result of a social reality which is at once an Other and yet entirely knowable and visible" (94).

This 'knowable other' that Caraivan claims has come to inhabit speculative fiction from postcolonial societies can be understood as the extension of otherness into the public realm as well as the realm of visibility. Crucially, rendering the other visible is a theme that permeates Beukes's South African fiction and is especially evident in her dystopian contexts which, as in *Moxyland*, refuses its citizens basic forms of privacy and agency. Similarly, in *Zoo City*, the inexplicable appearance of animal familiars is used to distinguish and identify traits of the other within individuals. It is Beukes's concern with the future and the other who will one day inhabit it, which is the focus of this thesis for, as Caraivan demonstrates in her work, "the Other that forces a redefinition upon the self [is] one of the main issues that has been preserved from

Apartheid literature” (94).

By asserting the presence of the radical other, that which can redefine the self, as continuing to persist in contemporary South African literature, Caraivan identifies its presence as a defining feature of the literary imaginary despite the official end of apartheid. As a result, Beukes’s works can be read as an attempt to subvert the efforts of powerful forces to depict the other as a visible and knowable subject and, instead, to consider alterity as that which refuses all forms of containment and explanation. She does so by identifying the other not as an external subject foreign to the self but as that which makes up an intricate part of the latter. In reducing this division between self and other, Beukes can render alien the way society responds to otherness and not the other itself.

This thesis looks at the notion of spectral citizenry as a broad term for the ghostly subjectivities that make up both *Moxylant* and *Zoo City*. Nedine Moonsamy makes use of this term when writing on “the structural representations of death in a selection of contemporary South African novels” (“Spectral Citizenry” 69). Stemming from this usage, I have appropriated the term to include what Caraivan refers to as the former colonial subject or, rather, those who are denied recognition as fully-fledged subjects by the very societies responsible for their existence. I argue that spectral citizenry can result from both the denial of recognised subjectivity by overriding discourses, as made evident in *Moxylant*, and the way in which the other is rendered hyper-visible, as will be demonstrated in *Zoo City*. Both methods of subjugation force the former subject to undergo experiences of othering within him/herself as they are excluded from the majority and spectralised by the masses. Rather than investing subjects with their former subjecthood, I argue that the attainment of spectral citizenship imbues citizens with the tools necessary for existing outside of recognised discourses. It is only in the face of such exclusion that subjects become aware of, and exempt from, the propensity for discourse to predetermine their subjectivities. Their disillusionment, however, comes at a great price and Moonsamy asserts as much when she states that “building a relation to the spectral is exhausting and uncomfortable as it renders impossible any form of final assimilation” (77).

Through interrogating responses to otherness, Beukes implicitly brings to bear South Africa’s colonial and postcolonial history, which has been dominated by narratives of division and othering. So, it is in response to this history of division that this writer situates herself as a

firm believer in the development of future-orientated narratives, and espouses a longing for stories that reflect an investment in the future. She believes it is necessary to imagine the future because, to do so, through the telling of stories, indicates a desire for life beyond the present moment. Beukes also admits that she believes in humankind's ability to change, reasoning that "we are all the wonder and all the meaning in the world and there is only us and we have to do better" ("Lauren Beukes on Fiction"). In light of this, I will argue that her fiction not only accommodates the other as a figure capable of redefining the self, but as that which simultaneously forces a redefinition of the future as well.

The formation of identities based on the validation and legislation of difference is most evident in the time of apartheid where people of colour were classified as 'non-white.' This period of South African history reflects that which has been persuasively argued by postcolonial and race theorists: that, in many instances, racial identification of the other is determined by a lack in the coloniser's identity in relation to that of the colonised (see Fanon and Hall). It is the creation of identity by means of dissociation which resonates with the condition of the other. Beukes's writing negotiates a space that accommodates the alterity of the other or, at the very least, allows the other to make an appearance. Her fiction, I will argue, attempts to give one a sense of the presence of the other that exists not only in the outside world, but within the self, characterising dehumanisation as a trait that is internalised and not necessarily something which is inflicted upon victims. In doing so, Beukes affirms the other as an intricate and complex part of the self, a factor which makes dissociation almost impossible.

Indeed, I would say that Beukes's South African fiction attempts to re-conceive the notion of difference and otherness to prevent the violence that often follows in the wake of confrontations with alterity. By allowing her readers access to the supposedly forsaken spaces of the city, and the lives of those who inhabit them, the author explores the propensity for otherness to exist in, and be vital in the formation of, the individual identity. When one acknowledges that identity is differentially constructed and fluid, as opposed to unified and static, one shows that it is possible to come to terms with the alterity and view it not as an inhibition, but as necessary for extending the arm of hospitality. It is important to note that for the unknown, marginalised other to be recognised, it is crucial to accept the other that exists inside the self. Until this is achieved, rejection of all and any overriding difference will continue as a way of repressing that which is intolerable within the self.

Spectral theory, then, is a useful framework when applied to Beukes's fiction as the ghost acts as a powerful metaphor for encounters with disturbing forms of otherness (Peeren, *Spectral Metaphor* 3). I argue that such a metaphor allows Beukes to explore the concept of the other in relation to the self as well as the ways in which it might be possible to interact and live with the presence of the other.

As previously stated, one of the concerns of this thesis is the way Beukes can explore the interface between present and future and, more importantly, what it is that makes such an exploration possible. While the relationship between the former and latter has been briefly expanded upon in terms of their relativity, it is Beukes's unorthodox literary approach to this interface that requires further explanation. I will argue that her unique treatment of genre, and ability to manipulate the conditions for the dystopia is transformed into a tool of effacement, capable of erasing and rewriting preconceived responses to subjectivity and otherness. Such a tool not only allows her to transcend the limitations that so often accompany genre categorisation, but it instils in her work an element of hybridity that results from the continuous effects of genre blurring. Her South African set novels, *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*, can be regarded as hybrid in that they fall under the loosely defined genres of cyberpunk, crime, speculative and dystopian fiction. The unique combination of which allow Beukes ample room to work with the demands associated with her future imaginaries that, I will argue, include the return of the repressed and the spectre.

Beukes's prominence as a dystopian author often results in attempts to classify her work in relation to the canonical, western standards imposed upon the genre (see Bethlehem, Schmidt, Snyman). The need to categorise her fiction, as either hopeful or hopeless, can be read as an attempt to contain the genre itself, as well as the fiction that falls into it. But, I would argue that Beukes's fiction resists all attempts at classification and containment, as demanded by the critics and readers who claim to know the dystopian genre best. Instead, the author opts for the non-opposition between the two ideals of hope and despair. Indeed, it is on account of her work's inability to be categorised that Stobie recognises this writer as a socially aware author whose "creative writing could re-foreground the ethical foundations of democracy" ("Dystopian Dreams" 368).

(Critical) Dystopian Literature in South Africa

Dystopian literature in South Africa is by no means a recent literary phenomenon and has been employed in the writing of prominent authors (J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer and Mike Nicol, for instance) before and after the apartheid era. The dystopian fiction produced prior to democracy, and the way in which it has been received, is interpreted by Ralph Pordzik, who looks at the novels published between the years of 1972 and 1992, and comments on the general lack of critical acclaim ascribed to these works. Pordzik states that the fiction written in this time, and the miscellaneous worlds that it aspires to portray, is popularly criticised for its inability to provide any real response to the overriding issues at hand. He goes on to admit that they often lack a “clear-cut alternative rendering [...] their inability to call up in the opposite worlds they fashion an effective sense of commonality with which to resist oppression and stasis” (178). Pordzik also questions the ways in which “South African future fictions reveal symptoms of crisis instead of illuminating their social and political causes” (178), making little attempt to comment on the situation further than the effects that it has had on the present. Despite such negative reception, Pordzik considers apartheid dystopian fiction capable of acting not only as a weapon in the ‘cultural struggle,’ but as an “important function in the process of creating new perceptual possibilities, of exploring and charting the multifarious relations between different systems of cognition” (178).

Moreover, Pordzik identifies a pattern within dystopian texts written in the apartheid era that “leads from the construction of a closed utopian locus towards assertions of more dynamic systems of change trespassing the boundaries between fantasy and social planning, determination and ambiguity, utopia, anti-utopia, and dystopian” (178). Essentially, he disputes the dissatisfaction felt by critics, arguing that the transformative aspects, which critics find absent, are in fact the defining features of the genre and can be found in “a poetics of crosscultural exchange” (178). In other words, the generation of new ways of seeing through the advent of genre blending and “interpenetration of cultural codes and attitudes” (178). Writing on Pordzik’s work, Stobie argues that his utopian/dystopian project imagines “dynamic forms of social change in the future, and problematises the Western focus of utopian conjecture” (“Dystopian Dreams” 369).

She identifies Pordzik’s interest in the production of new perceptual possibilities and the porous boundaries that delineate these genres within South African fiction as an important

feature of the critical dystopia during apartheid, and thereby establishes a link between the country's past and present dystopian literature. Post-apartheid dystopian literature, as exemplified in this thesis by the works of Beukes, not only reveals the continuation of the critical dystopia in the national imaginary, but also the notion of genre blending. The conjecture over Beukes's South African novels, in terms of the potential literary genres that they might fall under, has been taken up by several academics in attempts to classify and contain her work. These genres, into which her work has been placed, range from the broad spectrum of science and speculative fiction to the more particular subgenres and settings such as cyberpunk and dystopia. It is interesting to note the contrasting opinions in the academic reception of Beukes's work to exemplify not only the process of genre mixing and the feint boundaries that make up these genres, but also the potential of critical dystopian fiction to resist classification and organisation. For this reason, it could be said that the attempts to classify Beukes's fiction, and their failure to reach a consensus, can be read as the success of the critical dystopia and its ability to transcend genre categorisation.

Stobie's response to Beukes's writing is important because it focuses on the positive aspects of the critical dystopia, enabling social critique and generating "seeds of postcolonial hope" ("Dystopian Dreams" 368). She postulates that Beukes's work presents "a view of South African society which holds up to scrutiny the dystopia of institutionalised segregation, criminality, violence, oppression and human rights violations which characterised the past and persists into the future" (368). Further, Stobie unpacks the notion of social dreaming and subsequently examines the dystopian dreams that permeate Beukes's texts and, believing the writer to be socially aware, describes them as examples of critical dystopian literature that "disrupts easy binarist classifications and incorporates elements of opposition to oppression" (367).

Stobie defines social dreaming as consisting of a "character [who] typically becomes progressively more disaffected and alienated, leading to a counter-narrative of politicised resistance to the hegemonic structures of the society" (369). More importantly, she comments on the mix of genres evident in Beukes's fiction and claims that her "novels are not subject to the tyranny of closure" (369). While Stobie possibly means to imply the author's tendency to favour open endings, this idea of a resistance to closure also gestures towards the more generalised characterisation of critical dystopia as an "*impure* genre, with permeable borders

which allow contamination from other genres, that represents resistance to a hegemonic ideology that reduces everything to a global monoculture” (Baccolini and Moylan 8). Crucially, Stobie is the first to introduce the notion of slipstream as a means of analysing Beukes’s writing with the term, according to her, denoting a “surreal and dislocating postmodernist style of writing which blurs the boundary between speculative and literary fiction” (373). This understanding of Beukes’s fiction invests her work with the ability to “transcend the framework of realism in order to highlight and sardonically attack ethically indefensible issues naturalised in everyday life” (373). Such comments, I would argue, allow Stobie successfully to situate Beukes’s fiction within the realm of critical dystopia by paying attention to its ability to transcend genre categorisation.

Louise Bethlehem, in her informative article: “Lauren Beukes’s post-apartheid dystopia: Inhabiting *Moxyland*,” comments on the attempts made by critics to situate Beukes’s fiction in relation to the genres of global science fiction. She acknowledges Stobie’s examination of this author’s work from the perspective of the critical dystopia, cyberpunk and slipstream, as well as the popular responses generated by Beukes’s recent non-South African fiction which are reconciled with the categories of speculative fiction or social science fiction (Bethlehem 522–23). Bethlehem, too, alludes to the presence of the spectral in Beukes’s works and identifies her fiction as “saturated with the ghostly traces of South Africa’s traffic in bodies” (531). She asserts that “our task now becomes a matter of charting the specific itineraries of our ghosts. Or better still, of chartering their futures” (351).

Another perspective, one that is supported in the academic work of both Jennifer Schmidt and Elzette Steenkamp, is the influence of cyborg writing on Beukes’s novels. As previously mentioned, her fiction is often associated with the cyberpunk genre because of its potential to “offer the possibility of concerted, creative responses to technology and its effects on human bodies, both male and female” (Stobie, “Dystopian Dreams” 373). Cyborg writing takes this perspective further in that it questions the possibility of attaining agency in the wake of the displaced body (hereafter referred to as disembodiment). The latter is the result of the cyborg’s hybrid state as, consisting of both machine and organism, the corporeal is transcended by the technological. Furthermore, the cyborg, a metaphor for the relationship between the body and technology, debunks the myth of agency as interdependent on the human body. That is to say, the notion of the cyborg disrupts the fallacy of the innate self as being vitally

connected to the body and the latter's required status as a whole and unified entity. Rather, and in accordance with Karlien van der Schyff, "the construction of the cyborg body always underlies the erasure of embodiment" (68), and so, I argue, it is possible for agency to exist apart from its corporeal ties. Cyborg writing thus does not recognise the impact of technology on the body as a wholly negative occurrence and considers such a belief to be unconstructive. Instead, the genre implies that the issues at hand are subjective agency as performance and the consequences of viewing the "individual as a rationally self-determining, self-defining being, and of individual identity as the source of agency" (Jacobs 91).

Cyborg writing celebrates the "evolution of the human toward a posthuman body, posthuman subjectivity, and the posthuman form of agency" (91). In support of this claim, Donna Haraway outlines the features of the movement insisting that it "is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other" (*The Haraway Reader* 33). Haraway argues for the inherent "pleasure [existent] in the confusion of boundaries" and Naomi Jacobs, in her work on posthuman bodies and agency, applies this notion of experiences of joy when crossing borders between human and animal, human and machine, male and female, self and other (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 150; 94). On cyborg writing, Jacobs asserts that the genre makes room for the posthuman body and subject, stating that a positive analysis of the posthuman sees the "concept of subjectivity as multiple and fluid open[ing] spaces for transformative encounters with difference" (94). She then continues by stating: "[d]ifference may represent a threat to the unified humanist subject, who is defined in and exercises agency through opposition to some Other; but the posthuman subject, a location where differences intersect in unstable configurations, can always make room for more" (94).

It becomes apparent that the posthuman body, a site capable of multiple sources of agency, is intricately connected with structures of power precisely because "when power is understood not as a monolithic structure that immobilises all within its reach, but rather as a constantly shifting interplay of forces and tendencies, the self must be seen as hybrid of many conflicting discursive formations [so that] spaces can open up for resistance, spontaneity, selfcreation" (Jacobs 95). Beukes's fiction can be aligned with the theory of posthumanity in its ability to "affirm linkages: to other psyches, other species (animal and vegetable), and other agencies, from the technological to the multiple and intrapsychic" (94). This claim is supported

by Steenkamp who writes on the notion of a genetic and psychic link between human and animal individuals within Beukes's fiction (151), and by Jennifer Schmidt, who is more concerned with issues of white femininity and how the manipulation of the female body, as seen in Beukes texts, might function as a form of empowerment (11).

It is evident, then, that Beukes's fiction displays a propensity to go 'beyond the human' in the subjectivities that she depicts. In doing so, the author can comment on the privileging of human 'seeing' and 'knowing' above alternative, posthuman subjectivities. Cary Wolfe, on the subject, appropriates the words of R. L. Rutsky, when he states that:

any notion of posthuman that is to be more than merely an extension of the human, that is to move beyond the dialectic of control and lack of control, superhuman and inhuman, must be premised upon a mutation that is ongoing and immanent," and this means that to become posthuman means to participate in—and find a mode of thought adequate to— "processes which can never be entirely reduced to patterns or standards, codes or information.

(Rutsky qtd. in Wolfe xviii)

By looking at posthuman philosophy, which conceives of the self as a continuous process of becoming, in relation to Beukes's texts, it is possible to interrogate the humanist bias, that which is responsible for defining what it means to be human, standards usually set by the hegemonic order. Furthermore, through alluding to the ways of being and knowing the world that exists outside of our own psychology, Beukes demonstrates the violence and intolerance that characterise responses towards otherness.

As previously argued by Pordzik, dystopian literature, in the past, has been critiqued for not supplying its readers with solutions to the realities that they portray. Beukes's fiction, and its refusal to provide clear-cut alternatives, resembles this tendency as she refrains from privileging the different attempts at salvaging society. To do so, I argue, would create the very conditions responsible for the dystopia's existence. Instead, the critical responses to Beukes's dystopic fiction, as outlined in this section, act as evidence of Pordzik's claim that South African dystopian literature can produce perceptual possibilities in the absence of any form of closure. The critical dystopia, then, seeks to question the previously accepted norms of certain societies and encourage alternative strands of thought and perceptions. More importantly, "the horror it depicts can be read as the return of the repressed [making it] the essential genre for negotiating the variable relation between normality and the other" (Heinze and Petzold 58).

Derrida, Spectres, and the Future

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida asserts that never has there been a scholar capable of dealing with ghosts, stating that a “traditional scholar does not believe in ghosts—nor in all that could be called the virtual space of spectrality” (12). He goes on to say that “there has never been a scholar who, as such, does not believe in the sharp distinctions between the real and the unreal, the actual and the inactual, the living and the non-living, being and non-being [...] in the opposition between what is present and what is not” (12). Niall Lucy, writing on the same subject, asserts that it is in literature that “the virtual space of spectrality can be located” (113). He further observes that “literature is allowed to play games with reality, to speculate about things we know (for certain) could never exist or happen” (113). And, he therefore concludes that, “against this excessive space of the literary, the real world of real things and real events is all the better defined” (113). Lucy’s argument for literature, as an apt location for spectral studies, resonates with this thesis and this will be made evident through its consideration of Lauren Beukes’s *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*.

Literature, and its propensity for ghost stories, is a particularly apt location for spectral studies with the popularity of the ghost stemming from its position as a symbol, or metaphor if you like, of the unknown. Like that of the ghost, it could be argued that dystopian fiction exists alongside the human desire and need for interactions with the inexplicable and the mysterious, all of which are portrayed as fundamentally harmful to the human self. Often associated with the horrendous and the monstrous, the spectre is depicted as any form of other-worldly interruption that is capable of producing conditions of the uncanny. It is, however, because of its ability to sustain conditions of the unfamiliar, that the initial fear of the ghost is replaced with the desire to interrogate the reasoning behind the spectre’s (re)appearance.

Derrida’s conception of the spectre, as elucidated by Lucy, is concerned primarily with presence and the question of existence (112). His engagement with the spectre works to overturn the popular assumptions and responses associated with the ghost and, instead, focuses on its ability to derail dualisms and expose the aporetic logic which informs binary oppositions. He does not believe that the spectre is capable of definition, and certainly not of simplification, and asserts that it is a “paradoxical incorporation, the becoming body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit” (*Specters* 5). According to the French philosopher, “it becomes, rather, some ‘thing’ that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the

other” (5).

The theorist’s multifarious conception of the spectre reveals the importance of querying the value of spectral studies beyond the popular, yet limited, understanding of the ghost. He conceives of the spectre not just as a ghost capable of inspiring terror, but as an entity which, through its capacity to destabilise boundaries, can overcome the limitations of discourse, and houses the potential to transform how we think of, and respond to, otherness. Despite revealing itself to exist at the precise break down of distinctions, the spectre is unable to dismantle the metaphysical logic that makes up such binary oppositions because of this logic being ubiquitous and tied to issues of desire and power. It can, however, reveal what Derrida refers to as artifactuality, that which he identifies as the nonopposition between the actual and the artificial (*Echographies* 3). Artifactuality works to show that if spectrality exists (and because of its very nature it is impossible to prove it does not), there is reason enough to doubt the border between all that has been considered present and actual, and everything that opposes this notion: absence, non-presence and inactuality.

In Beukes’s fiction, the author exposes her dystopic societies as the result of artifactuality by introducing the spectre, that which, I argue, can traverse between, and act independently of, discourse. Its visitation makes one aware of the very existence of discourse as it exposes that which has, until now, been construed as the actual and the real, as the result of artificial construction. According to Werner Hamacher, “the most disparate types of discourses are haunted by the spectre because the spectre is what differs from all of them – and from itself” (183). It must be noted that the inability to separate or divide oneself from the entrenched discourse of society is a strand of thought prominent in Beukes’s fiction and, while it may not be possible to distinguish oneself from the discourse/s that informs one’s context, it is possible to be aware of the differentially constructed antimonies that make up such discourse. While it remains impossible to divorce discourse from power and, as previously mentioned, the subject from the confines of discourse, it is possible to expose the latter as an arbitrary and unnatural construction.

The spectral effect, then, is capable of undoing oppositions of thought responsible for imbuing discourse with its power. It embodies the very threat of the spectre which, according to Derrida, is to cast doubt over the “reassuring order of presents and, especially, the border between the present, the actual or present reality of the present, and everything that can be

opposed to it: absence, non-presence, non-effectivity, inactuality, virtuality, or even the simulacrum in general, and so forth” (*Specters* 48). With this in mind, it is possible to conceive of the spectre as that which “points toward a thinking of the event that necessarily exceeds a binary or dialectic logic, the logic that distinguishes or opposes *effectivity* or *actuality* (either present, empirical, living—or not) and *ideality* (regulating or absolute non-presence)” (78).

Regarding the spectre’s elusive nature, Derrida asserts that what distinguishes the spectre from the spirit is a paradoxical phenomenality; “the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisible [...] the tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh, but still the body of someone as someone other” (*Specters* 6). The spectre’s liminal state, being both visible and invisible at once, prevents it from being overwhelmed by the discourse that surrounds visibility, or what Andreas Brighenti refers to as “‘regimes’ of visibility” (“Visibility” 3). These regimes are presented by Brighenti as constituting a “phenomenon that is inherently ambiguous, highly dependent upon contexts and complex social, technical and political arrangements” (2). When visibility would have itself conceived of as representing the real and actual procession of events, Brighenti portrays it as a discursive construct and, therefore, that which is capable of being acted upon. According to him, notions of visibility are informed by an anthropological asymmetry between looking and being looked at: in effect, “the concept of intervisibility, of reciprocity of vision, is always imperfect and limited,” he notes (“Visuality” 326). This asymmetry, or the unequal relationship that exists between the visible and the invisible, is often the result of artifice and trickery and, because of this, Brighenti contests the formal opposition between the natural and artificial articulations of looking.

In light of this, the spectre, already identified as capable of acting outside of, and independently of, visibility, is endowed with what Derrida refers to as the visor effect. He characterises the concept of the visor effect as the ability to look at someone without being seen. The visor effect undermines the ‘regimes of visibility’ by preventing perception from being the sole constructor to identity formation and, thus, disrupts the alleged identification of the other, rendering it problematic and inaccessible. Derrida’s inclusion of the visor effect, in regards to spectral asymmetry, reveals that not only does that which looks at us disguise itself behind the act of looking but, according to Michael Marder, “this very act is not available for identification because the two gazes, the two specularities and the two intentionalities, never cross paths” (47). The visor effect ensures the spectre’s refusal to be acted upon by the discourse

of visibility, rendering the idea of symmetrical relations, that is, of economy, impossible.

That spectrality is capable of overwhelming discourse is a possibility emphasised throughout Derrida's writing on the spectral which, while laying down the foundations for contemporary spectral theorists, focuses predominantly on the 'messianic' concepts of the 'wholly other' and the 'future-to-come.' Derrida evokes these concepts of messianism, based on conditions of singularity and questions of arrival, to warn against utopian ideals of futurity and religion, the waiting for a homeland or a saviour, and the often-devastating events that accompany such belief. He writes against the arrival of a knowable messiah and, instead, insists that if the structure of existence is to revolve around the act of waiting, such an act should be in preparation for the unknown other and the unexpected future. Any other expectation would perpetuate codes of difference and see to the extension of certain prejudices, and the violence that characterises them, that eschatology so often requires. Rather than that of an expectant arrival, Derrida contends that waiting should be conceived as an interminable act. This is to say, to welcome the unknown and grant the other unconditional hospitality, is a task which, as is the case with the spectre, requires the destabilising of the binaries and oppositions responsible for the establishing normative forms of discourse.

Having introduced Derrida's notion of the wholly other, it is necessary, for this thesis and its concerns surrounding the identification of the other, to distinguish between that and the differentially-constructed other. The presence of the other, that which is constituted on account of difference, is inherent in the construction of social identities as it refers to group or individual identity founded purely on difference and inserted into societies in order to allow for the employment of techniques of social stratification. It should be conceived of as a constructed identity, one that is applied and enforced by its creators to establish secure structures of difference and separateness. Such a tool is used to constitute the self as a whole and contained being and enforces belief in the notion of an undivided, containable self in opposition to an alien other.

Contemporary spectral theory focuses predominantly on the differentially-constructed other or, rather, subjectivities that are made to resemble the abject. Identities constructed in opposition to everything that the defined self feels it is not and so rendered different, threatening and intolerable. In this respect, the other can thus refer to any marginalised group, be it the minority or the majority, who are misrepresented by those in power. As a result, the members

of such groups and communities are decentred and excluded, made to internalise the systemic violence which renders them other, and are therefore complicit with a system that vilifies them. Beukes's fiction, I will argue, transcends the boundaries of the differentially-constructed other and enters the realm of what Derrida refers to as the wholly other.

The wholly other, while often set in contrast to the other constituted from within the confines of society, is a Derridean concept which refers to the radical and unknowable other. It exists entirely outside of knowledge and understanding, and is a conception of alterity that exists beyond any dialect. Notably, Jack Reynolds believes Derrida's "conception of the wholly other [as] not opposed to the other as known," stating that "it does not occupy a different and more ephemeral realm, but it insists that something about any other we know must forever remain and aloof and unthematizable" (164). In her fiction, Beukes too reveals the propensity for otherness to be simultaneously conceived as knowable and incomprehensible.

When Derrida asserts that the future is only for ghosts, he is referring to this other who is capable of resisting interpretation, discourse and any entity that would impose itself upon it (*Specters* 45). As previously argued, his conception of the wholly other works in hand with his concerns of the 'future-to-come' as both are indeterminable and based on a messianic structure. According to Reynolds, the messianic structure is open to an ungraspable and unknowable other, not one that will ever arrive but one which nevertheless ensures the activity of waiting. Such allows for a "ceaseless openness towards a future that can never be circumscribed by the horizons of significance that we inevitably bring to bear upon that open future" (165). Reynolds's understanding of the wholly other can be extended to include the 'future-to-come' in that, for the future to be unpredictable, it needs to be exempt from knowledge.

Derrida's spectral conception of the 'future-to-come,' and the possible effects an open future will have on the arrival of the other, fits in well with Beukes's future-orientated concerns, as made evident in her fiction. I will argue that her writing centres not on the concept of the future in a temporal sense, but the future as that which still needs to arrive. Focus on the messianic understanding of the future, that which is always in the process of arriving, is evident in both *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*, whose temporal settings are already located in the near-future or alternative realities and within a distinctly futurised, dystopian narrative. Beukes's use of near-future settings intimates why it is that the temporally-defined notion of the future is inadequate. Instead, it needs to be conceived of as that which cannot be determined in advance

and which allows for the reconceiving of the other through a revolution in perceptions. It is therefore important to differentiate between the future as understood as the passing of time, a temporal event, and the ‘future-to-come,’ which is the radically unknowable future, and what becomes possible once one no longer denies the spectre but deals with it responsibly.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida states that “if futuration were the act of a knowing consciousness – then the future itself would be something entirely knowable and technically executable and would thus be, instead of the future, its annulment” (203). It will be argued that the fictional societies that make up *Moxyland* and *Zoo City* are characterised by closed futures as they are under arrest by certain entities which seek to make the future knowable and controllable. These conditions come about when the current state of reality is deemed as the natural, actual and singular procession of events as opposed to that which is inherently constructed. It can thus be understood as synonymous with the elimination of the spectre for it sees to the violent appropriation of the spectral, and occurs by normalising and domesticating the uncanniness and indefinable nature of the spectral.

It becomes apparent that, according to Derrida, the future needs to exist independently of the will of those who will one day inhabit it in order for it to remain open and resistant to external control. As witnessed in South Africa’s recent past, a system which is made to seem inherently true is a system more prone to institutionalised violence and is one that evades responsibility. Derrida’s fear of an annulled future resonates with Beukes’s writing in that they both conceive of the future not as a given date, but a time that is still to come. And so the future, in Derridean terms, is always in a constant state of arrival, only inhabitable by the wholly other. It is Derrida’s thinking on the other and its capacity to evoke and bring about the future which is central to the concerns of this thesis and which will be applied to Lauren Beukes’s dystopian fiction.

After Derrida: The Spectre as Conceptual Metaphor

Contemporary interpretations of the spectre, in the work of Esther Peeren and Maria del Pilar Blanco, focus extensively on the theoretical elements of the ghost and the potential role that it can play in scholarship and the academic world. Current spectral studies, including Peeren’s and Pilar Blanco’s work, have been directly influenced by Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*, a text that has been vital in the formation of the majority of spectral theories, but not limited by it. Both writers feel the spectre can act as a conceptual metaphor, which, according to George

Lakoff and Martin Johnson, works as an “alternative account in which human experience and understanding, rather than objective truth, play[s] the central role” (X).

Lakoff and Johnson determine the “essence of metaphor [to be] understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” and argue that human thought processes are largely metaphorical (5). They assert that conceptual metaphors play a central role in defining our everyday realities for “our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people” (3). The spectral metaphor, then, is useful when encountering subjects that have been rendered invisible by their histories, current political contexts and/or crime. Peeren recognises and identifies these individuals as agents of the invisible and is interested in their ability to develop agency under unrelenting and unsympathetic conditions. Before exploring the propensity for spectral subjectivities, however, it is necessary to argue for spectrality as capable of traversing, and working in collaboration with, the more established frameworks of postcoloniality, materialism, nationalism, or globalisation.

In *The Spectralities Reader*, Peeren and del Pilar Blanco define the spectre as a conceptual metaphor capable of evoking, “through a comparative interaction, not just another thing, word or idea and its associations, but a discourse, a system of knowledge” (1). Following this definition, they admit that:

its own status as discourse or epistemology is never stable, as the ghost also questions the formation of knowledge itself and specifically invokes what is placed outside it, excluded from perception and, consequently, from both the archive as the depositary of the sanctioned, acknowledged past and politics as the (re)imagined present and future. (9)

Spectral theory, then, works to evoke that which has been omitted from the archives of history and, whose omission is responsible for the politics that have come to inform the present and future imaginaries. It calls for history to be conceived of as spectral, which “would necessitate a reflection of how the past is both absent and present within the now moment, but also how the past can open up the possibilities for the future” (14). The potential for these future possibilities to take place, according to Peeren and del Pilar Blanco, is on account of the fact that “[t]he spectre is always already before us, confronting us with what precedes and exceeds our sense of autonomy, seeing us without being seen, and demanding a certain responsibility

and answerability, making Derrida's theory, besides an alternative ontology, also an ethics" (33). Furthermore, Peeren and del Pilar Blanco assert that "studies of ghosts and haunting can do more than obsessively recall a fixed past; in an active, dynamic engagement, they may reveal the insufficiency of the present, as well as the disconsolations and erasures of the past, and a tentative hopefulness for the future" (16).

Hope for the future, as emphasised in *The Spectralities Reader*, is intertwined and intricately connected with an ethics that extends, namely, to what is identified in the text as "living ghosts". Peeren, along with a host of academics, looks at how certain subjects are perceived as living ghosts, the livelihoods of which resemble what Achille Mbembe refers to as "Specular experiences": "extreme forms of human life, death-worlds, forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life that confer upon them the status of the living dead (ghosts)" (131). These subjects range from refugees to migrants, mediums and missing persons, all of which are displaced and decentred subjectivities determined in advance by their precarious status.

By emphasising "the ghost's association with disappearance, dispossession, and social erasure," Peeren provides an "important counterweight to Derrida's emphasis on the spectre as a powerful haunting force" (10). This counterweight is necessary to demonstrate that, despite possessing the ability to haunt, spectral subjects often come from the most vulnerable sectors of society. It is for this reason that she views spectral theory as a useful tool for engaging with both alterity and the haunting which the return of the repressed imposes on the present. It becomes evident that she is using the spectre as an alternative metaphor for the subjectivity of the dispossessed and is attempting to analyse this subjectivity, or lack thereof, in spectral terms. She views

the ghost [as] a metaphor certain people (are made to) live as, the conceptual and cognitive framework through which they are made sense of and come to make sense of themselves. While such living as a ghost can be dispossessing, the ghost is far from a dead metaphor in which the figurative dimension has been naturalised to the point of becoming invisible. Instead, the ghostly metaphor's continuing liveliness – its apposite proclivity to keep coming back to life is ensured by its invocation of a vast realm of sometimes contradictory associations, as well as by its many near-synonyms.

(Spectral Metaphor 6)

The spectral metaphor, then, questions the formation of knowledge and does not abide by narratives of history or forget about those who the latter excludes. By conceiving of the spectre as an examining tool, and not confined to its material functions, Peeren and del Pilar Blanco reveal that it can perform theoretical work deemed useful in “exploring and illuminating phenomena other than the putative return of the dead” (*Spectralities Reader* 2).

The theoretical work of ghosts is evident in what is popularly referred to as the spectral turn, a phrase used to describe the evolved understanding of spectrality and its emergence within academia. It documents the spectre’s progression from being understood in terms of haunting to a demand for responsibility and hospitality. According to the two Spectrality theorists,

to believe or not believe in ghosts no longer involves a determination about the empirical (im)possibility of the supernatural, but indicates contrasting validated attitudes – a welcoming seen as ethical and enabling, and a rejection unethical and dispossessing – towards the uncertainty, heterogeneity, multiplicity and indeterminacy that characterize language and Being because of their inevitable entanglement with alterity and difference.

(9)

In other words, to have confidence in the spectre does not suggest a belief in the supernatural presence of spirits, but an acceptance of the uncertainty and vulnerability that so often accompanies experiences with alterity and difference.

Set in opposition to this acceptance of the spectre, and the unconditionally accommodative stance that it entails, is the outright rejection of the ghost, followed by desperate attempts at its conjuration. Having been described by Peeren as capable of both welcoming and rejecting the call of hospitality towards the other, the spectre’s ability to signify either response reveals that it is how one reacts to the ghost which invests its metaphysical presence with its meaning. The spectre, then, can be described as a mirror, reflecting both public responses to alterity and the assimilation of difference in the modern condition. More importantly, however, if, as Derrida asserts, the spectre is a screen upon which all phantoms are projected (*Specters* 99), ghosts, essentially, are conditioned into haunting by those responsible for their very creation. That is to say, they are a symptom of the very society from which they have emerged and, until recognised as such, cannot be extrapolated from their position as a haunting and fearsome force.

To claim that one is haunted by an alterity already existent within the self is not a new phenomenon as, according to Peeren and Silke Horstkotte, the dependency of identities on notions of alterity has become somewhat of a cliché (*The Shock* 9). Alterity, then, should be loosely defined as that which comprises everything that is in some way distinct from the subject. This is not to say that it should be regarded as a synonym for difference but, rather, it “signifies otherness, a distinction or separation that can entail similarity as well as difference” (10). It is the denial of such alterity which produces the dysfunctional subject because it restricts the continuous formation of identity, prohibiting its inherently differential nature.

The difficulty, now, is in accepting the work of alterity and coming to terms with the impact and threat it may pose to the contained self. Confrontations with the other, described by Peeren and Horstkotte as taking place at the intersection of identity and alterity, are notoriously characterised by the uncanny as, that which was once familiar, is now unrecognisable. Both theorists assert that “the disruption of identity by alterity delivers a particular type of shock to the system a – shock that is radicalised under postmodernism, where stable ontologies and clear distinctions of belonging or difference are replaced by a multiplicity of possible worlds” (10). They argue that, when undergoing encounters with otherness, it is necessary to “define, locate and negotiate alterity in a manner that does not do away with the other through negation and neutralisation but that instead engages alterity as a reconfiguring of identities, keeping them open to change, to a becoming without a horizon” (10).

Spectrality, then, has become a prominent figuration of alterity, as it engages with the attempted expulsion of the other and its return in the form of haunting. It works to disrupt the illusion of selfsameness and it advocates the possibility of the decentred subject attaining a measure of agency in the public sphere. The decentred subject therefore allows for “a vision of identities as multifaceted constructions that are continually being transformed by the various specific others, or principles of otherness, with which they intersect and which must be actively engaged to function effectively in the social, political and aesthetic realm” (10–11). I will argue that, in her fiction, Beukes successfully presents her readers with such a ‘multiplicity of possible worlds’ and, in doing so, is able to interrogate the supposedly clear notions of belonging and difference.

The Novels in Question: *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*

The upcoming chapters should be read as a spectral analysis of Beukes's dystopian societies as they track the presence of the spectre, its dispensation towards the uncanny, and the disorientation that follows in its wake. By making use of a spectral lens, and applying it to *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*, it is possible to discern instances in both novels where the familiar is rendered uncanny. The presence of the latter, it will be argued, signifies a return of the repressed, that which destabilises the present by bringing to bear the discrepancies of the past. By viewing both novels as exemplifications of spectrality, it is possible to interrogate the socio-political and ethical fabric of South African society. Furthermore, when applied to a dystopian context, such as those prevalent in Beukes's novels, it reveals "how we might dismantle repressive ideologies and myths through the articulation of new narratives that no longer re-enact the same self-destructive cycles and repetitions of history" (Jennings 133).

As previously argued, both novels depict future societies heavily regulated by the past and governed by the authoritative representations of history. In *Moxyland*, fear of returning to a state of societal chaos prevents citizens from questioning their inundated livelihoods whereas, in *Zoo City*, the repercussions that accompany acts of violence, animal familiars as an irrefutable stigma, renders crime an unforgiveable offense. The dystopian conditions of these societies, it will be argued, result from an overreliance on history, as a source of reference, and is responsible for rendering them vulnerable to, or reliant on, historical narratives so far as they provide the evidence required to condemn the past. It is evident that the past plays a vital role in establishing the future of Beukes's societies—however, its degree of influence is misrepresented by those in power.

The present, then, is depicted by a certain few as the only possible version of events (and therefore not as constructed out of selective traits appropriated from history). It is also important to note that, while *Zoo City* is not characterised by a similar collective enemy like that of *Moxyland*'s Corporati, a corporate force bent on monitoring potential dissent, control, in the former text, is administered by the public at large. In both texts, the authoritative strands of history are appropriated by those inhabiting the present and used as a conduit for fear, believing the terror to be useful in its ability to act as a warning to future generations. Considering this appropriation, I argue that one of the consequences of being tied to the past in such a selective manner is the inevitable conclusion that encounters with alterity and otherness will be met with

fear and violence.

In response to such violence, the inhabitants of Beukes's near-future societies are depicted as unable, or unwilling, to confront the spectre. As will be demonstrated, allegiance to historical modes of representation, which, in both novels, revolve around South Africa's history of violence and illness, prevent the occupants of Beukes's cities from welcoming the spectre and undergoing the interactions with alterity which it comes to represent. In light of this, the spectre or spectral theory works to disrupt discourse and produce the uncertainty necessary for worthwhile interactions and explorations between subjectivity and alterity. This thesis, then, focuses extensively on subjectivity and what becomes of the subject when confronted with the alterity of the other.

Beukes's novels set in South African, I argue, deal with the shock of alterity and, therefore, are suitable texts to which spectral theory can be applied. Both *Moxyland* and *Zoo City* depict a move beyond narrow theories of identities based on the concept of self-sameness and, rather, document the protagonists' "shock or shame of discovering the other in the self" (Peeren and Horstkotte 11). Beukes's novels, and the protagonists they depict, emphasise how the self is forced to take up a position in relation to otherness and the presence of alterity. According to Peeren and Horstkotte, "[t]he interruption of identity by alterity prompts a taking place, a performative event where the self is forced to take a position in relation to otherness and its specific form" (11). The most popular, and almost involuntary, response to the spectre is to reject and exorcise its threatening presence in attempt to shield the self from the discomfort that almost always accompanies instances of reflexivity.

In both novels, the shock of the other induces a negating reaction and a rigid entrenchment of the self. This is evident in *Moxyland* where spectral subjects are denied recognition and access to technology, whereas the animalled citizens of *Zoo City* are relegated to the marginalised suburbs of Johannesburg. What results, as emphasised throughout this thesis, is a state of permanent haunting which characterises Beukes's cities and equally torments all inhabitants alike. Beukes's fiction, thus, seems to assert that it is how we react to this haunting, the discovery of a persistent alterity in the self and the home, which determines our response to the spectre and the question of ethics which it imposes up upon the haunted.

Chapter 1: “Catching the Transitive Before it Slips Away”: Tracing the Disappearing Subject in *Moxyland*

South African author Lauren Beukes’s debut novel, *Moxyland*, is set in a radically altered, futuristic society popularly described as a “dystopian vision” of the city of Cape Town (Snyman 92). The dystopic status accorded to the city, a consequence of its utopian endeavour to prevent the past from repeating itself, reveals Cape Town as an inherently haunted space and as a city that continues to be tormented by the violence of its unresolved and repressed history. This chapter contends that the violence of the past is manipulated by the Corporati, an omniscient-like network of corporations who are bent on controlling the historical representation of the city to predict the future and, thus, further their power. By doing so, the Corporati renders the future programmable and sees to what I discern to be the misuse of ghosts – as fear of the spectre is used to enforce tyrannical control rather than disrupt it. In portraying the city as unwilling to attend to its ghosts and the missing past which they work to evoke, Beukes presents her readers with a space that is, I will argue, governed by elements of the spectral.

By transforming Cape Town into a spectral metropolis, recognised as Moxyland, Beukes imbues the city’s inhabitants with what Avery Gordon describes as “repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction” (“Some Thoughts” 2). What Gordon is effectively describing is the acute disorientation experienced by the novel’s protagonists as they navigate a once-familiar locale in attempts to assert their subjectivity. In a society bent on ensuring the present’s repetition, and the familiarity and certainty which it projects, Beukes’s characters are coerced into taking up predetermined identities prescribed to them by the Corporati. Those who reject these administered identities are denied recognition as participating citizens and are thereby ‘disconnected’ from the city.

To be disconnected, in the novel, is synonymous with being ‘phoneless,’ cellular phones being a requirement for a recognised identity in Moxyland. Subsequently, the threat of disconnection, the city’s main form of punishment, causes citizens to live in constant fear of their disappearance. As one of the narrative voices of the text notes, those who “can’t play nice by society’s rules [...] don’t get to play at all. No phone. No service. No life” (Beukes, *Moxyland* 17). What is being emphasised is that the physical site of the body is no longer a vital source of identity as subjectivity has been transferred into the realm of the technological.

As a result, and to attain an agency apart from the Corporati, I argue that residents of the city take up a position of spectral citizenship.

Constructed out of four individual narratives, each depicting the characters' unique attempts to obtain subjectivity, *Moxyland* is made up of contrasting and conflicting responses to what will be identified as an unaccommodating regime/city. Kendra Adams, an upcoming artist and test subject for a nanotech marketing programme, is portrayed throughout the novel as a 'hipster' and her narrative tracks her desperate attempts to exist outside of the counterculture limits placed on her subjectivity. Kendra's narrative opens and, more importantly, concludes with her involvement with the Ghost branding agency, an advertising ploy aimed at altering the genetic make-up of a client with the benefits of what appears to be advanced beauty, health and limitless physical and mental capabilities. Her sponsorship comes at a great price, however, as it results in an immediate addiction to the company's product, Ghost, a somewhat unremarkable cold drink and, eventually, her death.

Set in contrast to Kendra's 'hipster' identity, Lerato Mazwai, once 'aidsbaby,' now Communique employee, has been groomed by the Corporati from a young age into a ruthless protégé. Her narrative, characterised by her indifferent and unsympathetic perspective, reveals the powers at play that makes the continuation of Corporati control and corruption possible. Lerato is portrayed in the novel as a distinguished programmer and her narrative tracks her attempts to move up the corporate ladder and secure her position in the Corporati. Her efforts are successful as, at the novel's close, she is promoted to a position that resembles that of "skyward*" (31), an anonymous online identity designed to manipulate possible forces of dissent into working for Corporati interests. Lerato's narrative, then, demonstrates the consequences of exorcising the past as her efforts to remove herself from her impoverished history renders her subjectivity vulnerable to external control.

Tendeka's story provides the reader with a narrative about someone who opposes Corporati control. His character allows us a glimpse into the operations that take place to challenge the hegemonic forces as well as help the marginalised communities that they ignore. His eagerness to undermine the Corporati is thwarted by his reliance on historical modes of protest and while his character may be interpreted as the most sympathetic and earnest, at the novel's close, he is revealed to be a product of the system which he so desperately sought to destroy. It is Tendeka's anti-corporate interests which result in his entanglement with Toby

who, by contrast, is depicted as a self-centred, careless youth who makes his living documenting seemingly banal events off his live streamcast.

Like Tendeka, Toby is a product of Corporati control yet, because of his drug-abuse problem and self-entitled acclaim, is unpredictable and ungoverned by routine. Unlike Tendeka, the ‘gamer’ is programmed into being ruthless and adaptable: for, as he admits, he has mastered the art of camouflage, allowing him the advantage of “hiding in clear sight” (12). Toby’s ability to adapt to different circumstances could also explain his social flexibility and why it is that he is the only character who directly interacts with the remaining three protagonists and is often responsible for the indirect contact among them. While this interconnected web of relations, with Toby at the centre, may be unintentional, it is responsible for determining the trajectory of the novel and captures how Beukes’s characters haunt each other in their day-to-day movements.

Moxyland tracks the intertwining narratives of its four characters, beginning with Kendra’s induction into the Ghost branding scheme and her first encounter with Toby, the latter en route to visiting Lerato, on the Communique trains. Despite leading predominantly separate lives, Toby, Tendeka and Kendra’s paths cross occasionally throughout the novel while Lerato’s trajectory is confined and her influence indirectly established, no doubt a consequence of her high position within the corporate environment. Two incidents which are essential to the novel’s plot and act as meeting places for these characters are the two protests, the first staged at Kendra’s art exhibition and the second at the subway, both of which are organised by Tendeka and his following of ‘disconnected’ disciples.

The latter event acts as a catalyst for the novel’s fatal conclusion as Beukes emphasises in Tendeka’s gruesome death, Lerato’s absorption into the Corporati and Kendra’s private euthanasia. The novel is haunted by what could be argued are its prophetic narratives, as the somewhat fatal trajectory of each character appears to be determined in advance. This is true for all but one as an unforeseen turn of events sees Toby being the only protagonist to survive the effects of the subway attack. Due to a remarkable twist of plot and his unpredictable character, he can travail the efforts of the Corporati and, by doing so, escape the potentially lethal manipulations of the “cycle of darkness” which (94), it will be argued, characterises the text.

The ‘cycle of darkness,’ a metaphor used by Tendeka to justify his refusal to accept

corporate funding for his arts initiative, can also refer to the theme of historic recurrence that so often characterises dystopian fiction. Not only does it signify the presence of a reoccurring past, but it acknowledges the way the Cape Town of *Moxyland* strongly resembles not only the apartheid state that governed until the advent of democracy, but the colonialist advances that first pillaged the Cape. Moreover, I have appropriated the metaphor to include the predetermined subjectivities imposed upon the novel's protagonists as they attempt to assert their individual identity within the confines of the Corporati's making.

One critic describes the identities of all four protagonists as "closed loops. Möbius strips" as they are unable to act outside of the power imposed upon them (Raven). In this chapter, I argue that the spectre can expose and interrupt instances of historical recurrence which are prominent throughout the text, as its presence works to mark the traces left behind by the disappearance of the subject. It is because of this disappearance that the spectre has returned both as a symptom of the unresolved violence of the past infecting the future and as a trace, working to show that "the one who disappeared appears still to be there, and his apparition is not nothing" (Derrida, *Specters* 120).

In a society, such as Moxyland, which is depicted by Beukes as a simulation of the city of Cape Town, it is impossible to possess a genuine subjectivity for, as Jean Baudrillard asserts, the disappearance of the real mirrors the disappearance of the subject (34). While the theorist's writing on simulation and the simulacra are applicable to the novel, my interest lies with his work on the disappearing subject in the face of technological advances. Thus, at certain points in this chapter I have appropriated Baudrillard's theory on the disappearance of the real and how it can be linked to instances of disappearing subjectivity in the text.

Furthermore, I argue that the inclusion of Baudrillardian theory in this chapter is appropriate as it resembles Derrida's concern with exposing the 'real' as artificial, since both theorists work to critique the success of systems whose hegemonic stance rests on the uncritical acceptance of the real. It is also important to note that, according to Baudrillard, "of everything that disappears there remains traces. The problem is what remains when everything has disappeared" (25). The theorist's understanding of trace and his assertion that "everything that disappears seeps back into our lives in infinitesimal doses, often more dangerous than the more visible authority that ruled over us" is reminiscent of Derrida's spectre in that both acknowledge the trace as allowing for the return of the repressed (26). The novel, then, depicts

its protagonists' desperate attempts to assert their identity in the simulated city and break the 'cycle of darkness' imposed upon their subjectivities. In the face of this disappearing subjectivity, the novel documents an attempt by each character to search for alternative means of establishing their existence in an unaccommodating system.

The novel's cyberpunk influence allows for subjectivity to be conceived in alternative terms as it is no longer restricted to the confines of the living body. Rather, focus is shifted onto decentred subjects, and their attempts to prolong their subjectivity in the face of its impending disappearance. It is for this reason, the fatal trajectories of the novel's protagonists, that critics tend to read the dystopian conclusion of *Moxyland* as a pessimistic evaluation of South Africa's future (see Green, Trimarco, Raven). When perceived as a critical dystopia, however, it is possible to discern an outcome not restricted to the hopeful/hopeless dialectic often placed upon dystopian fiction.

As previously argued, cyberpunk entails an understanding of technology not found in the typical dystopia. Here, advances in technology are capable of alleviating instances of oppression instead of enforcing them, precisely because agency and existence are no longer confined to the limiting conditions of the living body. So, while technology, and the fear of losing it, is portrayed in the novel as a means of establishing mass coercion and control, it is also depicted as capable of validating an identity apart from that bestowed upon subjects by the Corporati. Such an identity is set in contrast to those without access to technology, who Beukes describes as "disconnect" (*Moxyland* 17), rendered invisible to the very forces responsible for their exclusion. It is apparent, then, that the novel's ending is only bleak if death is determined solely in terms of corporeality. Considering this assertion, I argue that, to achieve an understanding apart from the pessimistic conclusion so often associated with the novel, it is necessary to track the relocation of subjectivity in the novel.

In cyberpunk fiction, this limitation, this conception of death, is not applicable as the body is no longer recognised as a source of value. Such is the case in the hyperreality of *Moxyland*. It is because of this lack of corporeal value and bodily integrity that the novel's characters have had to seek out alternative methods of establishing their subjectivity. The four protagonists are plagued by the knowledge of their immanent disappearance and, to combat this threat, turn to unique methods of making their subjectivities relevant and necessary to the forces in power. Both Toby and Lerato make themselves useful to the Corporati, Lerato, because of her highly skilled and ruthless programming, and Toby, by portraying himself,

through his streamcasting, as an unthreatening character, seemingly none the wiser to the effects of Corporati control. Kendra's supposed "sell-out" status as a Ghost ambassador can temporarily hide her disillusionment with the Corporati (15), whereas Tendeka's out-right damnation of the latter's control renders him a useful pawn in their propaganda schemes. Like the latter two protagonists, those unable to assert their worth must settle for documenting their disappearing subjectivities by leaving behind traces of their narrative to achieve a prolonged existence beyond their corporeal demise.

This chapter will focus predominantly on Kendra's efforts to enter the future and free herself from the repetitive cycles of darkness that make up her subjecthood. While her narrative has been described by a critic as depicting "a quiet and hopeless resistance" (Trimarco), I argue that by relinquishing Kendra's subjectivity from the confines of the corporeal, it is possible to conceive of her struggle in terms other than that of futility. Kendra's resistance is set in contrast to that of Tendeka whose frustrated narrative depicts the futility of popular protest in a society which has been stripped of all forms of nationalism and solidarity.

Rather, Kendra's narrative tracks her attempts to transcend the intermediate space that governs Moxyland (at times these take the form of her photographs) as she works to break away from her static position of compliance and submission, which she locates as "poised between" the past and future (Beukes, *Moxyland* 152). While the novel's remaining protagonists are made to inhabit an undisputed version of the present, Kendra actively attempts to disassociate herself from the simulated city. This chapter will look at Kendra's attempts to document her individual disappearance and attain a "sense of immediacy. Catching the transitive before it slips away" (101), as she tries to capture what remains of subjectivity once it has been stripped of its corporeal ties.

"It's a Cycle of Darkness": Predetermined Subjectivities

The novel's dystopian content is identified, in this thesis, as a 'cycle of darkness,' a metaphor which I have appropriated from the text to allude to the theme of historic recurrence, where the machinations of the past have continued to transpire in the present. The notion of the cycle epitomises the repetition that characterises the trajectories of the novel's protagonists and, more importantly, contrasts with the spectre and its ability to render time out of joint, effectively breaking the cycle. Without the interruption brought about by the spectre, the cycle is synonymous with Derrida's definition of a closed future as the bleak outcome of the novel's

four narratives is determined in advance, rendered predictable and prophetic.

In the novel, the individual identity of the subject is depicted as incapable of being sustained in the face of an all-powerful force bent on erasing narratives of dissent. As a result, citizens of Moxyland are made to inhabit predetermined identities, presenting themselves in the form of the ‘gamer,’ ‘hipster,’ political activist and ‘hacker.’ And, while most the city’s inhabitants are presented as being groomed into docile subjects, I argue that the novel’s protagonists, despite being direct products of the Corporati system, refuse to be defined by these structures and work to overcome the limitations placed on their subjectivity. Their narratives emphasise how state powers attempt to control the bodies of their subjects, as well as their identities, and demonstrate the loss of subjectivity that occurs in face of more powerful occupying forces.

What Tendeka refers to as a ‘cycle of darkness’ suitably encompasses the reality of societies threatened with an annulled future. Tendeka’s first reference to the cycle occurs when he defends his reasoning for refusing corporate funding for his art initiative, *Streets Back*. He explains:

It’s tainted. It’s against all our principles. I mean, you talk about making a real impact, what’s the point if you’re doing it dirty, breeding more misery? It’s like terrorists dealing heroin for the cause. It’s a cycle of darkness.

(Beukes, *Moxyland* 94)

Tendeka’s individual cycle of darkness is most evident in his cyberspace relationship with skyward*, a Corporati spy, who encourages as well as supplies him with ideas and the technology needed to initiate a political attack. This relationship can be understood as ironically mirroring Tendeka’s fears about accepting corporate aid as he is unknowingly being directly influenced by the Corporati. The severity of his manipulation is only revealed at the novel’s close as the reader becomes aware that skyward* has been manipulating him into pursuing illegal actions to promote his status as a terrorist. For, as the reader learns through Lerato’s experiences, “any action is justified in a state under terrorist threat” (230). The ongoing cycle is evident in Tendeka’s transformation from a peaceful activist into a feared terrorist as his struggle methods are manipulated into a weapon capable of furthering the Corporati’s desires for coercion and control.

The culmination of skyward* and Tendeka’s online negotiations materialise in acts of staged terrorism: the destruction of *Woof & Tweet*, an episode which is central to the novel’s

plot, and a subway demonstration that results in civilians being infected with the “M7N1 virus, a lab-coded variation of the Marburg strain” (170). Led to believe the virus a hoax, Tendeka is coerced into taking his activism to the extreme by blowing up the emergency rooms allotted for treating the infected victims. Despite believing his actions to be in the name of social transparency, it is only at the novel’s end that the reader becomes aware of Tendeka’s puppet-like status.

As a direct result of his “gullible trust in the machinations of skyward*, an agent provocateur” (Stobie, “Dystopian Dreams” 372), Tendeka’s resolve and adherence to outmoded forms of protest renders him a suitable subject for manipulation. The activist’s desire to expose the invisible, controlling network of the Corporati to the public is evident in his admission that “transparency only works as a policy if you can still find a way to make the stuff you don’t want people to see invisible” (Beukes, *Moxyland* 192). What Tendeka does not count on, however, is the Corporati’s ability to manipulate that which is already visible, that is, its ability to re-construe acts of protest as acts of terrorism. Ironically, Tendeka’s methods for destroying the illusion of transparency coincide with the Corporati’s desires to visualise violence and make visible the possible threats to the city. As a result, they can maintain control and transparency through the production of fear. As Lerato admits, “it makes perfect sense. The process has to be managed. Fear has to be managed. Fear has to be controlled. Like people” (230).

In my view, Tendeka’s reliance on outdated methods of reform are responsible for his downfall. His identity as an activist is one that Beukes suggests has been passed down over generations, inherited from his family and their supposed “struggle connections” (92). He admits to having “overemphasised the connection. It was a second cousin by marriage whose grandmother helped shelter Ruth First, a Communist journalist blown up by a letter bomb in the 1980s” (93). This relation is exaggerated to justify his political intentions and, unexpectedly, is also used to coerce him into cooperating with Corporati interests (93). Once again, the past is depicted as being transferred into the present which, in this case, results in Tendeka’s actions losing their value and being made repetitive and disingenuous. It is his overreliance on preconceived and historically-determined notions of activism or, at the very least, his allegiance to past forms of protest that prevents him from achieving social reform or from ultimately becoming an independent agent, free from Corporati control.

Tendeka’s form of protest cannot create a future in the Derridean sense because it seeks

to establish the future simply as the opposite of the present. In other words, his proposed future is overdetermined by the past and allows for nothing that could be defined as truly radical to occur or come to pass. By conceiving of the future as existing in opposition to the present, Tendeka unknowingly limits the scope of his radicalism in the sense that he renders himself predictable, knowable and, as a result, is unable to escape the confines of Corporati control. His attempts to incite worthwhile rebellion and find spaces outside of Corporati surveillance are thwarted by his reliance on outdated modes of protest. Furthermore, his failure to consider his present situation as the culmination of such tactics prevents him from harbouring any real suspicion towards skyward* and his 'superior' connections. As a result, Tendeka is unable to escape the power-play of the Corporati and is never truly capable of acting independently or of his own accord.

Adalet Snyman, on the subject, considers Tendeka to be childlike in the sense that he adopts idealised ways of behaving both in the real and virtual worlds (108). Regarding cyberspace, Tendeka comments on his conduct within Avalon, a virtual suburbia where he interacts with skyward*, purporting his online presence as "an idealisation, it's setting an example, showing people an alternative to what a perfect world might be" (92). What he fails to acknowledge is that the agency he asserts there is no more than "the culture he finds himself in allow[ing] him freedom in an imaginary space, but not freedom in his day-to-day movements" (108). As a result, Snyman considers his blatantly obvious attempts to be different "a trademark of a subculture movement and [...] his rebellion as essentially predetermined" (108). Following her assertion, I argue that, while Tendeka's failure to become an independent subject may result from his overarching desire to be different, it must be noted that, in the face of the Corporati, he is not provided with the ability to act otherwise. His incapacity to act outside of Corporati interests, insinuate that, in a society where politics is capable of overdetermining the lives and values of its citizens, agency can no longer be found in the figure of the political activist.

The loss of agency, as captured in the figure of the political subject, occurs when methods of the struggle are not only made predictable but appropriated by institutions that make up the Corporati to comply with their own agenda. This appropriation is evident in Tendeka's heightened radicalism, which is the product of a social conditioning based on idealised conventions of the past. The romanticised conception of the political subject, which depicts 'dying for the cause' as responsible for creating and upholding the status of the martyr, is

manipulated in the novel. Evidence of this idealism is found in Tendeka's desire to continue the legacy of the struggle, rendering him vulnerable to outside forces bent on controlling any form of insurrection and rebellion. Furthermore, Tendeka's last hopes of becoming a martyr are, retrospectively, portrayed as inherently naïve for, in his death, he hands over the last remnants of his subjectivity.

In transforming himself into a symbol of the struggle, Tendeka actively sacrifices his remaining individuality and provides the Corporati with an anonymous scapegoat onto which they can impose a new symbol, that of terrorist. On the figure of the martyr as symbol, Derrida, in the dedication to *Specters of Marx*, asserts that

one should never speak of the assassination of a man as a figure, not even an exemplary figure in the logic of an emblem, a rhetoric of the flag or of martyrdom. A man's life, as unique as his death, will always be more than a paradigm and something other than a symbol.

(xiv)

By attempting to transform himself into a symbol of martyrdom, Tendeka's efforts to expose the corruption of the Corporati are rendered futile as the remaining dregs of the activist's agency are terminated. Unknowingly, he plays into the trap of the Corporati, laid out by skyward*, and, through his character, Beukes can blur the lines that exist between martyrdom and terrorism. As Jolyon Mitchell proffers, "[o]ne community's 'martyr' is another's 'terrorist'; one person's 'martyrdom operation' is another's 'suicide bombing'" (2). More importantly, Beukes reveals both stereotypical statuses as determined, as well as dependent, on society at large and not on the individual whose death is of concern.

Acts of martyrdom and terrorism are determined by the communities from which they arise and Beukes emphasises this factor in Tendeka's final moments, which he believes are being recorded and screened live across the city. It is Tendeka's final wish that his death at the hands of the Corporati be broadcasted throughout the city as a testament to the treatment reserved by the regime for its subjects. Ironically, however, "Tendeka's on every channel on the TV, his face dominating the screen, Osama, coupled with some kid, Zuko Sephuma, who's already been arrested" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 235). Instead of revealing to the world the violation of human rights by the Corporati, Tendeka's sacrifice is repurposed so that it can be classified and exposed to the public as an act of terror. Furthermore, the activist's inability to control the way his death is remembered is emphasised by Toby's realisation at the end of the novel that

he has “the total sony exclusive on the untimely and grotesque death of a terrorist. Or a martyr. Depends on who’s paying” (236).

While Tendeka and his role as political activist is clearly set in opposition to the Corporati’s practices of dispossession and dominance, Lerato’s narrative seemingly embraces them, with her character thriving off her connections to the corporate side of Cape Town. Having established a successful programming career at a firm referred to as Communique, Lerato’s character provides readers with an inside perspective of corporate life as well as the basis on which her career was founded, her disadvantaged childhood. Her unique ‘cycle of darkness’ is captured in the way the Corporati capitalises on the country’s misfortunes by relying on the poverty-stricken lifestyle of its citizens, utilising their poor and desperate status as a catalyst for opportunistic and corrupt activity. In other words, those unfortunate enough to be affected by the AIDS virus are offered opportunities supposedly capable of securing them a better future by high-powered corporations.

What appears as a goodhearted initiative is revealed to be a corporate policy designed to instil and encourage ruthless and conniving behaviour in its constituents. HIV orphans, like Lerato, are groomed into cold and unsympathetic agents for the Corporati and are manipulated into increasing the hold of a tyrant-like entity bent on remaining in power. The Corporati’s appraisal of corruptive traits in its employees is highlighted by Lerato’s admittance that “you have to distinguish yourself if you’re going to make any progress” (82). Her indirect assertion, that the most prominent way of getting noticed by the Corporati is by posing a threat to them, epitomises the ruthless nature of Corporati rule.

The idea of defecting from Communique, Lerato’s current company of employment, to earn the respect of the Corporati and establish oneself further up the ranks of the conglomeration of companies, is first referred to in a story that Toby tells about Hope Modise to the new gaming recruits. Modise, a thirteen-year-old girl who hacked into Sonica Wireless’s servers in order to impress her programming teacher, was sentenced to twenty years disconnected from society and relegated homeless. Despite her illegal activity, Hope’s sentence was remanded with Sonica employing her as a security advisor as well as turning the incident into a public relations stunt (68). The aura surrounding the ‘Hope Modise’ scandal seems to fuel Lerato’s intentions as she constantly goes out of her way to supply Toby with illegal technology and is an accomplice in Tendeka’s plot to hack into the Communique system. Secretly, Lerato compares the hacking opportunity, a chance to divert from Communique, to

“finding [out] the wall blocking your way in a dead-end alley is only made out of cardboard, that you can push right through it” (45). She considers the prospect of going against her parent company a chance to assert her skill as well as her worth. It must be noted that, despite Lerato’s unofficial mantra being to “keep your friends close and your enemies and all that” (39), her position within the corporate world deceives her into thinking that she is secure whereas, to the reader, it is evident that the power she experiences is no more than the Corporati leading her to believe that she is in control.

Lerato’s actions, amounting to treason, result in a confrontation with the Communique internal affairs who offer her the ultimatum of being thrown from the thirty-second storey, an ‘employee suicide,’ or accepting a promotion that will entitle her to a position like that of skyward*. It is interesting to note that this method of killing was notoriously common for apartheid police with the most famous incident being the death of Ahmed Timol who, according to the police, fell from the tenth-floor window of the John Vorster Square police station. It could be argued that, by including the possibility of continued apartheid violence, Beukes is hinting at what I have thus far referred to as the ‘cycle of darkness’ and the appropriation of past tactics for dealing with concerns of the present. The reader is never made privy to whether Lerato’s detainment/ recruitment is of her own design or an incidental outcome of her risk and betrayal – however, this incident aptly illustrates the way her plans of defection are rewarded and her treason admired.

Lerato takes up an active position in the Corporati’s machinations and, unlike Tendeka, knowingly implicates herself in the future’s annulment by manipulating the present. One of the requirements for her new position is that she must break off all her ties with former colleagues as well as her family. It becomes evident that her employment at Communique has already seen to the estrangement of Lerato’s relations with her family and the complete breakdown of tradition. While I have argued that Tendeka’s overreliance on the past is responsible for his demise, Lerato’s position is different: she outright rejects the past claiming that, “[it] only holds you back. It’s like a drift net. The kind you get tangled in and drown” (106). This rejection is most evident in the loss of traditional life in Lerato’s narrative and in her brief, strained interactions with her family. Obligated to show respect to her ancestors, she describes the event as consisting of “three mismatched women holding a meaningless memorial to three people [she doesn’t] remember” (153). The Communique employee’s disdain towards acts of commemoration and remembrance is acutely documented in her narrative, both in the ridicule

directed at her sister for “her attempt to dress up nice for the ancestors” (153), as well as her severe disillusionment demonstrated in her cool observation that “the herbs Sipho throws into the air get whipped straight back at us” (153). By rendering her past irrelevant to her current lifestyle, Lerato refuses the spectre and its demands for context, ignoring the conditions responsible for her integration into the Corporati.

While Lerato actively attempts to exorcise her history to forgo her responsibility in the present, Kendra’s attempt to assert her subjectivity is stunted by her hipster status and her identity as both artist and test subject for a marketing nanotech programme. These roles are often interconnected since it is her ‘hipster’ status associated with that of an upcoming artist that makes her eligible for the brand-boosting advertising scheme. Before entering a thorough exploration of the relationship between Kendra’s art and the society which it depicts, it is beneficial to explore her identity, in terms of the hipster aesthetic that she adopts, and what it implies about her association with the latter. Kendra’s characterisation as a ‘hipster’ is largely because of her depiction in the novel as an art school drop-out, her preference for outdated digital technology, and by the direct reference made by Toby in his assertion that “[e]ven by the competitive standards of Long Street, being Cape Town’s hipster capital and all, this girl is styling” (12). By being categorised as a hipster, her desire to distance herself from the popular culture that determines her current society is trivialised and her efforts to establish a counter-identity rendered futile.

Kendra’s subjectivity is portrayed in *Moxyland* as unavoidably predetermined as her attempts to establish an identity apart from the one bestowed upon her, that of ‘hipster,’ is ineffective. Lauren Alfrey defines the ‘hipster’ as a “material subculture often symbolised by objects or styles appropriated from past eras, meant to appear ironic or novel with contemporary application” (15). Kendra’s preference for outdated digital technology will be examined further on in this chapter, although, it should be noted that the manifestation of nostalgia, generated by her choice of mediums, can be understood as an idealised attempt to return to the past. Alfrey, on the subject, aligns the subculture with a search for authenticity which “suggests at once idealism of the past and an appreciation for the creative” (65). I understand Kendra’s affiliation with the past, as demonstrated in the text, to reflect her desire to avoid the predetermined nature of both the present and future. It is her reliance on hipster culture, however, and its nostalgic associations with the past, which represents what Alfrey considers to be “a yearning for authentic things, and perhaps sadly, a more authentic life” (66).

Set in contrast to Kendra's somewhat mournful state is that of Toby who, I argue, actively embraces the breakdown of perceived reality, as insinuated by his participation in what the novel refers to as "Realspace" gaming (Beukes, *Moxyland* 118). He knowingly blurs the lines between reality and the virtual, thereby rejecting the authenticity that Kendra so desperately longs for, by opting to exist in an in-between state. A somewhat unassuming character due to his status as a DJ and 'waster' or drug-addict, Toby plays an important role in the text and the trials that lead to the novel's open ending. A once ambitious literature scholar and aspiring novelist, he is depicted as a lost cause, careless with his life and that of those around him.

Despite his carelessness, if one were to consider his history, it is evident that he has not always been rogue in his dealings and that it is because of his experiences at the hands of a repressive regime that he has had to adjust his lifestyle. In many ways, Toby is presented as a product of his society: adaptable, ruthless and self-centred. However, this superficial view of him is challenged by another, more intimate account. Toby may possess all the above-mentioned faults yet this image of him is qualified by his desire to distance himself from any links to his former life. By rejecting his past associations, he has encountered several losses, the confiscation of his trust-fund and all the benefits of his wealthy family among them, to achieve a freedom removed from external control.

For someone who appears disturbingly superficial and lacking in morals, Toby's actions and subsequent outcast state reflect a deeper sensibility which he has had to manipulate to survive. Unlike Tendeka, whose idealised beliefs act as a barrier to his achieving concrete reform, Toby has cast aside his old beliefs in exchange for a more versatile framework (albeit one lacking in other-centred morality). His character refuses to adhere to the accepted norms of the past and, in a culture that manipulates the present to re-enact the past, Toby renders himself invisible, or as mentioned earlier, has mastered the art of camouflage. Because he portrays himself as fickle and unsympathetic, he can 'work the system' in a way that no other character is capable of. His actions are not predetermined or based on any form of expectation and so he possesses what I consider to be the potential of an open future. The potential inherent in his character is most pertinent when one considers the decisions he is left with at the end of the novel, namely whether to document Tendeka's death as an act of martyrdom or terrorism.

Toby takes on the role of the flâneur in the novel, the emblematic archetype of the urban experience, infamous for observing the society of which he is a part. He possesses the dominant

character traits associated with the literary figure and these include idleness and an almost nonchalant approach to the proceedings around him. Like the *flâneur*, Toby is an urban explorer in that he roams the streets of Cape Town observing and recording his surrounding all the while maintaining a degree of anonymity. His beloved jacket, referred to in the novel as his “BabyStrange” (7), has the technical ability to record live and document his surroundings, as well as to display and project. Toby takes on the role of a living camera and, in this way, he is affiliated with Kendra as she too considers the camera to be an extension of her body. Both characters use forms of photography and digital surveillance as a means of returning the gaze in the panoptic society that is Moxyland. Despite being under constant watch, Toby and Kendra establish unique methods that refuse any kind of knowing, that refuse the Corporati absolute knowledge and therefore absolute control.

It is evident throughout Toby’s narrative that he frequently attempts to disassociate himself from his lived reality. One of the ways in which he achieves this disassociation is through recreational drug-use. He goes on to describe his habit as allowing him “just enough to remix [his] experience of the world a little” (159). The protagonist’s streamcast “Diary of Cunt” (56), a show featuring live recordings taken on his BabyStrange, is another outlet enabling him to distance himself from his immediate surroundings. It becomes apparent that Toby actively chooses to exist in a hyperreality, with his drug-use and desire to be permanently broadcasted live, an attempt to subvert the pre-established roles set out for him. Having abandoned his former aspirations, he is no longer driven by the Corporati’s definition of success opting, rather, for his individual trajectory to be determined by the ratings he receives from his viewers. Consequently, the gamer comes to see people, both in his immediate circle and out, as characters, deemed worthy because of their popularity with his online viewers.

Toby’s interactions with his mother, who he refers to as “motherbitch” (7), are treated as if he is in game play: “If I can get her to cry, points go to me and everything else is annulled” (10). He is the only character in the novel who repeatedly addresses the reader, once again insinuating that his actions are constantly being made broadcast and his narrative is a perpetual live-stream of events. Whereas Kendra finds release through her photography, seeking comfort in the anonymity it can extend to her, Toby is governed by the expectations of the camera and the seduction of the media. His involvement in online gaming is another source of disassociation as it enables him to become someone else entirely or, as he admits, gives him access to “recreations of lives you could never live” (156).

As previously mentioned, Toby's participation in online gaming is extended into the 'real' world as he joins a task team for the game "FallenCity™ Scorpions Elite" (119). The mission is compromised when Toby attacks a supposed 'enemy' team member who is later revealed to be an innocent bystander. It becomes apparent that he, along with his teammates, have been setup and that, instead of acting within the confines of "realworld play" (121), they have unknowingly been coerced into creating public disturbances. Furthermore, it is not coincidental that the mission is set to take place at the exact time of Tendeka's staged protest, which has already been attributed to the machinations of the Corporati. Tendeka admits as much when he asserts that "[t]he gamehack has already gone into effect. All those FallenCity™ players won't know what hit them" (141). It could be argued that, in the same manner that Tendeka is manipulated by skyward* into performing acts of terrorism, so are Toby and his crew of fellow gamers induced into staged acts of dissent. It is ironic, then, that the mission's objectives are to "find and subdue terrorists on the underground and recover and disarm [a] dirty 'suitcase' bomb" (119). Even more ironic than the mission's objective is the disclaimer Beukes incorporates into the briefing which asserts that "FallenCity™ is not real. FallenCity™ does not have any real-world affiliations with the Scorpions or the criminal underworld or terrorist organisations" (120). The disclaimer, set on differentiating the real from the game in *Moxyland*, is rendered problematic if one understands the line between the two as irrefutably blurred.

Proving the salience of my argument, Toby refers to another incident in the novel where gaming has had a very genuine effect on the real world. When commenting on the ability to access certain game spaces, he alludes to an event where "it took them 18 hours solid gamespace play to crack a drug-bust mission, and when they fragged every junkie in sight, they found all kinds of useful goodies tucked among their stash, including an access card that unlocks certain gameplaces realworld" (160). Here, it could be argued that game-players are appropriated and made to take on dangerous tasks usually reserved for the South African Police Force (SAPS). Beukes sets up a comparison between the 'gamers' and the police and, in doing so, hints at the invisible stronghold of power of the Corporati. By commenting on the protagonists' inability to determine who is being manipulated and who is in control, the author demonstrates the extent to which the Corporati's influence has infiltrated the social sphere.

The Corporati's reach is responsible for the disappearance of the subject with the former's intention being, as depicted in the novel, to subdue the independent agent. In light of

this, it will be argued that *Moxyland* pays homage to Baudrillard's assertion that the disappearance of the real is mirrored by the disappearance of the subject, a line of thought which will inform the concluding argument of this chapter. What could be argued as a cycle of disappearance, presents the subject as incapable of surviving in a society where the disappearance of the real is inherently responsible for their expulsion. As argued in this section, the novel's protagonists are made to inhabit predetermined subjectivities which refuse them authentic subjecthood apart from the identities ascribed to them. And so, the text documents a frustration with political and social forms of identity, dissatisfaction with the requirements for subjecthood, and the possibility of its disruption.

“Poised Between”: Breaking the Cycle

This section looks at the way in which instances of the uncanny can disorientate the novel's characters and disrupt the conditions placed on their subjectivity. It works to show how the spectre, by invoking the conditions associated with the uncanny, is capable of disrupting the present and breaking the 'cycle of darkness' that enables the continued existence of *Moxyland*'s high-handed regime. Nicholas Royle, on the subject, declares the uncanny as that which “entails another thinking of beginning: the beginning is already haunted. The uncanny is ghostly” (1). By comparing instances of the uncanny to the hauntings of a ghost, he justifies the former as not simply an experience of strangeness or alienation, but the coming together of the familiar and the unfamiliar, calling into question all that has once been deemed acceptable (1).

Like that of the spectre, whose contested presence casts every binary opposition into doubt, so does Royle conceive of uncanniness as a crisis of the natural, a crisis of all that is proper and entails a critical disturbance of what is considered to be the norm (1). As a result, I will argue that encounters with the uncanny in *Moxyland* are able to disrupt the experience of the present and, in the process, inform the novel's characters of the dubious forces at work behind the city's success. More importantly, however, the disturbance that the uncanny imposes upon its encountered subjects produces a sense of discomfort in Beukes's protagonists which, it will be argued, cannot be rectified or reversed. Depicted as a catalyst of sorts, the uncanny can be conceived as the very condition of contemporary haunting as, like the spectre, it inspires disruption and discontent within the confines and comfort of the present. I make this claim because, as Royle suggests, the *Unheimlich* can provide ways in which to think in less dogmatic terms about the nature of the world, ourselves and a politics of the future (3).

Instances of the uncanny are discernible in Kendra's narrative and are especially apparent in the exploration of her identity as both artist and test subject for the marketing nanotech programme. It is important to note that, throughout the novel, Kendra is depicted as inherently plagued by her history, namely, the death of her father and the shock to her subjectivity which it produced. Furthermore, it could be argued that her previous encounter with death foreshadows her decision to become a Ghost ambassador and acts as an, albeit impromptu, solution to her overriding anxiety and an attempt to exorcise her body of any cancerous threats. She soon realises that her attempts to take control of her subjectivity are thwarted by her reliance on the Ghost cool drink, an analogy for the inexorable control the Corporati exerts over its citizens. Her photography, then, can be argued as the final attempt by the artist to portray her diminishing subjectivity. It is not surprising that, at the biggest event of her budding career, Kendra's photographs are eclipsed by the more popular work by Khanyi Nkosi, a sound-installation under the title of *Woof & Tweet*. Regarding the threat of the spectre, it is evident that the installation piece, and its violent destruction at the hands of antiCorporati resistance fighters, proves to be an apt example of the spectral and its ability to produce conditions of the uncanny in its audience.

The creature that makes up *Woof and Tweet* is an uncanny, spectral kind of figure, not human or animal, biological or inanimate, alive or dead. It is initially described by Kendra as a "gruesome, red, meaty creature, something dead turned inside out and mangled, half collapsed in on itself with spines and ridges and fleshy strings" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 127). This monstrous image resembles Derrida's description of the spectre:

a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other. For it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition, in the very coming of the *revenant* or the return of the specter.

(*Specters* 5)

In *Woof and Tweet*, the creature's pain receptors and nerve endings have been scientifically altered/genetically modified so it is not able to feel pain, left with "just enough brainstem hardwired to respond to input in different ways, so it's unpredictable" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 128). The animal is equipped with built-in resonator-speakers which are used to cull sounds from its surroundings, "remixing ambient audio, conversation, footsteps, glasses clinking, rustling

clothing, through the systems of its body, disjointed parts of it inflating, like it's breathing, spines quivering" (127). The artwork's spectral affiliations are not limited to its gruesome physicality, but extends to the responses and reactions of the audience, generated by its uncanny presence. Furthermore, the ambiguous identity imposed upon the artwork demonstrates, as well as questions, the treatment reserved for the non-subject, thus revealing the dangerous consequences of possessing a revoked subjectivity.

In many ways, *Woof and Tweet* can be read as an ekphrastic follow-up to Jane Alexander's *The Butcher Boys*, a work renowned for its comment on the dehumanizing effects of the apartheid state on both the marginalised sectors of South African society and those responsible for keeping the regime in place. The artwork is a response to the emergency state that dominated the country during the height of apartheid and its hybrid combination of human and animal is thus seen as a device designed to provide insight into that which Kobena Mercer refers to as the "postcolonial grotesque" (80). It is not uncommon for affiliations to be made between Beukes's fiction and the art of Alexander as both deal with aspects of hybridity or what Mercer defines as "poetic monsters [that] eat away at the rigid polarity of 'self' and 'other' in colonial discourse [...]" (80). Commenting on this comparison, the author admits that "we are all echoing the monstrosities we see around us, like Jane Alexander's most famous work *The Butcher Boys*. It reveals the monstrousness beneath the skin. It's the power of allegory" (Beukes qtd. in Rodiers). Both art pieces are dominated by elements of the bestial and depict subjects who have been transfigured and alienated from their original form. Considering this similarity, this thesis contends that, by resorting to the use of hybridity in their work, both women are commenting on the subjectivity of the individual or, more importantly, what is left of subjectivity when acted upon by the tyranny of political systems. In response, *Woof and Tweet* not only epitomises the hybridity associated with the postcolonial condition, but, as is the case with *The Butcher Boys*, portrays the postcolonial subject as a spectral and, at times, grotesque figure.

Alexander's hybrid piece, made up of three human-like figures seated on a bench, alludes to the spectral as each body, violated into obscurity, takes up a liminal position between life and death. Bodily defamation, in this instance, is achieved through the overt presence of adhesions, broken horns, leathery skin, black eyes and the absence of distinguishing facial and genital features. Subsequently, the figures are stripped of their subjectivity and, like in *Woof*

and Tweet, their sense perceptions mutilated and removed to render them nonhuman. Despite the dehumanisation evident in the three victims, Alexander challenges the assertion of destroyed subjectivity by positioning her figures in such a way that they are caught, almost as if in an act of waiting, full of suspense and unease. Each figure is positioned so that they appear to be on the verge of movement, about to get up and take a stand, the effects of which will forever remain unknown and open to interpretation, an inherently spectral position. Considering its propensity to signify both violence and victimhood, it can be argued that Alexander's sculptural practise has succeeded in using the grotesque as a counterdiscourse in post-apartheid South Africa.

Beukes, too, makes use of the grotesque as a counterdiscourse and as a means of destabilising the legitimacy of society by producing, from within the putative subject, conditions of the uncanny and unfamiliar. Like the common interpretations of *The Butcher Boys*, *Woof and Tweet* can be viewed as a product of its context and reveals the extent to which subjectivity is manipulated by discourses of power. The transformation of the subject into an automaton-like entity is reflected in the creature's sole ability: to repeat and reiterate the sounds and signals produced in its near vicinity. The work indirectly comments on the current state of Moxyland society, revealing those who inhabit it as incapable of having their own voice, and only competent enough to repeat the information that they have absorbed. Like Alexandra's work, which can be described as reflecting on the relationship of individuals to hierarchies, *Woof and Tweet* reveals the relationship between power and subjectivity as interdependent. And so, it is only outside the dominant discourse of power that something other than a preconceived subjectivity is capable of being established. Considering this, I argue that the hybrid artworks reflect the postcolonial condition in that they portray subjectivity as that which is vulnerable to the play of power. More importantly, their allusion to subjectivity as being externally constituted gives rise to the possibility of the spectral subject, those excluded and, therefore, unrecognised by the omniscient-like power that, in the novel, is the Corporati.

Upon encountering *Woof and Tweet*, Kendra's response emphasises the ability of art to reveal subjectivity as the result of ongoing construction and mutation. While observing the supposed artwork, she becomes aware of the creature's ability to be traumatised and, acknowledging that it is unable to feel physical pain, questions the impact of the public's attention on its psyche. Her initial apprehension towards the artwork, and the possibility of it

possessing an unrecognised subjectivity, stems from the acknowledgement that all concern towards the animal has been directed at the physical aspects of its creation and not towards its emotional well-being.

Despite being described as incapable of possessing any form of subjectivity, Kendra attempts to look past, or undermine, the importance placed upon the monstrous nature of the creature and shows interest in the animal's sensibilities, that which exists beneath the skin. Because of her newly updated status as a "Sponsor baby" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 1), she is intimately aware of the potential for the transformation of subjectivities and can no longer be complacent in her interactions with the mutated subject. It becomes possible, then, to draw similarities between Kendra and the artwork in question as both are the product of scientific experimentation and, because of this modification, are recognised as commodities as opposed to living subjects. For this reason, Kendra personally affiliates her condition with the creature and is disturbed by its stigmatised presence. In her confrontation with the uncanny, she is forced to adopt a responsibility towards the mutated subject and made to perceive of herself, like the creature, as both familiar and grotesque.

The anti-Corporati art attack, led by Tendeka and responsible for the demolition of the creature making up *Woof and Tweet*, comments more on the psyche of the society responsible for the latter's creation than it does its destroyers. Not only does the episode shed light on societal response to trauma, but the inability of Moxyland's inhabitants to differentiate between performance and real life. Initially recognised by the gallery-goers as a performance art piece, the incident is soon revealed as a vandalism attack turned massacre. Before this revelation, however, Kendra describes the crowd responding hungrily to the spectacle "[n]ot [with]outrage or fear, but excitement" (136). And, she notes that "People are grinning, nodding, eyes overbright, which makes it seem all the more horrific" (136). Furthermore, the lack of recognition demonstrated by the gallery-goers for the mutilated, former subject, denies what Esther Peeren identifies as the central condition for attaining spectral agency, that is, the act of being noticed (*Spectral Metaphor* 16). Ironically, the former subject goes unobserved because of its exhibited state, a factor which coincides with the Corporati's aims of preventing its subjects from contemplating the possibility of their own indoctrination. I would therefore argue that, if one were to consider this episode as acting as a microcosm of Moxyland, it is possible

to apply the lens of the exhibit, the inability to differentiate between real life and performance, to society at large.

Such a lens results in the disfranchisement of the spectral and sees to the spectral subject, the animal/artwork, being appropriated by the discourse which it works to interrupt. According to Peeren,

[t]his type of ghost, lacking the spectre's association with seeing and being seen, cannot disturb because its very existence is put into question, erasing it from view; rather than putting the present time out of joint, such ghosts are themselves disjointed as the present spectralizes them.

(15)

It is only after the animal/artwork is slaughtered that it is released from its position of spectacle and rendered uncanny, reinvesting the spectral piece with its ability to disrupt and haunt. Readers are told as much when Kendra recognises and interprets the creature's trauma and the sounds it projects as though "it's screaming through our voices, the background noise, the context" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 136).

Kendra's realization that the screams of the animal are being transmitted through the voices of those that surround it intimates to both her and the readers that, before the spectral disruption, the pain of the non-subject, the beastly, cannot be heard and recognised within the context responsible for its loss of subjectivity. As a result, it is possible to conceive of the creature as not only a symptom of the society from which it emerged, but as victimised by the discourse of power that acts upon it. Like Kendra, it is unable to assert itself in a language other than that of its 'colonisers' which, in *Moxyland*, are the upper-middle class. More importantly, however, and despite this silencing, the episode illustrates the ability of the spectre to haunt by using discourse as its proprietary means because, while it is impossible to escape the confines of discourse completely, discourse too can become an instrument in the haunting process.

In much the same way as *Woof and Tweet* questions the conditions reserved for subjectivity in the novel, so can the same line of thought be extended to the role of the Rural and the threat it poses to the Corporati. The misrepresentation of rural space is best realised in the descriptions of a mural that Toby encounters while participating in an online game. The mural depicts a Nguni bull, a breed indigenous to South Africa and famous for its resistance to disease as well as high fertility rates and longevity. While Toby dismisses the bull as a simple touch of local flavour, he overlooks the species' history and its strong associations with the

country's indigenous peoples and their ability to succeed and flourish despite the harsh conditions and tough terrains. In the past, Nguni cattle have played a large role in determining the social and economic order of societies and were a symbol of wealth and prosperity.

Toby's first examination of the piece seems to fit this description as he refers to the mural as "giant-scale and kif skilful of a Nguni cow in profile, the kind you only ever see now emaciated in the background of the politsoc broadcasts about how fucked up the rural is" (110). He immediately compares the beauty of the art piece with the derelict images of domestic cattle exposed to the public through the media. The potential for misrepresentation is evident when Toby takes a closer look at the 'pastoral beast' and realises that what he once believed to be a mural made up of what he expects to be hide and bone is revealed, disappointingly, to consist of patchwork, marble and sequins. His inquisition takes an unexpected turn when he discovers that:

[It's] warm now and moving steady coz the fucking cow is breathing, and the sequins aren't sequins at all, but nails, fingernails bruised black and stained, and I can tell this because there are rotten fingertips emerging behind them, scraping out and over the other nails, so that there are six layers of intertwined wilted hands tearing their way out from the wall.

(112)

The multiple misinterpretations by Toby, when encountering the animal, could possibly reflect an understanding of the uncanny as "when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality" (Freud qtd. in Peeren and del Pilar Blanco 4). For Toby, what was initially depicted as an inanimate symbol of rural wealth is transformed into horrific encounter with a living representation of rural suppression. If the monster can stand for anything that a culture must repress, then the wealth and prosperity of the urban metropolis is revealed as being founded on the death and oppression of what presumably are the citizens of rural communities.

The domination of the Rural by the Corporati is further emphasised in the latter's assimilation of the Nguni symbol, which is usually associated with rural spaces, and how it has been appropriated into working for Corporati ends. The terror inspired by this incident reveals the possibility for misrepresentation to take place and the danger that accompanies insular and uncritical perspectives. Toby's evolving encounter with the mural can be read as an altercation

that occurs when what one believes and conceives as real goes unquestioned and, the possibility of its artificial nature, unrecognised. The spectre, then, is evoked by the mural in that the piece inspires both terror and revelation within Toby. Like Kendra's encounter with *Woof and Tweet*, it is not fear inspired by the Corporati but the encountering of the other which so frightens Toby for as he admits "something grotesque is scratching patiently on the inside, like a dog at the door" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 112).

In the novel, the spectre can haunt discourse by rendering it uncanny in the eyes of the public. What results is an interruption of discourse, a spectral moment capable of disrupting the present, and suspending the cycle of darkness which I have argued plagues *Moxyland*. By doing so, it reveals that discourse is malleable and vulnerable to manipulation. The emphasis Kendra places on background and context resembles what I argue to be a longing for the spectral moment, a desire for the spectral in a city that is founded upon its exclusion. Not to be mistaken with nostalgia, the spectral moment is that which is not confined to the present, but is characterised by the "linking of modalized presents (past present, actual present: "now," future present)" (Derrida, *Specters* xx). In other words, it allows for the inclusion of past and future narratives to exist and continue to impact the present, viewing justice not solely as reserved for the present but as that which exists "beyond the living present in general – and beyond its simple negative reversal" (xx).

One of the ways in which Beukes's protagonists achieve a sense of 'modalized presents' is through their chosen artistic mediums. In terms of Kendra's interest in film, the artist admits to finding value in the damage inherently present in her prints, admitting that it can occur long before she takes the photograph as well as during the stages of development. Instead of rejecting the damaged prints by opting for a digital alternative, refusing to be docile to the atrocities of the past, Kendra chooses to embrace it, her photographs paying homage to "the possibility of flaw inherent in the material" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 131). Toby, too, possesses a similar desire to separate himself from the clinical present. For instance, when referring to his career as a 'DJ,' he asserts the following:

It's the same with audio, you know. Digital was too clean when it first came out, almost antiseptic. The fidelity was too clear, you lost the background noise, the sounds you don't even pick up, but it's dead without the context.

(131)

What Kendra and Toby refer to as the disappearance of context and background noise could inadvertently be referring to the loss of authenticity in their subjectivity and environment, a factor already intimated at by Kendra's hipster status.

In response to this loss, I argue that both characters seek to capture within the present traces of the spectral capable of reinvesting the city of Cape Town with its context and its inhabitants with their subjectivity. If the present, as Beukes would have us believe, is deprived of context and history, Kendra and Toby opt to exist outside of this falsified present. It is the constant concern for background noise and context, reflected in Kendra's and Toby's individual art forms, which breaks the 'cycle of darkness' and satisfies the spectre's demand to have its time and history taken into consideration.

“Things are only real if they are documented”: Locating Traces of the Spectral

The desire to possess an authentic subjectivity is best epitomised in Kendra's narrative as she attempts to act outside of the expected roles allocated by her society. Having already established her artistic endeavours as an attempt to invest her identity and surroundings with authenticity, this section will argue that Kendra's narrative documents her constant efforts to distinguish reality from the simulation of Cape Town that is Moxyland. In doing so, she unknowingly documents her disappearance with her photographs remaining behind in the wake of her death as spectral traces of her subjectivity. While Kendra's death is usually read as a loss of agency, I argue that it is possible to view the event as the protagonist surrendering herself to a more open and porous form of identity.

Kendra's fatal trajectory reveals that, in the hyperreality of *Moxyland*, subjectivity is still capable of being realised despite the disappearance of the referent. Like Baudrillard, this thesis imbues the inevitable act of vanishing with the potential for empowerment as, per one Baudrillardian academic, “the whole trick is to disappear before dying and instead of dying” (Wernick 47). Considering this assertion, I argue that Kendra's narrative can be interpreted as an account of her disappearance as it actively documents her attempts to break away from the hyperrealistic world of Moxyland. Her story is an elegy to the disappearance of the real and epitomises the desire to, as another scholar of Baudrillard suggests, “disappear symbolically, before and rather than simply expiring biologically” (Genosko 37).

Evidence of Kendra's impending disappearance is rife throughout her narrative with the most obvious indication being her affiliation with the Ghost branding agency and her subsequent title as "Ghost girl" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 1). The very title given to the photographer positions her as a symbol of control, of consumption, with humanity being made android and advertisement. That said, it also signifies the spectral in that it refers to the intermediate state that she inhabits, perhaps even alluding to her bodily enhancements and cyborg status. In the novel, it is evident that Kendra's identity is repurposed, made advertisement and, along with the ghost logo on her wrist, is effectively transformed into a sign, "proprietary technology" (2). Her commodification is suggestive of what Baudrillard considers the disappearance of the real which, he argues, is paralleled by the disappearance of the subject (34). Yet, Kendra's vanishing subjectivity is documented in the traces that she leaves behind, that I argue are central to the concerns of the text. In response to her immanent disappearance, it is apparent that her narrative encapsulates Baudrillard's sentiment that "part of disappearing is to disappear before you die, to disappear before you have run dry, while you still have something to say [...]" (Lie "The Art").

It is evident, then, that the act of disappearing is invested with a degree of agency in the novel as it is the final remaining space in which one can assert control, experienced in the dissolution of one's character and even death. Kendra's own disappearance is depicted in her transformation into a cyborg subject as the nanotechnology in her cells modifies and replaces aspects of her human identity. Her decision to participate with an experimental technology, capable of endowing its users with a super-human existence, is set in contrast to what I have already identified as her desire for authenticity as well as her obsession with the possibility of error in both the human and the mechanical. By opting to be part of the Ghost programme, Kendra is responsible for her own disappearance as she exchanges her fallible, human subjectivity for a more versatile, modified position. It could be argued that in a society such as Moxyland, which has become a simulacrum of the city of Cape Town, the subject's experiences are no more than a simulated version of events. By controlling her own loss of recognition, Kendra can leave traces of what remains when the real, along with the subject, disappear. Her interest in photography is what allows the artist to capture the traces that surround her, photographed moments valuable only because of the absence they depict. I argue that her

photographs are an attempt to capture traces of meaning or, at least, to comment on its absence and, because of this, they are imbued with a spectral dimension.

Throughout the novel, Kendra displays a preference for analogue photography over the more popular digital form. Her affiliation with film reminds one of Baudrillard's thinking "of the disappearance of the image in the inexorable move from the analogical to the digital" (33). For him, this means the image is "being liberated at a single stroke from both the negative and the real world" (34). Furthermore, he states that, in contrast, "a traditional photograph is an image produced by the world, which, thanks to the medium of film, still involves a dimension of representation. The digital image comes straight out of the screen and becomes submerged in the mass of all other images from screens" (37). Digital photography, then, epitomises the disappearance of the real, the loss of context and authenticity, as it is reduced to being "[a] prisoner to the automatic operation of the camera" (37).

Kendra's photography reflects Baudrillard's argument regarding the changes caused by the move from analogue to digital. For instance, in an interview with Toby on her choice of medium, she openly admits that, when it comes to photography, film is more interesting than digital. What becomes evident is that the artist does not simply want to "re-create the manual" (Beukes, *Moxyland* 131), but embraces the mechanical and human capacity for error, reasoning that, by "working without the automatic function. The operator can fuck up too" (131). She views the imperfections and blemishes associated with her chosen medium as inherently responsible for endowing her work with context and background. By embracing the elements of the spectral in her photography, she rejects what Baudrillard labels the highest stage of materialism and the logical extreme of digitalisation, that occurs, according to him:

When everything disappears by excess of reality, when, thanks to the deployment of limitless technology, both mental and material, human beings are capable of fulfilling all their potentialities and, as a consequence, disappear, giving way to an artificial world that expels them from it [...].

(12–15)

While it is commonly assumed that humans will be the only species responsible for their own extinction, it could be argued that they are also the only species capable of making their material existence redundant in the face of a kind of technological singularity. Kendra takes up a contradictory position towards her status as a cyborg because, despite being a product of

humanity's supposed ascent towards high materialism, she rejects this world of artificial intelligence. Indeed, while Beukes's novel implies that technological advances and genetic modification of species are capable of surpassing human intelligence and acting independently of external control, I argue that Kendra attempts to capture this expulsion, humanity made spectral, all the while aware that she may not be able to bear witness to it herself.

Kendra's photography interrogates the possibility of a sustained existence despite the absence of corporeality. It resonates with Jean Baudrillard's assertion that disappearance may reflect a

desire to see what the world looks like in our absence (photography) or to see beyond the end, beyond the subject, beyond all meaning, beyond the horizon of disappearance, if there still is an occurrence of the world, an unprogrammed appearance of things. A domain of pure appearance, of the world as it is (and not of the *real* world, which is only ever the world of representation,) which can emerge only from the disappearance of all the added value.

(21)

The potential for genetically-modified species to surpass the human and go beyond the horizon of disappearance is evident in the nanotechnology that Kendra receives as part of the Ghost branding programme. Beukes describes the effects of which as "attacking toxins, sopping up free radicals, releasing anti-oxidants by the bucketload. It's a marathon detox and a fine-tune all in one. And the nano's programmed to search and destroy any abnormal developments [...]" (*Moxyland* 49). It is the lesser known side-effects of the technology which, I argue, sees to its test-subjects' introduction into the world of transhumanism (which aims to transform the human condition by developing technologies capable of modifying the intellectual, physical and psychological capacities of the human).

Ultimately, Kendra takes up a posthuman subjectivity, becoming a cyborg of sorts as her genetic material is transformed, and she is made dependent on the Ghost cool drink as a means of powering up her system. The same benefits of this genetic technology are extended to the canine police service, referred to in the novel as Aitos. The dogs are commonly used by the SAPS to keep 'disturbers of the peace' in-check and, as Toby admits, "even the most defiant bloody-minded idiot tends to shut up and give up when facing down those teeth" (167). Kendra's brief interactions with the Aitos, while predominantly nondescript, depict her movements, when in the latter's vicinity, as overcome by the same impulses responsible for the

dogs' programming. In attempting to describe the experience, she asserts that "[i]t wasn't empathy or altruism or anything. It was like I had to, like a real compulsion" (134). The connection that exists between Kendra and the Aitos not only marks them as modified subjects but also suggests a possible alliance, transforming them from an extension of Corporati control into a potentially threatening force to their creators. Despite her inexplicable affiliation with the dogs, once Kendra becomes aware of her resemblance to the modified Aitos, she is acutely conscious of her own potential to be controlled by the totalising forces of the Corporati.

Kendra's new-found cyborg subjectivity, despite transcending the limitations of being human, places her existence in danger as, like the Aitos who are euthanised once completing their term, she is put to death after the Corporati discover that she is immune to the viruses they use to control the public. It is important to note that Kendra rejects the nanotechnology in her system and, at the end of the novel, begs for it to be removed. In refusing the very corporeal advantages of her cyborg state, I argue that she wants to be free of the hold imposed on her by the nanotechnology. Her resistance can be aligned with what Haraway argues as "the main trouble with cyborgs, [...] that they are illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential" (151). So, while it is evident that Kendra's cyborg identity may have the potential to surpass human limitations, it is her own rejection of this higher intelligence which allows the artist to enter her death in defiance of Corporati control.

Kendra's disillusionment and subsequent rejection of her cyborg state occurs once she becomes aware that her agency, in terms of her disembodiment, extends in so far as it complies with the designs of the Corporati. Her photography is almost prophetic in its ability to document Kendra's disintegrating reality and, at the same time show that, by doing so, she continues to exist, albeit through trace. Evidence of her disintegrating reality is in the collection of photographs destined for her first, official exhibition. Her chosen medium requires materials that are no longer being produced and are difficult to come by and, even when such materials are accessible, the film is often rotted away and damaged beyond repair. Despite this, Kendra considers her most valuable pieces to be those which have been distorted, altered or where the image has been completely obliterated by the film itself. For reasons previously discussed, she rejects the clinical perfection associated with digital photography and opts for "[t]he over- and

under-exposed, bleached, washed-out, over-saturated with colour, blotches and speckles and stains like coffee-cup rings or arcs of white where the canister has cracked and let the light slip inside” (Beukes, *Moxyland* 50–51). By using outdated methods from the past to depict the present, Kendra can identify the flaws that exist within her present context, implying that, to render things visible, one may just need a different lens to look through.

Kendra’s interest in photographic documentation, as a prerequisite for establishing the real, makes an intriguing lens through which one can look at the future in *Moxyland* and the spectres that haunt the novel’s narratives. If documentation is believed to be the only means of validating the past, then that which goes undocumented is assumed as never to have taken place, never existed. It is the exclusion of the undocumented narratives, these unacknowledged pasts that has resulted in the unsympathetic and cruel society that is Moxyland. The protagonist’s desire to catch the transitive as it slips away is designed to contrast these oppressive conditions, and her photography can be understood as her need to document the final moments of the subject on the verge of its disappearance, but also to frame the traces that are left behind. Her photographs are a desperate attempt by the artist to hold on to a sense of narrative and context and prevent, or at the very least capture, its disappearance. The moment her metaphysical existence is threatened, photography becomes a way to produce meaning, simultaneously contributing to the construction of her identity as well as documenting its disintegration. It is as if she can foresee her future disappearance and death at the hands of the Corporati and is acutely aware of the need to document her individual narrative to sustain her presence, her own ghost, long after her corporeal existence has ended.

The protagonist’s status as a photographer imbues her with a sense of power that she cannot procure elsewhere in Moxyland. Susan Sontag, on the subject, writes that to photograph is to appropriate the thing being photographed (2). It means putting oneself in a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge and, therefore, like power (2). Kendra’s photography resembles Sontag’s understanding in the sense that the protagonist can reinvest the subjects that surround her with meaning and value set in contrast to their more taciturn intentions. Evidence of the transforming prowess of photography is found in a photograph taken of a woman she believes to be having an affair with her boyfriend, Jonathon. Intent on “reducing her to planes of colour, the hard sculptural bones offsetting the flicker of pity in her eyes” (Beukes, *Moxyland* 52), Kendra admits that:

The print I went with was an accident, a misfire while I was adjusting the light settings. It shows her sitting on the edge of the fire-escape stair, on the balcony outside the apt. The focus is on the shapely knot of her knee, one hand resting in the dark fall of her skirt, a black blur. You can only see the angle of her jaw tilted out of frame. It makes her look vulnerable.

(52)

It appears that the momentary appropriation of her subject instils within him/her a temporary vulnerability that is otherwise incapable of existing in Moxylund. The photograph, born out of Kendra's jealousy and depicted as a deliberate attempt by the artist to counteract Jonathon's betrayal, achieves the opposite of its intended effect as, instead of vilifying her subject, the flash of the camera renders her exposed and defenceless. The camera, then, allows Kendra to take possession of a space in which she is insecure and acts as a way of validating her experience as well as refusing them.

Set in contrast to her photographed subjects, Kendra opts for anonymity when documenting her own subjectivity. This is evident in the centre piece of her exhibition, entitled *Self-Portrait*, which describes a print from a rotten piece of film which came out completely black. After overhearing words of criticism directed at her piece, Kendra momentarily desires to reveal to her critic that despite the initial damage of the print:

under the black of *Self-Portrait* is a photograph of a photograph, clutched in my fingers, captured in the mirror with a reflected flash of light. That it's all meant to be damaged. But then I realise I don't have to. I don't have to make my moves transparent.

(134)

It becomes evident that Kendra is attempting to render herself invisible, to erase her identity while simultaneously being exposed to the public eye; she wants to gain a sense of empowerment through her anonymity and the failure to be recognised and understood. More importantly, due to the contextual nature of the photograph, her self-portrait pays homage to Baudrillard's assertion that "behind every image something has disappeared" and that (32), instead of paying tribute to the real, rather, it is to its disappearance.

The notion behind the idea of a self-portrait is that it is expected to capture a certain aspect that the artist would like to have revealed and conveyed to the public about him/herself. Instead, Kendra is the only subject privy to the absolute knowledge behind the process of the photograph, the context that saw to its creation and the trauma that resulted in its ruin. While

the viewer only encounters a damaged print, Kendra is intimately aware of the story underneath the surface of her work and, in keeping this information private, refuses to let her art and identity be quantified. The same demand for privacy is not extended to the reader as her narrative reveals the meta-textual nature of the photograph in question. By doing so, Kendra not only exposes her identity as simulacra but reveals her need to bring an end to the simulation. One of the ways in which she can achieve this break is by disassociating herself from her corporeal identity, which I think is a prominent theme throughout the novel.

By attempting to disassociate herself from her highly contextualised identity, Kendra begins to conceive of herself in terms synonymous with the workings of the camera. She comes to view her body as an extension of this device for it is only when she is behind it that she is granted a position of power. Toby admits as much when he discerns that it is “as if it’s the camera rather than the nanotech inside that smooths out her edges” (Beukes, *Moxyland* 21). Beukes creates this metaphor, comparing Kendra to the mechanisms of a camera, in order to capture certain stages of Kendra’s character development. She does so by purposefully imposing characteristics typical of the camera onto Kendra’s perceptions and thought processes. Kendra herself embraces the camera metaphor asserting that “[i]f I could embed a camera inside my body, I would. But all I can do is document the cells mutating on the inside of my wrist, the patterns developing, fading up like an old school Polaroid as the nano spreads through my system” (6). Describing to Toby the effects of the nanotechnology on her body, she says the following: “I’m improved. It’s like everything’s running better, like I’ve had a tune up, you know? The world seems sharper. Or fiercer. As if someone’s pulled the focus. Like in photography, hyper-realism? [...] Where everything is intensely real. It’s superdefined” (20). Furthermore, Kendra’s intimate, spectral connection with her medium is most evident at the time of her death, where her final moments are depicted in the same manner that one would use to describe the taking of a photograph: “My eyelids flutter, letting in snatches of light like a strobe, snapshots of movement” (233). By conceiving of her body as a tool designed for documentation, Kendra’s narrative places emphasis on the need to document the disappearance of the real and the traces that are left behind.

While Kendra does not give her viewers a standard self-portrait, she fervently documents the timeline of her Ghost branding on her body. The fluorescent logo on her wrist is the subject of “[f]our thousand one hundred and twenty photographs over the time it took to

develop. Like film. Played back in timelapse the bruise blossoms and bursts, resolving like a Rorschach into the logo” (48). Her attention to the physical site of the branding, as opposed to her countenance, invests the logo with a kind of spectral value. It resembles what I have argued to be a trace of the spectre and a marker of an absence. Although Kendra’s photographs act as the trace of, or the signifier for, the disappearance of context, after her death, her own trace is captured in what I identify as a unique and unexpected twist to the novel’s plot. The transferral of her DNA nanotechnology, described as latching onto her cells and able to reproduce itself, into Toby during their sexual encounter at the novel’s close could be argued to be the last remaining trace of her cyborg being (232). One might say that her disappearance challenges the meanness and finality of death as traces of Kendra remain despite her corporeal disappearance and, finally, unlike the substitution provided by her photography, “the dissociation is real for once, not artificially imposed and filtered through [her] camera” (206).

Kendra’s desire for disassociation from her hyperrealised present is depicted in her experience of night diving, an event which she constantly refers to important moments in her narrative. Malisa Kurtz suggests that Kendra’s experience of being submerged in total darkness has a profound effect on her identity, allowing her a glimpse of “powerful forces beyond immediate comprehension” (79). The overwhelming darkness not only provides Kendra with an unworldly sense of perspective but, I will argue, removes the limitations placed on her subjectivity. She describes the experience as harrowing:

but not because the darkness closed in. Because it made the sea wide open. Visibility limits your imagination of the ocean only as far as you can see, [...] But it’s only in the utter black that you can feel the true scale, the volume and weight of that gaping unknowable drift between continents.

(Beukes, *Moxyland* 53)

Kendra’s self-reflexive thoughts on the ocean resonate with this thesis’s concerns for the future and are, in a sense, similar to Derrida’s notion of “messianic extremity” (*Specters* 182). Her ability to appreciate that the ocean’s scale and volume are unknowable, inconceivable and her understanding of this as not a limitation but as an invitation to achieve some sense of autonomy and freedom is what transforms the initial terror of the incident into something more transcendental. Derrida’s messianic extremity can be described as that which is “unthinkable in advance, [that] which can be neither an object of knowledge nor of perception, and only

precisely because it evades the controls of both perception and knowledge, keeps the possibility of the future open” (182). If the future is to be an open one, it needs to be unknowable and it can only be so if it is free from any form of control. Subsequently, it is only once Kendra is surrounded by complete darkness that she can comprehend the limitations placed on the visible and the possibilities that invisibility, her disappearance, might offer. Taking this into account, the image of diving in the ocean not only acts as a metaphor for an open future but is a kind of leitmotif that permeates Kendra’s narrative.

As previously mentioned, Kendra constantly thinks back to her diving experience and, often does so, at important moments in her narrative. Upon finding out that Jonathon, her opportunistic boyfriend, is responsible for setting up her encounter with Andile, her branding supervisor, and therefore indirectly intuited her decision to become a Ghost ambassador, Kendra comes to the realisation that “this is the end of something. Maybe not limbo so much as the falling space, like the moment after you’ve thrown yourself backwards off the boat, your hand on your regulator to stop it jerking free, but before you hit the water. Poised between” (Beukes, *Moxyland* 152). This in-between space can be read as the period of transition from her life of reliance on Jonathon and the Ghost Corporation to a more independent and assertive self. She comes to the realisation that “without him, [she] is a nonentity. Girl in Limbo. Ghost girl” and for the first instance in the novel (151), Kendra actively chooses to accept these titles, not for the negative connotations they alluded to in the past, but for the freedom they can potentially bestow upon her.

It could be argued, however, that it is only through her death that Kendra can disassociate herself from the limitations of the branding nanotech and reach a state of complete anonymity and independence. Her desire for autonomy is reflected in a later use of the oceanic metaphor which occurs moments before what is generally acknowledged as Kendra’s death. She describes the incident in a similar manner although, this time, she is no longer ‘poised between’ and the diving image is depicted not as a transformative experience, but as a terrifying one which has the potential to consume her: “I struggle up through the tightening darkness, sealing in on me, like the crush of waves. I try and push up through the dark, which is wide open, too open, so I’m drowning in it, fighting” (233). It is important to note, then, that encounters with spectral elements in the novel are not always portrayed as comforting or generous. Rather, Kendra’s response to the spectral, acutely evident in the events leading up to

her death, are that of resistance and fear, thus, keeping in line with Derrida's definition of it as inspiring "a strict inspection or violent search [as well as] consequent persecution" (*Specters* 102).

Kendra's spectral transition or development, as closely documented in this chapter, refuses her any form of security and this is the precise threat that the spectre poses: it demands a future ungoverned by predictability. It becomes evident that the spectre can incite both freedom and fear in those who encounter it and, thus, its status as an uneasy ally sheds light on Kendra's tormented narrative. It is only in the event of her death that Kendra can return to the formidable ocean depths. Despite the claustrophobia and fear that she experiences, having described most of her life as 'poised between,' in her final moments she overcomes this limbo-like state. She is able to break her 'cycle of darkness,' despite the knowledge of her impending death, as her literary trajectory concludes with the word "fighting," a subtle yet important point that is necessary for coming to terms with her narrative (Beukes, *Moxyland* 233). It is in only in death that she is free from the restrictions placed on her identity and its accompanying anxiety. This is emphasised in the novel when, once over the initial shock and subdued by the drugs, Kendra experiences a sense of calm and admits that "[i]t's just like diving. Following the bubbles up, knowing that soon I'll break the surface" (233).

In a society like Moxyland, which is governed by a seemingly impenetrable force, the likelihood of sustaining an authentic, genuine subjectivity is arguably impossible. The system itself is reliant on producing uncritical citizens and works to suppress any dissent that would give the subdued masses the opportunity to think otherwise. Unable to breach the Corporati's control and aware of their impending assimilation, I argue that the novel's protagonists opt for alternative modes of asserting their agency. (Whether they are successful is deliberated upon throughout the chapter.) In terms of this thesis's spectral concerns, I have focused predominantly on Kendra's attempts to break away from her predetermined subjectivity and become other to her rationalised, acceptable self. In doing so, I argue that she is invested with a spectral subjectivity which persists despite her death and, through the transfer of her DNA to Toby, can surpass the limitations of the present and enter into the future perhaps uninhibited by Corporati control. Like her photographs, the nanotechnology acts as the remaining traces of Kendra's existence and what better hands for it to fall into than Toby, unstable and unpredictable, exactly how the 'future-to-come' would have it.

Chapter 2: Taking Responsibility for the Spectral Subject in *Zoo City*

If *Moxylant* tracks the disappearing subject and its conversion to the spectral, *Zoo City*, then, looks at the subject that has already disappeared. Both novels interrogate the relationship between the individual and the state, revealing the dire consequences that accompany acts of dissent. Whereas the protagonists of *Moxylant* are mostly eliminated for their insubordination, in *Zoo City*, perpetrators of crime are imbued with a condemned subjectivity within the social sphere. The latter novel, thus, focuses on the politics of criminality that have come to inform Beukes's near-future depiction of South Africa. In both of her texts, the author demonstrates how criminality is capable of being influenced by the discourse that acts upon it, as emphasised in the Corporati's involvement in Tendeka's staged terrorism. Spectral theory, then, and its proclivity to interrupt discourse, is an appropriate tool by which to approach *Zoo City* as it not only demands for criminality to be reconceived, but invests within the condemned, former subject a degree of agency despite their spectralised state.

Beukes's second novel is popularly described as a dystopian urban-noir depicting the divided city of Johannesburg, fixating on the space eponymously referred to as Zoo City. The city's socio-spatial division, reminiscent of modern day Jo'burg, is a direct consequence of the phenomenon referred to in the novel as the "Zoo plague" or (Beukes, *Zoo City* 61), in scientific terms, Acquired Aposymbiotic Familiarism (AAF). Beukes depicts this phenomenon, often associated with a 'pandemic' in the novel, as issuing a form of moral judgement upon the inflicted, a guilt sentencing of sorts, which is used to regulate urban society. Making this kind of prejudice possible is the fact that the most notable symptom of AAF, the appearance of an animal familiar once a crime has been committed, renders both the familiar and human counterpart subjects of moral contagion.

In the novel, to be animalled is to be separate from society at large, relegated to the margins of the city or, in the case of *Zoo City*, forced to inhabit the suburb of Hillbrow. By evoking such a stigmatised condition, Beukes calls into question notions of belonging, home and agency, all of which are withheld from the inhabitants of Zoo City. Deprived of the necessary requirements for constituting their subjecthood, I argue that the novel's animalled characters take up the position of 'former subject,' implying that their autonomy is in the past as opposed to the present. One such former subject is Zinzi December, an illegal dweller and scam-artist, and the protagonist whose narrative is closely tracked throughout the text.

The first half of the novel follows Zinzi's day-to-day movements as she is contracted with the task of locating the missing half of the up-and-coming RnB twin-duo, iJusi. The protagonist is endowed with the illustrious act of returning Songweza Radebe to the infamous music producer Odysseus 'Odi' Huron. Zinzi's involvement is later revealed as part of an ongoing man hunt, with her bounty being the outstanding component of an intricate sacrificing ritual. The purpose of this ritual, as revealed at the novel's close, is to rid Huron of his secret familiar, a giant albino crocodile. For this transaction to take place, however, S'busiso Radebe, Song's twin brother, is coerced into killing his sister so that the transferral of the Crocodile can occur at the precise moment of his familiar's arrival. In the mythos of the text, the sacrifice itself requires *muti* taken from familiars who have been separated from their human counterparts. Notably, this information is later revealed as the missing link in Zinzi's investigation of the 'zoo' murders plaguing the city.

Near the beginning of the novel, the reader is informed that, after being implicated in the murder of her brother, Zinzi is given her own personal animal familiar, Sloth. Along with the overt presence of the familiar, there is the more covert characteristic of the phenomenon referred to as "*mashavi*" (10), preternatural talents conferred to animalled characters often in the form of enhanced physical and/or mental traits. In Zinzi's case, it is her ability to locate lost and missing things which is responsible for her involvement in the missing persons case that dominates the novel's plot. More importantly, however, it is her unique, spectral *shavi* which holds her accountable to the dead as their 'missing' identities return to haunt the protagonist.

Zinzi's *shavi*, that which she describes as consisting of a web of connections between people and their lost things, forces her to confront as well as to internalise the histories of others, a revelation given to her during a visit to the sangoma Dumisani who asserts that: "[i]t's because you carry your spirits with you. It's the state of the world, my sister. Seven billion people have a lot of ghosts. Sometimes they get lost" (168). Accountability towards the dead, a spectral demand, takes into consideration the time and history of the former subject, and can be extended to the animalled characters in the novel who, while still alive, are deprived of their subjectivity. In pursuit of these ghostly subjects, Zinzi is led into the darkest corners of Beukes's parallel city, forced her to confront her past and to follow the threads that will eventually place her at the centre of a lethal *muti*-syndicate scheme gone awry.

By coming to terms with her unresolved history, Zinzi can extend this opportunity to

others by investigating the inexplicable deaths of multiple ‘zoo’ identities that occur throughout the novel. It could be argued that, through the act of returning lost or missing possessions, Zinzi is given the potential to reinvest animalled individuals with their subjectivity, forcing the protagonist to display a sense of hospitality towards the other found lacking in her “Former Life” (hereafter ‘FL’) (123). Furthermore, in doing so, she, along with the novel’s other animalled characters, is imbued with what I have identified as spectral agency, enabling her to act outside of the discourse prescribed to the ‘zoo’ identity.

If Moxyland is understood as the spectral metropolis that has come to exist alongside the city of Cape Town, then Zoo City is undoubtedly Johannesburg’s equivalent. By making the distinction between the recognisable cityscape and its haunted counterpart, Beukes enlightens her readers about the spectral communities inhabiting Johannesburg and pin-points the city as a literary locus of spectrality. In *Zoo City*, however, Hillbrow is portrayed not as the infamous, unwelcoming sector of the city, but as a sanctuary for those no longer recognised by the state, animalled characters deprived of their citizenship. For Beukes, the disadvantaged suburb has the potential to welcome the arrival of the future, along with those who will inhabit it, precisely because of the conditions of uncertainty and unknowability that characterise the locale.

Evidence of this assertion is in the fact that the neighbourhood’s most defining feature is its uncritical acceptance of animal familiars. Not wanting to romanticise circumstances born out of necessity, I argue that this form of acceptance stems from the refusal of Zoo City’s inhabitants to categorise and criminalise or, in other words, appropriate the terms behind the familiar’s appearance. Set in opposition to this welcoming stance are those in the novel who would advocate for a future free from the spectral conditions of uncertainty and fear that characterise the animalled condition (and take the form of the Undertow), opting for a present that is interchangeable with the past in the form of spectral appropriation.

Spectral appropriation, for the purposes of this thesis, signals a process whereby the spectre is confined to a certain discourse and placed within the limited field of knowledge. It is important to note, however, that, according to Derrida, spectral appropriation is always impossible because the spectre exceeds knowledge, ways of being tamed or contained. He asserts that “[o]ne does not know [the spectre]: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs

to knowledge” (*Specters* 5). Despite the impossibility of the spectre’s appropriation, I argue that the term be applied to identify and expand upon the animal familiar, as it is interpreted by certain factions of people in the text. Unlike *Moxyland*, Beukes’s second novel focuses on the overt aspects of spectrality that characterise both the city and its inhabitants. Thus, the spectre no longer arrives as the unknown other, capable of disrupting historical narratives, but is violently appropriated by being forced to fit into a discourse designed to neutralise its otherness.

In *Zoo City*, the spectral presence is manipulated to such an extent that, instead of disrupting the conditions that enable otherness, it enforces them. By demanding that the animal familiar conform to already established societal norms and values, its anonymity and unknowability is appropriated, turned into a symbol of guilt in a society fixated on marking its presence as criminal. As such, the attempted appropriation of the spectre reveals a desire for transparency, a condition set in opposition to the spectre’s unknowability, and which I identify as the need to monopolise and control knowledge in the face of uncertainty. For this reason, I would argue that the later novel’s depiction of society is different from *Moxyland*’s corporate apartheid state, founded on secrecy and the disappearance of evil, and it, instead, reflects a world regulated by unavoidable transparency in the social sphere. Considering this, the following chapter will look at the spectral subject and its ability to manoeuvre within a ‘transparent’ society.

In *Zoo City*, desire for transparency about violence and criminality in the public realm is responsible for generating the stigmatised presence of the animal familiar, which is synonymous with a criminal record, or, as Zinzi admits, a scarlet letter (Beukes, *Zoo City* 50). The familiar, then, is appropriated into a tool of moral surveillance in the social sphere which is administered by the people, the public at large, as opposed to the overarching forces at play in *Moxyland*. For this kind of self-regulation to be possible, the familiar becomes a necessary requirement in the constituting of a ‘zoo’ identity based on exclusion and hierarchy. As a result, I argue that moral transparency, as displayed in the novel, does not ensure the securement of society, as those in power claim it does, but, rather, places a foreclosure on the future of its inhabitants.

By refusing to acknowledge the presence of the animal familiar as something other than the product of criminality, the conditions that enable the construction of difference are perpetuated. The ‘future-to-come’ is thus forfeited in that, by conceiving of criminality as an

internalised product of the individual rather than a symptom of a society of which we are all apart, all held accountable, the community is absolved of responsibility towards the other. Furthermore, as if to combat apartheid's legacy of violence and poverty, the utopian ideal of moral and ethical transparency is placed at the forefront of the laws of social stratification and, subsequently, determines the requirements for subjectivity and citizenship in the novel. This is most evident in the ostracism of those in the 'zoo' community and the restrictions placed on the animalled subject, constraints which, I argue, call into question the very existence of agency and the ability to function in the public realm.

Animalled subjects are relegated to a position Judith Butler defines as "indefinite detention," which occurs when "certain subjects undergo a suspension of their ontological status as subjects [...] and when a subject deprived of rights and citizenship enters a suspended zone, neither living in the sense that a political animal lives, in community and bound by laws, nor dead and, therefore, outside the constituting condition of the rule of law" (67). And so, I argue that such conditions are responsible for the birth of the living ghost, made evident in the novel's animalled subjects, whose inheritance includes being initiated into a discourse centred upon their exclusion. In this chapter I argue that the agency of the former subject is restricted as his/her actions are immediately framed by a discourse of criminal intention and s/he is therefore subject to societal exclusion. With this restriction in mind, I examine the extent to which agency is prohibited in the novel once it has been invalidated by a certain discourse and the subsequent haunting of discourse which might ensue. In being denied recognition as full-fledged subjects, it becomes apparent that the animalled are inferred a kind of agency, which, by allowing the spectral subject to disrupt the continuity of the present, prevents them from being spectralised by it.

Spectral agency, in the novel, demonstrates the extent to which animalled characters can manoeuvre in a society that prides itself on their exclusion. The novel, then, "proposes an ethics that is comfortable with transformation, movement, and play – adapting difference – even if it is painful and awkward" (P. Clarke, 19). Adaption to difference is emphasised in the fluid construct of agency which is realised when animalled characters can manipulate the unstable 'zoo' identity assigned to them. Because of their lack of visibility in the social sphere, the animalled have the power to slip in and out of multiple character roles, enabling them to manipulate their identities to get ahead in a hostile environment.

Furthermore, I will argue that the use of magic, individually accorded through *mashavi*, imbues spectral non-citizens with a sense of subjective power, a kind of privatised infrastructure. Likewise, the overt role of magic in the text is also responsible for rendering the animalled subjects vulnerable because, in a society where everything can be repurposed, familiars are hunted and sold as the main ingredient for *muti*-magic. It becomes evident, then, that magic, like the trope of the animal familiar, is just one of the ways in which Beukes attempts to disrupt stabilised perceptions and show that one needs to form new ways of imagining the ontological shift brought about by the spectre.

Spectral Communities in *Zoo City*

In *Zoo City*, Beukes presents Johannesburg as a haunted space by imbuing the city with a shadow-like counterpart, the supposedly dark underworld of Hillbrow. Nowhere are the city's spectral dimensions more evident than in the ghostly parallels that characterise the clear divide between Johannesburg, the city of gold, and Zoo City, home of the animalled. Beukes has implied, in an interview with Sarah Lotz, that she believes "Jo'burg represents the future. It's this mad city with an extraordinary mash of cultures and economics, a huge disparity in living conditions and experiences that collide daily" (qtd. in Lotz). Clearly, then, the geographical and social divide portrayed in the novel is modelled on present-day Johannesburg. One thinks, for example, of the proximity between Hillbrow, an inner-city slum, and the wealthy satellite areas of Sandton and Randburg. Hillbrow, a convoluted space in South African history, is a popular location for the literary documentation of the post-apartheid city as, formerly a 'whites only' residential neighbourhood during the apartheid era, it became one of the first 'grey areas' of the city with the unofficial collapse of racial segregation. Despite its revolutionary beginnings, Hillbrow, today, is still conceived of in threatening terms as it is depicted as Johannesburg's crucible, a melting pot of various races, ethnicities and cultures.

It is because of Hillbrow's wide range of inhabitancies that Johannesburg is home to spectral communities, the likes of which include the homeless, refugees and, in *Zoo City*, the criminal. The unwelcomed presence of these marginalised sectors leads to an ongoing dispute between those who inhabit spectral communities, who Luiza Caraivan identifies as "former subjects" (94), and those who advocate complete transparency in the social sphere. Such transparency, I argue, is a relic of apartheid law and thinking, both of which favour the

adherence to prescribed social identities over human rights, and are intolerant of difference. Those advocating for transparency in the novel, the nonanimalled characters, display intolerance for the culturally determined other, which stems from the refusal to acknowledge the latter as an intricate part of the self. By refusing to accept the self as being partially constituted by the other, the presence of the latter is construed as a threat to the contained 'human' self, resulting in the promotion of fear and further depriving the animalled of their human qualities.

Loss of subjectivity, in the novel, occurs when the public is made privy to the individual's criminal history and are confronted with the abject experience of the animal familiar. On the role of the abject in the novel, Jocelyn Fryer notes that "just as the space of Hillbrow has been largely demonised and represented as aberrant, so have its residents been similarly relegated to a position of the abject Other" (6). Furthermore, Fryer alludes to the spectral status of the Hillbrow residents when she admits that they are "not treated as full subjects within their societies and are made to operate from a position of marginality" (7). Fryer's observation on the marginalised status of the other is reminiscent of the exclusionary politics of the apartheid state, although, in this case, difference is established through criminality as opposed to race.

Matthew Eatough, on the subject, focuses on the parameters of social citizenship in *Zoo City* and how they are based on patterns of inclusion and exclusion that made up South Africa's racially-divided history. He interrogates the relationship between citizenship and criminality in the novel by contending that it sees "to the creation of a new category of noncitizen in postapartheid South Africa, the criminal, whose self-evident maliciousness authorises an inequalitarian division of basic services eerily reminiscent of apartheid's race-based system" (709).

Eatough goes on to state that "[j]ust as under apartheid, the postapartheid state apportions its services in varying levels to classes of citizens and noncitizens" and (708), that to be classified as a citizen is to be recognised by the government as worthy of the infrastructure and services supplied by the state. The implications of this asymmetrical distribution of access to state infrastructure is that some can be rendered as noncitizens, which is, in a sense, a spectral position. Similarly, I would say that the encounter with what is perceived to be the "physical manifestation of sin" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 52), in the form of the animal familiar, determines the

identity of the other in advance as a non-citizen and, as a result, s/he is rendered all-knowable and overtly visible to the public.

Judith Butler, writing on the precariousness of human life, asserts that “it is not just that some humans are treated as humans, and others are dehumanised; it is rather that dehumanization becomes the condition for the production of the human to the extent that a ‘Western’ civilization defines itself over and against a population understood as, by definition, illegitimate, if not dubiously human” (91). She goes on to assert that “a spurious notion of civilisation provides the measure by which the human is defined at the same time that a field of would-be humans, the spectrally human, the deconstituted, are maintained and detained, made to live and die within that extra-human and extra-juridical sphere of life” (91). It is apparent, then, that the spectrally human are a necessary requirement for establishing what it means to be conclusively human. In societies like *Zoo City*, however, where violence is conceived of as a cycle that is impossible to break, Caraivan writes that there is “a strong relationship between the violent Other and the vulnerable Other – generally the victim, but possibly the perpetrator” (4). Beukes interrogates the relationship between violence and vulnerability by depicting both the former and latter not as mutually exclusive, but as capable of being internalised in the self (and, by implication, as not solely reserved for othering).

In *Zoo City*, however, the amalgamation of violence and vulnerability in the ‘zoo’ identity is rejected and deemed intolerable by the public. Such intolerance in the novel is captured in an excerpt from “Get Real: The Online Documentary Database” (Beukes, *Zoo City* 60), a fictional version of the International Movie Database (IMDB), and its review of “The Warlord and the Penguin: The Untold Story of Dehqan Baiyat (2003)” (60). More important than the review itself are the comments written by the public in response to the film, which is a documentary that tells the story of an Iranian warlord, a character made more infamous by the presence of the penguin at his side. Baiyat is recognised as the first animalled figure known to the public and, thus, the film’s reception is controversial to say the least. One response in particular asserts that “apos aren’t human. It’s right there in the name. Zoos. Animalled. Aposymbiots. Whatever PC term is the flavour of the week. As in not human. As in short for apocalypse” (64). The comment further stipulates that any association with the animalled will lead to destruction, going as far as to reference the Bible: “in Deuteronomy: Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor

and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction” (65).

What the latter excerpt reveals is the hatred and resentment directed toward the other and how, as a result, the animalled are deprived of their humanity. It repeatedly references the divide between the self and other, the split-self, and, I argue, it is precisely this split which Beukes hopes to address, not to restore a unified and whole subjectivity to those deprived of one, but to constitute that the self is always incomplete and in the process of becoming. Furthermore, by including this extract in the novel, illustrating the treatment reserved for the ‘zoo’ identity, the author demonstrates the harm that accompanies supposedly normative perceptions of what it means to be human. Subsequently, the excerpt echoes Butler’s thoughts on “the political implications of those normative conceptions of the human that produce, through an exclusionary process, a host of ‘unliveable lives’ whose legal and political status is suspended” (xv).

Despite the animosity directed towards the ‘zoo’ community in the novel, Beukes can interrogate the relationship between violence and vulnerability, and the self/other split, by rethinking certain aspects that are intrinsic to how criminality is popularly conceived. In a country, renowned for having one of the highest crime rates in the world, the author complicates previously perceived notions of criminality and justice popularly espoused in the postapartheid society. By writing from the perspective of Zinzi, a self-proclaimed former subject of society, Beukes worries the boundaries that define criminality in the novel, proving it capable of housing both violence and vulnerability. Typical of a literary noir, Zinzi’s status as a criminal and her violent history is rendered ambiguous as the reader accompanies her in an exploration of her turbulent past. While her association with violence is evident in her history of drug-abuse, a catalyst for her brother’s death, vulnerability is an inherent trait of her subjectivity.

This character’s positioning reflects what Gayatri Spivak has already attested: according to standards of social stratification, “if you are poor, black and female you get it three ways” (90). By imbuing the protagonist with her animal familiar, Beukes adds a fourth dimension to cement her social exclusion, that of the criminal. Through imposing upon Zinzi conditions responsible for removing her from the grace of civil society, Beukes places her in a position where she is forced to relinquish her ‘FL’ to her animalled status. In effect, Zinzi’s narrative attests to Butler’s demand that “dominant forms of representation can and must be disrupted for something about the precariousness of life to be apprehended” (*Zoo City*, 2). The

arrival of Sloth provides such a disruption, annulling the privileges of her 'FL' and rendering her inherently vulnerable. By forcing her to adopt a precarious existence, I argue that, following Spivak's thinking, Zinzi is required to "'unlearn' female privilege" in order to attempt to speak from the position of the "historically muted subject of the subaltern woman" (91).

As previously mentioned, animal familiars epitomise the relationship between violence and vulnerability in the novel in that their arrival is constituted by the act or intent to cause bodily harm. Despite their violent origins, however, the familiar itself is depicted by Beukes not as a bestial by-product of crime, as one might expect, but as possessing the innocence of the animal, born from violence, but not guilty of it. The familiar becomes a site of extreme vulnerability, a sign of the precarious life of the other. And, I argue, it resembles the Levinasian face, which Butler describes as "not exclusively a human face although it communicates what is human, what is precarious, what is injurable" (xviii). By presenting the familiar as the epitome of vulnerability, Beukes reconceives the popular form of othering, bestialisation, and transforms the negative connotations associated with the bestial into a positive extension of the self. By doing so, the author actively combats what Butler refers to as the "derealisation of the human" (72), which occurs when human beings are reduced to animal status, "where the animal is figured as out of control, in need of total restraint" (78). Beukes's conception of the animal familiar supports Butler's argument that "[i]t is important to remember that the bestialisation of the human in this way has little, if anything to do with actual animals, since it is the figure of the animal against which the human is defined" (78). Subsequently, the author, by refusing the normative requirements used to bestialise the other, can humanise violence or, rather, reveal that vulnerability is often a result of violence. Nowhere in the novel is this vulnerability more evident than in the connection between the animal familiars, their human counterparts and the looming presence of the Undertow.

The Undertow, as depicted in the novel, resembles the spectral because, according to the definition given of the latter by Werner Hamacher, it is "that which is most present amongst the things which can be experienced because it appears precisely in the open joint between future and past – or more exactly, where its apparently tight connection is out of joint" (181). I argue that the Undertow is a manifestation of this 'out of joint' position since it is described in the novel as existing outside of gravity, invested with the ability to disrupt time. As Zinzi experiences it,

The air pressure dips, like before a storm. A keening sound wells up soft and low, as if it's always been there, just outside the range of human hearing. It swells to howling. And then the shadows start to drop from trees, like raindrops after a storm. The darkness pools and gathers and then seethes.

(Beukes, *Zoo City* 208)

Hamacher goes on to say that “[w]hat appears as spectral is always the future and the future of the past as well, that which is not yet and will never be present” (208). In a similar vein, the Undertow epitomises death but also the future in that it is an unknown, fearsome entity, existing just outside the bounds of experience. It has been argued in this thesis that the future can only be inhabited by the spectre (radical alterity which arrives, in the novel, in the form of animal familiar) and so I would suggest that the presence of the familiar is able both to fend off death and welcome the ‘future-to-come.’ This dual responsibility is evident in the description Zinzi provides of her initial encounter with Sloth, upon the death of her brother – an episode which hints at the dynamic between animal familiars and the Undertow. She implies that Sloth’s abrupt appearance prevents whatever punishment the Undertow has in store for her: “Sloth is clutching my chest, his arms around my shoulders like a Judas hug. The Undertow deferred only for the moment. But not before I feel the dry heat of its breath,” recalls Zinzi (Beukes, *Zoo City* 175). Here, the Undertow is depicted as a monstrous entity that feeds off the supposed delinquents of society unless they are armed with an animal familiar.

By ascribing her characters with animal familiars who are imbued with the ability to fend off the Undertow, Beukes goes against the utopian impulse to provide humanity with a fresh start. The very term she ascribes to the spectre, animal familiarism, hints at the possibility of the familiar returning in an unfamiliar form. That is to say, the author refuses to erase the past, and the conditions that made it possible, as she does not want to present history with the opportunity to repeat itself. In the same way that the familiar acts as a reminder of past transgressions, so does the ever-looming threat of the Undertow refuse animalled characters a sense of relief and security. Instead, they are fixed in a constant state of foreboding, forced to learn to live with the precariousness that the Undertow engenders. It is the multiple ways in which the Undertow is interpreted in the novel that is responsible for its uncertain status. Zinzi goes on to mention just a few:

The Japanese believe it's hungry ghosts. The Scientologists claim that it's the physical manifestation of suppressive engrams. Some eyewitness reports describe teeth grinding and ripping in the shadows. Video recordings have shown only impenetrable darkness. I prefer to think of it as a black hole, cold and impersonal as space. Maybe we become stars on the other side.

(209)

The threat of the Undertow renders the animalled subject vulnerable and enforces upon the criminal a state of precarity that was previously obscured by a sense of safety provided by society to those it deems citizens. In doing so, the Undertow can upset the relationship between the 'saved' and the 'damned,' victim and perpetrator, causing a dissolution of these binaries that Beukes makes constant reference to throughout the novel. It is the potential for the violent and vulnerable other to co-exist in the self which, I argue, can redefine criminality and is therefore what allows the author to blur the lines between the binary opposition of law and lawlessness.

Having briefly commented on the self and other split in the novel, it is possible to extend this rhetoric to the geographical demography of the city. What becomes evident is the existence of a split-society, consisting of what I have previously termed spectral communities and an opposition that would see to the elimination of any threat to the stability and security of the city, who consider any form of difference shorthand for the apocalypse. Beukes goes to great lengths to reveal that efforts to gain a transparent society are responsible for the dislocation of whole communities, as well as for their very creation. In the same manner that the spectre is conjured only to be exorcised, so are spectral communities, consisting of those relegated to the margins of society, brought into existence by the very forces that would see to their removal. While this dynamic is acutely portrayed in the relationship between the non-animalled and the 'zoo' identity, Beukes also touches on sectors of society that resonate more deeply with the current South African condition.

Contributing to the spectral communities that permeate the novel is the constant influx of refugees and illegal immigrants, subjects unrecognised by the state and seeking sanctuary in the shadows of the city. By writing from the margins, Beukes attempts to capture the plight of the refugee as well as those who illegally occupy inner-city buildings (both of which are ongoing issues that continue to haunt the present-day Johannesburg). The author's interest in illegal dwelling and the refugee presence in Johannesburg is not restricted to the novel which

one senses when, in an interview with Sarah Lotz, she admits to being “inspired by the shame and horror of the xenophobic attacks in 2008” (Beukes qtd. in Lotz). In order to illustrate her point further, the writer speaks of her visit to the Central Methodist Church and her experiences and observations of the ‘refugee crisis’ in Johannesburg. The most startling aspect of the experience, for her, was not the devastating conditions of human life in the church, but the response of her Zimbabwean guide, which was disgust at the very presence of his fellow Zimbabwean refugees (Beukes qtd. in Lotz). The result of her visit, I think, was the desire to reinvest refugees with their humanity, which they had been deprived of, and to generate a new lens from which to understand the life of an illegal immigrant.

Unlawful squatting in Johannesburg continues to plague the post-apartheid city and Beukes is able both to capture and relativise this issue by depicting Zinzi as an illegal dweller in the novel. In doing so, this writer can touch on the sense of community and commonality that illegal dwelling and hijacked buildings often result in, and the roots that develop despite the illegal and non-permanent conditions of tenancy. The reason for this fraternity is that instead of sharing a common history, inhabitants of Zoo City share a present characterised by prejudice and uncertainty in the public sphere. The role of the community, while often overlooked, is of great importance if one considers the refugee status as the relinquishing of former identity in the eyes of the modern state. Unable to rely on previously acquired knowledge and frames of reference, both of which are rendered redundant in the new alien landscapes, the refugee is forced to learn “new behaviours, understand new rules and to adopt to new values and another type of social organisation” (Morrice 2). This process of “deep learning” refers to the vital necessity of the refugee to relearn, as well as refigure, their identity to suit the often-hostile context in which they have arrived (2). The experience of the refugee can be likened to that of a ‘second childhood’ as everything must be reinterpreted within a new context. The ‘zoo’ experience resembles a kind of second childhood not only because the animalled are forced to reconstitute their subjectivity in relation to the rest of the world to survive, but also in the return to innocence which, I will argue, accompanies the vulnerable subject.

Set in opposition to the transparent society of Johannesburg, Zoo City is one of the few spaces in the city where the presence of animal familiars is tolerated and public scrutiny is avoided. Despite being coerced to live within the confines of Zoo City by an unwelcoming

public sector, inhabitants find solace in the fact that it is a space where it is possible to acknowledge a person's history without needing to be privy to the details behind their informal incarceration in the area. Zinzi's experience as an illegal dweller reflects the capacity for communities to develop in unlikely spaces and it intimates the tentative security that such social orders can provide. As she recalls:

Elysium Heights wasn't the obvious choice of location for Starting Over. There were other, nicer blocks I looked at. But when Elysium's security guard agreed to show me the vacant apartment on the sixth floor when I asked him, 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. It reminded me reassuringly of prison. Only here, the doors open when you want them to.

(51)

What develops is an obscure sense of security offered by the spectral communities and the haven they provide for subjects no longer recognised by the state.

It is important, then, to consider the ongoing battle in Johannesburg to remove illegal immigrants from private premises. In the novel, Zinzi refers to this battle as a desire to reclaim Zoo City, stating the following:

[t]here was big talk about comebacks and gentrifications a few years ago, which led to months of eviction raids by the Red Ants, with their red helmets and sledgehammers and bullhorns, and bright-eyed landlords buoyed up on the property boom bricking up the lower stories of buildings. But the squatters always found a way back in. We're an enterprising bunch. And it helps to have a certain reputation.

(42)

As Zinzi's assertion implies, these removal projects are anything but stable, often conceived of as a temporary solution and responsible for causing the further displacement of already dislocated communities. A noteworthy instance, and one that has previously been established as personal to the author, is the 'successful' eviction of all unwanted destitute refugees from the Central Methodist Church. While this act is considered a success by the local community, who claim to have suffered financially from the presence of the refugees, it also acts as an uncanny reminder of the practise of forced removals that once characterised the apartheid regime. The comparison of the two is founded on the fact that hijacked buildings often acquire

community-like qualities and become home to the temporarily dispossessed. An example of the community status associated with illegal dwelling is evident in Florence House, a once pristine maternity hospital, which, since 2012, has been the home to illegal immigrants. The building is reported to provide not only cheap accommodation for its residents but facilities that include “a garage, crèche, church and, interestingly, an illegal mortuary” (Germaner).

I argue that, in *Zoo City*, Beukes presents her readers with a society obsessed with transparency, one that is consumed with exorcising the city of its shadows and the communities that inhabit them. By doing so, the author deliberately touches on the very real issues of transparency that exist in present-day Johannesburg and the wide efforts taken to remove the presence of unwanted communities, intolerable because of their illegal status. It is the refusal to acknowledge the presence of these communities which grants them their spectral status and, thus, is responsible for their prolonged existence. In refusing them any form of recognisable subjectivity, inhabitants are forced to adopt what is identified as a kind of spectral citizenry.

“Even Gangsters have a Heart Sometimes”: Reconciling Vulnerability with Violence

In Lauren Beukes’s *Zoo City*, it is possible to think of the spectral, that which simultaneously signifies the visibility of the guilty and challenges it, as a response to South Africa’s covert and corrupt political history. Its presence destabilises many of the tactics that defined the apartheid state (which was a regime that continually governed through misrepresentation, secrecy and distortion). As if to combat this history of secrecy, the society depicted in *Zoo City* reflects a time where transgressions, regarding violence in particular, are incapable of being concealed and judgement is determined in haste. Set against the backdrop of apartheid thinking and the history of silence which it enforced, Beukes presents her readers with a society at the opposite end of this continuum, one characterised by unadulterated transparency. In doing so, she can critique the logical extreme of post-apartheid thinking and its desire for full disclosure regarding the atrocities of the past.

The result of such transparency, while effectively regulating its citizens into becoming docile subjects, has also seen to violence being conceived of in performative terms. The animalled subject is appropriated and their subjectivity rendered singular, consolidated as violator as opposed to that of victim. It is evident, then, that, in *Zoo City*, those in power make it impossible for violence to be reconciled with vulnerability, which is a connection that has

been lost in a society that views the former as a performance, one capable of being commodified. I will argue that South Africa's recent past, and the consequences of the TRC have seen to a staged forgetting because, for national reconciliation to be attempted, the intimacy that is so often associated with violence had to be sacrificed. Thus, the society depicted in *Zoo City* has forgotten that vulnerability is a by-product of violence and, when the connection between the two is denied, perpetrators of violence are rendered inhumane, incapable of displaying vulnerability.

The utopian ideal of transparency, in the public sphere, is interrogated in the text and this supposed solution to past discrepancies is revealed as inept when dealing with the concerns for the future. I argue that the move towards transparency is set in opposition to the spectre, which is characterised, in *Specters of Marx*, by its asymmetrical visibility, its supreme insignia of power, the power to see without being seen (8). What Derrida terms "the visor effect" thus prevents any form of identification (6), any knowing of the spectre and is what allows for it to "signal that which is unquestionable – forgotten queries, inklings, and non sequiturs that remain unresolved or have not yet been raised to the level of a question" (Brendese 109). In *Zoo City*, however, Beukes comments on the gradual disappearance of spectral asymmetry and portrays it as that which has been subject to law, placed under restriction and prone to commodification. The commodification of the animal familiar is, in part, responsible for the negative associations attributed to the 'zoo' identity in the public sphere. For this reason, 'zoo' characters are predominantly portrayed as perpetrators rather than being recognised for their vulnerability and potential victimhood.

Indeed, the animalled identity, portrayed as taboo in the novel, is commodified as its supposed inclination for danger and violence is appropriated to suit the needs of popular discourse. For instance, the famous rap artist Slinger, renowned for his hyena *shavi*, is revealed later in the novel to be a publicity stunt, and games such as Grand Theft Auto VI: Zootopia "features a badass in a hoodie, packing a shotgun with a snarling panther by his side" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 89). The familiar, then, is treated as a fashion accessory. Further evidence of the eclectic response to the animalled subject in the novel occurs when, after being approached by an adolescent "Goth girl" bent on 'exonerating' Zinzi of her crimes, the protagonist is informed, that the interaction is a result of "that Hyena rapper guy, Slinger. He's made zoos cool. You're counter-culture inspirational, baby" (112–13). The commodification of the animalled status,

by non-animalled subjects, is revealed as being designed around a false pretence of social exclusion and intimidation as the 'zoo' identity becomes a symbol for the self-marginalised and outcast factions of society.

The popular rebranding of the animal familiar as an inherent site of violence has seen to the animalled subject being stripped of its propensity for both remorse and repentance, restricting them from possessing an identity apart from the violent other. I argue that acts of violence, in the novel, have become so entrenched in the society from which they emerge that they are only recognised for their performance value. Beukes references this theme of violence as performance when she has Zinzi witness the death of an animalled subject and his familiar. Zinzi explains the shocking scene as "a little 4 am drama [...] with people [on either side of her] leaning out of the windows to look, smoking and chatting" (206). She describes the street violence in almost comedic terms, observing that, following the fleeing soon-to-be-victim, "a Bear lumbers out behind him and looks both ways, as if checking for oncoming traffic" (206). Zinzi, too, is unable to prevent herself from conceiving of violence in performative terms as she, like others in the animalled community, has adopted the gaze of the 'coloniser,' which is to say, when privy to violence, both Zinzi and the non-animalled alike assume a response of disassociation.

By reducing acts of violence to their performative value, it is possible to assume that perpetrators are incapable of acting otherwise, of repentance and therefore exoneration. Such is reflected in an excerpt from the novel extracted from Zoo City's newspaper, *The Daily Truth*, which reports on the city's recurrent episodes of violence in, once again, a comedic manner. As the reporter Mandlakazi Mabuso asserts: "A young mom was hijacked on her way back from the crèche yesterday, but the baddies took pity and dropped the baby off, still in his car seat, by the traffic lights a couple of kays away. *Ag voeitog*. Even gangsters have a heart sometimes" (27). The emphasis placed on the unexpected morality of the perpetrator implies that those who commit violence are thought of as incapable of possessing a human ethics. Instead of resembling the human, popular conceptions of AAF range from animal familiars being conceived of as the physical manifestation of sin, to the more stigmatised presence of "zvidhoma" (52), the Shona word for 'spectres' and infamous for its supposed association with witches. As a result, I argue that the presence of the spectre is used by many to enforce preconceived modes of thinking in regard to violence, criminality and social stratification, as

opposed to disrupting them – and so it is repurposed. Furthermore, such spectral appropriation is responsible for generating the possibility of a closed future because, as previously acknowledged, to know the future in advance is cause for its annulment.

In *Zoo City*, Beukes demonstrates what occurs when the past, in the form of the animal familiar, is made unavoidably present as individual acts of violence are rendered synonymous with criminal activity. Jessica Dickinson, too, asserts that “the flexible signifier of Zoo-ness stands most strongly for criminality and criminalization. Although slippages persist between these two notions – the former suggests a way of being in the city, while the latter is a social marking imposed from elsewhere” (74). She then concludes that “both gesture to events of the past that are carried into the present, and that have implications for the future” (74). If criminalization, as Dickinson insists, is imposed from elsewhere, it becomes possible to view animal familiars, and their attached stigmas, as a creation of the society from which they have arisen.

The need to publicly condemn perpetrators of violence may well have some of its roots in the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the discourse of criminalization which, I argue, it would later give rise to. The country’s transition to democracy was guided by the TRC, a national commission which, in an attempt to break the history of silence that characterised the period, exchanged amnesty for the complete testimony of apartheid perpetrators. Further, proof that acts of violence were politically motivated was a requirement for entering the amnesty process. While the testimony given during the TRC, where victims and perpetrators faced one another and told their stories, was very intimate and personal, it could be argued that the focus on political acts of violence had the potential to eclipse that of the more spectral, personal offences.

Furthermore, to achieve democracy, the TRC advocated that violence be counteracted with vulnerability, shown by both victims and perpetrators, resulting in South Africa’s truth commission being the first characterised by public hearings. The public nature of the commission had the added effect of rendering perpetrators of apartheid violence vulnerable, for a popular perception at the time was that “one should regard the transparent and open process of the Commission as already a kind of punitive method [...] that is already a form of retribution” (Krog 17). It is evident, then, that perpetrators of apartheid violence were made vulnerable by the public voicing of their crimes and, subsequently, exonerated because of it.

Another factor worth noting is that, the moving of violence from the private realm to the public, a consequence of the TRC hearings, has resulted in acts of aggression being endowed with performative qualities, as previously discussed.

In *Zoo City*, the animal familiars function similarly to the hearings of the TRC as they too act as public admonishments of shame and guilt, subsequently rendering the animalled vulnerable to public scrutiny and dis-ease. Despite this resemblance, the AAF phenomenon is depicted as occurring in a time where vulnerability in relation to violence is no longer recognised. The animalled are denied the opportunity to be vulnerable and, as a result, are suspended in a permanent state of culpability. In effect, the logic of transparency informing the TRC becomes so all-encompassing in this text that many of the subtler aspects of the commission's processes are eschewed. By denying the animalled the same privileges offered by the TRC, an occasion to account for their crimes, the intimacy and vulnerability that often characterise acts of violence is neglected.

Furthermore, it could be argued that, in granting amnesty to perpetrators, the TRC advocated a suspension of memories by the victims in the name of democracy. This suspension of memory required that violence be viewed, and dealt with, as politically motivated as opposed to being conceived as a private and personal violation of the body. Depicted as a kind of staged 'forgetting,' these memories are suspended and not erased, the result of which is the possible return of the repressed. According to Philip Brendese, this return occurs when "the perception of a culture of impunity accompanies exaggerated economic inequalities that act as reminders of victimization" (12).

Writing on the politics of memory in relation to the TRC, Brendese draws on Nietzsche's premise in which he considers the ability to forget crucial in the process of national and individual recovery. According to the German philosopher, an excess of memory is "harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing, whether this living thing be a man or people or a culture" (qtd. in Brendese 62). He goes as far as to compare the effects of excess memory to that of sleep deprivation: "for, one who cannot forget is like one who cannot sleep" (qtd. in Brendese 45). Thus, it is apparent that, for democracy to be achieved, it was necessary to counteract the excess of violent memories that characterised apartheid. In *Zoo City*, Beukes portrays South African society as a space where the suspension of violent memories that characterised the reconciliatory era has been lifted and further magnified by the continued

experience of economic and social oppression in the present. Instead of acting as a memory vacuum to pave the way for reconciliation, the deferment of past violence has seen to the return of the repressed with a vengeance.

More importantly, the act of staged ‘forgetting’ that took place during the reconciliation process has itself been forgotten, suggesting that the relationship between violence and vulnerability is structured by memory. Not only are the inhabitants of Zoo City exempt from the transitional culture of impunity, but they are forced to carry their ‘crimes’ around with them, publicly distinguishing them as perpetrators of violence. Furthermore, the return of excess memory, in line with Brendese’s definition of it, provides a hegemonic mode in which the past is made meaningful resulting in the monopolization of memory. A consequence of such hegemony, according to Brendese, is that the past becomes ontologised and history is treated as “disguised theology” (46). Moreover, “history as disguised theology conceals the deadening of life’s receptivity to other practises of remembering, and also forecloses on possibilities of future iterations and inflections of memory, and with them, future possibilities for action” (46).

In *Zoo City*, the monopolization of memory, which occurs when one mode of remembering overpowers all others, is made possible in that the return of past violence is misrecognised. As Brendese goes on to suggest, the act of forgetting itself can be forgotten because when the past returns, it is not recognised as signalling a forgotten past haunting the present (12). Rather, “the ghost that comes back appears not as a revisitation of what has been, but what never was – the utterly new” (12). This thinking can be extended to the animalled characters whose condition is widely misunderstood throughout the novel. Those who misunderstand AAF do so because they do not recognise the animalled as society’s own repressed memories. It is evident, then, that for alternative modes of remembering to become available, violence needs to be reconciled with vulnerability and recognised as an unstable by-product of memory.

Zinzi’s narrative is imbued with contrasting images of violence and vulnerability. For instance, the delicate image of her bullet-torn ear acts as a reminder of her brother’s violent death, a result of his heroic efforts to protect her from paying the lethal price of her drug debts. It can be assumed that the bullet that killed Thando, referred to by his sister as a “white knight” in the text (Beukes, *Zoo City* 174), was destined for Zinzi who, because of her implication in his untimely death, is held accountable. The line between victim and violator is blurred as

Zinzi's indirect role in Thando's death marks her as an unwilling accomplice and perpetrator. Despite having had no part in authorising the violence against her brother, Zinzi is acknowledged as the catalyst responsible for his death. It becomes evident, then, that with the appropriation of the animal familiar as a site of uncontested violence, the ability to differentiate between perpetrators is absolved.

Another instance in the novel where victimhood is eclipsed by aggression is inferred in the author's subtle reference to Benoît's past as a child soldier. He describes the experience as crippling, admitting that "they did things to drive us mad. *Muti*. Drugs. Rape. Killing games" (228). Again, the line between victim and perpetrator is blurred here, because according to *The Handbook of International Humanitarian Law*, "regardless of how children are recruited and of their roles, child soldiers are victims, whose participation in conflict bears serious implications for their physical and emotional well-being" (Klappe 667). The possibility of conceiving the self as both victim and violator is better understood if the former and latter are not portrayed as existing in mutually exclusive terms, but on a fluid continuum which contends that violence and vulnerability are not permanent status. Benoît admits as much when he asserts that "there are camps for child soldiers, where they try to teach you to be human again" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 229). The trials of the Congolese refugee whilst under duress by the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group and cult, are eerily replicated at the novel's end as S'bu is manipulated into committing murder for the ritual to succeed. In the text's denouement, S'bu is tricked into attacking his sister, Song, in an act of coerced violence. It is evident, then, that he is rendered a victim by Odysseus Huron, drugged and manipulated into stabbing his sister to death. Despite the violent nature of his crime, like Benoît, S'bu cannot be held responsible even if the presence of an animal familiar is set on asserting otherwise.

Resembling Derrida's description of the spectre as a screen onto which all phantoms are projected (*Specters* 99), animal familiars become a site for public speculation – with the novel providing multiple theories stipulating their origin and purpose – and their association with criminality hyperrealised to form a dominant discourse of inferiority. Despite their inferior status being entrenched in the social sphere, "a caste below untouchable" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 86), the animalled are still subjected to laws enforcing dislocation, marginalisation and, in some cases, execution. It could be argued that the inclusion of the 'zoo' identity in the class stratification system, upon which the society of *Zoo City* is founded, makes the inhumane

treatment of the ‘zoo’ subjects possible. Because, for an inferior subjectivity to be eradicated, it needs to be systematically established first. Furthermore, in the novel, the spectre/animal-familiar is conjured repeatedly only so that it can be revoked, exorcised by the very power that calls it into existence. Such an exorcism, however, is impossible for it goes against the work of the spectre whose unique position prevents it from ever being exorcised, its definition derived from its ability to come back. Despite being deprived of autonomy by the dominant formations in the diegetic world of the text, it is the return of the repressed which cannot be vanquished and which, I argue, is where spectral agency is located.

Transparent societies, like the Johannesburg depicted in *Zoo City*, place value in the real over the imaginary and, in seeking out the official version of events, do an injustice to the marginalised, unofficial narratives of history. These spectral narratives seem to plague the novel itself in the form of disconcerting storylines that infiltrate the text and work to overthrow the hegemonic stance of official histories, breaking the bonds that glue narrativity with historical representation. To achieve this break, the author imbues certain narratives with the ability to disrupt historical discourse by stripping them of the coherency and closure associated with the ‘authentic,’ ‘linear’ structure of historical representation. The result is the advent of alternative practises of remembering that act outside of what I would call the hegemonic structure of memory.

An example of spectral disruption is evident in the visions Zinzi receives when under the influence of a sangoma’s *muti*. The hallucinations allow the reader access to her memories and the events leading up to her incarceration, AAF status, and the unknown details surrounding the death of her brother, Thando. The visions depict Zinzi’s last moments with him, the aftershock of his death and the arrival of Sloth, all of which are juxtaposed with recollections from her childhood. Each childhood vision, seemingly innocent, is tainted, almost prophetic, and seems to foreshadow the events that will unfold in the future. Reminiscent of the spectral, Zinzi’s visions can be aligned with Derrida’s assertion of time being out of joint, revealing that “[w]hat is happening is happening to age itself. What is coming, in which the untimely appears, is, happening to time, but it does not happen in time. The age is off its hinges. Everything, beginning with time, seems out of kilter, unjust, dis-adjusted” (*Specters* 96).

The first vision from Zinzi’s youth recalls an episode in which Thando is injured whilst in a playground. As if in retrospect, she describes the moment: “Thando falls off the slide. I am

only peripherally aware of this, I am so intent on chewing up the sour little flowers. He runs up to show me his skinned knee with pride. Blood runs down his leg, sticky like honey” (Beukes, *Zoo City* 173). This episode appears to mirror the next vision which depicts the aftermath of her brother’s death. Recalling a more recent memory, Zinzi watches as “a man with plastic gloves and a facemask pick[s] out globs of brain and pieces of Thando’s skull from the daisy bush” (173). Hauntingly prophetic, Zinzi’s adult drug-habit is symbolised by her eating the sour little flowers and this behaviour is what ultimately prevents her from fully experiencing Thando’s death, keeping her “so absorbed in the loop of please-don’t-be-dead, please-don’t-be-dead and still high” (174). By juxtaposing visions taken from Zinzi’s childhood and her later years, Beukes refuses a sense of chronology and presents the spectre as averse to temporal linearity and containment by revealing how the past can reference the future. It becomes apparent that Zinzi’s spectre, in this case the memory of Thando’s death, can act between and traverse discourse and can penetrate the so-called integrity of official narratives.

“They Already Look Like Ghosts”: Locating the Spectral Subject

Having identified the spectral, the ghostly, as capable of transcending discourse, informing narrative and disjoining its linearity, in the following section I argue that its appropriation as a metaphor is apt when dealing with those operating from a marginalised social position in the novel. Inhabitants of the ‘zoo’ community, deprived of autonomy in the public sphere, are invested with a spectral agency and provided with a framework with which to make sense of themselves. The livelihood of marginalised subjects is compared with the spectral position of the ghost with the intention of locating agency in the absence of bodily recognition. By opting to use this metaphor, however, a responsibility towards the other is required by academics and readers alike, so as not to impose upon the other a discourse capable of further entrenching their isolation and stigmatisation. As Peeren suggests, “[r]ecognising and taking responsibility for the way these ghosts *of* the present are created, perceived and treated is as important as dealing with the intrusions of past and future ghosts *in* the present” (*Spectral Metaphor* 14).

The implementation of the spectral metaphor as a tool of analysis of the novel meets with numerous obstacles, the greatest of which is that, in *Zoo City*, to assume one knows the other is to monopolise the presence of the spectre and, hence, control its visibility. It must be noted, then, that the metaphor does not enable forms of knowing the other, but allows one to

consider the possibility of acquiring agency in the face of such uncertainty. It seeks to render the desire for omniscience regarding the other irrelevant for the establishment of agency. For this reason, in the novel, the metaphor allows one to consider the way in which the narrator portrays the ability of animalled subjects to manoeuvre themselves in a society where otherness is classified and contained. The refusal to know the other, in the text, is demonstrated by the animalled characters who, in opposition to the all-knowing stance that surrounds the AAF phenomenon, abide by what is perhaps the most valued courtesy in Hillbrow, privacy – “[i]n Zoo City, it’s impolite to ask” (Beukes, *Zoo City* 1). As such, the novel’s opening line can thus be understood as an amalgamation of both hospitality and uncertainty because, in refusing knowledge of, and access to, the other, what is popularly conceived of as an inhospitable locale is transformed into a kind of haven, a space in which discourse is capable of being undermined, haunted.

The spectral metaphor, then, advocates for hospitality, understood in this instance as a responsibility towards the other, as a means of generating agency in the text (Peeren, *Spectral Metaphor* 95). For the relationship between hospitality and agency to be understood, it is important to note that the latter is always allocated, established elsewhere, and arises out, and often despite, the social structure, as opposed to being a function of individual behaviour. This section will look at the responsibility Zinzi owes to those who are, in some senses, disembodied, to those that “already look like ghosts” (Beukes, *Zoo City* 202). Her responsibility towards the other goes unhindered despite the, at times, peculiar nature of their arrival, be it her lover’s missing refugee family or the spectral return of recent victims of *muti* killings. The protagonist’s desire to return a degree of agency to the already spectralised other works in opposition to those who would have the animalled community remain marginal in a society whose refusal to be responsible for the other is synonymous with denying him/her agency. Consequently, it would be valid to say that the treatment of animal familiars in the text resembles Derrida’s critique of a kind of treatment of the spectre in which it is conjured, called up, only to be exorcised. This ‘exorcism’ comes in the form of marginalisation, incarceration and execution of the novel’s animalled characters and so, I argue, the spectral presence is appropriated to suppress the purpose behind its return and to forestall any kind of hospitality towards it.

Despite this refusal of hospitality, and its implications of responsibility, the

nonanimalled, or the not-yet-animalled, are held accountable for their actions due to the fear of becoming like the unwanted people who have animal familiars, and the stigmas attached to them. More importantly, in this panoptic society, they are obligated to take up positions of regulated and conventional responsibility towards the other, all in the name of self-preservation. Forced into adopting a somewhat limited ethical attitude towards the animalled, this kind of hospitality does not extend to the social sphere as those in *Zoo City* are marginalised and treated according to their criminal status. Unlike the non-animalled who, by insisting on full visibility, are regulated by fear and the desire to remain whole subjects, the “subjects designated as ghostly in the dispossessing sense of being considered invisible and expendable are not restricted to the option of rejecting the association outright by insisting on their full visible materiality and social significance” (Peeren, *Spectral Metaphor* 7).

Peeren’s theory regarding the subjectivity of what she refers to as ‘living ghosts’ is central to the concerns of this chapter and acts as an alternative means of establishing agency outside of the realm of full visibility. She believes the term encapsulates any groups of people who are considered or consider themselves “on the basis of their lack of social visibility, unobtrusiveness, enigmatic abilities or uncertain status between life and death” (5). Interested in the spectral position of the non-subject, Peeren examines how, despite the loss of subjectivity, agency is still capable of being established without the renunciation of one’s ghostliness. She looks to the spectral metaphor as a way of establishing agency from the marginalised or dispossessed position of the ghostly, non-subject. Subsequently, she does not consider the spectral metaphor as limiting, stating that those who make use of it “may also work *with* the metaphor, reshaping it to activate other, more empowering associations of the ghost in order to go from being overlooked to demanding attention by coming to haunt” (8). It is my contention that Peeren’s emphasis on the presence of the ‘living ghost’ provides a suitable lens through which to view the characters of *Zoo City* and the way they can manoeuvre within an exclusionary discourse. For, as the theorist admits, “the ability to act and be seen to act [...] is not necessarily derived from a renunciation of one’s ghostliness [...]” (16). Like Peeren, Beukes conceives of subjectivity in the novel as capable of being reshaped and generated from within a spectral framework.

The metaphor offers numerous advantages as it can imbue the animalled subject with a kind of spectral agency not found elsewhere in the text. No longer restricted by the pressure

and confines associated with full visibility, the animalled are either granted a form of empowerment: “they wore their animals the way some men wear weapons” (Beukes, *Zoo City* 52), or a method of getting ahead in an already hostile environment. Zinzi best exemplifies the advantages of spectral subjectivity as her character repeatedly traverses the line between what she refers to as her ‘FL,’ former-life, and her post-animalled present. Her experiences of the city range from her exploration of the city’s storm drains, which she despises due to “contempt of familiarity” (10), to her excursions into the high-end night life of Johannesburg. Her ability to access and manoeuvre the twin cities that make up Jo’burg is not based solely on her past vocation as a journalist but her ability to reshape her subjectivity because, as she concedes, “[i]t turns out that slipping back into Former Life is as easy as pulling on a dress. Fashion is only different skins for different flavours of you” (123). Zinzi’s ability to alternate roles and reshape her subjectivity is a direct result of her incarceration and criminal status.

Nowhere in the novel is spectral agency more evident than in the identities Zinzi performs throughout the text, which is to say, in the creation of falsified identities used to manipulate foreign investors in what she refers to as 419 scamming syndicate. Roped into committing fraud in order to pay off her drug debts, the novel’s protagonist admits that she has “become a master builder in the current affairs sympathy scam” (29), a requirement of which is to convincingly perform numerous online and real-world identities. She sardonically recalls the range of characters she has been asked to adopt:

[a] broken levee and an old lady with a flooded mansion, desperate to sell her priceless antiques cheap-cheap. A Chechnyan refugee fleeing the latest Russian pogroms with her family’s diamond in tow. A Somali pirate who has found Jesus and wants to trade in his rocket launcher and ransom millions for absolution.

(29)

These online characters reveal that Zinzi’s identity is no longer stable and they exemplify how she can use her ever-shifting identity to her advantage and to adapt to changing social circumstances. Her identity is transformed into a kind of role play which needs to be formatted and altered to suit the needs of the scamming market. One such personality is that of Frances, who Zinzi describes as follows:

a refugee in a camp in Cote d’Ivoire. Twenty-three years old. Suitably flirtatious if the *moegoe* on the other end of the line is a man, a good chaste Christian girl if it’s a woman.

More or less. Most characters are designed to be slightly flexible depending on the operator, although Frances is fairly one-dimensional. After the rebels attacked, she fled to safety, got stuck in the refugee camp, and now she can't access her father's fortune. Bog standard format.

(31)

By conceiving of identity in formatting terms, Zinzi alters her subjectivity to suit discursive practise. In a similar manner to that of Stuart Hall, she reveals shifting identities as “not [as] an abandonment or abolition of ‘the subject’ but a reconceptualization – thinking it in its new, displaced or decentred position within the paradigm” (2). Zinzi is no longer confined to thinking of identity in layman's terms and, rather, her approach resembles the ideas of Hall and his concept that identity, like deconstruction, operates under erasure (2). That is to say, both Zinzi and Hall are attuned to the inadequacies of identity while also being aware that it is a necessary requirement in order to function in society.

Despite evidence of spectral agency in Zinzi's performed identities, by playing a game with identity the protagonist makes herself complicit with the system that has rendered her less than visible, the system that reads the marginalised as less worthy of recognition. To prevent such complicity, according to Peeren, it is necessary to look at the ethical and political responsibilities involved in figuring people (*Spectral Metaphor* 5). Zinzi forgoes these responsibilities in her efforts to pay off her drug debts. By feigning to write from the position of the other, her scam letters further isolate the spectral subject. She both undermines and manipulates spectrality and, in doing so, does an injustice to those who would benefit from it. The consequences of her decisions are explained in general terms by Peeren's assertion that “if repeated and conventionalised, metaphors can define certain individuals or groups as superior and dispossess others by establishing or reinforcing negative stereotypes” (5). Zinzi's mass commodification of the other's ‘story’ achieves precisely this as she impersonalises and belittles the untold lives of others.

Her falsified emails are contrasted with Benoît's plight to locate his family in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as her letters are presented as interchangeable with those Benoît hopes to receive from his wife, Celvie. Zinzi's disbelief in Benoît's efforts is emphasised in an exchange between the two as she comments on the futility of searching for the other:

How do you know she even wants you back? Asked Zinzi.
 I have a message from her, replied Benoît.
 And I have a whole outbox full of messages promising untold riches.
 How do you know you're not just another *moegoe*, pinning everything on a dream that's
 patently impossible?

(Beukes, *Zoo City* 227)

Benoît emphasises his disdain for Zinzi's scamming habit by comparing his life to one of her formatted identities from the Eloria letter in which a boy, Felipe, is shot in the back. He further humanises Zinzi's formats by admitting that in his past life, metaphorically, he was responsible for shooting Felipe (228). By writing from the unknown perspective of the other, Zinzi manipulates the metaphor and, instead of taking up a position of responsibility for the ghostly subject as reflected in Benoît's attempts to locate his missing family, she performs an injustice to spectral figures by feigning their online and real-world presence, appropriating their identities, and further spectralising them. Peeren describes this injustice to the already spectral subject as capable of causing further harm:

[t]his type of ghost, lacking the spectre's association with seeing and being seen, cannot disturb because its very existence is put into question, erasing it from view; rather than putting the present time out of joint, such ghosts are themselves disjointed as the present spectralizes them.

(*Spectral Metaphor* 15)

She transforms the inexplicable stories of the other into an "ugly little fiction" and (Beukes, *Zoo City* 248), in doing so, further 'spectralizes' the already dispossessed subjects in the novel. Despite Zinzi's appropriation of the spectral subject, it is through her encounter with Benoît that she comes to realise the severity of her actions and their consequences – "the death of hope" as she calls it (229). It becomes apparent that it is not only the presence of Sloth which teaches her respect for the other, but Benoît's ability to hope despite his hardships.

It is only once privy to Benoît's admissions about his violent past that Zinzi comes to respect the metaphor as, having paid her debt, she goes on to publicly expose the scamming syndicate despite all possible implications. Furthermore, Zinzi takes responsibility for Benoît's traumatic injuries sustained during the crocodile's attack and extends this hospitality to his missing Congolese family. At the novel's end, she embarks on a journey to locate and reunite the family, knowingly exiting the country despite her involvement in the ongoing investigation

surrounding the *muti*-murders and her extended contract with Vuyo, her “catcherman” and syndicate connection (30).

Zinzi’s character development in the novel suggests that, while the onset of her ‘zoo’ identity may have stripped her of the luxuries of her ‘FL’ and “the creature comforts of [her] parent’s Craighall house with the pool and the gardener and the char lady who made [her] bed” (309), it is the ability to hope, epitomised in Benoît’s plight to rescue his family, that imbues her with a newfound responsibility towards the other. Notably, this is a sense of responsibility which she did not possess before her induction to the ‘zoo’ community and which is only instilled in her after the loss of her recognised subjectivity. At the novel’s close, Zinzi puts her *shavi* to selfless use as she attempts to search for Benoît’s family and, despite her previous disbelief in their survival, she states: “Celvie. Armand. Ginelle. Celestin. It’s going to be awkward. It’s going to be the best thing I’ve done with my miserable life” (309). In her attempt to pursue the missing other, Zinzi takes up a position of spectral citizenry as, by recognising the spectral status of the refugee, she is invested with an understanding of life and death that extends beyond normalised perceptions.

Moonsamy introduces the notion of spectral citizenry and, following Slavoj Žižek, explains that “in ‘post-transitional’ South Africa ‘one becomes a full member of a community not simply by identifying with its explicit symbolic tradition, but when one also assumes the spectral dimension that sustains this tradition: the undead ghosts that haunt the living, the secret history of traumatic fantasies transmitted’” (qtd. in Moonsamy 64). Moonsamy asserts that spectral citizenry can only be established through perceptions and experiences of death. For this reason, a transition must take place, one that views death not as an experience of radical alterity but as a “liminal reality in which the notion that life and death are divisible entities is compromised” (64). If spectral citizenry is determined by one’s experience and perception of death, then, in *Zoo City*, in being confronted by the Undertow, animalled characters are placed at the exact position between life and death. To the public at large, however, their status is that of a death sentence – death as radical alterity – and they are conceived only in terms of the living ghost. It therefore becomes evident that one can only enter into spectral citizenry through practises of exclusion and having undergone the loss of subjectivity, a consequence of what I have identified as spectral appropriation.

One of the conditions that both Peeren and Moonsamy prescribe to spectral agency and

citizenry involves inhabiting the uncertain status between life and death. This spectral status, along with the subject and the non-subject dialogic with which it is associated, is interrogated in the world of *Zoo City*, first and foremost, by the presence of animal familiars. The latter's apparent ability to defer the Undertow places them in a liminal position, a space exactly between life and death, which Beukes expands upon in the novel by providing an excerpt from a fictional online counselling database. Labelled under the heading "Masks of Existence: The Demystification of Shadow-self Absorption" (*Zoo City* 157), the reader is provided with a scientific account of the psychological response of the animalled to the threat of the Undertow. Caused by life-long anticipation of shadow-self absorption, dread of the Undertow, the trauma is depicted as "most often experienced as an irrefutable and ever-increasing sense of oblivion" (157). As a result, the position of the animalled is conceived by the public as a kind of death sentence and their subjectivity reduced to that of the living dead, the damned.

Despite this negative scientific account of the effects of AAF, spectrality exceeds science and cannot be quantified by scientific discourse. I argue that this ghostly position greatly resembles Moonsamy's definition of spectral citizenry which, according to her, "evoke[s] a desire to learn to live with the unspoken atrocities of history, as well as the spectral, phantasmagoric history of the events that have not taken place in this national imaginary" ("Spectral Citizenry" 70). Beukes goes to great lengths to reveal the borders between life and death as permeable and indeterminate, often doing so by depicting the materiality of the human body as not wholly significant to the work of spectral agency. She depicts the body's permeability in the story of Tyrone Jones, who, in an American prison where masculinity is determined by the animal familiar of the inmate, is bestowed with a butterfly. The butterfly, and the shavi it provides, allows Jones to escape the physical boundaries of the prison and to simultaneously experience the lives of others. Despite his incarceration, Jones is imbued with a certain freedom deprived to others. He describes the experience as follows:

See, when I go to sleep every night, I wake up as someone else. For the time I'm asleep, I live the day of someone else on the other side of the world. Man, I've been kids in Africa and India, I was once this old Chinese woman. Mostly I'm poor, but sometimes I get lucky and I'm rich. What I'm saying is, I can't hate the Butterfly, Butterfly breaks me out of here every night.

(Beukes, *Zoo City* 83)

His is a very apt example of spectral agency as, once again, his subjectivity is not confined to his bodily incarceration. More importantly, it provides the prisoner with the opportunity to become other to himself by literally stepping into their shoes, inhabiting their lives. The above excerpt also depicts the spectre's ability to render time out of joint and establish agency away from the material conditions of the body. This is not to say that the body is insignificant to the work of the spectre but, as emphasised in Jones's nightly out-of-body experiences, that it can overcome both corporeal and temporal limitations – even, as I will argue, in the untimely event of one's death.

By doing away with progressive linearity, the spectre indirectly questions the notion of finality or, as Brendese puts it, “[g]hosts interrupt the present and destabilise our presumption of a progressive, teleological linearity between past and future” (110). It is evident, then, that the spectre can overcome corporeal limitations and, in doing so, causes a disruption in its ability to haunt and remain undead. Nowhere in the novel is such a disruption more evident than in the advent of *mashavi* and the spectral status it imbues upon its subjects. One instance, undoubtedly the most inexplicable occurrence pertaining to the novel's plot, involves the nonsensical emails Zinzi receives from an unknown source. The poetics of the emails capture her attention and she later discovers the messages to be the ‘last words’ from the victims of recent murder cases. Zinzi half-heartedly accounts for this phenomenon by asserting that the dead have “[t]heir own special brand of lost things” and justifies it as an unknown consequence of her shavi (Beukes, *Zoo City* 266).

While this inexplicable phenomenon has been characterised as an occasion “where the narrative veers dangerously close to a ghost in the machine, a contrived plot device inserted to solve a difficulty that the writer cannot otherwise solve” (Barris), I would argue that it resonates with Peeren's understanding of spectral agency because, in her estimation, both subjectivity and agency are not restricted to the living body. Here, agency is not confined to the material and corporeal realm because, as Peeren suggests, living ghosts are “those people who, already in their lifetime, resemble dispossessed ghosts in that they are ignored and considered expendable, or, sometimes at the same time, become objects of intense fear and violent attempts at extermination” (*Spectral Metaphor* 14). In other words, their humanity goes unrecognised precisely because of the supposed validation of difference epitomised in their bodily existence. Thus, their corporeality is deemed other and intolerable, acting as suitable justification for the

eradication of all that is unfamiliar. It is because of their spectralised status that agency is not associated with the body alone but continues despite corporeal limitations, existing in a place exactly between life and death.

If one were to apply Derrida's thoughts on the spectral to the novel, it could be argued that it is Zinzi's recognition of spectral agency which compels her "to answer for the dead, to respond to the dead. To correspond and have it out with obsessive haunting, in the absence of any certainty or symmetry" (*Specters* 136). He speaks of a phantomatic mode of production, which I interpret to be the work of the dead, and which comes in the form of a kind of haunting of the living, preventing, in the present and future generations, "the amnesiac order of capitalist bourgeoisie (the one that lives like an animal, on the forgetting of ghosts)" (139). The presence of animal familiars, then, prevent this kind of forgetting and demand hospitality be extended to those no longer present. Caraivan views the phenomenon as a kind of ancestral haunting with the familiar marking "a return to nature and to the past in order to recover forgotten features and traditions" (101). Her understanding of the familiar resembles the work of the spectre in that, according to Derrida, such disturbances occur when "[t]he tradition of all the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (*Specters* 134).

Zinzi is confronted with this spectral tradition during her visit to the sangoma as the witch doctor tells her, "it's because you carry your spirits with you. It's the state of the world, my sister. Sometimes they get lost. But spirits are heavy, ne? They weigh you down" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 169). Her, albeit technologically induced, interactions with the late animalled victims can only be described as a kind of haunting which, in turn, obliges her to investigate the circumstances behind their deaths. What she discovers is that the victims are chosen precisely because of their spectral identity, which, you will recall, acts independently of the corporeal body, and the requirements of which are that they are in a possession of a familiar and that they operate outside of society. It is because of their outcast role that the disappearances of Patrick Serfontien and his Aardvark, a transient homeless man, and the "Sparrow boy/girl" (256), a prostitute in Zoo City, go unnoticed, which leads Zinzi to conclude that their social invisibility is "exactly what the killer is counting on" (264). The identity of the third victim, however, whose existence is intimated at by the presence of the Toad at the novel's close, is never fully revealed. The history of the Toad is not extrapolated on in the text, thus, making it possible to conceive of the creature as the epitome of the spectral in the sense that all knowledge of its

human counterpart has been lost. Despite this anonymity, it is only because of Zinzi's enquiry into the riddles, messages sent to her by the dead, and the significance she ascribes to them, that they are made meaningful.

Zinzi's investigation into the disappearances of the animalled subjects in the novel imbues their deaths with value other than that of their potential worth on the *muti* market. Furthermore, I argue that these messages and their anonymous references resemble what Beukes refers to, in an interview with Lenny Picker, as "subconscious things that surface from the dark waters. The ghosts of history and how they haunt our present, our connection to physical objects, and what that says about us, as well as social injustice, violence, segregation, and the scars we have to live with" (32). By interacting with the ghosts of history and acknowledging their extended agency as exceeding the confines of death, Zinzi is able to provide a kind of justice that extends beyond a commitment to the life of a living being. For justice, as Derrida asserts, must carry beyond the living present and into the spectral moment, that which is not docile to time. According to the French philosopher:

This justice carries life beyond present life or its actual being-there, its empirical or ontological actuality: not towards death but towards a living-on [sur-vie], namely, a trace of which life and death would themselves be but traces and traces of trace, a survival whose possibility in advance comes to disjoin and dis-adjust the identity to itself of the living present as well as of any effectivity.

(*Specters* xx)

In other words, to be just beyond the living present, as portrayed in the novel, is one of the ways in which animalled characters can learn to live with their ghosts. Zinzi's encounters with both the other and death allow her to assert a responsibility for the spectre that goes beyond the conditions of hospitality prescribed to the living. The protagonist experiences an interruption of the self in her narrative (that which Derrida finds to be synonymous with hospitality) (*Adieu* 51).

Conjuring the Crocodile: Taking Responsibility for the Other

The spectre's demand for responsibility is indirectly alluded to in the colloquial term *mashavi*, derived from the Shona word 'mashave,' and defined in the novel as the "spirits of foreigners, or of wanderers who died far away from their families and clans and did not receive a proper burial. Owing to this, they were never 'called home,' but continued to roam restlessly through

the bush” (Beukes, *Zoo City* 177). Not only does this definition resonate with the spectre’s ability to haunt, but it introduces the notion of responsibility towards the dead into the text. As previously argued, the act of haunting can be understood as a call to responsibility by ghosts and evidence of Derrida’s assertion that “the dead must be able to work. And to cause work” (*Specters* 120). Set in opposition to the phantomatic work of the spectre is what Derrida identifies as the process of conjuration, which enforces the finality of death and prevents any form of haunting from taking place. In the following section, I argue that acts of conjuration by inhospitable forces in the novel attempt to do away with responsibility by refusing to grant hospitality to the spectral, and by being unwilling to acknowledge the weight of the dead on the living. In denying both the other and death, refusing the traditions of the dead, the conjuring process works to exorcise the spectre, as opposed to dealing with it responsibly, and, in *Zoo City*, sees to the violent repurposing of the animal familiar.

In the novel, conjuration and its violent appropriation of the spectre is evident in Huron’s attempt to rid himself of his animal familiar – a large albino crocodile. Huron’s past, characterised in the novel by the mysterious disappearances and deaths of those close to him, is undoubtedly the cause of his animalled state. While it is not uncommon for animalled characters to keep their status a secret, Huron can successfully hide his AAF from the public despite his celebrity status and the inconvenient physicality of his familiar. To do so, the music producer is confined to his residence as he is unable to place geographical distance between himself and his familiar without being found out. It is because Huron’s confined state that he is forced to reconstitute his identity and present himself to the public as unable to leave his premise for reasons other than his AAF condition.

After his animalled transformation, the drastic change in Huron’s lifestyle is justified to the public as a response to being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As an article from *Krudo* magazine asserts, “[p]ractically overnight, Odi disappeared from the music scene and removed himself from society. He locked himself in the house, spiralling into depression and illness. There were rumours of cancer, even Aids” (Beukes, *Zoo City* 144). By rendering himself as an ailing victim to the public, Huron’s reintroduction into society is characterised by notions of recovery as he is focused on presenting himself to the public as a changed man, his mantra being “no interference. No drugs. No alcohol. Clean living” (144). I would add that his mantra is rendered ambiguous because of his failure to adhere to his own restrictions, and that his policy of ‘no interference’ indicates his desire to abdicate all forms of

responsibility, particularly by forgoing the home imprisonment sentenced to him by his animal familiar. Furthermore, Huron's designs to rid himself of his accountability are eerily misrecognised in his words: "I say that we should all shine; that we can all shine if we just focus, if we just get passed what's holding us down" (142). His attempt to exorcise his familiar, and its shadow of the Undertow, resembles the utopian ideals of regeneration so often responsible for the dystopian context. A baptism of sorts, Huron's desperate efforts towards renewal is exactly what the spectre opposes as it demonstrates an irresponsibility towards history and the other.

Eliminating the spectre is synonymous with the future's annulment and so, by ridding himself of his *mashavi*, Huron hopes to prevent the 'future-to-come' from arriving and maintain his status as the "The Once and Future King" of the music industry (138). By attempting to dispose of his *shavi*, he seeks to redeem himself in the eyes of the public and regain his mobility. More importantly, he is trying to remove the death sentence of the Undertow and the threat of oblivion which it ensures. Huron therefore refuses to confront the Undertow and take responsibility for his past crimes. In his attempts to return to full presence, he gives up the spectral position bestowed upon him by the other and by death, a process which is responsible for most of the violence making up the plot. Thus, the novel is centred on Huron's plight to exorcise his *shavi* and the complex process that such a task requires.

Upon meeting Huron, Zinzi is immediately aware of his attempts to separate himself from his history, his lost things. What she sees "belying the bigshot producer image – [is] a black tumour of lost things hanging over the man. A tumour that's eaten an octopus, but the fat tentacles have been amputated, so all that's left are stumps. Dozens of them, squirming obscenely" (74). One can interpret this 'tumour' as the remaining evidence of Huron's attempts to separate himself from his ghosts and destroy any reminders of past misdemeanours, anything that can potentially render him vulnerable. Furthermore, commenting on his procedure to remove unwanted traces from the past, Zinzi asserts that "[i]t's one of the worst hack jobs I've seen. There are ways to cut threads. A good *sangoma* can do it. But they'll eventually grow back thicker and coarser than ever" (74). This episode, depicting Zinzi's initial encounter with Huron, foreshadows their last meeting when, in her attempts to rescue Song and S'bu, she interrupts the final sacrificing ritual aimed at divorcing Huron from his animal familiar. By trying to exorcise the physical presence of his *shavi*, my sense is that Huron is attempting to rid himself of responsibility towards his past discrepancies and the anxiety that they impose on

him. More so, this violent ritual resembles Derrida's definition of "conjurement," which he contends is "a magical exorcism that tends to expulse the evil spirit which would have been called up or convoked [...] the exorcising of spirits by invocation, the exercise of magical or occult influence" (*Specters* 59).

Mashavi magic is depicted as a vital element in the conjuration process and is a thematic thread that permeates the text. Its role in the novel is first alluded to during Zinzi's visit to the sangoma who offhandedly reveals to her that it is possible to "cut your *shavi* loose" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 168). The sangoma, Dumisani, compares the process to the game of football, asserting that "[i]t's like soccer – you just need a substitute" (168). The actual sacrifice itself, however, is depicted as more violent and gruesome than the sangoma's brief explanation. To achieve it, Huron procures the help of his two henchmen, Marabou and the Maltese, who, in exchange for the crocodile, a *muti* investment, are hired to take care of Huron's dirty work. The illegal *mashavi muti* trade is depicted as the most threatening of all responses to the animalled subject and Zinzi first encounters the dark side of possessing an animal familiar in one of Jo'burg's storm drains when she is threatened by a gang of young street thugs who have taken to mutilating their own *shavi*. This act of self-mutilation points to the desperation of the most marginalised in society and, as the narrator sardonically quips, they are the ones that have "*mutilated*" themselves to survive (250). Such self-destruction puts the idea of crime and the criminal in a very different light as, in this instance, the harm is self-inflicted.

In the novel, Zinzi expands on the purpose of *muti*-magic in modern society, citing just a few of its uses: "[a] hack spell to scramble SMSs on your business rival's phone – easy. An affection charm to make someone feel more tenderly towards you, whether it's a teen crush or an abusive husband – a little trickier" (116). She reduces the mystery that surrounds magic to a science, admitting that "lab studies have shown that some spells work through manipulating hormone levels, boosting serotonin or oxytocin or testosterone. Simple on-off equations" (116). Zinzi also comments on the more abstract magic, believing it to be capricious with a tendency to backfire: "[a]nd the big stuff they promise, the Aids cures, bigger penises or death spells, are all placebo and nocebo, blessings and curses conjured up in your head" (116). It becomes evident that, while imbued with a certain magical talent herself, Zinzi is suspect of overreliance on magic, believing it to be defective and dangerous, both in its recreational use and procurement.

Huron's attempts to transfer his animal familiar, at the novel's close, relies heavily on

'muti-magic' and exemplifies Derrida's definition of conjuration in that it is depicted as a process of both invocation and exorcism. Evidence of the former, is in the invocation of the Undertow, a direct result of S'bu's drug-induced slaying of his sister. Made to believe they are in a video game where their weapons are magically stunted so as not to cause harm, S'bu and Song are coerced into a fight to the death which ends with Song being eaten by Huron's Crocodile. In the novel, the animalled can only be separated from their familiars through death and so, for Huron to live, his Crocodile must be transferred to another animalled person. This process can only occur at the exact moment that a new animal familiar is invoked and so S'bu is coerced into becoming animalled. It is apparent, then, that the Undertow, and the familiar that wards it off, is only invoked so that Huron's Crocodile can be exorcised or rather, transferred. The transferral takes place at the arrival of the Undertow, where S'bu is forced into accepting the familiar as his own and, once the process is completed, executed. The ritual completed, it is evident that Huron has not only transferred his familiar, but the responsibility of his past crimes along with his commitment to the other and alterity.

To vanquish the spectre, it is necessary to prove that it does not exist, to deny the dead their power to haunt. As Derrida puts it, "effective exorcism pretends to declare the death only in order to put to death" (*Specters* 59). In the name of reassurance, it certifies death to inflict it and so "it is effectively a performative" (59). He goes on to contend that nothing is less sure than the idea that what one would like to see dead is indeed dead, for this goes against the very definition of the spectral. To do so, he argues, is to refuse to believe that the dead can be more powerful than the living and it is precisely this mistake which Huron makes after the exorcism; convincing himself, to borrow a phrase from Derrida, that "what used to be living is no longer alive, [and] does not remain effective in death itself" (59). Trevor Hoag identifies the desire to certify the dead as a kind of mortification, the act of subduing bodily desires. He argues that, by declaring something dead, it is prevented from being memorialised and, consequently, it is supposedly denied its ability to haunt. For this reason, Hoag asserts that:

[t]he death of the entity at issue is far from guaranteed, it has yet to expire and be 'forgotten' in the vulgar sense of oblivion, so one accelerates the decomposition process by declaring that the object at issue has no pulse, or smells and is in need of ritual cleansing.

(8)

The conjuration process denies the dead their ability to work, to haunt, and is fixated on the exorcising of ghosts. In the novel, Huron disguises the deaths that characterise his past, that of his former star Lily Nombovu, as accidental, often refurbishing them as drug related, the result of armed robberies or car accidents. By covering up the cause of death of his murdered victims, Huron can suspend knowledge of, and enquiry into, the circumstances behind acts of violence and, as a result, he accelerates their forgetting. While Huron's shavi, his supernatural talent, is never revealed in the novel, his ability to hide the nature of his crimes from the public could be argued as an equivalent power, which is emphasised by his use of his Crocodile as a means of destroying bodily evidence. This purpose for the Crocodile is reminiscent of its use in *Ubu and the Truth Commission*; in the words of William Kentridge: "what has a wide enough mouth to swallow whatever we want to hide? Hence the crocodile's mouth" (viii).

It is important to note, then, that the spectral exists precisely because of its inevitable exclusion and it is for this reason that any attempts to conjure the spectral are futile. Derrida describes this futility as being inherent from the beginning in that, "as soon as there is some specter, hospitality and exclusion go together. One is only occupied with ghosts by being occupied with exorcising them, kicking them out the door" (*Specters* 176). In the novel, the inevitability of haunting is apparent in the gory sequence of events depicting Huron's demise by his former shavi in which Beukes reveals the consequences of refusing to acknowledge, and take responsibility for, the spectre. Having transferred his shavi to S'bu and seen to the child's execution, Huron fails to consider that S'bu, through the presence of his newly acquired animal familiar, can still be present in what may be the most spectral form.

Evidence of his prolonged spectral existence is depicted in Zinzi's last interaction with the crocodile in which she desperately tries to convince it to let her leave the underwater cavern unscathed. She reasons with it: "[t]hey're planning to kill you. Chop you up for *muti*. They've got all the tools waiting [...]. 'Monster like you? You're probably worth a fortune. I can help you. I can *try* to help you. But I have to get out'" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 301). Her ability to compromise with the 'monster' by convincing it to let her escape contrasts its violent role in the conjuration process just moments before. No longer under the lethal influence of Huron, I argue that the Crocodile adheres to Zinzi's request as a last act of agency administered by S'bu. Furthermore, later, once Zinzi has escaped with Benoît at her side, she witnesses the Crocodile gain its revenge, describing Huron's death at its jaws as "almost gentle. But then it clamps

down. Its teeth rip into his stomach. Huron screams like a slaughterhouse pig in a PETA video” (302). Despite Huron’s efforts to evade the Undertow, and its enforced responsibility, he is dragged into it by his former *shavi*. Zinzi’s distrust in the use of magic is validated as, despite the success of the ritual, Huron is unable to escape his fate. It therefore becomes apparent that it is impossible to exorcise the spectre who, according to Derrida, is a meeting place for hospitality and exclusion. As emphasised in Huron’s futile attempt, the responsibility one owes to the dead is endless. It is impossible to be free of it.

By exorcising his familiar, Huron refuses to be hospitable to the spectre and denies the ghost its ability to haunt and receive its justice from the living. Zinzi’s response to the work of the dead stands in contrast to Huron’s as she attempts to assume responsibility for the disregarded death of the animalled other. Despite her previous assumption that, “[m]aybe that’s all your talent is for, a distraction to keep you preoccupied until the blackness comes rushing in” (170), Zinzi comes to treat her *shavi* as a kind of privatised infrastructure, a form of empowerment, as her talent to locate missing things allows her to continue the work of the spectralised, unseen other. By using her *shavi* to discover the happenings surrounding the disappearance of the animalled characters, Zinzi’s behaviour can be conceived of as an act of absolute hospitality. The latter, according to Derrida:

[...] requires that I open up my home and that I give not only you the foreigner, but to the absolute unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names.

(*Of Hospitality* 25)

The protagonist’s extended responsibility to the already dead is mirrored in the death of Song at the hands of her sibling, a scene reminiscent of Zinzi’s own past and her role in the murder of her brother, Thando. Not only does S’bu’s drugged state parallel that of Zinzi who refers to herself as still high at the time of Thando’s death, but her precise role in his murder is never explicitly revealed to the reader. Zinzi’s own crime cannot be divorced from the discourse of violence from which it arose; however, through her intervention in the conjuration process, she can witness the inherent presence of innocence and vulnerability in what can be described as the novel’s obscenest act of violence. This vulnerability is depicted in S’bu’s uncertainty and inability to account for his actions when murdering his sister. Furthermore, despite being unable to clear her name, Zinzi can extend this courtesy to the twins and provide a sense of justice in

the wake of their untimely deaths. Instead of having the public believe their tragic deaths as the result of an uncontained fire, as Huron would have it, by revealing the truth behind their deaths she reinvests the twins with their vulnerability and, subsequently, their victimhood.

Zoo City is a novel centred on the notion of responsibility towards the other and the hospitality that the former task entails. Subsequently, I argue that Zinzi's attempts to rescue Benoît and the twins force her to confront her fears as she describes her journey into Huron's underwater cavern as "swimming into the heart of the Undertow" (Beukes, *Zoo City* 288). Having previously argued the Undertow as representative of the future, it is possible to conceive of Zinzi's exploration of the 'future-to-come,' in opposition to Huron, as being defined by her hospitality towards the other. By blurring the lines between the other and the criminal, Beukes emphasises the difficulty that characterises the granting of such hospitality and the imposition it places on the host. In her writing, she juxtaposes the divide between those in power who desperately seek to destroy all evidence of responsibility towards the other, Odi Huron, and the likes of Zinzi, bent on following the threads, returning what is lost and taking up responsibility for the dead. Her investigation into the murdered animalled victims, along with her decision, at the novel's close, to locate Benoît's missing family and ensure their return, can be understood as an act of unconditional hospitality to ghosts, a commitment to the undying.

In this chapter, I have argued that Beukes challenges the reader to consider the self as having the potential to house a propensity for both violence and vulnerability. And, by being open to the idea of the self as other, it is possible to change the way alterity is received, a requirement on which, as it has been argued, the future depends. By rendering the distinction between the self and other ambiguous, the author calls for a re-conception of what it means to be a criminal in a country where crime is indistinguishable from the experience of everyday life. She also demonstrates what occurs when the divide between perpetrators and victims is solidified and how this chasm is capable of instigating further violence and repeating cycles of victimhood. Beukes's *Zoo City*, as I have argued, documents the overriding response to otherness, in the form of the criminal, and reveals how, like that of most countries of recovery, confrontation occurs on a daily-bases. It is for this reason that Beukes's controversial interaction with Eugene de Kock at the 2016 Franschhoek Literary Festival is an interesting point on which to conclude this chapter as it sheds light on the difficulty experienced when

confronted with perpetrators of the past in the shelter of the present.

The instinctive response of the festival goers, once aware of De Kock's highly contested presence, was to ask him to leave the event and Beukes, having supposedly consulted with the guests, was at the forefront of this undertaking. Her actions have led her to be accused of speaking on behalf of the black writers present – as self-righteous and sanctimonious, in other words. Not wanting to be mistaken for sympathising with De Kock, who the country knows more popularly as 'Prime Evil,' or the atrocities he committed under the law of apartheid, I think that the country's national desire to achieve reconciliation took a step back the moment the former Vlakplaas commander was asked to vacate the vicinity. His presence, while harmful to some, could be argued to epitomise the ideals of the TRC: to conceive of a space in which both victims and perpetrators of apartheid are integrated, "close enough to touch, close enough to punch" (Msimang, "An (im)possible Situation"). Sisonke Msimang, opposed to Beukes's involvement, considers the incident a result of "the long shadow of apartheid casting its pall over the literati who had believed for a moment that we were a rainbow" ("An (im)possible Situation"). Beukes's involvement, while born from good intentions, and her refusal to extend her hospitality to include the 'criminal' other, demonstrates the ease with which it is possible to relapse into the secure and tired conventions of othering.

Conclusion: Welcoming the Spectre

This thesis has tracked what I argue is the pervading presence of the spectre and the latter's allusions to the ghostly in Lauren Beukes's South African fiction. By identifying instances in her novels, *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*, where the familiar has been rendered uncanny, and by tracing the disorientation that follows, it is possible to view Beukes's fiction through a spectral lens. Such a lens is, above all else, inspective in that it allows the viewer to focus on certain societal disturbances to show that no matter the conditions of the present, the future is always at risk of being exorcised, sacrificed to the security offered by repetition. The dystopian genre employed in Beukes's novels works to show that the moment the past is perceived as intolerable, as made evident in *Moxyland*, or indispensable, *Zoo City*, the prospect of the future is called into question. Despite the constant threat of its elimination, however, hope for the future is located in Beukes's protagonists, who, in the face of unrelenting circumstances, are able to take up alternative forms of subjectivity to suit their ever-changing modes of existence.

Inspired by the proliferation of dystopian fiction that has emerged out of South Africa in recent years, I have attempted to portray the genre as a worthwhile field of study that extends beyond its generalised association with 'young adult' enjoyment. For the sake of clarity, I have focused solely on Beukes's fiction. Yet, there are a host of authors, including the likes of Sarah Lotz, Charlie Human and Lily Herne, who have all contributed to the dystopia's recent popularity. By writing for a genre that one could argue is set in opposition to the very notion of nostalgia, these authors profess a longing to depict not 'what was,' but what 'will be.' I have attempted to comment on the reasoning behind South African post-transitional fiction having found a mouthpiece in the dystopian genre which, as Sargent asserts, has a propensity for "social dreaming" (qtd. in Baccolini and Moylan, "Introduction" 5). One can define the latter as the ability to reconceptualise an already inhabited space, thereby allowing for a kind of haunting to take place. I argue that, like the previously mentioned authors, Beukes transforms a once recognisable space into an unknowable locale and, by doing so, not only provides a commentary on the society she depicts, but emphasises the need for a revised understanding of subjecthood as one of the requirements for entering the future.

Furthermore, by using spectral theory as this thesis's leading theoretical framework, I have attempted to demonstrate its value and potential as an independent academic discourse. It is important to note that this thesis is not the first to have recognised the affiliation that exists

between Lauren Beukes's novels and the notion of the spectral. In her essay, "Specters of Cyberpunk: Haunted Spaces in Lauren Beukes's *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*," Malisa Kurtz introduces the notion of the ghost as playing a central role in making visible that which is absent, in South Africa's case, the enduring legacy of apartheid and the violence and exploitation which characterises the postcolonial setting. Kurtz addresses important issues such as cyberpunk's fantasy of disembodiment and, more relevant to this investigation, the ability of ghosts to "enact countermemories against which alternative visions of the future may be imagined" (66). She also makes use of the term "racialized capitalism" in order to capture the new framework that has succeeded the apartheid logic and which continues to haunt the living (67). What Kurtz views as the continuation of an "invisible apartheid" (84), I have argued is an apt example or symptom of what Derrida refers to as a future that is inherently closed, a temporalised future that is planned for in advance, treated as a "continuation of the present or a projection of the present beyond itself" (Lucy 115). It is this understanding of the future, as that which needs to be supervised and controlled, which characterises Beukes's texts and the South African cities they invoke, exposing any regime which seeks to manipulate the outcome of the future in advance as guilty of the future's annulment.

Beukes's own critical take on the future diverges from the dystopic societies depicted in her novels, which are founded on the suppression and exclusion of narratives that would attempt to imagine a future other to that of the designated present. The author emphasises the importance of being critical of the future in a conference talk at the 2014 Design Indaba in Cape Town, where she begins her presentation with the statement: "those who cannot remember history are doomed to repeat it and those who cannot imagine the future are doomed to fuck it up" ("Lauren Beukes on Fiction"). She experiments with ideas of how the past informs the future through the telling of stories and the positions from which they are told. One example she gives is based on San rock art and a depiction that she personally came across: that of a seventeenth-century ship. Her first point is that, like the artist who presumably had to travel great distances to witness the ship and then return to record its presence, it is necessary to go out and find new ways of seeing things in order to describe what is occurring around us, in order to imagine the impossible ("Lauren Beukes on Fiction"). Her reference to the Khoi San also introduces the marginalised narratives of history and toys with the exclusionary nature that so often accompanies narrating history. Through the inclusion of rock art in her

presentation, Beukes exemplifies how the past can inform the future, as she demonstrates the lessons we could potentially learn from interacting with historical cultures and narratives. It should be evident, then, that this novelist is interested in how histories are written and then overwritten, presented and displayed, for it is here where the spectre makes its re-appearance.

The spectre, as depicted in Beukes's novels, is representative of a suppressed past and, as Avery Gordon claims, makes its appearance when "entire societies become haunted by terrible deeds that are systematically occurring and are simultaneously denied by every public organ of governance and communication" (*Ghostly* 64). This failure to deal with past and historical events sufficiently is evident in the dystopian futures of both *Moxyland* and *Zoo City*, periods removed from their recent past and isolated in a present state that looks upon historical events as illicit and taboo. In capturing the resentment directed towards the past, Beukes demonstrates the narrow-mindedness that arises in the absence of any form of interrogation of history. Furthermore, the author reveals the potential for insularity; that which occurs when consideration of the past is rendered as a kind of treason as it is viewed as synonymous with the apartheid state (that which is tantamount to *Moxyland's* history of mass epidemics and episodes of terrorism). This lack of historicity and failure to consider the past, however, does not mean that it is no longer present, a factor which is both emphasised and exaggerated in Beukes's second novel. In *Zoo City*, attention to the past is appropriated, used to enforce a criminal sentencing upon those affiliated with AAF and its radical phenomenality. It is evident, then, that by failing to deal with past responsibly and in its entirety, conditions for selective othering can persist, which, in turn, allows those in power to determine the requirements for possession of a legitimate and recognised form of subjectivity.

If *Moxyland* looks at the disappearing subject, *Zoo City*, by contrast, focuses on how to take responsibility for a subject that has already disappeared, what this thesis refers to as living ghosts. Both novels deal with spectral subjectivities or rather, what becomes of subjectivity when the society in question is adamant on its suppression. The spectre, then, in analytical terms, is a tool of critique, allowing one to question and analyse, even in the most stifled and oppressive contexts. Such a tool is important when considering communities such as the Cape Town of *Moxyland*, described by Beukes on an online blog, as a place where "the enemy has become so much more nebulous, when there is no Big Bad [...] where it's the social fabric we live in" (qtd. in Green). Spectral theory, it has been argued, can expose the requirements placed

on the future as well as encouraging a need to imagine the future despite the limitations placed on the present, be it the overwhelming propensity for neoliberalism in modern society or the aversion to difference that so often accompanies systems of social stratification.

Moxyland is, at times, a disturbing novel that grants its readers access to a future society whose governing body is as unwelcoming to its inhabitants as it is unforgiving in its practises and attempts to acquire hegemonic control. The novel's bleak outlook acts as a prophetic vision, revealing the extreme conditions that present day urban Cape Town might succumb to in its attempts to maintain its cosmopolitan status. It could be argued, then, that Beukes's writing is pre-emptive in its ability to acknowledge the harrowing solutions capable of being implemented when dealing with the unrest that exists beneath the city's calm façade. In light of this, the novel demonstrates the need for a revolution in perceptions, for the introduction of a lens capable of dealing with a terror that has been rendered invisible, inseparable from the society of which we, as South Africans, are all a part. Beukes offers an alternative vantage point through which to penetrate the totalising, official structure of history which works to assimilate difference, marginalise opposition and refuse the sustainable identity of the individual. It is apparent that the spectre, then, is a particularly apt lens through which to reveal the totalising narrative of history for its very essence is comprised of the relationship between absence and presence, the visible and invisible.

In the novel, the city of Moxyland comes to replace that of Cape Town and exists as evidence of what might happen if one were to take certain elements of post-apartheid society and its exclusionary politics to their logical extreme. Beukes's panoptic society exposes how an undeterred belief in certain ideologies and uncritical acceptance of systematic control has the ability to be transformed into a kind of national weapon capable of instigating oppression and despotism. Evidence of these oppressive controls is exemplified in the attention Beukes places on public security, and how it is transformed into a method of coercion dependent on the constant production of fear, and political activism, converting the right to protest into intentional acts of terrorism. Beukes presents her readers with four unique responses to the instilled oppression of Moxyland subjects, each encompassing an individual attempt to act outside of Corporati control. Unable to be granted a recognised position in society, subjects are forced to act outside of this logic, with the inhabitants of Moxyland working to gain a spectral citizenry. Nowhere is this more evident than in Kendra's documentation of the disintegration

of her subjectivity. It could be argued that her entire narrative is an elegy to her disappearance, unknowingly documenting her transition into the spectral.

Beukes's literary take on the Cape Town of 2018, while unsympathetic when dealing with its characters' individual and often fatal trajectories, resists classification as, neither hopeful nor hopeless, *Moxyland*, like the spectre, evades understanding and operates outside of the limits placed on the dystopian genre. Instead, the novel anticipates a spectral presence capable of operating as what del Pillar Blanco and Peeren describe as a "powerful metaphor for encounters with disturbing forms of otherness" ("Introduction" 3). It is this otherness located "inside the self, the home and the homeland" which refuses all previously held notions of safety and security in the novel and manifests in the frustration experienced by each protagonist (3). It causes a disruption, renders time out of joint, and in doing so demands a response as well as participation by the novel's characters. Such a response resonates with Derrida's reasoning that, when facing any spectre, the aim should not be to exorcise or assimilate, but to live with it so that it may live on. This work (if one may call it that) entails adopting an ethical attitude of open expectancy that approximates absolute hospitality, a welcoming without imposing conditions or, according to Moonsamy, "a desire to live with the unspoken atrocities of history, as well as the spectral, phantasmagoric history of events that have not taken place in the national imaginary" ("Spectral Citizenry" 73).

In *Zoo City*, Beukes depicts the ongoing battle to come to terms with the spectre or, as Derrida so finely puts it: "[t]o learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts" (*Specters* xviii–xix). The author portrays this battle as taking place in a country whose extreme efforts to renounce the atrocities of the past have only worked to repeat them, subsequently rendering the past indispensable to the construction of the novel's dystopic present. I argued that, by refusing to acknowledge the return of the repressed, in the form of animal familiars, the battle between hospitality and exclusion perseveres and transforms the city of Johannesburg into a haunted locale.

The growing conflict between hospitality and exclusion is best epitomised in the distribution of subjecthood and agency as illustrated in the novel. This distribution does not favour Beukes's animalled characters who, having been deprived of the agency in the public realm, are forced to establish alternative means of generating subjective power. Forced into

operating from a marginalised position, this peripheral existence can be reconceived as a position of haunting, thus, enabling the animalled a spectral response. Furthermore, by introducing Peeren's spectral metaphor to the analysis of the text, it is possible to discern a shift in thinking regarding agency and its confinement to the living subject. When viewed in this light, the spectral subject is recognised for its ability to return and reply despite its disappearance. Or, in Derrida's words, "[t]he one who disappeared appears still to be *there*, and his apparition is not nothing" (120).

Set in opposition to spectral agency, and the learning to live with ghosts that it entails, is what I identify as the elimination of the spectre, a process of conjuration which denies both the work of alterity and death. Authorised by those in the novel opposed to the agency of haunting, it can be argued that the conjuring of the spectre is an act of silencing the already muted response of the dead. In *Zoo City*, to conjure the spectre not only denies all forms of responsibility to the other, but, in signifying a return of agency within the public realm, aspires to achieve the impossible. Thus, most the novel's violence is centred on efforts to exorcise Huron's spectre, his Crocodile, and his desire to return to a state of wholeness, the unattainable reparation of the self/other split. This impossible longing to possess a unified subjectivity is set in opposition to the fluid identities of spectral citizenry taken up by the novel's animalled characters.

Unlike Huron, Zinzi makes no attempt to return to her 'FL,' former life, and, for this reason, she embraces her animalled state. Her acceptance of the spectre, in the novel, is acknowledged as a taking up of responsibility, one that is directed towards the other existing within herself, but also that extends beyond the confines of the living. Her actions mirror the words of Joshua Gunn who, on the subject of the spectre, suggests that "the purchase of haunting is ultimately an ethical one, a commitment toward the other or alterity that hesitates administering last rights – the claims to truth and final ends – in favour of an openness to surprise, to what a given ghost has to say" (qtd. in Hoag 97).

It is apparent, then, that both of Beukes's novels depict the need for an ethics capable of welcoming the spectre and the conditions of uncertainty and unknowability to which it alludes. In order for this kind of hospitality to be possible, Beukes seems to say, a new kind of subjectivity is required or, rather, subjectivity needs to be done away with all together. As is the case with Kendra and Zinzi, protagonists who undergo a radical revisioning of their

subjectivity, leading them into forced encounters with the self as other. Once again, it is the knowledge and acceptance of the impossibility of possessing an undisputed, 'wholesome' subjectivity, which is instrumental in taking up a position of spectral citizenry. Such citizenry allows one to be conscious of the discourse of which we are all a part and so, as I have argued, discourse is capable of being haunted by the very subjects it works to harm. Thus, to view the self as spectral and, hence, privy to the machinations of discourse, is to remain open to the 'future-to-come' and is, perhaps, the only way to enter a future free from the controls encountered in *Moxylant* and *Zoo City*. It could be argued that Derrida asserts as much when he states that "[t]he future can only be for ghosts" (*Specters* 45).

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