Internal and External Ruin: Exploring Android and Human Self Fragmentation in Dilman Dila's "The Blue House" through Necropolitics, Posthumanism, and Post-Anthropocentrism

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Abstract: *This paper explores the intersection of subjectivity, fragmentation, and existence, "The Blue House" by Dilman Dila, focusing on the fragmentation of the android self and its connection to the human self through frameworks of posthumanism, post-anthropocentrism, and necropolitics. This study investigates how the android self reflects both internal and external forms of ruin in a post-apocalyptic world. Incorporating Rosi Braidotti's posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism theories, the paper explores how the blurring boundaries of the human self and the android destabilise traditional norms of subjectivity. Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics further investigates the fragmentation within the capitalistic system that controls not only power but also extinction, dehumanisation, and politics of dying. Positioning "The Blue House" as a post-humanist and post-anthropocentric text, this paper problematizes how Dila reconstructs the figure of the android not only as an imitation of humanity but as a site where survival, memory, and fragmentation intersect the boundaries between human and non-human, while also reflecting the class hierarchies embedded in survival within a capitalistic necropolitical setting. This paper argues that the android's fractured consciousness is shaped by the necropolitical violence of external ruin and the trauma of a lost human past, while simultaneously revealing posthuman and post-anthropocentric possibilities that challenge normative human–machine binaries.*

1. Introduction

The ideas around science fiction, especially African science fiction, remain underexplored from many perspectives. In this paper, the author aims to explore the short story "The Blue House" by Dilman Dila through the frameworks of Necropolitics, posthuman and post-anthropocentrism to analyse the setting, characters, and ideas explored in the short story. The story focuses on an android character named Cana-B70, who dreams of a blue house and a human self that shatters its identity, perspectives, and memory. The story is about the journey of Cana-B70 to find the blue house in a post-apocalyptic world. It not only reflects the personal and existential issues but also the social hierarchies that shape access to resources, safety, and agency by highlighting how both the human self and the android experience the consequences of unequal power relations.

This idea of power hierarchies is further analysed by attempting to investigate the idea of necropolitics by Achille Mbembe in the short story and in the post-apocalyptic setting to understand the hierarchies in different worlds. By applying posthuman and post-anthropocentric theory by Rosi Braidotti, the study aims to understand the fragmented identity, subjectivity, and memories of the human and android self. And by combining three of these frameworks, the paper aims to understand how the internal ruin of character reflects the external ruin of the world. This paper contributes to the emerging discourse on African science fiction by positioning Dilman Dila's "The Blue House" within the broader discussions of power, class, survival, and identity. It seeks to demonstrate how post-apocalyptic imaginaries become spaces where both human and non-human forms of life negotiate in conditions of ruin.

2. Review of Literature

To understand the existing discussions in and around the focused text and theories, it is necessary to understand the positioning of the analysis and interpretation of it in the existing works. The following reviews of literature are related to discussions of posthuman, post-anthropocentric, Necropolitics, technology, and politics of identity and the idea of hybridity.

- "The Ridicule of Time: Science Fiction, Bioethics, and the Posthuman" (2013), a journal article by Jay Clayton.
  This article explores the different perspectives and the reactions towards science fiction in different ages. In this article, he argues that science fiction and bioethics are intertwined in debates of posthuman. Bioethicists often dismiss science fiction as unrealistic, but they themselves use science fictional habits of mind to speculate "what if?" scenarios when debating genetic enhancement and posthuman futures. He further examines the myth of science fiction, where it is seen as always dystopian and anti-biotech. He disagrees; he argues that most of the science fiction has been optimistic about human transformation, and it is less about warning lessons and more about cultural anxieties and hopes of its historical moment. This article provides a different perspective to analyse the science fiction text.

Volume 15 Issue 1, January 2026
Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal
www.ijsr.net

Paper ID: SR26125215257   DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.21275/SR26125215257   1542

- "Dying for the Economy: Disposable People and Economies of Death in the Global North" (2021), a journal article by Eve Darian-Smith.
  This paper investigates different instances in which capitalism and death are entangled, from colonial slavery and genocides to modern-day disasters like Rana Plaza. Going beyond Mbembe's necropolitics, scholars argue that late capitalism directly commodifies death itself. Death as a source of value. Exploring the Opioid epidemic as a case study, rural working-class communities are already marked as economically "useless", turning them into "death-subjects", their deaths fuelled pharmaceutical profit and created a "domestic killing field." Further, she analyses the hierarchy of killability, on how necropolitics reinforce a system where some lives are worth less and valuable only in death. This article adds to the analysis of lives in a post-apocalyptic world, where, in the text "The Blue House", the question of who gets to be the android.

- "Refiguring the posthuman" (2004), a journal article by N. Katherine Hayles.
  This article explores how the ideas of humachine, posthumanism, and subjectivity. Hayles argues that when subjectivity is fragmented across human and machine, memory becomes the bridge between continuity and rupture, shaping how beings negotiate survival in a chaotic world. She also argues that posthuman subjectivity is not an abandonment of the human but a reconfiguration that includes distributed cognition, where agency and thoughts are shared between the human and machine systems. Posthuman identity emerges through interaction, feedback loops, and memory exchanges between humans and technologies. By exploring this aspect of analysis in Dila's story, it expands the understanding of human-machine rather than human and machine binaries.

- "Queering the Post-Apocalypse in Three Selected Short Stories by Dilman Dila" (2020), a journal article by Edgar Fred Nabutanyi.
  In this article, Nabutanyi analyses Dila's three short stories "A Wife and a Slave", "Two Weddings for Amoit", and "The Taking of Oleng". He argues that post-apocalyptic futures are not only about technology or destruction but also about alternative social relations and identities. And it is not only about sexuality but also about the form and method of African sci-fi. He states Dila's sci-fi "queers" the apocalypse by placing non-normative characters at the centre of regenerative possibilities that it reframes survival not as a return to order but as an embrace of hybridity, uncertainty and fluidity and argues that African sci-fi is inherently queer because it breaks with the realist tradition of African literature and it itself is framed as "queer" in its very form. This article adds to the idea of destabilization of normative human subjectivity, and it is fragmented, hybrid, and not bound by the purity of the human "original" self.

- "The Necropolitics of Drone Bases and Use in the African Context" (2024), a journal article by Ezenwa E Olumba.
  The article investigates the idea of necropolitics around the drones as aerial colonialism in African countries. He argues that the drone deployments reflect the same logic of external control over African territories and resources; it is the drone that decides who lives and who dies, and this creates "death-worlds" where populations are reduced to living under constant threat. He defines aerial colonialism as control and domination of airspace by externals, and drones allow for the exertion of power without direct presence. He argues that the reason why the drone bases often fail to improve local security, like the case of terrorism in Niger, which persisted near a U.S. drone base, is that they serve the interests of the external rather than the local population. He calls for a pan-African security partnership to counter aerial colonialism. This article helps to understand the role of necropolitics, by bringing this perspective into analysing the story, it highlights how technologies mediate life and death and how survival under necropolitics produces selective people of "who may live and who must die" as he has argued in this article.

- "Toward a Critique of Posthuman Futures" (2003), a journal article by Bart Simon.
  In this article, Brat Simon explores the idea of a posthuman future, liberal humanism, and warns that biotechnology threatens to alter "human nature," undermining political equality and rights. He differentiates between popular posthumanism that seeks to surpass biological boundaries and critical posthumanism, which positions human hybridity as fundamental to human nature. Popular posthumanism emphasizes individual transcendence, flexible identities, and cooperative biotechnological dreams. Media like *The Matrix* appropriates postmodern theories of fragmented subjectivity but ultimately reinscribes liberal humanist ideals. He further explores the concern with how biotech reduces bodies to components and information, also uses *Frankenstein* to show biotech discourses create horror around hybrids, but critical posthumanism reframes hybridity as constitutive of humanity rather than aberrant. He then argues that posthumanism cannot completely escape humanism. The "humanist ghosts" persist just like how the memories of the human self persist in the android self in "The Blue House".

- "Legacies of Marxism? Contemporary African science fiction and the concern with literary realism" (2024), a research article by Peter J Maurits.
  This paper explores the growth and rise of African science fiction in the 2000s, and debates emerged whether these texts should be counted as serious literature because realism has long dominated African literary traditions. These texts are often dismissed as "not real literature" because it is speculative, fantastic, or genre fiction. He explores, like Sofia Samatar, Nnedi Okorafor, and others. Historically, African literature was judged through realist frameworks, especially tied to Marxist aesthetics that demanded political commitment and representation of "real" social struggles, which writers like Achebe, Ngũgĩ, and Soyinka wrote. Some argue that it must remain socially committed, while others value aesthetics and the pleasure of imagination. African science fiction debates ASF challenges the Institution of Literature by refusing realism as the only valid form, and thus it can be read as negotiating the legacy of realism, especially Marxist realism, without fully breaking from it, transforming it instead, producing works where realism and speculation coexist in tension.

3. Research Gap

While there are several scholarly discussions around African science fiction, the focus has often been on its relationship to colonial histories, gender, and cultural identity. Much of the discourse has emphasized whether African science fiction fits within global science fiction traditions, sometimes marginalizing its unique epistemologies and narrative strategies. However, the idea of post-apocalyptic futures through necropolitics, posthuman, and post-anthropocentric is underexplored. Dilman Dila's "The Blue House" in particular has not been studied through this lens. Additionally, existing scholarships tend to a profound political or cultural reading of science fiction but are less focused on the way of how class hierarchies, memory, and human-nonhuman relationships intersect through consciousness, memory, power and survival. This study aims to investigate the gap through the combination of necropolitics, posthumanism, and post-anthropocentrism, offering new perspectives on looking at a science fiction text in the spaces of power, class, and identity.

4. Objectives

1) To explore how class hierarchies and unequal power relations shape survival and agency in a post-apocalyptic setting through a necropolitical lens.
2) To investigate the relationship between internal ruin of consciousness and memory and external ruin of the world and society in "The Blue House" by Dilman Dila.
3) To examine the post-anthropocentric and posthuman idea of the coexistence of the human and android self through memory beyond the normative human-machine binaries in the story "The Blue House".

5. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretative approach to examine Dilman Dila's "The Blue House" through a critical necropolitical, posthuman, and post-antropocenrtical view. The primary method used is close reading of the text, focusing on the instances of survival, memory, and merging of human and android self. The android transformation, fragmented identity, and consciousness are compared to the environment of the post-apocalyptic setting, where Achile Mbembe's Necropolitics plays a huge role in deciding systematically who gets to live and who dies. The study also uses the posthuman and post-anthropocentric concept of Rossi Braiodtti to understand the human-machine hybrid and the conflicts of two consciousness, it also uses a comparative study to understand the fragmented memories and emotional death of the original self to the external harsh environment, highlighting the similarities of internal and external conflicts. And it also investigates how this text draws scenarios mirroring real life of Black people, which operates on the logic of necropolitics, highlighting how access to life-sustaining resources and the systematic violence of Black bodies are contemporary issues. This methodology aims to illustrate how science fiction texts reflect on contemporary issues of human and android subjectivity, life and death, and unequal distribution of powers in society.

6. Analysis & Discussion

The text "The Blue House" can be examined through a critical necropolitical lens to explore how access to resources determines one's right to live or die because of the inequality of power. Within the story, only a select few are given the opportunity to transform their consciousness and memories into android bodies, where the human and android self is merged to form a new post-anthropocentric self. In this section, we investigate the play of power, class, and agency that is directly connected to survival. If we analyze this extract from the story,

> They wore masks, like everyone else, with tubes going into their noses to help with breathing. Her father had gotten a load of money about ten years ago, after a virtual reality puppet show he made became world-famous, enabling him to take them out of the village and into the city. The world was falling apart, but they had money, they could become androids and live forever. (Dila, 253)

The act of the selected few becoming androids becomes an act of necropolitics; the only reason she gets to live is because of her father's economic privilege, and her consciousness and memories were transferred into the android body. Achille Mbembe, in his essay, argues, "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (Mbembe 11), dividing individuals into those who are allowed to live and those who are condemned to die in a post-apocalyptic world. Through the concept of power, which "Braidotti argues that advanced capitalism blurs the boundaries between human, other species, and earth in an all-consuming commodification of life" (van der Zaag), this particular argument highlights how life becomes a commodity, where people who desire to have a long life can "buy" life to avoid death. In "The Blue House, survival and longevity are literally brought, revealing the intersection of capitalism, technology, and necropolitical control that defies who can transcend death.

In this section, we can unpack the idea of the human and the android self. To become an android is to become one at the price of emotional disconnection. Cana-B70 is disconnected from human body, emotions, and environment after the transformation. There is a clash between the security system and the organic system in her android self, which illustrates how technology, while extending life, suppresses the human self and the memories that connect her to her human self. This transformation embodies the post-anthropocentric self, the one that survives beyond biological limits but at the price of emotional and existential alienation.

> A girl, off-screen, laughs; the laughter grows louder as she runs closer to the bird. It leaps away with a shrill chirp, and the girl groans. Her image finally appears in the windowpane, and Cana-B70 should now see her face, but the file is corrupted and all she can see are colored pixels, the way they are in the TV news files with blurred faces. *What did I look like?* Security.sys fought a losing battle against Organic.sys until mem.sys came in to support, for she did not want to shut down. (Dila 209)

This inner battle reflects the outside environment, where everything is ruined, society is destroyed, the world has already ended to a certain point, the weather is critical, and there are only extreme cold and hot. Her human memories are fragmented and partially inaccessible, showing how the android body, both preserves and constrains her identity, which in a way is reflected through harsh conditions on her android body and environmental instability. Android's body and devastated world reflect one another; both are caught between preservation and decay, survival and disintegration. One of the instances where the story explores the harsh environment is "She calculated that she would reach it before midnight, when temperatures dropped to negative one hundred." (Dila 150) and "When she auto-rebooted, daylight was breaking and the ice was melting" (Dila 172).

Artificial dream and fragmented memories that Cana-B70 sees become a site to analyze the subjectivity of the android self. There are instances where the binary questions about the human and android subjectivity blur, where the memories make her think, "Is this a memory? Am I that girl?" (Dila 179). This questioning of self mirrors her internal struggle between Security.sys, Organic.sys, and Mem.sys, showing that survival through technology comes at the cost of emotional death. "She could not understand if she was experiencing the fragmented data stored in Organic.sys or a video file" (Dila 172). In this section, we have looked into how the inner conflict is reflected in the environment where she travels.

The dream-like quantity of some memories with no coherent perception reflects both posthumanism and alienation. As Braidotti states:

> Subjectivity is out of the picture and, with it, a sustained political analysis of the posthuman condition. In my view, a focus on subjectivity is necessary because this notion enables us to string together issues that are currently scattered across a number of domains. For instance, issues such as norms and values, forms of community bonding and social belonging as well as questions of political governance both assume and require a notion of the subject. Critical posthuman thought wants to re-assemble a discursive community out of the different, fragmented contemporary strands of posthumanism.

One of the examples of this alienation that she experiences in the story is when memory plays:

> A hand takes the kettle off the stove, and pours boiling water into a cup with a tea bag in it, and then the hand takes the cup to a face, but the face has no mouth to drink the tea. Like in the nightmare it has no features, just colored pixels. There is giggling, though. The person holding the camera, perhaps an elderly male, is saying something, and the person with the steaming cup, perhaps a little girl, is giggling. The colored pixels shimmer and begin to bleed, and the video ends. (Dila 172-179).

These memories through her android consciousness turn them into something unfamiliar, creating a disconnection between human and machine self, which can also be analyzed as something that reflects the post-apocalyptic world setting in the story. This posthuman subjectivity becomes a key that helps to understand how technology shapes identity, and the experiences of "subject" android matter to understand broader issues such as the norms, society, communities, and values.

Just as the systematic workings of necropolitics in the world, such as marginalization and exposure to violence on Black bodies, illustrate how power determines whose lives are valued. Black Americans' murder cases like Ajike Ownes, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, and KKK violence are examples in which we can see how Black bodies are exposed to violence because of the fragility and marginalization. Similarly, in the story "The Blue House," we can see how this power operates through class and resources rather than race, with survival dependent on economic privilege, highlighting how necropolitical hierarchies dictate who lives and who dies.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, "The Blue House" story informs us about the blurring binaries of human and android self, revealing how the post-apocalyptic world is run by power, class, and accessibility to resources and opportunities, revealing how the necropolitical structures that determine who gets to live and who dies, illustrating that survival becomes a privilege tires with the money one has and technological access. The transformation into an android self-shows that survival comes at the cost of emotional death, fragmentation, and alienation from the original self. Fractured identity and inner conflicts reflect the existential crisis and the harsh environment outside.

Besides, the narrative investigates the posthuman and post-anthropocentric potentials of "self", where the organic-synthetic, life-machine, human-non-human divides no longer exist, and identity is formed beyond the standard binaries such as human and android. The interaction of the Cana-B70 exposes the topic of life monetization, where stretching one's life can be done, but only under oppressive power relations.

When looked at from a larger perspective, Dilman Dila's "The Blue House" presents a subtle critique of human and posthuman conditions in a deserted world, providing a free space for talking and probing issues of power, technology, and environmental disintegration- all intertwined with identity, the right to exist and life. This narrative throws overboard the human-centered idea that talks against hybrid bodies and it also brings into focus the quite dilemma of how privilege, technology, and ecological collapse together determine the future of both human and posthuman existence.

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Volume 15 Issue 1, January 2026
Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal
www.ijsr.net

Paper ID: SR26125215257   DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.21275/SR26125215257   1546