

**Movement through space
in the works of Assia Djebar and André Brink**

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A dissertation submitted in the fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree

PhD (Literary Theory)

In the Department of Afrikaans
at the
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPERVISOR: Prof. WD Burger

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Pretoria for the bursary that allowed me to conduct this thesis.

I am also deeply grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Willie Burger for his invaluable advice, support, and patience. Jou insig, wysheid en mentorskap strek veel wyer as hierdie proefskrif.

I would like to thank my parents, family and friends for their support and belief in me. A special thanks to my father for his encouragement. Pappa is my klankbord en inspirasie.

Finally, my eternal gratitude to my husband and son. In julle vind ek vreugde. Hierdie proefskrif word—vanselfsprekend en met liefde—aan julle opgedra.

Abstract

Algerian author Assia Djebar and the South-African André Brink have been described as a duo of literature and of struggle. Various parallels exist between the authors' oeuvres: Both authors strive to create a chain of voices for those that have been ignored or silenced; they attempt to re-evaluate the colonial experience while problematizing the complexities of present day Algeria and South Africa; their narratives foreground language, space and power struggles between colonizer and colonized, master and slave, man and woman. Their characters represent a desire for freedom and the need for resistance in the quest for liberation.

This thesis will focus on landscape, place and space in Djebar and Brink's work. Numerous investigations on space in both authors' individual oeuvres have been conducted but none of these compared the role of space in their work. In this comparative study space will be explored from two perspectives: firstly a 'typical' post-colonial framework will be used. The analysis will draw on the work of postcolonial theorists such as Ashcroft, Glissant, Bhabha, Said, Pratt and Schama. Secondly, I will make use of an alternative 'postcritical' approach to examine the role of space in Djebar and Brink's novels. This second 'postcritical reading' will be based on the work of, among others, Felski, Latour, Macé and Citton who advocate modes of interpretation that emphasize the coproduction between the text and the reader. This approach will focus on the role of the reader as a 'coactor' with regard to space in the texts.

This study will make a twofold contribution: While a comparative study will provide fertile insights into both these authors' work and thus contribute to the body of critical work on their oeuvres, and in the process allow for a comparison of the postcolonial experiences in Algeria and South Africa, it will also explore the current theoretical debate concerning "critical" and "postcritical" approaches to literary studies from a "global South" perspective.

Abbreviations and preliminary remarks

The chosen novels of André Brink will be identified as follows:

Kennis: *Kennis van die Aand / Looking on Darkness* (1973),

OW: *'n Oomblik in die wind / An Instant in the Wind* (1975),

Inteendeel: *Inteendeel / On the Contrary* (1993),

Duiwelskloof: *Duiwelskloof / Devil's valley* (1998), and

Philida: *Philida* (2012).

The following abbreviations of Assia Djebar's novels will be employed in the thesis:

AF: *L'Amour, la fantasia / Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (1985),

OS: *Ombre sultane / A Sister to Scheherazade* (1987),

Vaste: *Vaste est la prison / So Vast the Prison* (1995),

SS: *La femme sans sépulture / The Woman without a tomb* (2002), and

NP: *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père / Nowhere in my Father's house* (2008).

All English translations of excerpts from the novels are my own, unless otherwise specified.

“L’époque actuelle serait plutôt l’époque de l’espace. Nous sommes à l’époque du simultané, nous sommes à l’époque de la juxtaposition, à l’époque du proche et du lointain, du côte à côte, du
disperse”

- Michel Foucault (2004: 12).

“A novel must be a house fit for free characters [people?] to live in”

- Iris Murdoch (1997: 278).

“Literature is a dynamic notion, an arena where all languages meet and where no language has said the last word. History has not come to an end, mankind is not, yet. It is becoming. In movement.

Migrating. In fieri”

- Isabella Maria Zoppi (1998: 430).

Chapter 1: Two African authors

1.1 Space for two African authors

This thesis seeks to explore the representation and the production¹ of space in the works of Algerian author Assia Djebar and the South-African André Brink. Even though Djebar and Brink have been described as a duo of literature and of struggle, it was their coincidental death on 6 February 2015 that brought the various parallels existing between the authors' *œuvres* to the forefront (Chanda, 2015). Both authors strive to create a chain of voices for those that have been ignored or silenced; they attempt to re-evaluate the colonial experience while problematizing the complexities of present day Algeria and South Africa; their narratives foreground language and power struggles between colonizer and colonized, master and slave, man and woman. Their characters represent a desire for freedom and the need for resistance in the quest for liberation. It is however the comparable portrayal of landscapes, places, and spaces in Djebar and Brink's work that is of particular interest in this study.

In this introductory chapter, I will first and foremost offer a validation for such a comparative study. Thereafter I will give a background to the authors and their *œuvres* in order to emphasize the similarities between the two. I will moreover substantiate the choice of Djebar and Brink's novels that will be investigated. After setting out the method of the thesis, an outline of each of the study's chapters follows. I will conclude the chapter by outlining the aim and rationale of this study.

1.2 A time for space

Our era is marked by space, Michel Foucault believes. We live in times characterized by ideas of simultaneity, juxtaposition, disperse, near and far, and side by side (Foucault, 2004: 12). In a time when the internationalization, indigenizing, decolonizing, and the Africanising of curricula is emphasized (Le Grange, 2018: 4), Foucault's statement is especially relevant. It is a time which demands complicated conversations and requires a cacophony and assemblage of different voices and knowledge traditions

¹ I agree with Mundell (2018: 1) who insists that "literary practitioners do not simply represent place: they also construct it".

in order to reimagine the field in such a way to provide a plane in which no tradition, space, or knowledge dominates any other (Le Grange, 2018: 15). From a literary perspective, to borrow the spatial expressions of Foucault, I believe it is a time to read texts simultaneously, to juxtapose *œuvres* that are produced from near and far, or those written side by side. This ‘space’, a space of widening and contracting, a space of placing together of that which has been dispersed, is essential to engage in the ongoing conversations needed in transformation.

This thesis can possibly provide such a space by investigating the portrayal of space (*sic*) in the work of these two authors from opposing poles of our continent. Numerous investigations on space in both Djébar and Brink’s *œuvres* have been conducted but none of these compared the role of space in their work.² In this comparative study space will be explored from two perspectives: firstly a ‘critical’ post-colonial framework will be used. The analysis will draw on the work of postcolonial theorists such as Ashcroft, Glissant, Bhabha, Said, Pratt and Schama. Secondly, I will make use of an alternative ‘postcritical’ approach to examine the role of space in their novels. This second ‘postcritical reading’ will be based on the work of, among others, Felski, Latour, Macé and Citton who advocate modes of interpretation that emphasise the coproduction between the text and the reader. This approach will focus on the role of the reader as a ‘coactor’ with regard to space in the texts. These two approaches allow this study to make a twofold contribution: A comparative study will firstly provide fertile insights into both these authors’ work and thus contribute to the body of critical work on their *œuvres*.³ Both Djébar and Brink have publicly expressed the need in African literature for a greater exchange and more dialogue between North and South (Merini, 1999: 91; Brink, 1998: 25). I believe that this thesis provides such a possible dialogue that allows for a comparison of the postcolonial experiences in Algeria and South Africa. The comparative study is additionally of value for it will explore the current theoretical debate concerning “critical” and “postcritical” approaches to literary studies from a perspective from the “global South”.

² Little research exists that compares Brink and Djébar’s work at all (Steenekamp, 2017).

³ Velčić (2017: 112) refers to the advantages of comparing Djébar’s work to other writers: “[T]eaching Djébar exclusively as a woman writer or her texts solely in the francophone literary tradition not only could reinforce gender stereotypes and linguistic and national boundaries but also does not do justice to the multiple linguistic and cultural layers present in her work. It also marks her texts as separate from world literature or easily relegated to its margins and as much removed from established classics. Classroom practice confirms that Djébar is best read and analyzed in comparative contexts—transcultural, transhistorical, and transnational—which include a wide spectrum of world literature”.

1.3 An African literary duo

1.3.1 Assia Djébar (1936-2015)

Fatima-Zohra Imalayen, known as Assia Djébar, is considered to be Algeria's most renowned and prolific female novelist (Ringrose, 2006: 9-10).⁴ Born into a family that had a long history of resisting French colonization, Djébar's resistance took place in the form of literature. Her writing career started during an Algerian student protest in 1956 (Murray, 2008: 9). Instead of taking her final exams that year, Djébar began writing *La Soif*, her first novel (Mortimer, 1988a: 5-6). The notion of resistance continued to play a central role in Djébar's life and her writing.⁵ "Narration," according to Djébar (in Hitchcock, 2010: 210), "must not tell the story but interrupt it: that is to say, suspend it, surprise it at all costs". She regards writing as a "form of direct action, of bearing witness, of commitment and transgression". Through writing, she can give voice "to those who are forgotten by official forms of discourse, the marginalized, betrayed and forgotten women, whom she urges to advance with both defiance and hope" (Salhi, 2009: 202).

Djébar's resistance strategies form part of her feminism of exposure: in comparison to French feminists, she "transgresses symbolic language with her semiotic rhythms, resists the Law of the Father by giving voice to the other/Mother, refuses the notion of woman as man's other, [and] revisits maternal geneologies" (Ringrose, 2006: 257). Her oeuvre can be seen as a "testament to the injustice that results when political orders, and orders of representation, are predicated upon exclusion: when women or dissidents are physically and epistemologically exorcised" (Tomlinson, 2005: 65). Djébar's novels are significantly analytical of women's dual oppression in Algeria: French colonialism and Maghrebian patriarchy (Abdelkader, 2010: 89; Mortimer, 2001: 213; Salhi, 2009: 201; Ivantcheva-Merjanske, 2015: 27). It is Algerian women's condition that urges Djébar to claim "subjectivity for herself and her Algerian sisters by reappropriating language, history, space, and the gaze" (Mortimer, 2001: 213). For women to liberate themselves from the "inflicted silence and the patriarchal chains," Djébar believes that women "have to retrieve a voice that has been driven into silence [...] and ensure it speaks for them" (Abdelkader, 2010: 89). This voice offers Algerian women, be it victims or rebels of

⁴ In 2005, Djébar became the first Algerian woman to be admitted into the Académie française (Chanda, 2015).

⁵ Due to her resistance, Djébar "has been dubbed potentially as the most threatening person to Algeria's political chieftains, secular and religious" (Ringrose, 2006: 258).

masculine and colonial oppression, a means of resistance and liberation. By giving a voice to feminine subaltern subjects through her writing, Djébar is believed to deconstruct the centre of power and language (Ivantcheva-Merjanske, 2015: 27-28).

Although she aims to give women a voice, Djébar does not claim to ‘speak for’ Algerian women, but rather proposes to ‘speak next to’ them (Abdelkader, 2010: 89). Issues of who speaks and who remains voiceless, how and under which terms someone speaks, as well as what kind of speech is used are frequently addressed in Djébar’s work (Velčić, 2017: 113). This entails a sensitivity to a vast array of different forms of languages employed in her work. Velčić (2017: 113) refers to how Djébar’s prose “employs narrators and characters that use verbal (oral or written), visual (painting), musical, and even corporeal language”. Not only are different languages used, but her fiction is also known for bringing together diverse arts and disciplines.⁶ Her transformation of such interdisciplinary references “asks for modes of reading beyond Western binaries and beyond national, linguistic borders and across disciplines” (Fisher, 2017: 76). Trained as a historian, Djébar’s texts often entail creative and imaginative rewriting of colonial, decolonial, and postcolonial Algerian history (Donadey, 2017: ix-x)⁷. This fictional and imaginative revision “destabilizes the opposition between the real and the fictional and renders obsolete canonical definitions of factual and fictional narratives” (Fisher, 2017: 76).

Although her work can be categorized as ‘postcolonial’ due to her fiction’s interest in the consequences of Algeria’s colonial oppression,⁸ ⁹ Djébar herself does not use the term, perhaps, according to Hiddleston (2006: 14) “in an attempt to avoid the creation of a fixed theory”. Hiddleston (2006: 14)

⁶ Donadey (2017: x) reasons that “the wide range of literary, visual, and musical references” within Djébar’s œuvre make her works both rewarding and difficult to teach: “Her method is interdisciplinary, drawing on historical texts and archives, painting, music, architecture, and religious texts, as well as Middle Eastern, European, and Mediterranean literary traditions”. She moreover argues that Djébar’s “fragmented fictional revision of a history that is very foreign to North American students is a major challenge in teaching her works” (Donadey, 2017: ix-x).

⁷ Although history plays an important role in her work, imagination remains at the heart of her œuvre. Gayatri Spivak’s last sentence in her afterword “How to Teach Assia Djébar” reads: “In Djébar’s defense of fiction (and mine too [...], Assia), we hold out for the imagination” (Spivak, 2017: 162).

⁸ Ivantcheva-Merjanske (2015: 25-26) sheds light on the effect of Algeria’s colonisation: “L’Algérie est le pays qui a le plus souffert parmi les pays du Maghreb des ‘effets de la colonisation’: elle a subi 132 ans de colonisation pendant lesquels la langue et la culture du colonisateur se sont imposées comme normes. De plus, c’est un siècle de violence, celui de la conquête puisqu’un tiers de la population civile a été massacré au cours de razzias, de destruction de villages entiers et mêmes d’enfumades, mais aussi celui de la guerre non déclarée contre l’Algérie à partir de 1954” (Ivantcheva-Merjanske, 2015: 25-26).

⁹ Brink also signals the possible influence the Algerian war had on him. When he first went to France, he states: “it was tough, but it was also fascinating. There were the last convulsions of the Algerian war and there was a highly politicised atmosphere” (Brink in Wroe, 2013: 30).

argues that “(p)ostcoloniality is not one position” and that postcoloniality’s experience is “changeable, modulating, and demands both engagement with a series of models and questioning of their status”. In this regard, Djebbar “offers no single ‘postcolonial theory’, but a series of possible models, each of which operates on a different level and none of which can conceptualise postcolonial Algeria in a secure and determinable way” (Hiddleston, 2006: 20).

Djebbar’s oeuvre is usually divided into two periods: the works from the first phase of her career between 1957 and 1967 are characterized as classical. Within these early works, Djebbar is believed to start her “tentative quest to make sense of women’s positions in contemporary Algeria”. This period of her work depicts women as “fiercely involved in the anticolonial struggle” (Salhi, 2009: 201). It moreover inaugurates “the search for a feminine genealogy, sorting through the conventions and norms that shape women’s lives in Algeria at the time of the war of independence while also charting individuals’ resistance to such norms” (Hiddleston, 2006: 5-6). After twelve years of working solely on films, Djebbar’s second period of her writing career is introduced in 1980 with *Femmes d’Alger dans leur appartement*, a turning point in her career. This second phase is marked by an avant-garde aesthetics and kinetic style in which new focus is placed on women’s solidarity (Donadey, 2017: 11-12). Although similar characters, themes and scenes from earlier novels are repeated and re-enacted in this later period of her work,¹⁰ there seems to be a greater focus on disillusionment. Salhi (2009: 201) for instance refers to the novels’ depiction of the betrayal of Algerian women by their own government. Hiddleston (2006: 9-10) argues that the final period of Djebbar’s work is less concerned with mourning the loss of Algeria’s victims, and more concerned with the “reconfiguration of the country itself as ghostly, at once dead and alive, and beyond the writer’s grasp”. Hiddleston asserts that “(a)ny sense of the specific, of a determined history or particular genealogy of Algerian women, evaporates and Algeria is figured as insubstantial, lost or torn apart”. Djebbar’s final novels portray Algeria as “not only bereaved, struggling to mourn its most talented creators and commentators, but also spectral and

¹⁰ Hiddleston (2006: 11) refers to the significance of Djebbar’s repetitiveness: “Characters in early works resurface in altered form in later texts, and scenes of trauma, resisting resolution, are repeated and re-enacted to produce varying effects [...] It is as if she never wants a particular version of a scene to be taken as definitive, and she rewrites problematic moments so as to prevent their false resolution” (Hiddleston, 2006: 11). Zimra (in Ringrose, 2006: 26) also posits that Djebbar’s oeuvre does not always represent a change of direction, but it remains “un dialogue profond avec tous les autres textes signés de sa main” (Zimra in Ringrose, 2006: 26). Brink is also known for the repetitive nature of his work: similar characters, scenes, and themes are often repeated in his oeuvre. He has been criticized for not attempting new approaches (Cochrane, 2013: 185).

divided from itself". Even though the second period of her work expresses disillusionment, it "retains a sense of the ongoing necessity of attending to Algeria's past using an alternative conceptual framework of spectrality and partial memory". Her final works depict an ongoing search for an appropriate narrative that would make sense of the postcolonial Algerian subject's past and present. The quest is however unsatisfying for such a narrative is impossible to find in and through language, and more specifically, the coloniser's language (Hiddleston, 2006: 53-54)¹¹. According to Hiddleston (2006: 9-10) postcoloniality in Algeria "is this anxious shifting between past and present, the haunting of other epochs and other cultures, the disjointed, Derridean trace that supplements contemporary ideology".

This deferment of a locus of identification and a narrative that appropriately captures Algeria's experiences of colonialism and postcolonialism remains a focus throughout Djébar's corpus. The space offered by Algeria "excludes the writer more often than it grounds or defines her". Algeria as Djébar's "only locus of identification or belonging" is simultaneously "figured as broken, war-torn, unfamiliar and irrevocably lost" (Hiddleston, 2006: 1). Hiddleston (2006: 1) observes:

Driven by the urge to recover her country's history, Djébar repeatedly returns to Algeria's past only then to interrupt the narrative of its shaky development. The native land is the object of a quest, inciting the writer to invent an identity and a genealogy, but it also resists and eludes that quest. It offers glimmers of familiarity, hints of a home, but under closer inspection shatters and disseminates the cultural security that Djébar strives to create and represent.

Her task of setting out to tell Algeria's story in a single and straightforward framework is believed to fall short. The possibility of charting the development of Algerian women's roles and of creating a coherent and ordered version of her country's trajectory continues to elude her. Her native land is lost to her, and her writing too "becomes an artifice disconnected from the land she sought to recreate". Her writing is therefore constantly jolted by a type of movement out of or into an Algeria that she cannot grasp (Hiddleston, 2006: 1-4, 10).

¹¹ Hiddleston (2006: 2) comments on Djébar's use of French in her writing: "she finds that this language glosses over the multiple, intricate Arab and Berber resonances of her cultural history. Anti-colonial narrative becomes deformed and indeed compromised when created in the language of the coloniser".

1.3.2 André Brink (1935-2015)

André Philippus Brink is considered to be one of South Africa's most distinguished writers and has been described as a "colossal presence" in Afrikaans literature (Wroe, 2013: 23; Burger & Szczurek, 2013: 9; Willemse, 2004: 130-131).¹² ¹³ Brink has always been known as a literary rebel and innovator who set out to "renew and create" (Wroe, 2013: 26). In a similar fashion to Djébar, Brink also relates the act of writing to a form of revolution,¹⁴ and identifies his way of writing as a manner to break taboos and to say 'no' to the status quo (Brink in Kossew, 1996a: 24-25)¹⁵. His writing as 'revolution' and resistance is exemplified in his work: He is seen as the mouthpiece for the movement of the "Sestigers",¹⁶ one of the leading figures of African Magical Realism and Feminism, as well as an important initiator of the representation of sexuality in Afrikaans literature (Burger & Szczurek, 2013: 10; Meintjies, 2013: 41, 46; Coetzee, 2013: 146). The theme of resistance can be found throughout different phases in his work: in his work for the movement of the "Sestigers" during his modernist existentialist phase, his exploration and exploitation of the South African political situation during his phase of *Littérature engagée*, his questioning of a form of neocolonial imperial discourse within his postmodernist phase, and his insistence on the development of a radically new historiography in his post-Apartheid phase (Meintjies, 2013: 41, 43-44, 52, 74). Even after South Africa entered a new democratic era, Brink maintains that the writer should pursue "the problems of racism, injustice, corruption, and the lack of

¹² Words taken from the ceremony where Brink received his honorary doctor's degree from the University of Pretoria in 2003 (Willemse, 2004: 130-131).

¹³ With his novels published in more than thirty languages, Brink's work attracts steady attention from local and foreign critics (Burger & Szczurek, 2013: 10).

¹⁴ Where Djébar was at once regarded as "the most threatening person to Algeria's political chieftains" (Ringrose, 2006: 258), Brink earned the reputation in 1973 of being "the first Afrikaans writer whose work was banned in his native South Africa" (Diala, 2005: 6).

¹⁵ Brink observes: "A literature which does not constantly and insistently confront, affront, offend—and thereby explore and test and challenge—the reader and the world, is moribund [...] In the act of offence we glimpse the possibility of freedom. As long as people can be offended by literature there remains a chance that they may be awakened [...] in order to learn their world anew" (Brink in Kossew, 1996a: 24-25). Kossew (1996a: 6) moreover signals that it is the political situation in the late Sixties that impinges substantively on Brink's work which motivates him to declare that "No Afrikaans writer has yet tried to offer a serious political challenge to the system [...] We have no one with enough guts, it seems, to say: No".

¹⁶ The "Sestigers" is a group of young Afrikaans writers responsible for the movement in the Afrikaans literary sphere from Realism to Modernism during the 1960's (Meintjies, 2013: 41). Kossew (1996a: 5-6) notes: "The Afrikaans writers of the Sixties, with Brink as one of their main theorists, issued a direct challenge to the traditions of Afrikanerdom. Brink asserted the right of writers to have the freedom to choose their own subject-matter, to break down taboos and repressions (a prominent feature in Calvinistic Afrikaner Nationalist society) particularly with regard to sex as a literary subject, to challenge and criticize social structures, and to make technical and aesthetic experiments in writing".

freedom,” for these problems “concern the world as a whole and remained a moral challenge, wherever they may be in the world” (Meintjes, 2013: 73).

Like Djébar, Brink too wishes to respond to the silence of his country’s oppressed through his writing. Whilst Djébar aims to offer a voice for subjugated women in Algeria,¹⁷ Brink envisages to tell the stories of “those who do not really make History, but undergo it” (Brink, 2009: 206)¹⁸. He specifically refers to stories from the ‘other side’ which are rarely heard that need to be reimagined (Brink, 1998b, 22; 2009: 54).¹⁹ Brink (1998b: 24) insists that the aim in representing these ‘lost’ stories and voices is not merely to provide new historical ‘evidence’, even though that in itself may be important, but he argues that it is “the leap of the imagination towards grasping the larger implications of our silences” that is especially crucial. Where Djébar’s practice of speaking ‘for’ or ‘next to’ the silenced is generally praised, Brink’s attempt to speak for the Other is predominantly criticized (Viljoen, 2013: 422, 438; Wenzel, 2008: 150; Higgins, 1999: 14)²⁰. As postcolonial writer, he is encouraged to openly profess that he does not misuse the voiceless by claiming that he speaks with complete transparency and authority ‘for’ them (Viljoen, 2013: 431).

Through the constant engagement with and the resistance to the hegemonic oppression of imperial power, the deconstruction of colonial discourse, and the critical way in which he deals with colonial experiences in his texts, Brink’s work can also be described as postcolonial (Kossew, 1996a: 7; Meintjes, 2013: 38; Viljoen, 2013: 413). Kossew (1996a: 5-6) describes Brink’s status as postcolonial writer as especially problematic due to the history of Afrikaner colonialism. As postcolonial writer he is seen as attempting to challenge his own Afrikaner colonial background by “questioning assumed perceptions

¹⁷ Brink also portrays a special interest in silenced feminine voices of the past. He is particularly concerned with the link between women and history and proposes a reimagined South African history as “herstory” (Brink, 1998b: 23).

¹⁸ My translation: “diegene wat nie eintlik die geskiedenis maak nie maar dit ondergáán” (Brink, 2009: 206).

¹⁹ Brink declares: “If stories are retold and reimagined, the re- is of decisive importance: each new invention happens in the margin of the already-written, or against the background of the already-written. This excludes a reading of the new narrative as fortuitous invention, as ‘mere fiction’, because it engages with the world [...] It inserts itself into the reader’s consciousness as an invitation to a moral choice” (Brink, 1998: 22).

²⁰ Although Brink is continually criticized for speaking for the Other, Viljoen (2013: 422) argues that Brink openly demonstrates that he can only give a voice to the Other by acknowledging his own framework of restrictions, preconceived ideas, and opinions. She signals how in Brink’s *Inteendeel*, by speaking ‘to’ the voiceless instead of speaking ‘for’ them like he supposedly does in *Houd-den-Bek* and *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, Brink is following the suggestion made throughout Spivak’s theories concerning the voice of the subaltern (Viljoen, 2013: 428). Brink (in Higgins, 1999: 14) himself declares that he is conscious of the critique on his interest in the feminine voice and his adoption of female narrators. He admits: “As a result of my readings in feminism, I was only too aware of treading on very dangerous territory, but I just couldn’t find any other solution: I had to plough on”.

of the right to rule and of Afrikaner values, and exploring what he called his ‘love-hate relationship with the Afrikaner’” (Kossew, 1996a: 6).²¹ His critical questioning of his Afrikaner background also involves his choice in language.²² Although he has written in both English and Afrikaans, his choice of Afrikaans as his first language implies according to Kossew (1996a: 7) “writing back” to the white readers of South Africa, his own Afrikaner people. Just like Djébar, Brink also points to the burden that is his choice of language: where Djébar regards French as a language of oppression for being the language of her country’s former coloniser, Brink similarly sees Afrikaans as a medium of oppression. He states: “In simplistic terms, the language of apartheid, colonized by the imperialistic activities of politicians, has now become the Language of the Lie [...] Afrikaans has become identified, more and more, in the mind of the world, with the apartheid ideology” (Brink in Kossew, 1996a: 19).

In further accordance with Djébar, Brink also faces the problem of African identity. Like Djébar, he struggles to find a language to describe the African landscape (Kossew, 1996a: 17). In this sense, Brink can be associated with a group of South African writers in whose work the African landscape “remains alien, impenetrable, until a language is found in which to win it, speak it, represent it” (Coetzee, 1988: 7). Coetzee (1988: 7) declares:

It is no oversimplification to say that landscape art and landscape writing in South Africa [...] revolve around the question of finding a language to fit Africa, a language that will be authentically African [...] The quest for an authentic language is pursued within a framework in which language, consciousness, and landscape are interrelated.

Just like Djébar, Brink’s quest to be able to find a language in which Africa can be fathomed, continues.

1.4 Space in ten novels

When looking at Djébar and Brink’s *œuvres*, it becomes clear that there exist many parallels in their work: both authors see writing as a form of resistance and aim to give a type of voice to the silenced and oppressed people of their countries. Due to the critical way in which their texts question colonial

²¹ Kossew (1996a: 6) highlights the risk for the writer writing against his own people and traditions. Brink (in Kossew, 1996a:6) himself exclaims: “The Afrikaans writer is, by the very nature of his position, a cultural schizophrenic”.

²² As Kossew (1996a: 19) posits, “language, politics and colonialism are inevitably linked within South Africa, and any writer’s choice of language becomes a significant political act”.

forms of oppression, their work can moreover be identified as postcolonial. Both writers also demonstrate a sensitivity to language and find it difficult to employ a language of oppression in their work. They moreover experience a similar difficulty to finally grasp the landscape of their countries through their novels. This commonality of the notion of space is of predominant importance to this study. In order to determine the possible comparable role of space within their oeuvres, I aim to explore how space is portrayed in their work.

The extensive nature of Djébar and Brink's work requires me to make a selection of five novels from each author's oeuvre. The following novels of André Brink will be analysed: *'n Oomblik in die wind* (1975), *Kennis van die Aand* (1973), *Inteendeel* (1993), *Duiwelskloof* (1998) and *Philida* (2012). The thesis will also examine *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985), *Ombre sultane* (1987), *Vaste est la prison* (1995), *La femme sans sépulture* (2002), and *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père* (2008) of Assia Djébar. The authors' sensitivity to the choice of language employed in their work (discussed earlier), motivates me to primarily make use of the original texts in French and Afrikaans. English translations of Djébar's novels or the English versions of Brink's texts will not be employed.²³

These novels give a balanced representation of the authors' oeuvres. Due to the wide ranging publication dates, the novels provide a type of chronological overview of their oeuvres. It will allow me not only to study different perspectives on space, but I will also be able to analyse how the representations of space in their novels might have developed over time.

1.5 Method

This study will draw on the insights of classical narratology (Genette, Bal, Bakhtin, and Brink) and post-classical narratology (Herman & Vervaeck) on the role of space in narration. The narratological instruments will be used critically (whilst remaining well aware of the pitfalls of structuralist

²³ Brink's English versions of his Afrikaans novels cannot be regarded as translations, for he describes that he almost 'rewrites' them in English. Kossew (1996a: 29-30) observes: "(Brink) describes the process as not 'translating' the work, but rethinking it in the framework of a new language: even more important, perhaps, re-feeling it. It even underwent a change of title [...] indicative of the process involved". My choice in studying the 'original' texts is moreover encouraged by the idea that translation, as writers like Anthony Burgess believes, changes the very nature of the text (Meintjes, 2013: 39).

narratology) to describe space in the novels of the two authors. The instruments of narratology will be supplemented by the philosophical approaches to space like the work of Bachelard, Lefebvre and Foucault. Turning to post-colonial theories of space, any solipsistic analysis will be prevented, as the post-colonial theory will provide a useful insight specifically in the case of these two authors. Introducing the thoughts of “postcritical” theorists such as Felski, Latour, Citton and Macé, a critical reflection on the postcolonial approach will be made possible.

1.6 Outline of chapters

The following chapter (Chapter two) offers a literature review that investigates the existing research on Assia Djebar and André Brink and the analyses of the notion of space in the texts of this study. The chapter will provide a critical examination on the existing responses to space in Djebar and Brink’s work and accentuate the possible need for a post-critical approach to space in their oeuvres. Chapter three (“Narratology and space”) gives an introduction to the concept of space from a narratological perspective. The chapter will examine various explanations and terminology on the concept of space that will assist my analysis on space within the novels. In Chapter four a postcolonial framework will be provided that will serve as the basis for my ‘critical’ analysis of space in Djebar and Brink’s chosen novels.²⁴ I will demonstrate how space is a central interest within critical traditions, especially the field of postcolonialism, and how it is often intertwined with concepts such as identity, language, power, and gender. Thereafter, a postcolonial reading of space in the authors’ work follows in Chapter five. From a critical, postcolonial perspective I will explore the role as well as the representations of spaces within Brink and Djebar’s texts. Chapter six sets out to investigate the critique and limits of the current rhetoric of critique. I will explore various alternatives to critique, including the idea of a postcritical framework that is outlined by Rita Felski. In Chapter seven I aim to provide a postcritical reading on space in the chosen works by focusing not only on what the representation of space makes possible in the authors’ work, but also on how their representation of space influences my reading practice. I will highlight the study’s findings in the concluding chapter of this thesis by indicating the differences between a critical and postcritical reading of space in Brink and Djebar’s work.

²⁴ The investigation of theories will not be limited to the more ‘theoretical’ chapters (Chapters three, four, and six) in this study. An integration of theory and analysis will also be found in the other chapters.

1.7 Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, I set out the aim and rationale of this study: to investigate the role of space within the chosen novels of Djébar and Brink. Despite various parallels found in their *œuvres*, no in depth research exists that compares the role of space in the authors' work. A comparison of the chosen novels will to my mind provide valuable insight and contribute to the existing body of critical work on their *œuvres*. By comparing a 'critical' postcolonial and 'postcritical' approach to their novels, the study will additionally investigate current theoretical debates concerning the prevalent rhetoric of critique.

Chapter two: Literature review

Space in the works of Djébar and Brink

Numerous investigations on space in Djébar and Brink's work have been conducted. These studies are however limited to analysing space from two perspectives: a (critical) nationalistic approach and a (critical) postcolonial and feminist approach. The following section will show an analysis of these existing investigations. Thereafter, I will offer a brief critique on the critics' responses and highlight the need for a post-critical approach to space in their *œuvres*.

2.1 Space in the work of Assia Djébar

Most literary critics place emphasis on the postcolonial and feminist nature of Assia Djébar's *œuvre*. Academic articles on these novels use a postcolonial perspective in studying the themes such as the place of Algerian women in patriarchal societies, the colonization of the mind, the language of the oppressor and the questioning of space.²⁵

In the subsequent sections I will demonstrate how the existing analyses of space in Djébar's work focus on Algerian space itself,²⁶ its limits and characters expatriation from Algeria, the 'Motherland'. Literary critics' exploration of the representations of closed/open and private/public spaces within Djébar's *oeuvre* will additionally be pointed out. The transgression of these spaces is considered as a form of protest, an act which is paralleled to the act of writing in her work. I will finally discuss critics' emphasis on Djébar's insistence on the need for a protesting language to transgress the binary concepts of space within Algeria.

²⁵ Various critics refer to the central theme of space in Djébar's work: Tomlinson (2005: 60-61) points out how Djébar is best known for "the exploration of different kind of space: the space of the seraglio, the gendered space prescribed by Islamic tradition and sometimes literally 'carved out' by the FIS, rather than the space that signifies death—corporeal absence *per se*". Garane (2005: 16) emphasizes how Djébar challenges "the way in which space and place are conceptualized in [her] particular culture".

²⁶ Hitchcock (2010: 229) refers to how Djébar "writes against France's Algeria then wonders if indeed this is the only Algeria possible: French Algeria, Algeria in French, all else palimpsest, nomad, veil, and extravagantly disputed. French Algeria is Algeria from the outside and in that exotopy both a clarity and the articulation of form is possible".

2.1.1. A Nationalistic approach to space

a. The limits of an Algerian space

Within Djébar's work, the land and the nation of Algeria is represented as woman. As outlined by the philosopher Frantz Fanon, Djébar emphasizes how woman and space/the land/the country are confused. National victimization is paralleled to female victimization. A violence done to the land is linked to a violence done to woman (Faulkner, 1996: 851, 852, 855).²⁷ Bentahar (2009: 29-30) insists that according to Fanon the colonized people's lack of resistance is apparent through colonial accessibility to the Algerian woman. He argues that "the French colonizer views the inaccessibility of Algerian women as a form of national resistance and focuses the colonial discourse on the limitation of her inaccessibility by conveying an image of her as a victim of a demonized jailer throughout all colonial administrative channels". Women's bodies are moreover described as ambiguous terrains of contradictions and instabilities. The female body/land metaphor allows for a similar description to the land itself:

D'abord ségrégué, puis dévoilé, enfin rendu silencieux, le corps féminin des Algériennes est donc un terrain ambigu, un terrain de contradictions et d'instabilités. Les Algériens identifient en fait le pays à la femme, et l'Algérie colonisée aux corps des femmes violées par le colonisateur. (Rocca, 2004: 81-82)

Just as Djébar is exiled from her mother tongue (See 2.1.2 b), she also finds herself exiled from the feminine space that is Algeria, the motherland (Ringrose, 2006: 157). Djébar experiences a sense of loss with her native land. Hiddleston (2006: 158) indicates how Djébar's most recent phase in her œuvre "announces a further step toward expatriation, a break from any intended quest for identity and a reconfiguration of Algeria as necessarily lost". She however highlights that Djébar expresses a hesitant and partial 'expatriation', one that does not imply rejection, dissociation, or non-belonging. Djébar rather engages with Algeria's limits and explores its hidden underside. Her writing constitutes "a movement outside the confines of any single, specified notion of Algeria", it is "a movement outside all that is associated with the 'patrie', the fatherland and its attendant resonances of patriotism or pride in national frontiers" (Hiddleston, 2006: 181).

²⁷ Faulkner (1996: 855) however emphasizes that Djébar's confusion of land and woman differs from Fanon's work: "Woman and land/place are still confused, but this new confusion seems less deleterious [...] for the condition of women than that of Fanon and so many others before him [...] Djébar's representation is of a woman as human subject, in possession of herself, even as that woman is an embodiment of the city of Algiers, a new variation on national allegory representing the land or nation as woman".

Despite Djébar's attempts to move beyond a nationalistic notion of Algeria, she remains exiled in a sense from her native land as Algeria remains unknowable:

Djébar's journey is not a completed departure but a questioning of the rigidity of Algeria's borders, geographically, culturally, linguistically; it reveals its postcolonial evolution as one that cannot be circumscribed as inside or outside, this or that. Haunted by colonialism, preoccupied with partial memories of hidden traumas, and ravaged anew by the uncanny violence of the Islamist resurgence, Algeria remains distraught and unknowable. (Hiddleston, 2006: 181)

Within Djébar's exploration of Algeria's limits and borders, she specifically draws the reader's attention to the relation between these borders and the space that women (literally and figuratively) occupy. Djébar claims subjectivity for herself and other Algerian women by attempting to reappropriate space. She reminds the reader that "Maghreban patriarchy still attempts to restrict movement and vision, denying Algerian woman her right to circulate freely in public space where she may see and be seen" (Mortimer, 2001: 213). Mildred Mortimer (2001: 221) emphasizes how Djébar "calls for the transformation of domestic space into a locus of positive relationships, a space no longer controlled by the male patriarchal gaze. In other words, she calls for an end to all vestiges of the closed and oppressive system of domestic organization Orientalists termed a *harem*".

b. Open/public/closed/private space

The postcolonial critique of patriarchal societies in Djébar's oeuvre involves a critical questioning of notions of space in her novels. Within these analyses, the study of spatial binaries is predominant.²⁸ Within many of her novels the relation between open or public, and private or closed spaces are explored.²⁹ Space in traditional Algeria is distinguished between inner space reserved to women, the home; and outer space reserved to men, the workplace and government (Huughe, 1996: 867; Mortimer, 1998b: 199, 204; Mortimer, 1988c: 301,303; Zimra, 1992: 69, 70).³⁰

²⁸ Rader (2011: 121) maintains that "while many readers and critics have discussed the importance of space in Djébar's narrative, few have touched upon the alterity of spaces beyond the pairing of inside/outside, veiled/unveiled, saying/said, narrating/narrated, and observing/observed".

²⁹ Vogl (2003: 712) even refers to how Djébar's use of prose, paintings and photography focusses on the images that liberate women or hold them captive in a figurative, but also literal sense.

³⁰ Woodhull (1993: 79) refers to how Djébar's depiction of these binary spaces has influenced the screening of her film: "her prizewinning feature film *La Noubia des femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1978), which was supposed to have been shown on Algerian television, was never aired because officials deemed it disrespectful of Algerian manhood, among other things

On the one hand the monotony of domestic interior spaces and the constriction of these spaces are emphasized. Interior spaces symbolize reality, a sense of belonging, affection, and tenderness. On the other hand, the reader finds that a sense of freedom is associated with exterior, open spaces. Characters' walks outside the home offer a glimpse of self-affirmation. The outside world represents curiosity, difference, transgression, unreality, and solitude. Although exterior spaces are linked to liberation, it is also a cause for fear and bewilderment (Hiddleston, 2006: 82, 90; Rocca, 2004: 19-20, 97).

Where men are the visible masters of the outside world, women are left with(in) inner spaces.³¹ Zimra (1992: 70) emphasizes how the traditional Arabic house is contained by the Arabic district, the casbah. She signals how the name itself 'casbah', or 'fortress', is another cipher of containment. She describes the traditional house and its enclosures as follows:

At the center, opens a patio; around the patio a circular warren of rooms that cannot be said to 'open' onto the patio because they, too, are contained, 'veiled' by a curtain. Such endlessly concentric enclosures are the spatial metaphors of spiritual enclosure, but with an absent female self within. Woman becomes a textual trope of absence, even when on display.

Rader (2011: 129) also looks at the 'place' of women within traditional Arabic spaces. She mentions that even though mothers might have a say in their daughters' marriage, it is the man who "remains the perennial architect of the women's gender role and their place in the traditional harem". She alludes to the wife's various domestic duties in Djébar's *Ombre Sultane* that is mapped out by the apartment's plan: "the kitchen highlights her male inscribed gender role as nurturer and cook and the bedroom circumscribes her role as the man's concubine or odalisque. Therefore, the latter space outlines the husband's domain, rendering this woman powerless and objectified".

because the only man to appear in it is handicapped and confined to a wheelchair. (Djébar cheerfully explains that he was the only man she could find occupying interior space, which was the space she was interested in exploring)".

³¹ Abdelkader (2010: 101) refers to the close confinement of many of Djébar's characters. He refers to Djébar's text, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*, which highlights this sense of confinement: "I may say that Hajila's environment is a closed one, 'of women always in waiting'; 'sad caged bird women' [...] living like captives in 'that rarefied atmosphere of close confinement'" (Abdelkader, 2010: 101).

Throughout her oeuvre, Djébar is determined to rethink the place of women in Muslim society (Hirchi, 2003: 87). Mortimer (1988c: 306) reminds the reader that “although the harem no longer exists in an Algerian society as a physical reality, psychological walls are still present”. Victoria Best (2002) studies the notion of the borderline between public and private spaces in Djébar’s *Femmes d’Alger dans leur appartement* (1980). In her article, Best offers valuable insight on the need to reconceive space in Djébar’s work:

The way we understand and interpret space—domestic space here—is then wholly determined by our cultural—and our gendered—imagination [...] Undoubtedly, the way we interpret space is culturally determined, but equally, the way we imagine space is the way we organize it outside of ourselves [...] the way we conceive in ideological terms is also the way we conceive in concrete and material ones, so that the patterns of our mind find themselves reimposed on our public and private spaces. (Best, 2002: 877)

Best (2002: 873-875) demonstrates how women are confined within the house as well as the veil. She argues that this confinement, this “mapping out of space within which women may exist” are arbitrary borderlines that play a significant role in national and gender identity. She accentuates Djébar’s use of motifs of space and enclosure. Djébar provides “a representative chronicle of women’s battle to inscribe themselves in space, a space that is paradigmatic of postcolonial life where past and present, tradition and innovation, and a multiplicity of voices and discourses can comfortably cohabit” (Best, 2002: 875).

The veil plays a complex role in the modulation between imprisonment and liberation. Hiddleston (2006: 91) highlights how the veil on the one hand can function as a barrier and a symbol of separation and seclusion, but it can also allow female characters to remain anonymous which, in turn, allows them to circulate freely: “The veil, though associated with subordination and segregation, also paradoxically allows certain rules to be broken, since it means that the wearer can walk in the streets sheltered from the other’s gaze”.

As Faulkner (1996: 983) points out, “women are shown to be confined by the architecture of the city and the customs of their society”. They are confined by the physical border of inner and outer spaces, but they are also imprisoned by the use of the veil. After the war, Djébar perceives the return of the veil as a kind of prison for women. She accentuates how women’s bodies as well as their minds are imprisoned by physical walls and mental veils (Faulkner, 1996: 847, 852).

It is this imprisonment that is shared amongst Djébar's female characters. Hiddleston (2004: 94; 2006: 97) refers to the women in Djébar's work's "unique and singular experiences of evasion or flight, their resistance to containment" that forms a basis of their feminine community. She argues that the "[c]haracters derive a sense of self not from habitation and belonging but precisely from their ability to break away from home and roots" (Hiddleston, 2006: 100). Rocca (2004: 17) insists that Djébar's characters demonstrate a deep desire not only for a physical space, but also a mental space from where they can discover the world around them. They also have a desire for a verbal place for expressing emotions as well as an interior psychological space where emotions can be transmitted to the other. It is a desire for a space, be it physical, mental, or psychological, for freedom. Djébar, according to Best (2002: 976), is of opinion that "without freedom, there can be no female sexuality at all" (Best, 2002: 876).

It is through the characters' freedom of movement and their exploration of public spaces that they discover their bodies and their desires. They are able to restore their female corporeality and access their subjectivity through the passage into the outside world (Rocca, 2004: 19; Ringrose, 2006: 182-183). The discovery of their bodies allows them to create a space that they can call their own. It becomes a safe house that is no longer the territory of man. Ringrose (2006: 184, 208- 209)³² and Woodhull (1993: 85-86) highlight how this discovery often takes place in the *hammam*, the Turkish bath, a "cavern-womb-like space" in which "women can 'become' [...] where 'women [can be] among themselves, and where they can discover love of the self on the side of women" (Ringrose, 2006: 208-209). Within the cavern-like space of the *hammam*, women's bodies in turn transform into a cavern, a shelter within they can find themselves (Ringrose, 2006: 184).

Woodhull (1993: 85-86) refers to the ambiguous space that is the *hammam*:

A 'liquid prison', the bath at night becomes space in which hierarchies between men and women, and between urban and rural populations, are unsettled: the bath presents itself as 'a harem in reverse' where transient peasant men seek shelter [...] From the ambiguous space of the bath, the reader is transported to an uncertain 'shore' [...] a border between land and sea, a 'threshold' between inside and outside.

³² Ringrose (2006: 184) associates Djébar's use of the *hammam* with Irigaray's 'other of the other', a space for woman.

This ‘threshold’ space recalls, as Abdelkader (2010: 98-99) insists, Homi Bhabha’s notion of ‘in-between spaces’:

Djebar’s depiction of the public bath [...] offers an alternative women’s space similar to what Homi Bhabha calls [...] ‘in-between spaces’ of negotiation that are beyond the politics of polarity. Thus, the *Hammam* is the sole momentary respite from the harem [...] It offers a secret solace to sequestered women [...] This provisional maternal cocoon contributes to the deliverance from the lustful quarters of captivity. For Djebar the *Hammam* is the space where a locus of nurturing relationships among women are cultivated, a refuge from homes that have become prisons where questioning and terrorization have replaced true communication and genuine respect between husbands and wives.

The ‘in-between’ space for nurturing relationships is signalled by Hitchcock (2010: 247) as well. He mentions how women’s solidarity binds them “to a common quest, the sublation of the harem literally and figuratively in the political unconscious of North African women”. He describes the harem itself as a “paradoxical space facilitating friendship otherwise denied in public fora”.

The notion of ‘in-between’ spaces can be understood from a more literal perspective as well. Women are regarded as being caught ‘in between’ walls constructed by men. They are “immured within unseen spaces, silent places; immobilised in the name of prejudice, or prurience, or fear” (Tomlinson, 2005: 60-61). Tomlinson (2005: 60-61) indicates how, as women, Djebar’s female protagonists “constitute the ‘blindspots’ of a patriarchal culture”.³³ She demonstrates how “their evacuation from the public domain, from the street, mirrors their evacuation from political and philosophical representation. Their internment between the walls of men’s houses mirrors their internment between the lines of men’s discourses”. She argues that similar to Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, Djebar’s principal concern is “to make those in-betweens, those alien walls, alien lines, into something approaching a home: to furnish women with an imagery, and a language, of their own” (Tomlinson, 2005: 60-61). It is feminist perspectives such as these that will be explored in the following section.

³³ Tomlinson (2005) focusses on the protagonists of *Les Alouettes naïves*, *Femmes d’Alger dans leur appartement* and *La Femme sans sépulture*.

2.1.2 A feminist approach to space

a. Transgressing space as a form of protest

Djebar's heroines are considered "*odalisques en fuite*³⁴, women fleeing confined space" (Mortimer, 1988c: 306). They attempt to break through the spatial limits imposed on them by their culture. Woodhull (1993: 85) and Abdelkader (2010: 102) refer to how female space in *L'Amour, la fantasia* and *Ombre Sultane* is depicted as a tomb or a sarcophagus from which women must emerge. Djebar (1985: 204) states in *L'Amour, la fantasia* that "(t)hose who do not cry out in protest are in 'a prison without reprieve'". The spatial liberty they seek is not only freedom of movement, but also a freedom of gazing that is not veiled or controlled by man (Rocca, 2004: 174).

In many of Djebar's novels, "woman's right to see and be seen is [...] at the heart of the struggle" (Mortimer, 2001: 221-222). Public space is characterised by the visibility of man and the invisibility of woman. The private and feminine inner space is invaded by the voyeur, the one who observes the body and the intimacy of women from the outside (Rocca, 2004: 33, 128). Rader (2011: 121) alludes to such an 'invaded' space when referring to *Ombre Sultane's* "intertextual discourse between feminine storytellers and their framed narrative spaces, as determined by the masculine eye".³⁵ Merini (1999: 2) argues that Djebar insists that "the feminine world of intimacy and privacy must be protected from the public, impersonal, masculine and 'evil' eye". She is of opinion that the veil can be seen as a mask and a weapon of reverse-voyeurism and refers to its usefulness "since entering certain realms of public life and public discourse can easily be compared to entering a hostile, almost exclusively male enemy territory, and doing so 'naked' and defenseless since male voyeurs are apt to metaphorically 'strip women naked' in dealings with them". Faulkner (1996: 852) however argues that by speaking, looking, and removing the veil women are able to claim public space and to seize control. She emphasises Djebar's perspective on transgressing the closed, private space into the outside space as a form of protest: "To take the subject position as the one who gazes, to see outside, is to revolt, to assert a certain power".³⁶

³⁴ "Odalisque en fuite" was the title that Djebar intended at first for *Ombre Sultane* (Mortimer, 1988c: 311).

³⁵ My emphasis.

³⁶ To protest against their prisons, Djebar (1980: 68) urges women in *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* to "Parler entre nous et regarder. Regarder dehors, regarder hors des murs et des prisons".

This subverting act of gazing in *L'Amour, la fantasia* is studied by Murray (2008: 55) as an act of voyeurism. In a traditional Maghrebian society only men are allowed to gaze while the woman's gaze is strictly controlled by religious belief (Erickson, 1996: 306). To Murray's mind the author reverses the voyeuristic gaze of the male coloniser. Djébar counteracts the voyeuristic gaze of the coloniser by placing herself in the traditionally masculine position of the voyeur. She reverses male and female roles and rebels against feminist subordination and masculine authority (Murray, 2008: 55, Hiddleston, 2004: 100; 2006: 102).

The assertion of power through this protesting voyeuristic act is paralleled with the act of writing in the novel. Just as voyeurism implies transgressing private spaces, the act of writing also represents a means of transgressing spatial boundaries erected by patriarchal societies (Murray, 2008: 56) for "[o]nly the written word can fly through the bars and escape paternal censure" (Ringrose, 2006: 60-61). The written word becomes a tool to reach the outside world, a space that is linked to sunlight and with women's liberation (Faulkner, 1996: 851). Mohammed Hirchi (2003: 89-90, 92) describes how the written word is perceived as a refuge and a haven in the author's oeuvre. Writing itself becomes a terrain, a safe space, to which the author belongs. Other critics also comment on Djébar's writing practices and how it is mirrored through the theme of writing in her novels. McCullough (2005: 119) for example argues that Djébar's "highly controversial (historical, fictional, and sociological) writings [...] endeavour to liberate imaginary women from their enclosed spaces; these fictional characters may then inspire real women to reflect on their situations, to speak and act against the unfavorable conditions in which they live and work" (McCullough, 2005: 119). Hitchcock reflects on the way Djébar transcribes as well and insists that "she takes proximity with her Algerian sisters as a condition of collapsing inside and outside and therefore challenges masculinist discourses of seclusion" (Hitchcock, 2010: 214). He demonstrates how her "language of form [...] offers the contamination of colonialism as an intriguing prison. The principle of the fugitive slips the fetish of possession, seclusion, and the various veils of patriarchal reverie" (Hitchcock, 2010: 236). This use of language as a form of protest will subsequently be discussed.

b. The need for a protesting language

In order to express herself through writing, Djébar however needs to break out of a prison, a prison-house of patriarchy, both on the level of human relations, and on the level of language (Velčić, 2017: 114, 118; Ringrose, 2006: 155).³⁷ Ringrose (2006: 95) refers to both Djébar and French feminist Hélène Cixous' common identification of patriarchal society as a 'prison-house' or 'une vaste prison', "where both sexual identity and language are imprisoned within rigid oppositional structures".

In order to break away from or to find a *sortie* from the patriarchal prison-house of language, Djébar, like Cixous, explores different and new ideas of *écriture*. It is a feeling of exclusion in language which drives both authors to look for another *écriture*/writing/language. For it is language, in the words of Cixous, that "provides the antidote to exile, it becomes 'another country', a home for those without a home ('Je me suis trouvée bien nulle part'³⁸) and opens up other worlds: "Tout est perdu sauf les mots. C'est une expérience d'enfant: les mots sont nos portes vers tous les autres mondes. A un certain moment pour qui a tout perdu, que ce soit d'ailleurs un être ou un pays, c'est la langue qui devient pays. On entre au pays des langues" (Ringrose, 2006: 95, 128, 132).

A new form of writing requires a liberating, and therefore often, a protesting language.³⁹ The choice of French, the language of the oppressor, as a language of protest in Djébar's work, has led to numerous debates (Donadey, 2000: 27; Mortimer, 1988c: 301, Ghaussy, 1994: 461, Erickson, 1996: 312, Best, 2002: 878).⁴⁰ Ghaussy (1994: 459) believes that the French language, "the other language", empowers Djébar. Through telling the story of native Algerian women in a foreign tongue, Best (2002: 878) argues

³⁷ The critics' use of the term 'prison-house' recalls Frederic Jameson's book, *The Prison-House of Language*, in which Jameson analyzes the basic methodology of Structuralism and Russian Formalism. Jameson's (1972) use of the term "prison-house" is a reference to Nietzsche's declaration: "We have to cease to think if we refuse to do it in the prison-house of language".

³⁸ Hélène Cixous, "Mon Algérie", p. 71.

³⁹ Djébar highlights the importance of a certain language in which "to speak is a second revolution undermining male patriarchal hegemony" (Faulkner, 1996: 852).

⁴⁰ Rothendler (2016: 297) refers to the implantation of the colonizer's language in Algeria: "Scholars often refer to the entry of the colonizers' language into Algeria as an implantation of French, making language into something physical. The French initiated this implantation with the idea that to unify a region, one had to unify its language. In 1938 Arabic was declared 'a foreign language', so that French became associated with citizenship and freedom, especially freedom of movement in a space no longer belonging to the indigenous population. In fact, this implantation had the unintended consequence of reinforcing regional language differences such that the regions became increasingly delineated by the language of their inhabitants: Berber, Arabic, Spanish, Italian and Turkish".

that Djébar's "cultural imagination perceives language and its structures differently. Rather than thinking language through the body, as feminist theory has tended to do, the anonymity of women's relation to discourse leads Djébar to think of language in terms of space and structure" (Best, 2002: 878). In her analysis of the multilingual strategies of postcolonial literature in Djébar's text, Anne Donadey (2000: 27) emphasizes the fact that Djébar uses French as a form of combat. She refers, among other things, to Djébar's "arabiz[ing]" of the French language as part of her protest.⁴¹ Best (2002: 878) insists that Djébar's use of language creates a significant female space. It is a "space of interaction for mental and physical, real and fantastic". In her examination of Djébar's approach to language as a temporal, physical and imagined space, Rachel Rothendler demonstrates how Djébar appropriates the voices of colonizer and colonized across time. She believes that Djébar "creates a chronotype, a kind of temporal landscape in which French [...] becomes her own to the extent that she inhabits it" (Rothendler, 2016: 296). To her mind Djébar "makes words into her own space in which she literally and figuratively pushes 'the geographic limits' of the French language so that she can inhabit its borders, itself 'a linguistic territory' hors-les-langues" (Rothendler, 2016: 299).

Mortimer (1988c: 304) and Ringrose (2006: 88) however signal the ambiguity linked to the use of the colonizer's language. The narrator's French education is a liberating force, but it also alienates her from her peers. Her initiation into the French language gives her freedom of movement and she is free to enter public space through her French education.⁴² She is not veiled or cloistered. As Zimra (1992: 77) states: "The alien language brings freedom, a freedom expressed through the contrapuntal images of naked/clothed, covered/uncovered body" (Zimra, 1992: 77). It however brings only superficial freedom for the French language "frees the body but not the soul". The language propels her into a 'symbolic world' which is hundreds of miles away, it "creates in her a sense of geographical dislocation" (Ringrose, 2006: 88). She is furthermore separated from the maternal world with girls of her kind and age (Mortimer, 1988c: 304, Ringrose, 2006: 88, Zimra, 1992: 71).⁴³ The ambiguous French language strengthens her sense of exclusion:

⁴¹ Hitchcock (2010: 240) similarly affirms that "Djébar has been outspoken about a concomitant desire to Arabize French". Rothendler (2016: 298) also demonstrates how in "creating imagined linguistic space of her narratives, Djébar may refuse to translate Arabic words".

⁴² Rothendler (2016: 298) refers to how "(o)rdinances related directly to the French language and to the enforcement of French law as a whole turned French into a symbol of freedom, intellect, and citizen status in colonized Algeria" (Rothendler, 2016: 298).

⁴³ Mortimer (1988c: 302) describes Djébar's perspective of French as a paternal language and Arabic and Berber as maternal languages. The language of the colonizer, the official public written language, became an adopted paternal language

Djebar's paternal identification places her both inside and outside the dominant male order, but also, and more poignantly, places her both inside and outside the maternal order, which perceives her 'annexation' of the outside world, the male/public world, as a threat. (Ringrose, 2006: 60)

Although the French language liberated her from the harem (Ivantcheva-Merjanske, 2015: 213), she remains both inside and outside male and maternal orders.⁴⁴ Spivak (2017: 161) demonstrates how in *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père* Djebar "considers the double-edged gift of the veil of the French language and culture from her father, without access to either the women's or the men's world fully, and she generalizes her intensely private story. The theme of self-effacement is center stage".⁴⁵ Ivantcheva-Merjanske (2015: 216) argues that the French language remains an 'open wound' ('une plaie ouverte') for Djebar. She is never able to harmonise the Arab and Berber voices with the memory of the French language. Rothendler (2016: 297-298) also alludes to the sense of disorientation that develops in the imagined spaces of these languages. She points out that the 'displacement' is a common occurrence for the younger generation who had grown up under French rule.⁴⁶ She demonstrates how in *L'Amour, la fantasia* "(t)he narrator vacillates between the sense that linguistic *métissage* offers her more control and movement and the sense that one language will forever interrupt the other, leading to a mental aphasia. The two languages demarcate distinct physical areas in endless confrontation, engendering feelings of exclusion and isolation" (Rothendler, 2016: 297-298).

The antithesis of the French, the foreign, 'alien' paternal language, is Arabic, the maternal language. In the scene where the mother visits her son in prison in *Vaste est la prison* the Arab language is represented as a world of tenderness and intimacy: "La langue arabe crée mentalement la perception d'une terre imaginaire qui reconstitue la terre natale, restaure son aura à travers l'harmonie des sons de la langue" (Ivantcheva-Merjanske, 2015: 55). The Arab language becomes a refuge, and intimate

because Algeria was administered by a French colonial bureaucracy supported by an indigenous male labour force. In contrast, the unofficial private oral languages, Arab and Berber dialects, remained maternal languages; Algerian women rarely had access to French schools and were excluded from most if not all forms of public activity.

⁴⁴ This in-between state is emphasized through Djebar's regular use of the term 'seuil' (threshold). According to Zimra (2011: 112) the term 'seuil' can be seen as the master concept and the felicitous trope throughout Djebar's work. Zimra (2011: 126) posits that "(w)e might do well to remember that 'threshold', her favourite figure of liminality, is both (space) and situation (time)".

⁴⁵ Spivak (2017: 158) refers to the metaphor given by Djebar at the end of *L'Amour, la fantasia* to the double bind of her *francophonie*: "her father's traditional decision to marry her off, as a child bride, to the French language".

⁴⁶ Rothendler (2016: 297-298) states: "Due to the extreme regulation of language during colonization and directly following independence with the promotion of Arabization, the younger generation that had grown up under French rule was thrown into a state of language crisis, torn between Arabic and French".

space whilst the French language serves only as an instrument, a password (Ivantcheva-Merjanske, 2015: 56).⁴⁷ Ringrose (2006: 133) demonstrates how in *L'Amour, la fantasia* Arabic is (still) regarded as the language of love and pleasure. Djébar longs for the Arabic language just as she yearns for the 'Voice of the Mother'. Djébar's relation to the Arabic language according to Ringrose (2006: 133) however changes later in her oeuvre:

In *Vaste est la prison*, the opposition between French (as the language of absence—in the sense of geographical absence—and of alienation) and Arabic (as the language of presence and pleasure) abruptly breaks down [...] The Arabic language no longer represents protection from the segregation at work in her society but is now associated with the very process of segregation.

The (maternal) Arabic language, previously perceived as a language of great respect, is regarded as a patriarchal language which promotes segregation and antagonism between sexes. Djébar is prompted to turn her attention to another language, the ancient Berber. The Berber language "becomes the object not only of a historical quest [...] but of Djébar's personal quest for 'une écriture des femmes' (The Berber language is revealed to have been the privileged property of women: 'Dans la société touareg, ce sont les femmes qui conservent l'écriture...')" (Ringrose, 2006: 25).

Djébar's 'écriture des femmes' however doesn't succeed in combatting her feeling of alienation with regard to patriarchal language. It doesn't provide "a sortie from the prison-house of language but returns to her original starting-point of exile" (Ringrose, 2006: 146). Djébar is believed to remain an orphan or an exile of language. She has no language to call her own (Ringrose, 2006: 146, 156).

Although an exile of language, Ringrose believes that in the final part of her work Djébar is able to access the lost Mother-Voice that she longs for in *L'Amour, la fantasia*. Through embracing a kind of matriarchal writing, "one that gives voice to the women down the maternal line of her family", Djébar frees herself from the paternal order. Ringrose argues that through Djébar's re-entering into the semiotic recesses of her mind, she is able to access the repressed sounds of the maternal order as well as the repressed voices of other women whose cries have been silenced (Ringrose, 2006: 55, 58-59, 62-63, 77, 156).

⁴⁷ My translation. "Dans ce cas, une langue, l'arabe, devient le refuge, l'espace intime tandis que la langue de l'autre, celle du pouvoir, est simplement l'instrument, servant de mot de passe" (Ivantcheva-Merjanske, 2015: 56).

Djebar's 'matriarchal writing' accentuated by Ringrose (2006) is praised by other critics as well. Hitchcock (2010: 224) believes that Djebar's writing succeeds in representing the sound of Algerian resistance. He states:

What would the history of Algerian resistance to the French sound like? [...] if Djebar's Quartet so far is any indication it would have to be both polyphonic and dissonant; it would have to embrace the music of the mountains as well as the coast and rely on the power of memory, of silence in history, and of creation [...] Certainly it would be the space of voices, if not harmony. (Hitchcock, 2010: 224)

Her writing is believed to represent harmony for it bridges gaps, silences, and lacunae. Hitchcock (2010: 207) equates Djebar's aesthetic to "a scriptable voice in the space of silence, a complex troping on history that explores writing as a feminist intervention against what history determines as unutterable". He considers Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* as "both writing through the body and composing through rhythm: the sounds of Djebar's birthplace that sing within consciousness and an unconscious desire measured in the otherwise ambivalent space between utterance and silence" (Hitchcock, 2010: 218). Pappas (2010: 173) demonstrates how Djebar explores female Algerian interiors that are both spatial and psychological in *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*. She signals how the text examines the difficulty in finding a female voice in Algerian society. Echoing Ringrose's sentiment mentioned earlier, she considers the novel to be about "accessing the inaccessible". Djebar's language is commended by Sharpe (2013: 216) as well for it is through her spatial grammar that the author "emancipates Algerian women from their state of subalternity within the nationalist and post-colonialist imaginary".

Other critics are however less optimistic about Djebar's ability to access the repressed voices of those who have been silenced. They rather emphasize the difficulty, and sometimes even the impossibility, of speaking and representing others' stories. Rahman (2017: 33) accentuates how Djebar is unable to speak from the inside. She believes that Djebar's "testimony is unveiled as a duplicitous intervention. It is a language that, in attempting to witness, cannot escape the repetitive act of violence, revealing a central *aporia*: if one represents, one risks reproducing, however slightly, the act. But if one does not speak, one risks erasing the traces of the act". Djebar's attempts to give voice to Algerian women or to bring their silenced stories to light, is perceived to fail. She is believed to end up appropriating the others' voice. Each representation, each experience she attempts to encapsulate "adds another layer

of opacity that further freezes the singularities beneath the surface of the text” (Hiddleston, 2006: 78, 96, 167). Hiddleston demonstrates how narrative excludes as much as it reveals. She highlights how Djébar’s desire to encapsulate and capture a collective feminine voice is unsuccessful:

On one level [...] Djébar’s text is a force of connection, setting up links and narrating common experiences between singular women. Writing serves as a unifying force, integrating past and present and establishing an alternative, feminine history. Nevertheless, the text concludes by lamenting its own failure, alluding to absence and lack rather than creativity. The singular violence of the past stifles the narrator’s voice, disabling reconstruction and excluding women once again from language and history. (Hiddleston, 2006: 104)

Where Djébar’s writing is seen as a connection that fills silences and gaps by critics such as Hitchcock (2010) and Ringrose (2006), Hiddleston highlights that it is the notion of absence, or precisely silences and gaps, that come to the forefront in Djébar’s texts. Tomlinson (2005: 61) agrees that Djébar does not necessarily wish to fill the gaps, but rather aims to accentuate them. In her analysis on space in Djébar’s *Le Blanc de l’Algérie*,⁴⁸ Tomlinson indicates that “(t)he *blanc* of the work’s title is the mark of Algeria’s bereavement, a blank space intercalated in the pages of the country’s history, of its chroniclers, to speak themselves” (Tomlinson, 2005: 62). She mentions how white spaces and blanks “serve Djébar as her figures for erasure, not simply the erased” (Tomlinson, 2005: 63) and insists that her representations of “‘revenance’ refer to the absence of full meaning by signalling the presence of meaning elsewhere, in an interstice, an in-between-crypt-walls which is always, she reminds us, out of sight” (Tomlinson, 2005: 63).

It is these critics’ insistence on the inaccessibility, aporia, absences and meaning ‘elsewhere’ that I wish to explore further in this study.

⁴⁸ Tomlinson (2005: 61) insists that the novel “has much in common with her other work in terms of spatial disposition and the definition, or redefinition, of lacunae and of gaps. Space here is both indeterminate and precise, both difference and dimension. It is both the interval separating two positives and a proper sphere available to perception, to study; both the ‘non-dit’, the ‘non-vu’ between masculine dicta and masculine figures, say, and a realm apparent in itself. It is—one might summarise—‘space’ shorn of articles and the space, a space: of female activity, for example, or female experience”.

2.2. Space in the work of André Brink

Similar postcolonial approaches are found in the analysis on space in Brink's work. The representation of place, space, landscape, and atmosphere play a significant role in Brink's oeuvre (Bothma & Roos, 2013: 274, Willemse, 2015: 212). The social construct of space comes to the forefront in Brink's texts. Space and landscape do not merely serve as a background for his novels for Brink is believed to portray living landscapes based on experience—"deurleefde en ervare landskappe"—(Willemse, 2015: 212). Valeria Guidotti (1998: 399-400) highlights Brink's perception that "geography travels through social practices at large and is implicated in myriad topographies of power and knowledge". His imaginative and re-creative practice of writing new geographies of the (silenced) human and spatial mosaic of South Africa is accentuated (Guidotti, 1998: 400).

Literary critics focus on Brink's portrayal of space as fiction, the connection that he draws between space and identity as well as Brink's ability to deconstruct colonial paradigms associated with space. These literary responses to space in his work can similarly be divided into a nationalistic and a postcolonial approach.

2.2.1 A nationalistic approach

"The national landscape," according to Larsen (2005: 293), "is part of a more general story of how place and identity are interconnected". Brink (2011:11) himself accentuates this interrelated connection between space and identity in South African literature. He highlights how, even currently, one often finds the notion of constant return to the landscapes of apartheid in recent South African literature. A popular motif in this regard is the exiled South African who returns home after many years and tries to fit in as he or she attempts to understand the past.

Brink's imaginative practice allows him to reconfigure the relations between (South African) space and (South African) identity. Throughout his oeuvre, South Africans often represent a sentiment of geographical rootlessness. His characters share a passionate craving for their homeland and face a similar dilemma: the ultimate choice to return home despite the cost—their hatred for and resistance

to the apartheid regime (Hassal, 2013: 185). Their (inevitable) journey home “is more one of the mind in search of a personal identity than land and material possessions” (Rich, 1982: 67).

Many critics highlight the influence of space on Brink’s characters. Viljoen *et al* (2004: 19, 20) emphasize the way in which physical and metaphorical spaces influence the construction of South African identity in Brink’s *’n Oomblik in die wind*. In their analysis of *Philida*, Mathilda Bothma (2015: 45) and Willem de Vries (2012: 8) also highlight how space, identity and the notion of belonging relate. Bothma (2015: 46-47) raises the central role that place and displacement play in the construction of the Self.

This relation between identity and space is not a passive one: “To be born in a place is not enough [...] Brink insists on the naked materiality of the landscape that requires our activity if we want to belong there and shape an identity, an activity that does not follow an already prepared program but evolves while it unfolds” (Larsen, 2005: 300). In order to belong and to shape an identity, an active participation with the landscape is required. One finds that the landscape plays such an active role in Brink’s characters: Elisabeth in *’n Oomblik in die wind* “compares the effect of the landscape on her identity with that of the decay of flesh”. It is the new environment of the *veld* that causes her to rethink “the petty divisions imposed by society” which in turns allows her to reassess the relation between mistress and slave. In Elisabeth and Adam’s journey, the land becomes part of their identity. It is a journey, through the ‘landscape of truth’ (Kossew, 1996a: 54-55). This journey-image is often found in Brink’s work. His characters are compared to pilgrims: as they travel across unknown landscapes they are at the same time exploring uncharted inner territories (Hassal, 2013: 179).

Brink’s character’s connection with the earth is taken a step further when he suggests, as Diala (2005: 14-15) points out, that “the earth and its rocks take their substance from the bones and flesh of the human dead, and that the longer presence of blacks in South Africa has meant that their mortality has left a deeper mark on the earth”. In the evocation of Africa the characters highlight the “stone-like enduring presence of blacks and [...] the rootlessness and essential foreignness of white people in Africa”. Despite the suggested human substance of the earth, Brink evokes Africa “as primal earth, indestructible, mysterious, beyond human possessiveness and futile claims for permanent tenancy”.

Human claims to the ownership of the earth are refuted. The earth's sovereignty and its eternity versus human's fleeting presence and their fugitive temporality is accentuated (Diala, 2003: 907-908).

This opposition between the earth's eternity and human's mortality often takes a somber turn in Brink's texts: The pilgrimage is turned into a tragic human adventure. Diala (2003: 907) believes that Brink apprehends the South African landscape as "inherently tragic and thus a fitting scene for tragic drama. This accounts for his incremental portrayal of the earth as invariably scorched and drought-stricken, an externalization of the aridity of apartheid and its desertification of the human environment". Within Brink's engagement with the South African landscape the hostility of nature and the haunting mortality of the protagonists are emphasized. The human becomes the "eternal pilgrim and voyager, only walking by" (Diala, 2005: 27). Diala (2005: 25-26) demonstrates that even Brink's Eden in *'n Oomblik in die wind* becomes an intimidating, tragic environment:

Brink's African Eden is in reality the eternal wilderness in the shadow of the valley of death. Where vultures and eagles are pervading presences all through Adam's and Elizabeth's wanderings as symbolic reminders of death, on their physical paths, the protagonists also stumble through tombstones and memorials, and themselves experience symbolic deaths and resurrections [...] All of the wilderness is indeed a vast grave throwing up now and again the bones of dead animals, and the protagonists' memories are full of tombs and cluttered with ghosts of the dead. (Diala, 2005: 25-26)

These tragic wanderings and images of death is a common occurrence in Brink's oeuvre. Andon-Milligan (1992: 28) argues that "most of André Brink's works are haunted by blindness, by a fear of being lost in fog, of being plunged into some sort of primeval chasm". Diala (2003: 905) similarly points out that most of Brink's protagonists are "invariably doomed to death or its symbolic equivalent of imprisonment".

The notion of imprisonment runs throughout Brink's oeuvre. Kossew (1996a: 53) and Hassal (2013:168-171) explore how both Elisabeth and Adam in *'n Oomblik in die wind* see themselves as imprisoned. Hassal (2013: 169-170) demonstrates how Elisabeth is at first imprisoned in "her girl's role in the small-town society of the Cape". She pursues freedom by escaping her family through marriage. She however doesn't find liberation through running away and finds that "she has exchanged one imprisonment for another". The character Adam has also been a prisoner all his life: not only is he born a slave who is denied humanity, but he is later convicted to Robben Island. When he escapes prison and flees into

the interior, Adam experiences a lonely freedom. It is a freedom that, as Hassal (2013: 169-170) indicates “continues to deny him human relations, and is itself a kind of solitary confinement”. Even the love between Elisabeth and Adam is itself a kind of prison: the idyllic summer spent together on a lonely, Eden-like beach, is soon followed by the idea of entrapment (Diala, 2005: 19; Hassal, 2013: 170-171).

It is suggested that the characters only experience freedom during their journey through the vacant wilderness (Hassal, 2013: 172-173). It is only in the ‘wilderness without end’, away from the pressures of society’s imposed marginality, where Adam and Elisabeth can find their true selves (Kossew, 1996a: 54). Meintjes (2013: 47) argues that “[i]t is only in the natural environment of an African interior, totally isolated from the civilisation of the Cape, that Elizabeth and Adam can manage to transcend white supremacist and male chauvinist norms and rules and escape from the ‘disorientated, deranged social structures’ which are referred to in one of the mottoes of the text”. When they reach the outskirts of settlement, they are again reminded of society’s “ruthless separation of black and white”. In society they are dehumanized: “But if the prison gates close about them, and if they even acquiesce to some extent their own imprisonment, they have known in the wilderness a freedom and a humanity they could not have experienced at the Cape” (Hassal, 2013: 172-173). The dehumanizing structures of society are not only limited to the Cape, for Hassal (2013: 168, 172) is of opinion that Brink converts “the entire country into a prison, in which as in all jails, the guards as well as the prisoners are incarcerated”.

Brink’s representation of these spaces (be it the country itself, prisons, the wilderness, or civilization) is also examined from a postcolonial framework, which the following section aims to investigate.

2.2.2. A postcolonial approach

In comparison with analyses on Djébar’s work, many critics employ a postcolonial framework to explore spatial binaries in Brink’s oeuvre. Literary critics similarly analyze the function of houses in Brink’s texts. Although some maintain that the representation of houses in his work focuses “on power relations dominated by the male-female binary” (De Lange *et al*, 2008: xxii-xxiii); the gendered male-female perspective is less common in the literary responses on Brink’s work than that of Djébar. Where

Djebar's work is believed to be centered on the opposition between inner spaces reserved to women and outer spaces reserved to men; critics demonstrate how Brink's portrayal of houses highlight binaries such as past and future; superficial surface and hidden interior (De Lange *et al*, 2008; Wenzel, 2008).⁴⁹ Within the South African context, emphasis is placed on suppressed memories and hidden histories that need to be 'aired', exposed and excavated through telling and writing stories (Wenzel, 2008: 151-153).

Literary critics additionally explore how Brink deconstructs certain spatial binaries and mythologies. Zoppi (1998: 316) refers to Brink's "deconstruction of the mythology of the 'discovering' colonial gaze and on the demystification of accepted, official history through imaginative geography". The 'discovering' colonial gaze is called into question together with the principle of mapping. Guidotti (1998: 401) argues that Brink deconstructs the map trope as "supporter of imperial myths and systems of knowledge and by unveiling the lie of a land as empty, uninhabited, a blank continent without a history, without a geography too, awaiting colonial inscription".

In *'n Oomblik in die wind* Brink is seen to emphasize the opposition between the Cape's colonial settlement and the underexplored interior of South Africa. Louise Viljoen (2004: 140) accentuates Brink's deconstruction of "the spatial binary that opposes wilderness to civilization and the racialization of those spaces in order to envision the transformation of South African cultural identity during different phases of South African history". Although the transformative power of the dialogue between the center and periphery in *'n Oomblik in die wind* is emphasized, Viljoen (2004: 142-144) draws our attention to the novel's tendency to maintain certain binaries of colonial thought. She refers to the binary that "associates the white person with civilization and the colored or black with the lack of civilization" (Viljoen, 2004: 142-143). To her mind, the narrator seems to 'naturalize' the relation between a specific space, race and class: the colored slave has a natural bond with the wilderness and

⁴⁹ Referring to Brink's *Imaginings of Sand* and *Rights of Desire*, Wenzel (2008: 151) demonstrates how the "houses in the novels do not merely depict lifestyles and cultural atmosphere, but also illustrate the significance of the different internal or inhabited spaces of houses or 'homes'. These houses appear sombre and secretive; they consist of labyrinthine dimensions, contain brooding silences, and store deep and dangerous secrets that often emerge in the form of haunting spirits, skeletons of slaves from the past. Although they reveal fascinating stories of their inhabitants, they also harbour evidence of a past that is locked away from the public gaze: stories of exploitation, slavery, the abuse and neglect of women and children. Consequently, the various spaces—chambers, caves and cellars—assume a significance and a life of their own by reviving or re-enacting personal (life) stories. These are 'memories' that need to be excavated and exposed through the acts of writing and telling of stories".

he 'belongs' there rather than in civilization's extravagant clothing whereas the European succumbs and does not 'belong' to the wilderness. According to Viljoen (2013: 417-418) this supposed connection between the slave and the earth can be discredited for the very reason that it is Adam's owner who states that he is bred to survive these tough conditions of the land. Adam furthermore accentuates that he did not choose the wilderness but that his situation forced him to go there. Viljoen however criticizes the novel's repetitive representation of Adam's intuitive knowledge and his sensual experience of the land. Adam's knowledge is compared to the abstract knowledge of Larsson, who could not survive in that environment. Kossew's response (1996a: 49-50) to the opposed forms of knowledge in *'n Oomblik in die wind* differs from Viljoen's:

The role-reversal situation is also incorporated into the narrative, so that not only are the boundaries between mistress and slave overcome within their sexual relationship but the idea of knowledge is reversed too—illiterate Adam Mantoor becomes the one who can 'read' the landscape, and Elisabeth Larsson, for all her 'civilized' knowledge, is helpless. In a similar way, the word 'savage', originally used by Elisabeth to protect herself from her responses to Adam [...] is used later by Adam to describe the state of freedom Elisabeth has arrived at.

Where Kossew seems to appreciate the reversal of knowledge, Viljoen argues that through this association between slave and nature, certain colonial binaries are strengthened.

Another example of Adam's natural instinct is portrayed in the scene on the rocky island off the beach: Although some critics believe the scene to be one of intense self-discovery and a liberation from colonial restrictions (Massyn, 1992: 45), Viljoen (2013: 418) emphasizes how the scene portrays Adam's sexuality as instinctive and uninhibited, as well as bestial and overpowering: "Dit is 'n vorm van representasie wat herinner aan die Romantiese verheerliking van die sogenaamde 'natuurmens' en kan waarskynlik ook gelees word teen die agtergrond van Hayden White se opmerkings oor die 'Wild Man' en die 'noble Savage' in *Tropics of Discourse* (1978)" (Viljoen, 2013: 418). Viljoen (2004: 143-144) claims that Brink displaces European concepts such as the 'wild man' and the 'noble savage' on the character of the colored slave. In representing Adam as a wild man who makes statements such as "Vrou, jy's wildernis genoeg om deur te swerf" (OW: 93), Viljoen (2013: 419, 426-427) argues that the author is explicitly making use of a well-known rhetorical strategy of colonial discourse in feminizing the oppressed man and giving him the same lower status as a woman in a patriarchal society. She

criticizes the novel's negative colonial stereotyping of the slave or native as 'half-wild'.⁵⁰ Attempts to question colonial stereotypes regarding the representation of the slave are according to Viljoen subtly confirmed through Brink's inclination to portray him as a child of nature. The novel is marred through maintaining and even idealizing certain colonial stereotypes (Viljoen, 2013: 420, 427). Viljoen (2013: 420) indicates how even the couple's idyllic stay on the beach is blemished by the use of stereotypes:

Al is die rasse-en klassevooroordele opgehef in hierdie paradysbestaan, bevat dit al die genderhiërargieë ingebou in die Bybelse Eden: Adam is die jagter, terwyl Elizabeth vrugte en skulpe versamel; hy lei, sy volg; hy neem seksueel besit van haar en sy gee toe; wanneer hulle 'n slang vind, is dit vir haar mooi, terwyl hy dit doodmaak. Indien Brink met hierdie paradys 'n beeld wou gee van die ideale Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing waarin rasse-en klassevooroordele opgehef is, is dit ongelukkig 'n samelewing waarin genderhiërargieë intakt bly. Dit mag wees dat Brink met die uitbeelding van die idille by die see ook die lewenstyl van die Boesmans en sommige Khoi [...] as 'natuurmense' uit die vroeë Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis idealiseer—ironies genoeg het vroue ook in hierdie groepe die ondergeskikte rol teenoor mans vertolk. (Viljoen, 2013: 420)

Viljoen (2004: 144-145) moreover points out how Brink maintains the colonial tendency to feminize colonized landscapes. According to her the author "has not succeeded in visualizing a space in which gender inequalities have been resolved". To her mind, Brink fails to empty gender categories and to 'un-gender' space. The wilderness, as the narrative suggests, is gendered as female. As mentioned earlier, there exists a strong connection between humans and the landscape in Brink's work. It is however often the woman characters in his texts who portray a deep connection with the earth. Kossew (1997: 120) demonstrates how in Brink's *Imaginations of Sand*, the women's lives are inscribed on the land:

[S]till readable as features of the landscape and therefore not subject to erasure, so that one becomes a tree, another part of a flood, another sinks into the ground [...] But where the men see land as something to be owned and protected [...] for Ouma the land is the palimpsest of history.

Kossew (1997: 120-121) believes that the (unproblematic) linking of the women with the landscape raises issues in the politics of the novel and poses problems of reading: "For the narrator is not just a 'silent or silenced woman in South African history' but is, more specifically, a white Afrikaner woman,

⁵⁰ Viljoen (2013: 423, 429) refers to other characters in Brink's oeuvre that are similarly portrayed as being 'one with nature': Galant, the slave woman Pamela and the white woman Hester in *Houd-den-bek* as well as Rosette in *Inteendeel*. This type of representation highlights that slaves and women share the same status in a patriarchal system and it evokes the feminization of the colored or black man within a colonial setup.

Kristien". Viljoen (2013: 425-426) refers to other female characters such as Ma-Roos in *Houd-den-Bek* who have also perhaps been unproblematically linked with the earth: "Haar seksualiteit word verder gesien as 'n ekstensie van die land waarvan sy deel is en dus ook van haar aanvoeling vir 'n soort 'natuurlike' orde waarin die vrou verplig is om die man seksueel te dien".

The relation between woman and land is furthermore linked to the archetypal colonial confrontation between the "European consciousness and the virgin continent" (Hassal, 2013: 161). The gendering of land as woman creates a link between the colonial explorer and the violator which in turn allows for "a realisation of the violent rape of the land [...] Thus, possession of the land as woman is part of the patriarchal colonising process" (Kossew, 1996b: 70). Kossew (1996a: 208) demonstrates how the character Barbier in *Inteendeel* experiences a sense of guilt, not just as a colonizer, but also as a man, when he realizes that the colonizing activities of exploration and exploitation of land is bound with that of women:

The phallus/pen/gun connection [...] is made explicit here [...] by the characterising of exploration as the 'scrawl of progress' on 'virgin' land. The tone used by Barbier here is that of self-blame, of culpability, as he comes to a realisation of the effect of the colonising process on the land and its inhabitants. The sense of crusading zeal with which he began his quest for the 'great unknown' is replaced by a sense of humility and shame as the impact of European incursion is felt. (Kossew, 1996b: 71)

Meintjes (2013: 66) emphasizes how *Inteendeel* links "the struggle against social injustice and the exploitation of people with the struggle against the abuse of the environment [...] This abuse stems from the desire to 'acquire, to conquer, to have, to possess' [...] Colonial domination assumes a specifically ecological guise in this text". He argues that the text occupies a significant position in South African ecocentric literature: "Barbier, in a perspective coinciding with ecofeminism, realises that Rosette and the land are one [...] The feminist and ecological concerns of the novel converge in the specifically metatextual nature of the text. The novel indicates that nature itself is a text which could be semiotically decoded" (Meintjes, 2013:66- 67).

The way in which many of Brink's characters perceive the land is directly linked to their use of language. In Brink's *Kennis van die Aand*, this link between language and place and its relation to power is explored. Kossew (1996a: 62) states:

Bound up with this colonizing power of language are the issues of the dialectic of place and displacement and of finding an authentic voice (i.e., an identity not imposed by the centre). This is a concern both for the colonizers and the colonized: while the colonizers seek to find a language to inscribe the alien landscape, the colonized seek to find an authentic, 'native' language aimed at emphasizing its difference from that centre.

The relation between language and landscape comes to the forefront in *Inteendeel*. Kossew (1996b: 72) refers to the change "in the way Barbier views native language" and how it is "indicative of his change in perspective on Africa itself". She evokes Barbier's last imagined journey in which he "finds that he now understands the link between the land and the language of the indigenous people whose 'storylines' have called the landscape into being, into 'visible language'". In Brink's *Imaginations of Sand* the landscape is similarly seen as the site of history and stories. The landscape itself in a sense becomes a language that can be spoken (Kossew, 1997: 120). Barbier in *Inteendeel* likewise realizes that the landscape has its own authentic language—a realization that makes him aware of his own language's inadequacy: "The change in his perception about the 'empty', 'inconsequential' and 'brittle' sounds of European languages reflects the change in his entire response to Africa and its people. He is able to acknowledge the 'space' as space, not as emptiness to be mapped and named" (Kossew, 1996b: 72).

The colonizer's obsessive need to name and map the 'unknown' is also evoked in *'n Oomblik in die wind*. Elisabeth's husband, Larsson the explorer, demonstrates the "coloniser's arrogant imposition of names on the landscape as well as on the indigenous people" (Kossew, 1996a: 50). Larsson equates naming with cartography: both represent a way in which he can possess a part of the earth. Cartography and the act of naming are represented as integral parts of the colonizer's will to power. Brink is believed to use the act of mapping as a metaphor to question the colonizers' epistemological control. Colonial cartography practices are subverted in the novel by emphasizing the inadequacy of the knowledge relied on by the European explorers: their confident mapping and cataloguing is "undermined by the 'narrow patch' it takes up in contrast to the 'white emptiness [...] great and wide' of the uncharted land" (Kossew, 1996a: 52-53). Kossew (1996a: 52-53) points out that Elisabeth, who is upset when the Hottentots use the map to make a fire, "clings to this remnant of European control over the landscape". Elisabeth, lacking her husband's eurocentrism, however realizes that she is unable to find words to inscribe, name or possess the landscape (Burger and Szczurek, 2013: 17; Diala, 2013: 195; Kossew, 1996a: 50, 52-53).

The critical framework employed within these existing analyses on both Brink and Djébar's novels offers valuable insight to their work. I do however believe that the existing research demonstrates certain limits with regards to space in the authors' oeuvres. In an attempt to highlight these possible restrictions, I aim to critically engage with some of the literary critics' examinations in the next section.

2.3 A need for a 'post-critical' approach

The existing research on space in Djébar and Brink's work is limited to analyzing space in relation to language, identity, memory, gender, power, and politics through a nationalistic, postcolonial, and feminist approach. No in-depth research exists that explores the way that space in itself (and not in relation to another concept) is portrayed in their work. The aforementioned critics' responses to space can all be categorized within the 'critical' tradition of postcolonialism, deconstruction, post-structuralism and feminism.

Literary critics such as Murray (2008) and Hiddleston's (2006) insistence that Djébar reverses the male gaze seem to be closely associated with the critical tradition. Is the reversal of the gaze an adequate response, or does it merely imply the same system or reproduction of voyeurism with roles reversed? Instead of challenging the system of voyeurism, it seems as though Murray (2008) and Hiddleston (2006) imply that the system of gazing can be kept intact by merely changing the subject who gazes.

The emphasis on language and writing in relation to space in Djébar's work is furthermore typical of the (critical) deconstructionist approach. Ringrose (2006), Hirchi (2003) and Faulkner (1996), among others, accentuate the need to deconstruct the binaries of inner and outer spaces and to transgress spatial boundaries with the written word. The use of theories by critics like Fanon and Bhabha to strengthen arguments made additionally associates their responses to a postcolonial, deconstructionist framework.

In their responses to Djébar's work, Velčić (2017) and Ringrose's (2006) reference to the 'prison-house of language' recalls Jameson's work. His book, a response to Formalism and Structuralism that predates critical theory, typically belongs to the 'critical' tradition. His book can be seen as a critique on the 'pre-

critical' approach to literature. Within the critics' references to Jameson's 'prison-house', their responses are also placed within the ambit of Jameson's critical approach.

The responses to Brink's work are equally limited through the critical frameworks used in the analyses. Burger and Szczurek (2013: 13-14) mention how the literary criticism of the past three decades on Brink's work can be "characterised by a strong theoretical or thematic approach, sometimes resulting on only brief 'applications' of a theory to a novel". The responses discussed earlier can be categorized similarly.

Kosew (1996, 1997) and Diala's (2013) analyses of language and place in Brink's work are typical from a 'critical' deconstructionist perspective. In their postcolonial readings of Brink's texts, Viljoen (2004, 2013) and Kosew (1996a) criticize Brink for maintaining and even idealizing certain colonial stereotypes concerning space, race and class. Brink's portrayal of the land as female goes against postcolonial thought on deconstruction and is therefore immediately criticized. They highlight how he fails to 'un-gender' space and accentuate the problems that arise when he unproblematically links women with the landscape.

To my mind, the existing 'critical' responses to space in Djébar and Brink's œuvres leave the following questions under examined: what is the role of space in their work? How does a postcolonial framework influence our interpretation of space in their novels? Who are the 'actors' involved in exploring space in Djébar and Brink's texts? How do space and its representation in the novels influence our interpretation? How does space steer the reader toward particular reactions?⁵¹ What does (the

⁵¹ Reflecting on his own work, Brink (in Kosew, 1996a: 26-27) emphasizes the importance of involving the reader's responsibility. He aims to invite readers to enter into the debate, rather than to be merely 'spoken at'. The existing analyses that focus on the role of the reader in Brink's novels can predominantly be categorized within a 'critical' tradition. Kosew (1996a: 83-84) for example proposes that "Brink's project for his readers is the reading between the lines, a decoding process which allows a political message to be smuggled out before the very eyes of the jailers". She furthermore highlights how in both *Inteendeel* and *Kennis van die Aand* "[t]he responsibility, again, as so often in Brink's novels, is passed to the reader to 'report' the writer's cause 'aright'" (Kosew, 1996a: 211- 212). Senekal (1988) also explores the role of the reader in Brink's work by exploring how the author aligns himself with a specific and definable group of readers and accordingly chooses certain text strategies. According to him, the text strategies chosen by the author is directly influenced by his perception of his reader and the intentions he has with the reader. Other critics, such as Jonckheere (1988: 76) asserts that Brink's readers are often manipulated by an implicit author. With regards to Djébar's œuvre, little has been said on the works of Djébar and its reader. Donadey (2017: 15) refers to the challenges in teaching Djébar's work: "In Roland Barthes's characterization, we are dealing with 'writerly' rather than 'readerly' texts, texts that demand active participation and research on the part of the reader to elucidate them" Guyot-Bender (2017: 23) insists that the mix of narrators in her work "do not invite a smooth reading. Djébar's point is to engage readers, including educated French readers, in an epistemological questioning of how information about any past reaches further generations, through a style Maya

portrayal of) space in the novels create and make possible? In order to explore these questions, I will firstly contextualize the notion of space from a narratological perspective, which will be my aim in the following chapter.

Boutaghou calls ‘en arabesque’”. Referring to Djébar’s work, Abdo and Bobroff (2017: 55) state: “It should be emphasized that a work of art, a piece of literature, is not simply a window into the real world, a way for us to gain knowledge about, for example, the veiled and exotic Other. A close reading assignment—a deep focus on the literary, formalistic, and aesthetic qualities of a text, in both the original French and translated English—is therefore essential”.

Chapter three: Narratology and space

3.1 Defining the concept of space

This chapter aims to offer an introduction to the concept of space within a narratological perspective. Space is a notoriously difficult concept to define philosophically. De Lange *et al* (2008: xii-xiv) argue that this difficulty derives from our understanding of space, just as in the case of time, as “both an aspect of physical reality and also the varying ways in which human beings experience and conceptualize this reality”. The difficulty of defining the concept is additionally related to the fact that “our conception of space constitutes one of the instruments that we use in order to think, write and read”. Ryan (2012: 1) insists that that we should distinguish between literal and metaphorical uses of the concept of space. She asserts that space, “as an a-priori form of intuition [...] is particularly difficult to capture in its literal sense”.

The role of space is a neglected subject in classical narratology (Brink, 1987: 107). De Lange *et al* indicate that “space and place have arguably been less satisfactorily addressed in narrative theory than has that other crucial co-ordinate of human life—time. But cultural geographers remind us that space and place remain central to our experience” (De Lange *et al*, 2008: xvi). Mieke Bal (2009: 133-134) argues that “together with character, few concepts deriving from the theory of narrative texts are as self-evident and have yet remained so vague as the concept of space” (Bal, 2009: 133-134). Space is “always implicitly necessary for every activity performed by a character”, but there exist little theoretical publications that is devoted to it (Bal, 2009: 134, 143). In these publications space is treated as “a separate category only to enable specialized analysis. The concept of space is sandwiched between that of focalization, of which the representation of space constitutes in a way a specialized case, and that of place, a category of fabula elements” (Bal, 2009: 134). Within narratology, the concept of space is “pushed into a corner”: “It is not altogether discarded, but neither does it have a recognized and clear-cut status within the text” (Zoran, 1984: 3). Even Gérard Genette, the influential French literary theorist, says relatively little on the subject. Genette (1966: 102, V I) briefly discusses space’s ambivalent character and argues that “one doesn’t talk about space, but about other things in terms of space. One could even say that it’s space who talks: its presence is implicit, implicated, at the source

or basis of the message rather than in its content” (Genette, 1966: 102, V I).⁵² He insists that one should examine literature in its relation to space because literature “talks about space, describes places, residences, landscapes [...] [literature] transports us through imagination to unknown countries and it creates the illusion of travelling through and living in these spaces” (Genette, 1966: 43-44, V II).⁵³ Furthermore, Genette specifies that space is one of the essential aspects of that what the French poet Paul Valéry called a ‘poetic state’ (*l’état poétique*). Genette (1966: 44-48, V II) distinguishes between different forms of space that one finds in the literary sphere: the spatiality of language itself, the space of the book, literary spatiality in terms of writing itself and the ‘space’ of literature taken as a whole. However, as Brink (1987: 107) points out, there exists no elaborate analysis on space in Genette’s major works.

A possible reason why space remains a relatively unexplored territory is due to the fact that narratologists have long privileged time over space (Ryan, 2012: 13). When focusing on the representation of space in literary texts, the concept “becomes imbued with a temporal dimension”. A narrative representation of space “is inevitably [...] subject to temporal instability, change, and progression” (De Lange *et al*, 2008: xiv). This intrinsic connectedness of space and time leads Russian literary theorist, Mikhail M. Bakhtin, to the creation of the chronotope motif. The term ‘chronotope’ (literally, ‘time space’) refers to the connection between spatial and temporal relations that are expressed in literature. Bakhtin (1981: 84-85) points out that chronotope “expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature”. He explains the concept of chronotope in literature as follows:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. The chronotope in literature has an intrinsic generic significance. (Bakhtin, 1981: 84-85)

⁵² My translation. “[O]n ne parle pas de l’espace: on parle d’autre chose en termes d’espace—et l’on pourrait presque dire que c’est l’espace qui parle: sa présence est implicite, impliquée, à la source ou à la base du message plutôt que dans son contenu, comme dans une phrase celle de la langue ou du locuteur lui-même” (Genette, 1966: 102; V I).

⁵³ My translation. “[O]n doit envisager la littérature dans ses rapports avec l’espace. Non pas seulement—ce qui serait la manière la plus facile, mais la moins pertinente, de considérer ces rapports—parce que la littérature, entre autres ‘sujets’, parle aussi de l’espace, décrit des lieux, des demeures, des paysages [...] nous transporte en imagination dans des contrées inconnues qu’elle nous donne un instant d’illusion de parcourir et d’habiter; non pas seulement encore parce que, comme on le voit par exemple des auteurs [...] une certaine sensibilité à l’espace, ou pour mieux dire une sorte de fascination du lieu, est un des aspects essentiels de ce que Valéry nommait l’état poétique” (Genette, 1966: 43-44, V II).

Bakhtin (1981: 243, 250-251) additionally emphasizes that the chronotope, the inseparability of spatial and temporal determinations in literature, is always infused by values and emotions.⁵⁴ He describes the chronotope as “the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied”. It is the chronotope that shapes and gives meaning to the narrative: Operating as the essential means for materializing time in space the chronotope “emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel”. Bakhtin insists that “any and every literary image is chronotopic”. Language itself is described as chronotopic: “Language, as a treasure-house of images, is fundamentally chronotopic.”⁵⁵ Also chronotopic is the internal form of a word, that is, the mediating marker with whose help the root meanings of spatial categories are carried over into temporal relationships (in the broadest sense)” (Bakhtin, 1981: 251).

The chronotope is moreover described as being shaped not only by the author, but by the reader as well. Explaining how the chronotopes of the author and listener or reader is presented to us, Bakhtin (1981: 252-253) states:

First and foremost, we experience [the chronotopes] in the external material being of the work and in its purely external composition. But this material of the work is not dead, it is speaking, signifying (it involves signs); we not only see and perceive it but in it we can always hear voices (even while reading silently to ourselves). We are presented with a text occupying a certain specific place in space; that is. It is localized; our creation of it, our acquaintance with it occurs through time. The text as such never appears as a dead thing; beginning with any text—and sometimes passing through lengthy series of mediating links—we always arrive, in the final analysis, at the human voice, which is to say we come up against the human being [...] In the completely real-life time-space where the work resonates, where we find the inscription or the book, we find as well a real person—one who originates spoken speech as well as the inscription and the book—and real people who are

⁵⁴ Bakhtin (1981: 244-248) identifies the road and the threshold as examples of chronotopic motifs that are highly charged with emotions and values. He describes the road as “especially (but not exclusively) appropriate for portraying events governed by chance. This explains the important narrative role of the road in the history of the novel [...] one crucial feature of the ‘road’ common to all the various types of novels we have covered: the road is always one that passes through *familiar territory*, and not through some exotic alien world [...] it is the *sociohistorical heterogeneity* of one’s own country that is revealed and depicted” (Bakhtin, 1981: 244-245). On the other hand the chronotope of threshold can be combined “with the motif of encounter, but its most fundamental instance is as the chronotope of crisis and break in life. The word ‘threshold’ itself already has a metaphorical meaning in everyday usage (together with its literal meaning), and is connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold). In literature, the chronotope of the threshold is always metaphorical and symbolic, sometimes openly but more often implicitly” (Bakhtin, 1981: 248).

⁵⁵ Borrowing from Samuel Beckett, Gilby and Haustein (2005: 19) remark that “language [...] is one of the simple games that time plays with space”.

hearing and reading the text. Of course these real people, the authors and the listeners or readers, may be (and often are) located in differing time-spaces [...] but nevertheless they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete historical world set off by a sharp and categorical boundary from the represented world in the text, for all its aspects—the reality reflected in the text, the authors creating the text, the performers of the text (if they exist) and finally the listeners or readers who create and in so doing renew the text—participate equally in the creation of the represented world in the text.

From these descriptions of chronotopes, we can deduce that space is therefore more than the simple background of the story. It is of equal value of the fabula and the characters of the story.

This chapter aims to explore narratological instruments that will aid me in describing the portrayal of space in the novels of Djébar and Brink in Chapters five and seven. The introduction of this chapter has already touched on some insights concerning the role of space within classical narratology (Genette, Bal, Bakhtin, and Brink). Within the following sections, I however seek to draw on theories of post-classical narratology on the role of space in narration. For this purpose, I will primarily make use of Marie-Laure Ryan's (2012) and Herman and Vervaeck's (2001) conceptualization of space within narratology. Their work provides meaningful explanations as well as valuable terminology on the concept of space that will assist my analysis on space within the novels in Chapters five and seven. After specifying different forms of textual spatiality as set out by Ryan (2012), I will additionally explore various approaches to narrative space to which she refers.

3.2 Forms of textual spatiality

Space as a concept within narratology refers to more than the mere representation of a world that serves as a container for existents or a location for events (Ryan, 2012: 2). Ryan (2012: 2-6) explains the role of space within narratology by distinguishing between the following different forms of textual spatiality.

3.2.1 Narrative space

Narrative space refers to the physically existing environment in which characters live and move. Ryan (2012: 2- 3) differentiates between five different categories within narrative space:

a. Spatial frames

Spatial frames are “the immediate surroundings of actual events, the various locations shown by the narrative discourse or by the image”. Spatial frames are synonymous to Ronen’s (1986: 4) notion of ‘setting’ which he defines as the actual immediate surrounding of an object, character, or event. Spatial frames refer to the spatial information given to events that occur in the narrative. They can be described as “shifting scenes of action [that] may flow into each other” as a character moves through different spaces. Spatial frames are determined by “relations of containment (a room is a subspace of a house), and their boundaries may be either clear-cut (the bedroom is separated from the salon by a hallway) or fuzzy (e.g. a landscape may slowly change as a character moves through it)” (Ryan, 2012: 2).

b. Setting

The setting refers to the “the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place”. Contrary to spatial frames, a setting “is a relatively stable category which embraces the entire text”. (Ryan, 2012: 3). We may for instance say that the setting of Brink’s *Kennis van die Aand* is Apartheid South Africa in the 1960s.

Herman and Vervaeck (2001: 59) insist that the “description of setting requires a constant questioning of the terms and criteria for its characterization. Just as in the case of events and roles, there is no clear method to distill the setting from a text”. They moreover indicate how “structuralism likes to work with binary oppositions that can form the basis of a sliding scale. Following Mieke Bal, one could investigate space relying on pairs such as inside versus outside, high versus low, and far versus close” (Herman & Vervaeck, 2001: 59). I will make use of such pairs within the analysis of space in Brink and Djébar’s novels in Chapter five.

From a postmodern perspective of narrative space, Herman and Vervaeck (2001: 113) however point out that “the space of a particular narrative passage cannot be reduced to the description of the setting. Instead it should be seen as an entanglement because the setting refers to the setting of other

narrative passages, to the reader's spatial conceptions, and to the narratives that are attached to that setting in social reality". The postmodern narratologist argues that the space that the reader reconstructs "changes constantly and resists unambiguous and invariable representation" (Herman & Vervaeck, 2001: 113). They demonstrate how, from a postmodern perspective, the "analysis of a narrative text generates an interchange between literary clichés pertaining to the text (such as patterns of setting and narrative strategy) and interpretive habits. At the spatio-temporal level, this interaction links the textual setting to the extratextual space and time [...] Inevitably, the act of analysis will always be colored by narratives that precede the analyzed text and that resonate in the form of literary clichés and interpretive habits". This perspective will aid my analysis in the postcritical reading on space in Djébar and Brink's work in Chapter seven, especially with regards to the reader's spatial conceptions.

c. Story Space

Story space is "the space relevant to the plot, as mapped by the actions and thoughts of the characters. It consists of all the spatial frames plus all the locations mentioned by the text that are not the scene of actually occurring events" (Ryan, 2012: 3). Story space does therefore not only refer to the surroundings of actual events, but it also evokes spaces that characters for example dream about.

d. Narrative (or story) world

The narrative world can be defined as "the story space completed by the reader's imagination on the basis of cultural knowledge and real world experience". Ryan (2012: 3) points out that "while story space consists of selected places separated by voids, the narrative world is conceived by the imagination as a coherent, unified, ontologically full and materially existing geographical entity, even when it is a fictional world that possesses none of these properties". When a story consists of real and imaginary locations, the narrative world "superimposes the locations specific to the text onto the geography of the actual world". If a story takes place in a wholly imaginary landscape (Ryan gives the example of *Lord of the Rings*), "readers assume that the narrative world extends beyond the locations named in the text and that there is continuous space between them, even though they cannot fill out this space with geographic features".

The narrative world can hence be understood as the space of the narrative as it is perceived through the reader's imagination. The reader gathers information from 'spatial frames', but is able to 'fill in the gaps' through his/her imagination in order to form a wholly and continuous space in which the story unfolds.

e. Narrative universe

Ryan (2012: 3) describes the narrative universe as the "world (in the spatio-temporal sense of the term) presented as actual by the text, plus all the counterfactual worlds constructed by characters as beliefs, wishes, fears, speculations, hypothetical thinking, dreams, and fantasies". It refers to all the possible worlds presented in the text, even those spaces imagined by characters that don't form part of the spatial frames of the story. Ryan specifies that "for a possible world to be part of the metaphorical concept of narrative universe, it must be textually activated",⁵⁶ therefore it must be mentioned or presupposed by the text.

Ryan (2012: 4) points out that these aspects of narrative space "are progressively disclosed to the reader through the temporal unfolding of the text". She calls this dynamic presentation of spatial information the "textualization of space". When space is not described for its own sake, as for example the description of space in a tourist guide, this textualization becomes a narrativization wherein space "becomes the setting of an action that develops in time".

3.2.2 Spatial extension of the text

Ryan (2012: 4) describes the concept of "spatial extension of the text" as a spatial correlate of the notion of "discourse time" (the time it takes to peruse the discourse). The concept refers to both "the spatiality of the text as material object and to the dimensionality of the interface with the reader, spectator or user". She refers to spatial extensions that range from a spatial dimension of zero (e.g.

⁵⁶ Herman and Vervaeck (2001: 155) notes that some literary theorists use the possible worlds concept in a metaphorical way. They refer to David Herman to whom for example "a possible world comes down to the context the reader uses to interpret (problematic) elements of the narrative text so that they become meaningful, acceptable, and therefore quite possible". They insist that "(e)very reader has a different kind of knowledge and therefore constructs his or her own possible world" (Herman & Vervaeck, 2001: 155).

oral narratives that exclude gestures and facial expression and music) to quasi one-dimensionality (e.g. a text displayed on a single line with letters moving from right to left, as in television news lines, electronic billboards, and some digital literary texts), to two-dimensionality (e.g. printed narratives, painting and film) and finally to genuine three-dimensionality (e.g. ballet, sculpture and theatre).

3.2.3 Space that serves as context and container for the text

It is important to note that in many narratives one finds spatial referents that exist in the real world. Ryan (2012: 5) states that “narratives are not only inscribed on spatial objects, they are also situated within real-world space, and their relations to their environment go far beyond mimetic representation”. Through referring to certain landscape features and landmarks that exist in the reader’s current reality, the spatial situation of the narrative corresponds to the real-world location. In this way, the narratives are in a certain way linked to the reader’s current familiar reality. There are many examples of such spatial referents to be found in Brink and Djébar’s work. It is especially of value when it comes to the ‘postcritical’ interpretation of space (see 6.3.7) that will form the focus of Chapter seven in this study.

3.3 Approaches to narrative space

3.3.1 Spatial Imagery

The study of spatial imagery was developed by French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. I will discuss some of Bachelard’s insights regarding space in the next chapter. For the purpose of this chapter, I believe it noteworthy to however signal how scholars of spatial imagery have recently been focussing more on the primary spatial composition that forms the basis of language and cognition. Ryan (2012: 6-7) refers to theorists such as Lotman (1970), Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Turner (1996) who all “believe that the most fundamental human experience consists of apprehending oneself as a body located in space”. She demonstrates how the “embodied nature of mind is reflected in language by families of metaphors that concretize abstract concepts in terms of bodies moving through or situated in space”. Examples of such spatial metaphors are given:

Words like up and down, front and back, high and low, organize space using the body as point of reference. Due to the erect position of the body, up and down are

the most prolific sources of metaphors: e.g. happy is up, sad is down; more is up, less is down; etc. Front and back are mainly used as metaphors of time: in our culture, the future is ahead and the past is behind. Other spatial schemata that provide important sources of metaphors are the conduit, the journey, the path, and the container (space as a whole can be seen as a container). Though these approaches are not specifically narratological, they can be applied to narrative texts as well as to poetry or to language in general. (Ryan, 2012: 6-7)

My examination on space in Djébar and Brink's work in Chapters five and seven will frequently focus on the use of such spatial metaphors within the chosen texts.

3.3.2 Textualization of space

Different techniques of space representation give flesh and shape to the reader's visualization. This allows the reader to immerse him/herself into the narrative world. Description is considered the primary discourse strategy for the disclosure of spatial information. Ryan (2012: 7-9) examines various ways in which spatial information is portrayed in texts:

3.3.2.1 Presentation of spatial information on a micro-level

a. Static descriptions

Within a static description of space "the report of the narrative action is temporarily suspended to afford the reader a more or less detailed glimpse at the current spatial frame" (Ryan, 2012: 7). Long, often poetic descriptions of landscape can be regarded as an example of such a static description.

b. Dynamic descriptions

In contrast to static descriptions, the interruption of the narrative action can be minimized by constructing narrative space in a more dynamic manner. Dynamic descriptions allow for a 'coincidental' portrayal of spatial information whilst the narrative action occurs. Ryan (2012: 7) gives the following examples through which space is presented in dynamic ways: "object or character movements ('he left his house, and turned right toward the harbor'); characters' perceptions ('from the balcony, a tree blocked her view'); narrativized descriptions (e.g. revealing the floor plan of a house by describing the

building process); and implications from reports of events ('the bullet missed its target, crossed the town square and broke a window of the church')

c. Deictic shifts

Deictic shifts refer to the changes in fields of vision with regard to space. The narrative moves for example from a detailed focused to a wider spatial vision, and vice versa. Zoran (1984: 15) refers to these shifts as 'here-there' relationships which are parallel to two types of coordination systems in language:

The deictic system, whose center ("hero") is the spatio-temporal location of the speech act; and the intrinsic system, whose center is any point in the world chosen for that purpose. These two centers exist side by side throughout the text as a matter of principle. But the relationships between them can change at any point: they may come closer together, one may become prominent at the expense of the other, the objects which are here and there may change, and the relationships between here and there may be reversed. (Zoran, 1984: 15)

Ryan (2012: 7) notes how the notion of deictic shift "explains how narratives transport the reader's imagination from the 'here and now' of the illocutionary act—the normal reference of deictic expression—to the place and time of the narrated scene. Through effects of zooming in and out, narrative texts may vary the distance between the observer's spatial situation and the narrated events, and through shifts in focus, they can move objects of description from the foreground to the background or vice versa". She refers to how perspective itself "is a particular positioning of the narrator within the story space; this positioning may coincide with the location of a specific character whose movements are followed by the narrator, or it may move across a certain area that contains several characters as the focus of the discourse alternates between different individuals".

Throughout my investigation of spaces in the authors' novels in Chapter five, I will often refer to this form of presentation of spatial information on a micro-level.

3.3.2.2 Presentation of spatial information on a macro-level

a. The map strategy

The map strategy offers a panoramic representation of space from an all-seeing god's eye point of view to the panoramic perspective of an observer that is situated on an elevated point. This strategy divides space into segments for instance left to right, north to south, front to back, etc. (Ryan, 2012: 8).

b. The tour strategy

In the more common tour strategy in narrative fiction, space is represented dynamically from a mobile point of view. Spatial information will be given by following the movement of a character through a specific space. Contrary to the pure vision of the map strategy, the tour view mimics the embodied experience of a traveler (Ryan, 2012: 8).

3.3.2.3 The cognitive map model

Through the presentation of space on both a micro- and macro-level, the reader is able to gather spatial information into a cognitive map or a mental model of narrative space as he/she progresses through the narrative text. Ryan (2012: 8) explains that “through a feed-back loop effect, these mental models, which are built to a large extent on the basis of the movements of characters, enable readers to visualize these movements within a containing space. Mental maps, in other words, are both dynamically constructed in the course of reading and consulted by the reader to orient himself in the narrative world. The various landmarks shown or mentioned in the story are made into a coherent world through an awareness of the relations that situate them with respect to each other”.

Ryan (2012: 9) demonstrates that often only a basic representation of space is required for readers to understand the story as “space in narrative usually serves as a background for characters and their actions, and not as a focus of interest”. If topography is however of utmost importance for the logic of the plot, a graphic map of the narrative world is often provided.

3.3.3 The thematization of space

An essential feature of the cognitive mapping model discussed above is the reader's ability to attribute symbolic meaning to different landmarks and regions presented in the narrative world. Referring to the different functions that space portrays in a story, Bal (2009: 139) highlights that on the one hand, spaces function merely as a frame or a place of action that remains entirely in the background. She however insists that space is often thematized: "it becomes an object of presentation itself, for its own sake. Space thus becomes an acting place rather than the place of action. It influences the fabula, and the fabula becomes subordinate to the presentation of space. The fact that 'this is happening here' is just as important as 'the way it is here', which allows these events to happen".

This thematization allows space to be more than a mere element of the story. De Lange *et al* (2008: xiii) highlight that "being is not [...] belonging. The novelist cannot portray characters who are not somewhere. But how they are where they are relates to matters cultural and political that it is also the task of the writer of fiction to investigate". Moreover, space is described as a narrative dimension that is linked to identity: "In a narrative text, the plot, that is the dynamic development of the action and the interplay of the characters contributing to this action, will usually occur in one or more defined places [...] this spatial segment is often, for variety of reasons, particularly important for the characters who inhabit it. Place is linked to identity, and not only to identity-formation but also, under given circumstances, to a sense threatened identity" (De Lange *et al*, 2008: xiii). The space represented in a text is therefore not just a place. It represents a whole 'narrative climate' around it. It denotes not only a period (a spatio-temporal setting), but a greater dimension of experience ('n "ervaringsdimensie") (Herman & Vervaeck, 2001: 57, Brink, 1987: 108).

In her exploration of the history of such thematizations of space, Ryan (2012: 9) refers to how space in the cosmology of archaic societies is "ontologically divided into a profane world, the realm of everyday life, and a sacred world, inhabited by supernatural beings, with holy sites functioning as portals between the two". As a narrative response to these cosmologies and topologies "symbolic geography diversified into regions where different events and experiences take place—where life, in other words, is governed by different physical, psychological, social or cultural rules". She gives examples of this symbolic organization of space in various narratives: "narrative worlds can be structured by oppositions between colonizing countries and colonized regions; between town and country [...] between life in

the capital and life in the province [...] between home and away from home [...] between the knowable and the unknowable [...] or between landscapes that speak differently to the imagination". The importance of a character's crossing of the boundaries between these symbolically charged spaces is emphasized.

According to Ryan (2012: 10) "narrative space can be described in terms of the partitions, both natural and cultural, that organize it into thematically relevant subspaces: walls, hallways, political boundaries, rivers and mountains, as well as in terms of the openings and passageways that allow these subspaces to communicate: doors, windows, bridges, highways, tunnels and passes". These subspaces can be regarded as horizontal (e.g. different places on a map or in a building), but the narrative can also present vertical partitions that "oppose the world of everyday life to a world of magic, dreams to reality, images to existents or, in narratives with embedded stories, the different levels of fictionality". Ryan (2012: 10) highlights that while "horizontal partitions divide the geography of the narrative world, vertical partitions create ontological layers within the narrative universe".

An exceptionally rich source of thematization is presented through narratives that focus on the lived experience of space:

Some stories present space as closed and confining (prison narratives; Anne Frank's diary), others as open and liberating (narratives of exploration; many travel narratives), and still others as open and alienating (stories of wandering aimlessly in a hostile environment). Confined space occasionally turns into a field of endless discoveries, as does Robinson Crusoe's island. Through its immensity, space may be perceived as separating (narratives of exile; *Odyssey*), or its existence may be denied by technology (telecommunications; travel through teletransportation). (Ryan, 2012: 10)

For this experience of space Ryan (2012: 10) highlights that narratives may emphasize the importance of our sense of embodiment. It is important to acknowledge not only how a character experiences a certain space, but how he/she also embodies this lived experience of space. Narratives may additionally focus on place "by immersing the reader in a particular landscape or cityscape" (Ryan, 2012: 10).

The most radical thematizations of space according to Ryan (2012: 10-11) are those that involve alternative or logically inconsistent and impossible worlds. She refers to narratives that represent

multiple parallel worlds or worlds that violate the laws of perspective. In literature, a common form of logical impossibility can be found in metalepsis, “the transgression of ontological boundaries through which imaginary creatures of pen and paper can penetrate into the fictionally ‘real’ world of their creator, or vice-versa” (Ryan, 2012: 11).

The notion of thematization forms one of the primary focuses within current investigations of narrative space. Ryan (2012: 13) refers to recent trends in analysis: the anchoring of stories in real-world space; comparative studies of the medium-specific techniques that enable people to construct mental images of narrative space; empirical studies of the importance of mental visualizations and cognitive mapping for the understanding of plot and the experience of immersion; studies of the historical and cultural variability of the semiotic oppositions (such as “high-low,” “inside-outside,” “closed-open”) that determine the topology of narrative worlds.

Most of the thematizations of space discussed in this section can be found in Djébar and Brink’s work. Their texts offer numerous examples of symbolically charged spaces. It is however Brink’s own comments on the relation between the reader and these symbolically charged spaces of the story that is especially of value for this study. Brink (1987: 122) states:

Vir die soveelste keer word dit deel van die leser se verantwoordelikheid, maar ook van die leser se plesier, om by elke vasstelling van ’n ‘bevinding’ omtrent die verhaalruimte, daarvandaan verder te gaan deur te vra: Waarom? Wat ‘doen’ dit in en vir die verhaal? Wat ‘wen’ die verhaal daardeur? (Of sou dit daarsonder kon klaarkom?) (Brink, 1987: 122)

It is these types of questions (what is the role of space in the story, what does it do, what does it ‘set in motion’?) that I intend to analyze in this thesis. These questions are aligned with the postcritical approach to literary interpretation that will be discussed in Chapters six and seven.

3.4 Conclusion

The analysis of this chapter has defined space as not merely the background of a story, but as an essential dimension of it. It is an active participant within the fabula that is influenced by the reader itself. Within Ryan’s conceptualization of space the meaning and the mode of existence of narrative

space is explored. Her study on different forms of space as well as her examination of different approaches to narrative space will form the background of my analyses in Chapters five and seven.

In the following chapter, space will be placed within a 'critical' postcolonial perspective. This critical approach will be used to examine space within the works of Djébar and Brink in Chapter five.

Chapter four: A critical postcolonial framework

4.1 A 'critical' framework

In this chapter I will provide a postcolonial framework that will serve as the basis for my 'critical' analysis of Djébar and Brink's work in Chapter five. After justifying the need for a postcolonial theoretical framework, I will define the term 'postcolonial' and highlight the primary concerns of postcolonial theory. I will demonstrate how space is a central interest within the field of postcolonialism. I will explore various definitions and approaches on space, place, and landscape to indicate its role in postcolonial theory. Different types and categories of spaces will be analyzed. Although this chapter focusses primarily on postcolonial theories, concepts from other critical traditions will also be employed to develop certain arguments. Thereafter, I will examine how the notion of space is intertwined with concepts such as identity, language, power, and gender within, but not limited to, a postcolonial literary critique. After signaling the possible reductive nature of a postcolonial approach to the chosen texts, I will conclude the chapter by raising important critique on the field of postcolonialism.

Post-colonial literary theory creates a framework for writing and reading post-colonial literature (Ashcroft *et al*, 1989: 115). The choice of a postcolonial theoretical framework can be justified by the postcolonial nature of Djébar and Brink's work.⁵⁷ The term postcolonial is used here to "cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft *et al*, 1989: 2). Colonialism, "the conquest and direct control of other peoples' land", is seen as a specific phase of imperialism.⁵⁸ From a Marxist perspective, imperialism can be defined as a policy through which the capitalist mode of production is globalized: non-capitalist nations of the world are

⁵⁷ See Chapter one. Both Djébar and Brink are concerned with the effects of European imperial domination. Both are known for practicing a type of resistance literature in which they attempt to create a space for voices that have been ignored or silenced. A "postcolonial project" who "aims not only at rewriting history from the vantage point of the West's 'others', but also to retrieve the absent voices, gazes and subjectivities of these 'others'" (Sajed, 2012: 145) can be identified in both authors' work.

⁵⁸ "The colonial phase, particularly the rapid acquisition of territories by European nations in the late nineteenth century (most famously in the 'Scramble for Africa'), represents the need for access to new (preferably captive) markets and sources of raw materials, as well as the desire to deny these to competitor nations" (Williams & Chrisman, 1994: 2).

penetrated and their pre- or non-capitalist forms of social organization are abolished (Williams & Chrisman, 1994: 2). Williams and Chrisman (1994: 3) advert to the resistance to colonialism:

Beginning in 1947, the formal dissolution of colonial empires and the granting of independence to previously colonised countries followed various campaigns of anti-colonial resistance, usually with an explicitly nationalist basis. These took forms ranging from legal and diplomatic manoeuvres [...] to wars of independence [...] opposing the colonisers on what many would regard as the real ground of colonialism: military power. The ending of colonial rule created high hopes for the newly independent countries and for the inauguration of a properly post-colonial era, but such optimism was relatively short-lived, as the extent to which the West had not relinquished control became clear. This continuing Western influence [...] was named neo-colonialism by Marxists [...] Although the name apparently privileges the colonial, the process itself can be seen to be yet another manifestation of imperialism [...] the extent to which the formerly colonised countries can be considered post-colonial is both variable and debatable.

The hyphenated term 'post-colonial' signals a time or condition 'post-' or after colonialism. Mishra and Hodge (1994: 284) argue that we cannot refer to one 'post-colonialism', but rather many postcolonialisms. Without the hyphen, 'postcolonialism' signifies "an always present tendency in any literature of subjugation marked by a systematic process of cultural domination through the imposition of imperial structures of power". They distinguish between two kinds of postcolonialisms: The first and more readily recognizable postcolonialism can be called oppositional postcolonialism. It is found "in its most overt form in post-independent colonies at the historical phase of 'post-colonialism' (with a hyphen)". The second form of postcolonialism is similarly, but with a different inflection, also a product of the processes that constituted colonialism. This second postcolonialism can be seen as a "'complicit postcolonialism', which has much in common with Lyotard's unhyphenated postmodernism: an always present 'underside' within colonization itself" (Mishra & Hodge, 1994: 284).⁵⁹ The unhyphenated

⁵⁹ It is important to acknowledge the link between postcolonialism and postmodernism. According to Linda Hutcheon (1989: 130) the relations between the postcolonial and the postmodern are strong and clear. According to Mishra and Hodge (1994: 281) Hutcheon "gets her own discussion of the two (postmodernism and post-colonialism) under way by emphasizing their distinct political agendas. Implicit in the diverging political agendas is the question of the definition of the subject. If for postmodernism the object of analysis is the subject as defined by humanism, with its essentialism and mistaken historical verities, its unities and transcendental presence, then for post-colonialism the object is the imperialist subject, the colonized as formed by the processes of imperialism" (Mishra & Hodge, 1994: 281). Cosgrove (2008: 29) accentuates how there has been a strong revival of landscape as an important subject of artistic exploration within postmodern culture.

‘postcolonialism(s)’ to which Mishra and Hodge refer can hence denote the theory, or perhaps theories, that attempt to make sense of the always present colonial subjugation.⁶⁰

As a field, postcolonial theory is primarily concerned with accounting for the impact of colonial rule.

Kossew (1996a: 11-12) touches on some of its strategies:

[A] post-colonial reading employs strategies which include its being symptomatic of the operation of and resistance to colonial power; comparative with other post-colonial texts and literatures; dialogic, in the Bakhtinian sense, contesting the notions of authenticity and essentialism; multivalent, acknowledging intersecting discourses of oppression and resistance such as race, gender and class; and constitutive, seen as a transformative field in which writer-and reader-functions produce the text.

An important concern of postcolonialism is its “attempt to bring into focus the dispossession that the West visited upon colonial societies through a series of intrinsically spatial strategies” (Gregory, 1994: 168). As Said (1989: 218) posits, it is impossible to conceive of colonialism or imperialism “without important philosophical and imaginative processes at work in the production as well as the acquisition, subordination, and settlement of space”. Cosgrove (2008: 26-27) indicates how the working landscape was inextricably linked to the cultural and economic circuits of the European colonial project. He demonstrates that the postcolonial decentering of the European subject has shaped culture and landscape in Europe and regions beyond it.

The settlement of space still has an influence in the post-colonial world. McDowell (1996: 38) observes:

We [...] now live in a post-colonial world in which nations are fragmenting into smaller nations and where local or regionally based social and political relations have increasing salience. Movements for the self-determination of peoples, differentiated one from another on the basis of ethnicity, language or religion, are fragmenting the world political divisions of the post-war period and producing an unfamiliar map. Thus, through a range of processes—from the uneven impact of an increasingly global capitalism, migration, war, new social movements—old boundaries are being transgressed and disrupted and replaced by new divisions [...] the links between identity and a sense of belonging to a particular territory or place are being remapped.

⁶⁰ Throughout this thesis, I will make use of the hyphenated term ‘post-colonial’ to refer to the specific period after colonialism. ‘Postcolonialism’ (without the hyphen) will be employed when referring to theories used to guide the analysis of underlying colonial oppression and control in its various forms.

The spatial notions referred to by McDowell ('fragmenting', 'local', 'regionally', 'movements', 'divisions', 'unfamiliar', 'map', 'global', 'migration', 'boundaries', 'transgressed', 'sense of belonging', 'territory') are all examples of popular concepts within postcolonialism. In order to explore how space, and the terms associated with it, is analyzed in and through postcolonial theory, it is necessary to define these notions first. For the purpose of this study, I will primarily focus on the definitions of space, place and landscape.

4.2 Space, place and landscape

Mitchell (2002: viii) examines the relation between these three terms and asks how they resonate together. "In many contexts," he indicates, "we use them interchangeably. A landscape just is space, or the view of a place. In both the phenomenological and historical materialist traditions of this subject, space and place are the crucial terms, and landscape is taken for granted as an aesthetic framing of the real properties of space and places". Despite many differences between the phenomenological and experiential tradition exemplified by Gaston Bachelard and Martin Heidegger and the Marxist tradition represented by Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault, they "agree on the primacy of 'space' and 'place' as the fundamental categories of analysis. Landscape remains relatively underanalysed" (Mitchell, 2002: viii).

The concept of space raises difficult questions about the composition and structure of the object or subject itself: "where does it begin and end? Where are its boundaries? What differentiates it from other aspects of reality?" (Kirby, 1996: 54). The term space demarcates "a multidimensional entity with social and cultural as well as territorial dimensions". Space is described as "a text upon which histories and cultures are inscribed and interpreted" (Darian-Smith *et al*, 1996: 2, 5). Erica Carter (1993: xii) however points out that spaces do not influence our sense of self, but it is rather places who play a significant role in the dimension of our identifications:

It is not spaces which ground identifications but places. How then does space become place? By being named; as the flows of power and negotiation of social relations are rendered in the concrete form of architecture; and also, of course, by embodying the symbolic and imaginary investments of a population. Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed.

Mitchell (2002: ix) describes the difference and transformation between space and place in the following manner:

An empty space is not the same thing as an empty place. An empty place is filled with space, as if space were the negative void that rushes in when a place is vacated. It is the spectral absence that 'fills' a hollow shell or a clearing in the forest. A place, however, is basically the same thing as 'a' definite, bounded space, while space as such, without the definite article, becomes abstract and absolute.

Space can therefore be defined as a neutral term whereas place and landscape are historically and culturally loaded terms. Kate Darian-Smith *et al* (1996: 3) confirm that "[i]t is through the cultural processes of imagining, seeing, historicizing, and remembering that space is transformed into place, and geographical territory into a culturally defined landscape".

Place is depicted as "a concrete, determinate, mentionable portion of space" (Zoppi, 1998: 475). It is also seen as "a palimpsest, a kind of parchment on which successive generations have inscribed and reinscribed the process of history" (Ashcroft *et al*, 1989: 392). According to Isabella Zoppi (1998: 426, 475) Newton and Heidegger define space and place similarly. Zoppi understands Newton's definition of a place as "that fraction of space which is appropriately filled by something. In a certain way, places are 'furnished' spaces, identifiable through the objects and the subjects inhabiting them, through the acts occurring there, through the moral or axiological values ascribed to them". In Heidegger's conception, the essence or meaning of spaces is also given through places: "Man constructs his territory; then, he inhabits it with his Self and his thought. Man is responsible for the cultivation and the culture of a place, a homeland, of the essence of a piece of land".

Place in literature is similarly described as a loaded term:

Space in literature as in life is never just an empty, neutral extension but much rather a place that has been named, demarcated, allocated. It is a place that gets its meaning from human experience and memories and from relations between people. It is often a stage where human desires and interests clash. (Viljoen, Lewis & van der Merwe, 2004: 3)

We can therefore say that by naming, inhabiting, and giving meaning to space, a (neutral) space is transformed into a (cultural or historical) place or landscape. The meaning allocated to space or one's 'sense of place' is a prominent concept in postcolonialism. Edward Said defines geography as "a socially constructed and maintained *sense of place*" (Said, 2002: 245-246, my emphasis). Seddon (1997: 105-

107) finds the term problematic and insists that the concept be applied with caution “because it is a form of appropriation. It can be a way of legitimising a set of personal and subjective evaluative criteria as if they had some externally derived authority”. He additionally links the term ‘sense of place’ to ‘*genius loci*’, the dominant character of a place: “I do not disown the term ‘*genius loci*’, but urge that it be used with caution. It would be dangerous to assume that there really is a *genius loci*, that our task is to identify it, and that its discovery then justifies the design decisions we choose to make. It is a useful concept, but it is culture-bound, so that its application requires self-inspection”. He argues that it is critical when saying ‘sense of place’, to ask ‘*Whose place?*’

Critics additionally highlight that the significance of place is not merely dependent on a single reciprocal relationship between signifier (the ‘place’ named) and signified (the ‘real place’). Ashcroft *et al* (2006: 391) declare:

By ‘place’ we do not simply mean ‘landscape’... Rather ‘place’ in postcolonial societies is a complex interaction of language, history and environment... The theory of place does not simply propose a binary separation between the ‘place’ named and described in language, and some ‘real’ place inaccessible to it, but rather indicates that in some senses place is language, something in constant flux, a discourse in process. (Ashcroft *et al*, 2006: 391)

The notion of place is influenced by (and in turn influences) various, ever-changing elements. The term ‘place’ is furthermore distinguished from the term ‘landscape’: De Lange *et al* (2008: xv-xvi) argue that landscape “negotiates the difference between the relatively fixed term ‘place’ and the more indeterminate ‘space’. A landscape typically consists of several places, and yet is linked to an area, a region, in a way space is not”. Landscape, as noted by DeLue (2008: 9-10), is difficult to define: “It strikes me that landscape [...] is confused (vexed, difficult, hard to get one’s head around) precisely because we, ourselves, cannot properly see it (whatever ‘it’ is), and this in part because we do not know exactly what we are looking for [...] because [...] we have seen way too much of it already [...] or because landscape [...] is both our subject and the thing within which we exist”. Elkins (2008: 69) makes a similar observation:

Like the body, landscape is something we inhabit without being different from it: we are in it, and we are it. That might be a fundamental, phenomenological reason why some writing on landscape, like some writing on the body, seems unusually free of scholarly protocols and signposts. Philosophy melts into impressionisms; logic deliquesces into reverie. The object isn’t bound by our attention: it binds us.

This binding power of landscape is accentuated by Mitchell (2002: vii-viii) as well:

Landscape exerts a subtle power over people, eliciting a broad range of emotions and meanings that may be difficult to specify. This indeterminacy of affect seems, in fact, to be a crucial feature of whatever force landscape can have. As the background within which a figure, form, or narrative act emerges, landscape exerts the passive force of setting, scene, and sight. It is generally the ‘overlooked,’ not the ‘looked at,’ and it can be quite difficult to specify what exactly it means to say that one is ‘looking at the landscape’ [...] The landscape imperative is a kind of mandate to withdraw, to draw out by drawing back from a site. If a landscape, as we say, ‘draws us in’ with its seductive beauty, this movement is inseparable from a retreat to a broader, safer perspective, an aestheticizing distance, a kind of resistance to whatever practical or moral claim the scene might make on us [...] The invitation to look at a view is [...] a suggestion to look at nothing—or more precisely, to look at looking itself—to engage in a kind of conscious apperception of space as it unfolds itself in a particular place.

DeLue (2008: 11) continues his exploration of the subject of landscape, the space towards which we are invited to look at, and asks “why look at all? What necessitates or compels consideration of landscape and its theorizations, now or at any other time?” He explains the importance of landscape as follows:

To my mind, the intellectual and socio-political stakes of landscape theory are high [...] landscape is part and parcel of human activity, experience, and discourse. I agree also with W.J.T. Mitchell’s thesis that ‘landscape is not a genre of art but a medium,’ which I take as evoking the manner in which humans use landscapes of all sorts (natural, pictorial, symbolic, mythic, imagined, built, and so forth, if such distinctions can be drawn) as means to artistic, social, economic, and political ends (some nefarious, some not), as well as the manner in which landscape of all sorts act on and shape *us*, as if agents in their own right. (DeLue, 2008: 11)

Landscape is described as being “dynamic; it serves to create and naturalize the histories and identities inscribed upon it, and so simultaneously hides and makes evident social and historical formations” (Darian-Smith *et al*, 1996: 3). Simon Schama (1995: 10-12) indicates that it is through our shaping perception and cultural framing that raw matter and mere geology and vegetation are turned into landscape. He refers to the Dutch origin of the word ‘landscape’, ‘landschap’, that similar to ‘Landschaft’, its Germanic root, denotes a section of human occupation and jurisdiction (Schama, 1995: 10). Coetzee (1988: 37) indicates that the word landscape “which we use today to designate both a specific terrain and the general character of that terrain, enters English in the sixteenth century as a term from the art of paintings: landscapes were pictures of stretches of countryside”. Whether

referring to human occupation or painting, landscape is associated with people and place. Spirn (2008: 54) considers its etymology:

Danish *landskab*, German *landschaft*, and Old English *landscipe* combine two roots. 'Land' means both a place and the people living there. 'Skabe' and 'schaffen' mean 'to shape'; suffixes '-skab' and 'schaft,' as in the English '-ship,' also mean association, partnership. Still strong in Scandinavian and German languages, these original meanings have all but disappeared from English. *Webster's Dictionary* defines landscape as static, 'a picture representing a section of natural, inland scenery, as of prairie, woodland, mountains... an expanse of natural scenery seen by the eye in one view'; the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the word to a Dutch painting term ('landskip'). But landscape is not a mere visible surface, static composition, or passive backdrop to human theater. A coherence in vernacular landscapes emerges from dialogues between builders and place, fine-tuned over time.

Landscape's power derives from its ability to be the object and also the subject, the 'passive' backdrop and at the same time the 'active' place wherein we find ourselves. Olwig (2008: 158) describes landscape's capacity by referring to the work of Yi-Fu Tuan:

[L]andscape is notable for having a double identity. As Yi-Fu Tuan has observed, what appears to give the concept of landscape its power is that it is a 'diaphor,' because it combines at least 'two dissimilar appearances or ideas,' thereby generating a 'tensive meaning.' This tension derives from the fact that landscape means both 'domain' and 'scenery.' A domain, in this context, can be understood as a place, region, country, or land inhabited by people and it thus belongs to the discourses of politics, economics, community, society, and what I call the art of place making. Scenery, on the other hand, belongs to the discourse of the aesthetics of space. 'The diaphoric meaning of landscape,' according to Tuan, 'lies not in one image (concretely known) pointing to another, but rather in both—equally important—imaginatively synthesized'.

The association between landscape and scenery is dependent on human agency: "An environment becomes a landscape only when it is so regarded by people, and especially when they begin to shape it in accord with their taste and needs. Nature may offer the raw material of scenery unaided, but to transform it into landscape demands the powers of the seeing human eye and the loving human hand" (Seddon, 1997: 111). Not only is landscape determined by the way we look at it, but landscape in itself also represents a way of looking. Cosgrove (2008: 20) explains it in the following manner:

[L]andscape represents a way of seeing—a way in which some Europeans have represented to themselves and to others the world about them and their relationships with it, and through which they have commented on social relations. Landscape is a way of seeing that has its own history, but a history that can be

understood only as part of a wider history of economy and society; that has its own assumptions and consequences, but assumptions and consequences whose origins and implications extend well beyond the use and perception of land; that has its own techniques of expression, but techniques which it shares with other areas of cultural practice [...] landscape constitutes a discourse through which identifiable social groups historically have framed themselves and their relations both with the land and with other human groups [...] this discourse is closely related epistemically and technically to ways of seeing.

The above mentioned observations on space, place and landscape aid us in understanding that space, in all its different forms, cannot be treated as a passive object of analysis. Cosgrove (2008: 34) raises the concerns among critics to “sustain the sense of landscape as a material geographical object, encompassing both human agency and the material environment, acknowledging its symbolic attributes without reducing it to a mere social construction”. Although he focusses on landscape, the same can be said for space and place as well: Gilby and Haustein (2005: 11) emphasize that “spaces and places are not a priori conditions of human perception but products, historically changeable and constituted by various cultural and medial practices”. Places and spaces are not only “relational and constitutive of social processes” or “sets of material social relations” or “cultural objects” (McDowell, 1996: 29, 32). Spaces and places are also instruments of cultural and social practice and power. Mitchell (2002: 1) argues that we should not approach landscape as a noun, but rather as a verb. Landscape is not an object to be seen or a text to be read. It is a process by and through which social and subjective identities are formed. He demonstrates how the study of landscape has gone through two shifts in the 21st century:

[T]he first (associated with modernism) attempted to read the history of landscape primarily on the basis of a history of landscape painting, and to narrativize that history as a progressive movement toward purification of the visual field; the second (associated with postmodernism) tended to decenter the role of painting and pure formal visuality in favor of a semiotic and hermeneutic approach that treated landscape as an allegory of psychological or ideological themes. I call the first approach ‘contemplative’ because its aim is the evacuation of verbal, narrative, or historical elements and the presentation of an image designed for transcendental consciousness [...] The second strategy is interpretative and is exemplified in attempts to decode landscape as a body of determinate signs. (Mitchell. 2002: 1)

Mitchell (2002: 1-2) insists that it doesn’t suffice to ask what landscape (and we could add space and place to the argument as well) ‘is’ or ‘means’, but we should ask what it does and how it works as a cultural practice:

Landscape, we suggest, doesn't merely signify or symbolize power relations; it is an instrument of cultural power, perhaps even an agent of power that is (or frequently represents itself as) independent of human intentions [...] landscape is a dynamic medium, in which we 'live and move and have our being,' but also a medium that is itself in motion from one place or time to another. In contrast to the usual treatment of landscape aesthetics in terms of fixed genres (sublime, beautiful, picturesque, pastoral), fixed media (literature, painting, photography) or fixed places treated as objects of visual contemplation or interpretation [...] landscape circulates as a medium of exchange, a site of visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identity. (Mitchell. 2002: 1-2)

From a postcolonial perspective, Garane (2005: 10) equally demonstrates that "place, space, and even geography are textual constructs that produce, rather than simply reproduce space and place". She argues that "literary and filmic texts can at once inscribe and produce place and space, and thereby participate in a form of geographic/cartographic discourse".^{61 62}

The responses to the definitions of space analyzed above allow me to make the following conclusions: Spaces, places and landscapes are simultaneously objects and subjects, products and instruments of culture and power. It is important to note, however, that space has not always been approached as such a relational term that is both object and subject. As Foucault (2004: 12) notes: "Il faut cependant remarquer que l'espace qui apparaît aujourd'hui à l'horizon de nos soucis, de notre théorie, de nos systèmes, n'est pas une innovation : l'espace lui-même, dans l'expérience occidentale, a une histoire". Coates (2001: 92) refers to the Cartesian-Newtonian worldview that perceived space "as a neutral or empty receptacle/container, a blank slate waiting to receive the imprint of the material universe". Space's relational character suggested in the definitions and theories above, is initially proposed by French philosopher Gaston Bachelard who developed the study of spatial imagery.⁶³ Bachelard argues

⁶¹ Garane (2005: 10) understands 'geography' not simply by its definition of writing (*graphein*) and earth (*geo*), but makes use of the description of geography as "any number of (carto)graphic projections of an 'image de la terre qui est création intellectuelle'".

⁶² Landscape architect, Anne Spirn, draws an interesting parallel between literature and landscape. She refers to Basho and the tradition of Japanese linked poetry, *renku* or *haika*, and demonstrates how it offers valuable insights for creating human settlements in accord with natural processes: haikai can be described as "a chain of many short poems or haiku, usually written by two or more different poets, where 'each poem takes up the suggestion of the preceding poem and yet opens up a new world of its own'. This open-ended, collective, creative process is like that of shaping landscape. All landscapes, whether gardens, farms, or towns, have co-authors, in dialogue with one another and with nature. They embody their builders' responses both to the cultural traditions of a region and to its natural conditions" (Spirn, 2008: 44-45).

⁶³ Foucault (2004: 13-14) accentuates how Bachelard's work has showed us that the space in which we live is all but homogeneous: "L'œuvre (immense) de Bachelard, les descriptions des phénoménologues nous ont appris que nous ne vivons pas dans un espace homogène et vide, mais au contraire, dans un espace qui est tout chargé de qualités, un espace qui aussi peut être hanté de fantôme ; l'espace de notre perception première, celui de nos rêveries, celui de nos passions,

that through the comprehension of space, one encounters “the boundaries of the self” (Danielewski, 2014: vii). Our understanding of ourselves is directly influenced by our understanding of the space which surrounds us. He believes that a person does not experience his/herself primarily in the form of time, but rather through a series of fixed moments in specific spaces. He insists that “to change space is to change being” (Bachelard, 2014: 221-223; Du Plooy, 2013: 349).

Bachelard’s work, *Poétique de l’espace* (1957), is described by Ryan (2012: 6) as a “highly personal meditation on certain images that ‘resonate’ in the imagination of the author, conjuring a quasi-mystical sense of connectedness to the environment and of the presence of things”. Combining a phenomenological with a psychoanalytical approach, Bachelard examines “lived, imagined, dreamed but altogether intimate spaces in literary texts, taking the house ‘comme un instrument d’analyse pour l’âme humaine’” (Gilby & Haustein, 2005: 14). He analyzes the house from cellar to garret, its drawers, chests and wardrobes, its nests, shells, and corners. A house according to Bachelard (2014: 19) is an example of a “felicitous space”. It is a refuge, a place of hiding, curling up and dreaming. Throughout the book, Bachelard highlights the important relation between space, the self, and the imagination. He argues that the experience of space is determined by human imagination. Due to this connection, space can never be neutrally approached (Du Plooy, 2013: 340, 343).

Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* plays an important role in French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre’s work (Schmid, 2008: 28, 38-39). In his analysis of social space, Lefebvre (1991: 410-411) focusses on the production of space:

(Space) has of course always been the reservoir of resources, and the medium in which strategies are applied, but it has now become something more than the theatre, the disinterested stage or setting, of action. Space does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena [...] Rather, it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it. The outcome is a vast movement in terms of which space can no longer be looked upon as an ‘essence’, as an object distinct from the point of view (or as compared with) ‘subjects’, as answering to a logic of its own. Nor can it be treated as a result or resultant, as an empirically verifiable effect of the past, a history or a society. Is space indeed a medium? A milieu? An

détiennent en eux-mêmes des qualités qui sont comme intrinsèques : c’est un espace léger, éthéré, transparent, ou bien c’est un espace obscur, rocailleux, encombré ; c’est un espace d’en haut, c’est un espace des cimes, ou c’est au contraire un espace d’en bas, un espace de la boue ; c’est un espace qui peut être courant comme de l’eau vive, c’est un espace qui peut être fixé, figé comme de la pierre ou comme le cristal”.

intermediary? It is doubtless all of these, but its role is less and less neutral, more and more active, both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end. Confining it to so narrow a category as that of 'medium' is consequently woefully inadequate.

Lefebvre emphasizes that space, like the concept of time, can no longer be seen as an a priori or ontological entity, an epistemological starting position, or an independent material existing 'in itself'. He explores the processes and strategies of the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991: 403; Kipfer *et al*, 2008: 9, Schmid, 2008: 28). Lefebvre understands space as "fundamentally bound up with social reality". Space is a product. It does not exist 'in itself' but is produced. Together with time, space is "the result and precondition of the production of society" (Schmid, 2008: 28, 29).

Lefebvre divides the production of space into three dialectically interconnected dimensions or processes. From a phenomenological approach he distinguishes between the triad of 'spatial practice', 'representations of space', and 'spaces of representation'. From a linguistic or semiotic approach, he refers to 'perceived', 'conceived', and 'lived' space. (Schmid, 2008: 29).⁶⁴ His trinity of space forms an essential element for the self-production of the individual as well as the self-production of society. Space according to Lefebvre, should be understood as "an intricate web of relationships that is continuously produced and reproduced" on an individual and social level (Schmid, 2008: 39-41).

In representing space in their work, Djebbar and Brink make use of a relational approach suggested by Bachelard and Lefebvre. They highlight how it is intricately connected to different dimensions and processes. In their *œuvres*, they take part in a geographic dialogue. In discussing this interconnected role of space within the authors' work in this thesis, I will make use of the term 'place' when referring

⁶⁴ Lefebvre's three-dimensional dialectic is influenced by Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche. Schmid (2008: 33, 39-40) highlights how the three dimensions or moments are dialectically interconnected. He describes the three dimensions of Lefebvre's trinity of space as follows:

- 1). Perceived space: Space can be grasped by the senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting). This sensuous aspect of space is directly related to the materiality of the elements that form space. Lefebvre's dimension of perceived space draws on Marx's theories on material social practice.
- 2). Conceived space: In order to be perceived, space must first be conceived in thought. Constituting space postulates an act of thought that is connected to the production of knowledge. Here Hegel's notions of language and thought play a significant role.
- 3). Lived space: This dimension refers to the lived experience of space by human beings in their everyday life. Lefebvre believes that "the lived, practical experience does not let itself be exhausted through theoretical analysis. There always remains a surplus, a remainder, an inexpressible and unanalysable but most valuable residue that can be expressed only through artistic means" (Schmid, 2008: 40). Nietzsche's thoughts on the creative, poetic act are here undoubtedly of value.

to human settlements of geographical terrains and the term 'landscape' will be used when reference is made to the historical, political, and cultural dimensions of a natural environment. The term 'space' will be employed when referring to a 'neutral' space that has not been culturally, historically, or politically defined.

In the following section of this chapter, I seek to investigate more specifically the role of space within postcolonial literature.

4.3 Spaces in postcolonial literature

Within postcolonial theory, different types of spaces are examined. The struggle for power between the symbolic spaces of the center and the periphery is a key feature in postcolonial discourse on space (Viljoen *et al*, 2004: 16). These symbolic spaces, inhabited by those who have and those who lack power, are one of the fundamental causes of inequality. Mary Louise Pratt (1992) makes use of various terms to better explore the struggle for power between these symbolic, and often literal, spaces.

Pratt (1992: 6-7) makes use of the term 'contact zone' when referring to colonial encounters, "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict". Pratt employs the term in an attempt to invoke a spatial and temporal copresence of previously separated subjects. It focusses not on the previous separation, but rather on the copresence, the interaction and interlocking of "understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt, 1992: 7).

'Anti-conquest' is another concept used by Pratt (1992: 7). The term refers to "the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (Pratt, 1992: 7). Pratt calls the key protagonist within this 'anti-conquest' the 'seeing-man' who she defines as "a European male subject of European landscape discourse—he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (Pratt, 1992: 7).

The third term described by Pratt (1992: 7) is ‘autoethnography’ or ‘autoethnographic expression’. It portrays “instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer’s own terms [...] [it] involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror” (Pratt, 1992: 7). All of these terms are pertinent in the works of Djébar and Brink.

Within postcolonial studies, the notions of space, place and landscape are often intertwined with the notions of identity, memory, language, power, gender, race, and politics.⁶⁵ In the following section, I will explore the interrelated connection between these notions and demonstrate how they are analyzed from a critical postcolonial perspective.

4.3.1 Space and identity

The spaces in which we find ourselves influence our identity. In his book *Landscape and Memory* Schama (1995) reveals how people have drawn imaginatively on features and aspects of their environment to form distinct identities. Viljoen *et al* (2004: 12) emphasize how spaces mold and determine the ‘self’:

Both the concept of space and that of identity have to do with our experience as human beings. The very spaces we occupy form our identities, and these identities determine our perceptions and representations of those spaces and varying spatial experiences. We can thus view the relationship between space and identity as a symbiotic relationship, a mutual dependency creating meaningfulness.

Spaces can construct and in turn be constructed by identities (Duncan, 1996: 143). In addition to influencing our personal identities, space also shapes our national identity. Larsen (2005: 297) indicates that “in its material-symbolic complexity”, the national landscape represents four basic ideological functions in the makeup of national identity: “(1) it gives *unity* to people and place, (2) it provides this unity with a *unique* character, (3) it provides people and place with a common *origin*, (4) it *naturalizes* that unity and that origin”. Postcolonial writer and philosopher Édouard Glissant’s theories on the

⁶⁵ Rose (1996: 57) demonstrates how “spatial metaphors are widely used in current social and cultural theorizing as a means of articulating the intersection of subjectivity, power and the production of knowledge. The politics of knowledge is understood in terms of the politics of representation, and the politics of representation is interpreted in terms of a geopolitics of location”.

relation between (both personal and national) identity and space are here especially of value.⁶⁶ When talking about the idea of identity, Glissant (1996: 59-63) makes use of the distinction employed by French poststructuralists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari between *racine unique* and *rhizome*. He defines the *racine unique*, or the single root as “celle qui tue autour” and who excludes the other as participant. Glissant (1996: 66, 98) insists that this idea of a unique, permanent, and intolerant identity that is based on the notion of the *racine unique* should make space for the *rhizome*, or root system, that forms part of his concept of Relation. The root system as “la racine qui s’étend à la rencontre des autres racines”, considers the other as an inference (*inférant*). He additionally elaborates on the difference between the two and insists that the *racine unique* forms part of an ancient way of thinking about identity which inevitably leads to universalism. *L’identité-racine*, as Glissant calls it, is founded on *mythes fondateurs* which establish patterns of filiation and legitimizes the possession of territory. Glissant argues that ‘atavistic’ Western cultures are grounded on such foundation narratives which legitimizes their claim to territorial possession.⁶⁷ The primary role of these *mythes fondateurs* is to allocate a certain territory to a community by insisting on the presence of a legitimate filiation or connection between the two. The myth then presents itself as a Genesis, a creation of the world. The *mythe fondateur* then leads the community to consider the ‘earth turned territory’ (“terre devenue territoire”) as absolutely theirs. As a result of this ‘legitimacy’, the myth forms part of the culture’s historical conscience. The society believes that they have a right to the piece of land ‘given’ to them and that it is therefore also their right to expand the limits of ‘their’ territory. Glissant (1996: 62) insists that this is one of the founding principles of colonial expansion.⁶⁸ He additionally describes how the *mythe fondateur* influences History:⁶⁹ over time, foundation myths are accompanied and later replaced by clarification or explanation myths (*mythes d’élucidation*), and then by tales and stories that prefigure

⁶⁶ Glissant (1996: 131) describes identities as one of modern time’s painful quests for it is never finished. He states: “Les identités sont une des conquêtes du temps moderne, conquête douloureuse parce que ce n’est pas fini et que sur toute la face de la planète il y a des nœuds, des foyers de désolation qui contredisent ce mouvement”.

⁶⁷ Glissant (1996: 59-60) delineates an ‘atavistic’ culture as “celle qui part du principe d’une Genèse et du principe d’une filiation, dans le but de rechercher une légitimité sur une terre qui à partir de ce moment devient territoire. Je ferai l’équation ‘terre élue = territoire’” (Glissant, 1996: 59-60).

⁶⁸ Glissant (1996: 77) refers to the “absolute legitimacy” of English and French colonisation, both of which are relevant to this study: “La colonisation anglaise et française [...] qui étaient les principales au XIX^e siècle, sont les seules qui sont absolument sûres de leur légitimité, absolument [...] La colonisation française et la colonisation anglaise au XIX^e siècle étaient sûres de leur légitimité parce que c’était le système entier (la pensée du territoire élu) qui s’agrandissait à la dimension du monde. Et quand le monde a été réalisé par la colonisation (les colonisateurs en ont été les fourriers; c’est eux qui ont découvert les côtes, qui ont fait les cartes, etc.), quand tout cela a été ‘réalisé’, la légitimité s’est effondrée, parce qu’elle ne pouvait plus s’étendre”.

⁶⁹ Glissant (1996: 62) calls History the daughter of foundation myths: “L’Histoire est [...] réellement fille du mythe fondateur”.

History which finally leads to the invention of novels, poems and texts who, according to Glissant (1996: 62),⁷⁰ “tells, sings and contemplates” the foundation myths. By reassuring a culture’s own destiny, these narratives tend to exclude others from the community (Glissant, 1996: 67).⁷¹

On the other hand, identity that is based on the notion of *rhizome*, *l’identité-relation*, is not related to foundation myths involving a creation of the world but is rather associated with the contradictory experience when cultures come into contact with each other. This proposed view on identity that is framed on Glissant’s *chaos-monde*, accentuates the idea of roaming. It does not legitimize any claims to territory for he highlights that *l’identité-relation* “ne se représente pas une terre comme un territoire, d’où on projette vers d’autres territoires, mais comme un lieu où on ‘donne-avec’ en place de ‘com-prendre’” (Glissant, 1990: 156-158).⁷² *L’identité-rhizome* involves what Glissant (1996: 69) calls “la pensée de la trace”: it stresses the importance of traces, of meanders, of becoming and not necessarily of being.⁷³ He links the idea of *identité-relation* (or *identité-rhizome*) to ‘composite’ societies (“cultures composites”) or cultures where a form of creolisation takes place (Glissant, 1996: 60). In contrast to ‘atavistic’ cultures, these cultures are characterized by a lack of foundation myths and are therefore, according to Coates (2001: 155) “not fatally marked by the need for purity and the establishment of unimpeachable genealogical credentials”. These cultures do not share a common, single foundation narrative. They rather have a mixture of tales and stories who are, to quote Glissant (1996: 63) “déjà une pratique du detour”. These different narratives form part of what he calls “la pulsion chaotique”, for not one of these stories can claim absolute legitimacy.

⁷⁰ My translation. Glissant (1996: 62) observes: “Sur le chemin qui mène à elle le mythe fondateur sera accompagné, puis occulté, puis remplacé d’abord par les mythes d’élucidation, d’explication ou de mise en abîme des processus sociaux et des conditions d’environnement d’une communauté, ensuite par les contes et récits qui préfigurent l’Histoire et enfin par les romans, poèmes et textes de réflexion qui disent, chantent ou méditent celle-ci”.

⁷¹ Glissant focusses especially on the excluding nature of epics: “les grands livres épiques fondateurs de l’humanité sont des livres qui rassurent la communauté sur son propre destin et qui par conséquent tendent, non pas en eux-mêmes mais dans l’usage qui en sera fait, à exclure l’autre de cette communauté” (Glissant, 1996: 67).

⁷² Glissant (1990: 205-106) likens the verb ‘comprendre’ to the notion of transparency and notes that the verb itself suggests a form of appropriation: “Il y a dans ce verbe comprendre le mouvement des mains qui prennent l’entour et le ramènent à soi. Geste d’enferment sinon appropriation. Préférons-lui le geste du donner-avec, qui ouvre enfin sur la totalité” (Glissant, 1990: 205-206).

⁷³ Glissant (1996: 70) insists that la trace is not a matter of following comfortable paths. He claims: “La trace [...] C’est une manière opaque d’apprendre la branche et le vent, être soi dérivé à l’autre, le sable en vrai désordre de l’utopie, l’insondé, l’obscur du courant dans la rivière dételée”.

When considering a rhizomatic approach to identity, Glissant (1996: 98) raises the sensitivity that often accompanies the question: “si on pose cette question on a l’impression qu’on mutile ou qu’on ampute sa propre identité; alors on n’a pas ‘envie’ de la créolisation. Parce qu’on peut mourir pour son identité-racine unique, mais on ne peut pas mourir pour la créolisation”. It is assumed that an *identité-rhizome* will mutilate one’s ‘unique’ identity. Glissant (1996: 132) however insists that a movement towards the rhizomatic approach to identity or an identity that is based on relations, is not a matter of uprooting. It rather involves a way of conceiving one’s roots as less intolerant, less sectarian. In the context of an *identité-rhizome*, the notion of the nation is portrayed as more cultural than state-controlled, military, economic or political and less patriotic in the traditional sense. *L’identité-rhizome* allows the idea of power and force that is linked to identity to erode and to disappear (Glissant, 1996: 132).

As suggested by Glissant, the idea of a single homeland or elected territory is inextricably linked to national identity. Who we are depends on where we are, where we live in a specific country and our sense of belonging to land and to place. It is through the land that we perceive our social and historical selves (Darian-Smith *et al*, 1996: 10, 11, 120; Viljoen *et al*, 2004: 3, 20). Memory and space are also entwined. Edward Said (2002: 241) notes that “[o]ver the past decade, there has been a burgeoning interest in two overlapping areas of the humanities and social sciences: memory and geography or, more specifically, the study of human space”.

The relation between landscape and romantic nationalism has a complex history (Cosgrove, 2008: 28). Referring to American history, Angela Miller (1993: &) observes that “[n]ationalism, in the New World as in the old, [...] sought to particularize identity through race, environment, and history. Americans constructed a national identity through all three, but during the decades of romantic nationalism, environment was preeminent” (Miller, 1993: 7). Cosgrove (2008: 35) highlights how landscape is often employed as the context for socio-political identity and community action. In her analysis of American landscape art, Miller (1993) acknowledges the role of space in nation building. Although her study focusses primarily on painting, she makes relevant arguments for literature as well as she demonstrates how (landscape) art is an expression of national identity. She refers to mutual concerns of representation that can be found in both the domain of art and the exercise of nation building:

[I]t is in the dilemmas of representation itself that landscape painting reveals its deepest, most submerged concerns—concerns that parallel the central dilemmas of nation building. Artists, critics, and audiences explored issues of national

identity in displaced fashion, through the symbolic content of form and composition, through arguments about what to represent, and through the recurrent issue of the relationship between part and whole. (Miller, 1993: 2)

Miller (1993: 9-10) additionally accentuates the belief that a country's national character can be seen as the 'transcript' of its scenery and landscape. She stresses the symbolic importance of landscape in the process of nationalism:

The conviction that subjective experience was a natural extension of sensory data supported a nationalist aesthetic because it predicted a realm shared by all Americans [...] A shared landscape would weld the individual to the general, the concrete to the abstract, the part to the whole. Nationalism was at root a substance, a thing, and not merely a social process. Whether embodied in time or space, it was, like the homunculus of medieval medicine, fully formed in the womb of the nation. Yet, like a newborn, it had to be nurtured and protected, and the conditions had to be created that would allow it to flourish. It existed, however, in the 'everlasting hills', in the broad rivers and sweeping plains, as the very substance of nationalist rhetoric.

Landscape is a product and instrument of our culture and identity. It is built from myths, memories, and obsessions (Schama, 1995: 9, 12, 14; Viljoen *et al*, 2004: 3). Schama (1995: 6-7) states that "[b]efore [landscape] can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock".

4.3.2 Space and displacement

Once the sense of belonging to a place is lost, it directly influences one's sense of self. A classic feature within postcolonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. The relationship between the self and place forms the basis for what Bill Ashcroft (1989: 8-9) calls "the special postcolonial crisis of identity". Displacement produces "alienation of vision and the crisis in self-image". The notion of exile is a central term in postmodernist and postcolonial literature. De Lange *et al* (2008: xv) emphasize the connection between exile and place:

[E]xile means removal from the place where the author or fictional character used to live, and where, in many cases at least, his or her identity and sense of belonging was formed. And yet, as many modernist and postcolonial novels demonstrate, this kind of complex distance from the author's or character's place of origin can serve as a basis for, and significantly contribute to, the artistic formation of narrative fiction of the highest order. (De Lange *et al*, 2008: xv)

Homi Bhabha (1997: 445) similarly comments on the notion of displacement and exile in postcolonial fiction—a notion that he redefines as the ‘unhomely’:

[The unhomely] captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world in an unhallowed place. To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the unhomely be easily accommodated in that familiar division of the social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you as stealthily as your own shadow [...] In a feverish stillness, the intimate recesses of the domestic space become sites for history’s most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting [...] The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world. (Bhabha, 1997: 445)

Bhabha’s notion of the unhomely can therefore perhaps be described as a sense of constant and unrestricted estrangement: not only do you feel displaced or exiled from your home or native country, your home in a sense becomes the place of displacement.

4.3.3 Space and language

This effect of displacement is often influenced by language: A gap opens up between the experience of a place and the language available to describe it. Those whose language is either destroyed by enslavement or by the imposition of a language of a colonizing power begin to feel alienated. The language available seems to be inadequate or inappropriate to describe new landscapes and conditions (Ashcroft *et al*, 1989: 9-10). Coetzee (1988: 165) notes how European poets had to realize “that the real Africa will always slip through the net woven by European categories”. They consequently wondered “whether native African languages may not be in harmony with the landscape as European languages are not”. White South African poets share similar concerns: “The questions that trouble white South African poets above all are, as we might expect, whether the land speaks a universal language, whether the African landscape can be articulated in a European language, whether the European can be at home in Africa” (Coetzee, 1988: 167).

The control over language is one of the main features of imperial oppression. Language is the “medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’ and ‘reality’ become established. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an established post-colonial voice” (Ashcroft *et al*, 1989: 7). Within postcolonial literary theory, there is a central focus on the nature of language. Language is both the subject and the medium of the text. Ashcroft *et al* (1989: 115) insist that “[l]anguage is inextricably linked both with identity and the power relationship of colonial discourse and control, so the post-colonial text is itself a site of struggle for linguistic control”.

According to postcolonial theorists, the language of space, place, and landscape⁷⁴ is also intertwined in colonial discourse: “Language carries the riches and the burdens of the past, and the language of landscape, like all languages, is loaded” (Seddon, 1997: 5). Seddon (1997: 5) accentuates how the language we use to represent landscape is culturally conditioned:

The way in which we perceive, imagine, conceptualise, image, verbalise, relate to, behave towards the natural world are the product of cultural conditioning and individual variation [...] The important question usually is ‘what do we mean when we say...?’, or ‘where have these words been before, and what aspects of our past do they trail behind them?’ It is important because linguistic structures are conservative, and they pattern our thinking. The feminists have taught us that we need to struggle to escape sexist language, but that is only one example of cultural bias perpetuated by language. The example of Eurocentrism is another, but only one of many. (Seddon, 1997: 13)

Seddon (1997: 16- 27) pursues his argument on the loaded language of landscape and asserts that it is anthropocentric:

The language of landscape is inescapably anthropocentric: inescapably, because the very concept of landscape is anthropocentric, a way of positioning ourselves in relation to the external environment. Indeed we are constantly translating that environment into landscape to make it humanly inhabitable [...] The point of being highly conscious of the anthropocentric implications of our language is that if we are not, we are servants of the language we use, rather than its master or mistress, and as a consequence, we have little insight into the nature of our perceptions, and limited control over our actions [...] the way we use words tells us a good deal

⁷⁴ Not only do we make use of language to represent and describe landscape, but landscape itself is perceived as having its own language. Humans in turn make use of landscape metaphors (landscape’s ‘language’) to express themselves: “Landscapes are rich with complex language, spoken and written in land, air, and water. Humans are story-telling animals, thinking in metaphors steeped in landscape: putting down roots means commitment; an uprooting is a traumatic event. Like a living tree rooted in a place, language is rooted in landscape” (Spirn, 2008: 52).

about the way we relate to landscape—and that a little weeding in the garden of words can help to maintain linguistic health [...] The words we use both reveal and influence our perceptions of the environment, reflect our objectives and interests, and affect our actions, including the way we design.

This relation between power and language is one of the most vital issues in postcolonial literatures (Kossew, 1996a: 61). The connection between space and language is influenced by power and vice versa. In postcolonial studies colonial space is often analyzed with “its relation to and representation through- the eye- and the pen- of the imperial beholder” (Darian-Smith *et al*, 1996: 2). The language that the colonizer uses to portray the colonial space plays therefore a significant role. It is through this language, through the cultural and political power of maps and the act of naming that histories are either presented or silenced (Darian-Smith *et al*, 1996: 5, 14).

4.3.4 Naming spaces

The figure of the map is central in many postcolonial writings. Within postcolonial literary responses, physical or geographical maps are portrayed as having effectively but also restrictively implemented colonial policies whereas conceptual or metaphorical maps are represented as exemplars of colonial discourse (Huggan, 1989: 115).⁷⁵ Map-making and the act of naming are seen as servants of colonial plunder. Huggan (1989: 115) refers to cartography’s demonstration of colonial discursive practices which he identifies as “a series of key rhetorical strategies implemented in the production of the map, such as the reinscription, enclosure and hierarchization of space, which provide an analogue for the acquisition, management and reinforcement of colonial power”. McClintock (1995: 27-28) describes the role of the colonial map in the following manner:

The colonial map vividly embodies the contradictions of colonial discourse, Map-making became the servant of colonial plunder, for the knowledge constituted by the map both preceded and legitimized the conquest of territory. The map is a technology of knowledge that professes to capture the truth about a place in pure, scientific form, operating under the guise of scientific exactitude and promising to retrieve and reproduce nature exactly as it is. As such, it is also a technology of possession, promising that those with the capacity to make such perfect representations must also have the right of territorial control [...] Yet the edges and blank spaces of colonial maps are typically marked with vivid reminders of the failure of knowledge and hence the tenuousness of possession. The failure of

⁷⁵ Huggan (1989) refers specifically to the fascination of Canadian and Australian, but also other postcolonial writers with the notion of the map.

European knowledge appears in the margins and gaps of these maps in the forms of cannibals, mermaids and monsters, threshold figures eloquent of the resurgent relations between gender, race and imperialism. The map is a liminal thing, associated with thresholds and marginal zones, burdened with dangerous powers.

Gregory (1994: 7) also makes reference to map-making's failure in capturing the 'truth':

It is perfectly true that historians have usually presented cartography as the Survey of Reason, a narrative journey of progress from darkness to enlightenment, in the course of which maps become supposedly more 'accurate' and more 'objective.' But it is also true that there is now a critical historiography, which has established the implication of maps in the constitution of systems of power-knowledge and, [...] has suggested ways of deconstructing their technologies of power. In doing so, it has become apparent that mapping is necessarily situated, embodied, partial: like all other practices of representation.

Cartography is but a form of representation which is based on subjectivity. Huggan (1989: 116) stresses that mimesis is part of cartography and its practice. The map represents a particular version of reality: that of the West. It conforms to its makers' particular kind of view of reality in order to empower them (Huggan, 1989: 116, 118). Kirby (1996: 45) similarly defines cartography not as a 'technology of knowledge' but rather as a 'technology of subjectivity':

The Cartesian subject, the Enlightenment individual, the autonomous ego of psychoanalysis: all appear to be reducible to [the] same graphic schema. The 'individual' expresses a coherent, consistent, rational space paired with a consistent, stable, organized environment. Cartography, a science developing (as a science) in the Renaissance and being standardized in the Enlightenment, is both an expression of the new form of subjectivity and a technology allowing (or causing) the new subjectivity to coalesce. The form for subjectivity, space and relation between them inspired by mapping has achieved [...] a kind of popular dominance today—though all three are also beginning, according to Frederic Jameson, to 'wither away' under the pressures of postmodernism.

While postmodernist and poststructuralist theories highlight the liminal, subjective, and representational nature of mapping, postcolonial frameworks focus on the 'dangerous powers' with which it is burdened (McClintock, 1995: 28). One of the powers of cartography accentuated in postcolonial discourse is the hierarchization of space. Diala (2013: 191) refers to the role of cartography "as a white mythology aimed at the hierachisation of space (North and South) in the validation of an essentialist view of the universe, and thus in the attempt to justify and perpetuate colonial appropriation and violence. Ostensibly aimed at a mimetic representation of a specific geographical area, a map in reality is a desire". This desire of naming expresses a desire of control: "By flamboyantly

naming 'new' lands, male imperials mark them as their own, guaranteeing thereby, or so they believe, a privileged relation to origins" (McClintock, 1995: 29). Colonial nations have the power to control space through their map-making practices due to the fact that they govern cultural production. Drawing from contemporary literary theories of discourse, text, and metaphor, Garane (2005: 9-10) indicates that "the scientific rules of mapping are influenced by those governing cultural production". She refers to arguments made by J.B. Harley concerning the so-called 'rule of ethnocentricity' that leads cartographers to 'place their own territory at the center of their cosmography or world map'. This process can in turn help to promote, legitimate, and codify Eurocentric world views. Due to its hierarchization of spaces and its embodiment of a systematic social inequality, the map can consequently discriminate (Garane, 2005: 9-10).

Adverting to Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Garane (2005: 11) demonstrates that "this form of mapping, an inscription of authority through a hierarchical ordering of space, extends beyond positive, empirical knowledge of geographical space to include its arbitrary constructions, its 'imaginative geography'".⁷⁶ Said (2002: 247) describes the notion of 'imaginative community' as a basis for his major works⁷⁷:

Two of my books, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, are based not only on the notion of what I call imaginative geography—the invention and construction of a geographical space called the Orient, for instance, with scant attention paid to the actuality of the geography and its inhabitants—but also on the mapping, conquest, and annexation of territory both in what Conrad called the dark places of the earth and its most densely inhabited and lived in places, like India or Palestine. The great voyages of geographical discovery from da Gama to Captain Cook were motivated by curiosity and scientific fervor, but also by a spirit of domination, which becomes immediately evident when white men land in some distant and unknown place and the natives rebel against them.

This desire for conquest and domination to which Said refers is expressed through the act of naming. Seddon (1997: 23) argues that "[a]n obvious form of taking possession is to give names to things and places. The field sciences, such as geology, soil science, botany and zoology, all work by giving names that indicate relationships within a set of constructs that are European in their origin, so that this too

⁷⁶ 'Imaginative geography' connotes imaginary geographical distinctions between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident' for example. Even though it is imaginary, it nevertheless has a great impact on 'real' foreign policy (Garane, 2005: 11).

⁷⁷ Within the field of postcolonialism, Williams and Chrisman (1994: 5) signal Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) out as the text that "single-handedly inaugurates a new era of academic inquiry". The book's success according to Williams and Chrisman (1994: 6) comes from its bringing together Foucault's theories of post-structuralism and Gramsci's theories on Western Marxism.

ties the unknown to the known, reducing unfamiliarity”. Through naming a place you imaginatively possess that region (Seddon, 1997: 25). In his argument Seddon (1997) primarily focusses on Paul Carter’s *The Road to Botany Bay*, a book “about the way in which space becomes humanised, brought within the realm of our culture, translated into place” (Seddon, 1997: 36).

In *The Road to Botany Bay* Carter evokes “the spatial forms and fantasies through which a culture declares its presence. It is spatiality as a form of non-linear writing; a form of history” (Carter, 1987: xxii). He insists that spatial history does not begin in a particular year or in a particular place, “but in the act of naming. For by the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is, a space with a history” (Carter, 1987: xxiv).

Carter explores the different naming practices of Captain Cook and Joseph Banks. He demonstrates how for example Bank’s practice of naming a plant is a way of disposing of it: Once the plant is named it is ‘known to science’. It is categorized in the familiar Linnaean taxonomy—a system that is European in origin. By giving it a name and ordering it in a European system, the plant is no longer unfamiliar and foreign. Through naming the plant, it is owned (Seddon, 1997: 6). Carter argues that the land was not objectively recorded by explorers. Seddon (1997: 24) explains that colonial explorers “invented places to conform with European needs and expectations. The naming—which was in fact a renaming—gave substance to their inventions [...] Many colonial names are about possession and dispossession”. Carter (1987: 56) comments on this possessive nature of naming:

Explorers were not despatched to traverse deserts, but to locate objects of cultural significance: rivers, mountains, meadows, plains of promise. They had a social responsibility to make the most of what they saw, to dignify even hints of the habitable with significant class names. They were expected to arrest the country, to concentrate it into reversible roads which would summarize its content; they were expected to translate its extension into objects of commerce. They were, by a curious irony, meant to inaugurate a form of possession that would render the dynamic of their own journeys invisible.

Carter’s description emphasizes the role of the map as a tool in the colonial enterprise. As pointed out by Ashcroft *et al* (1989: 31-32) maps were “a means of textualizing the spatial reality of the other... in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control”. Through the act of mapping, knowledge of the other is therefore produced. Cartography as a tool of knowledge acted “to distinguish ‘self’ from ‘other’ [...] (it) was the measure between human and non-human, civilized and savage” (Kirby, 1996: 49).

Postcolonial theory is specifically seen as a critique of the process of productions of knowledge about the other (Williams & Chrisman, 1994: 8). From a typical postcolonial perspective, Said (1987: 54) draws attention to the arbitrary distinction between the self, belonging to a ‘familiar’ space, and the other, associated with an ‘unfamiliar’ space: “this universal practice of designating in one’s mind of a familiar space which is ‘ours’ and an unfamiliar space beyond ‘ours’ which is ‘theirs’ is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary”. The nature of the boundaries between the ‘familiar’ and the ‘unfamiliar’ is subjective. Gilby and Haustein (2005: 16) argue that “[p]ostcolonial places cannot be described without being constructed and invented”.

The distinction between self/other, master/slave, powerful/powerless or known/unknown is used metaphorically to explore the postcolonial search for identity. These dichotomies also form the basis of colonial appropriation (Kossew, 1996a: 15). Kossew (1996a: 34) demonstrates how Africa, from a Eurocentric perspective, was regarded as an empty space on which colonists imposed their own myths and codes: “To the West, Africa has long been the heart of darkness. Even during the age of discovery, European seafarers only skirted the coastlines of the continent, leaving the interior unexplored and peopled, in the popular imagination, by monsters and human freaks” (Kossew, 1996a: 34).

Hitchcock (2010: 9) comments on the colonial tendency to impose on the so-called ‘empty’ spaces outside of Europe:

We know that colonialism offered a world to be inscribed. Gayatri Spivak calls this process ‘worlding’, whereby Europe, for instance, projects an aura of blankness onto the world, specifically the Third or developing world, to produce a space for subsequent inscription. A complex process of presencing and othering is implied in worlding, and it did not expire with the declarations of independence often interpreted to herald postcoloniality [...] The production of space regulates a logic of state that deludes itself into believing it is the quintessence of development and the pinnacle of civilization [...] The postcolonial writer must continually struggle to de-scribe space as the Other of colonialism. Consciously or not space of postcolonial writing brings alternative histories to bear on the processes of anticolonial narration. (Hitchcock, 2010: 9)

The space of ‘worlding’ is contaminated by “production as projection” (Hitchcock, 2010: 9). In producing knowledge on the space of the other, certain (often Eurocentric) views and ideologies are projected and inscribed on that space. In this sense, cartography is seen as not only exemplifying colonial practices but also structuralist procedure. Huggan (1989: 121) explains the structuralist activity

of the map as follows: “A simulacrum of the world (or part of it) is produced through the participation of the intellect in the abstract reorganization of its ‘natural object’: the external environment”.⁷⁸ Critics consider the poststructuralist as well as anticolonial paths that have been opened up by the critique of spatial science in the closing decades of the twentieth century.⁷⁹ Derrida’s practice of deconstruction, that some regard as a decolonizing gesture,⁸⁰ has a significant influence on geography (Gregory, 1994: 74).⁸¹ Harley (1992: 238) emphasizes how deconstruction “urges us to read between the lines of the map—‘in the margins of the text’—and through its tropes to discover the silences and contradictions that challenge the apparent honesty of the image”. It is not, as Huggan (1989: 12) suggests, believing that deconstruction can provide a “better” map of reality, but rather, to echo Derrida (1976: 113) questioning “any discourse which proposes itself as an exact map of reality”. Huggan (1989: 121) describes the importance of a deconstructive reading of the map:

A deconstructive reading of the Western map [...] is one which, focusing on the inevitable discrepancy between the ‘natural’ and the ‘imitated’ object, displaces the ‘original’ presence of the West in such a way as to undermine the ideology which justifies its relations of power. This operation of displacement is tantamount to a ‘decolonization’ of the map, where decolonization entails an identification of

⁷⁸ Huggan (1989: 120) refers to the goal of structuralist activity, as described by Roland Barthes (1972: 214-215): “The goal of structuralist activity [...] is to reconstruct an object in such a way as to manifest the rules of its functioning [...] structure is therefore a simulacrum of the object, but a direct interested simulacrum, since the imitated object makes something appear which remained invisible or [...] unintelligible in the natural object [...] the simulacrum is intellect added to object, and this addition has an anthropological value, in that it is man himself, his history, his situation, his freedom, and the very resistance which nature offers to his mind”.

⁷⁹ Some theorists suggest that poststructuralism will be better understood through its connection with postcolonialism. Robert Young (1990) regards poststructuralism as an anti-colonial theory born out of the violence of the Algerian War of Independence. He states: “If so-called ‘so-called poststructuralism’ is the product of a single historical moment, then that moment is probably not May 1968 but rather the Algerian War of Independence—no doubt itself both a symptom and a product. In this respect, it is significant that Sartre, Althusser, Derrida and Lyotard, among others, were all either born in Algeria or personally involved with the events of the war” (Young, 1990: 32). Sajed (2012: 151-152) stresses the intimate link between deconstruction and postcolonialism: “deconstruction (at least the kind that is associated with Derrida, Cixous and Lyotard) emerged out of an anti-colonial stance, as a project of displacement and subversion of the category of ‘the West’, in the context of the Algerian War against French colonialism [...] These links are currently found in the works of postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Robert Young, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak—who want to ‘make something happen’ to deconstruction by grafting it onto postcolonial analysis”.

⁸⁰ Sajed (2012: 145) refers to how as a decolonizing gesture, deconstruction “attempts to decentre and to expose various forms of centrisms, such as logocentrism, phallocentrism, and structural centrism”.

⁸¹ Gregory (1994: 74) states: “Derrida’s achievement is to show that the strange, the alien, the other are not massing outside the gates of Reason: They are already and, so to speak, constitutively inside. For deconstruction displaces the binary oppositions of both categorical and dialectical thought; it frustrates the attempts to draw a perimeter, to hold the line, by showing that all these boundary commissions and policing operations are inherently ‘undecidable’: that their systems can be completed only by admitting terms that call that very completeness into question. The point is not that drawing boundaries is somehow impermissible—the play of difference that is language depends upon it—but that the permeability of those boundaries has to be constantly asserted; more than this, that the space in which they are drawn is not a simple plane. Each side folds over and implicates the other in its constitution [...] The same practices of deconstruction can be traced through the recent history of human geography”.

and perceived dissociation from the empowering strategies of colonial discourse (including, for example, a rejection of its false claim to a 'universal' history). The result is a dismantling of the self-privileging authority of the West which also suggests that the relations between the 'natural' and the 'imitated' object which inform the procedures of cartographic representation are motivated by the will to power and, further, that these relations ultimately pertain neither to an 'objective' representation nor even to a 'subjective' reconstruction of the 'real' world but rather to a play between alternative simulacra which problematizes the easy distinction between object and subject. (Huggan, 1989: 121)

In questioning colonial representation practices, a deconstructive reading of maps also involves a revision of the history of colonialism. Huggan (1989: 123) suggests that such a revisioning is the reason for the map topos' prevalence in contemporary post-colonial literary texts. He insists that some poststructuralists, such as Deleuze and Guattari, move 'beyond' deconstruction's practices of 'mapbreaking' to a type of reconstruction, or 'mapmaking'.⁸² In regarding the map as a "shifting ground" with flexible design, Deleuze and Guattari associate it to their concept of *rhizome*, discussed earlier in this chapter. Huggan (1989: 126) asserts that in their conception of the map as an "open" and rhizomatic rather than a "closed" homogeneous construct, the focus shifts from deconstruction to reconstruction. The advantage of their model, according to Huggan (1989: 126), lies in the fact that "it provides a viable alternative to the implicitly hegemonic (and historically colonialist) form of cartographic discourse which uses the duplicating procedures of mimetic representation and structuralist reconstitution as strategic means of stabilizing the foundations of Western culture and of 'fixing' the position (thereby maintaining the power) of the West in relation to cultures other than its own". Where Derrida's deconstruction focusses on the homogeneity of colonial discourse, Huggan (1989: 126) believes that Deleuze and Guattari's reconstruction is more suitable for the operations of post-colonial discourse: Their rhizomatic map highlights not only the process of deterritorialization, but also a reterritorialization through "working within and between the multicultural societies of the post-colonial world". Deleuze and Guattari's model allows for a creative revisionism through the map topos in postcolonial writing. Huggan (1989: 127) declares:

the desystematization of a narrowly defined and demarcated 'cartographic' space allows for a culturally and historically located critique of colonial discourse while, at the same time, producing the momentum for a projection and exploration of

⁸² Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 12) describe the map as follows: "The map is open and connectable in all its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, re-worked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on the wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation".

'new territories' outlawed or neglected by dominant discourses which previously operated in the colonial, but continue to operate in modified or transposed forms in the post-colonial, culture. (Huggan, 1989: 127)

Through such a creative revisionism, the map offers a link between poststructuralist and postcolonial theories "in the pursuit of social and cultural change" (Huggan, 1989: 128). In the following section, I will highlight how postcolonialism pursues such social and cultural change by reimagining and deconstructing spatial binaries.

4.3.5 Spatial binaries

Within many postcolonial analyses, the focus is placed on the spatial dichotomies that are interconnected with the notions of gender, race, and politics. Viljoen *et al* (2004: 15) affirm that "[s]pace is coded in different ways, not at least by racializing, gendering or politicizing it". Darian-Smith *et al* (1996: 16) emphasize that "just as the politics of identity and difference are gendered, so too are the institutional and private practices that socially constitute space". Feminist scholarship often focuses on the gendered perceptions of the imperial beholder. They highlight the importance to rethink gendered representations of the land and to deconstruct the myth of the masculine ego and its destiny, that the land is female. They also accentuate the need to challenge the universalist dichotomy between private (women's) and public (men's) spaces (Crehan, 1998: 62, Darian-Smith *et al*, 1996: 11, 16). In the following sections, I will explore these postcolonial arguments on gendered space.

McClintock (1995: 6-7) argues that "imperialism cannot be fully understood without a theory of gender power". Although race and class played a distinctive role in the framework of the empire, she insists that "gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise".⁸³ Marxist-feminists argue that patriarchy and capitalism, two bases of imperialism, "interact to ensure that women are oppressed of both gender and class" (Spain, 1992:

⁸³ McClintock (1995: 31) highlights the importance "to stress from the outset [...] that gendering of imperialism took very different forms in different parts of the world". As an example she refers to "Arab women (who) were to be 'civilized' by being undressed (unveiled), while sub-Saharan women were to be civilized by being dressed (in clean, white, British cotton)" (McClintock, 1995: 31).

25). Through spatial segregation the imperial enterprise was able to maintain its greater power over the oppressed (Spain, 1992: 15).

Social and gender relations are spatially constructed and negotiated. Gender relations are embedded in the spatial organization of places (Duncan, 1996: 4-5). Spain (1992: 28-29) contends that gendered spaces shape and are shaped by our daily activities: “Once in place, they become taken for granted, unexamined, and seemingly immutable. What is becomes what ought to be, which contributes to the maintenance of prevailing status differences”. She explains that status is primarily determined by spatial arrangements: “changing space potentially changes the status hierarchy and changing status potentially changes spatial institutions” (Spain, 1992: 233). The entwined relation between status and space has an additional influence on the access to knowledge:

Throughout history and across cultures, architectural and geographic spatial arrangements have reinforced status differences between women and men [...] Women and men are spatially segregated in ways that reduce women’s access to knowledge and thereby reinforce women’s lower status relative to men’s [...] Spatial arrangements between the sexes are socially created, and when they provide access to valued knowledge for men while reducing access to that knowledge for women, the organization of space may perpetuate status differences. (Spain, 1992: 3)

Knowledge is consequently also in a sense determined by space. Feminists argue that the idea of knowledge as “embodied, engendered and embedded in the material context of place and space” has far-reaching implications (Duncan, 1996: 1). Duncan (1996: 2) emphasizes the effect of such gendered practices:

Universal categories of reason and knowledge as well as history and power are in fact reflections of gendered practices marked not only by gender but also by differences within gender. This gendered dualism of mind and body has spatial corollaries in other dualisms such as interiority/exteriority and public/private distinction. This latter distinction in turn depends upon other gendered dichotomies such as immanence/transcendence. Thus, while the public sphere has been seen as the sphere of universal reason and transcendence of the disembodied, disinterested Cartesian observer, in fact this model observer can be shown to be (implicitly) a white, bourgeois able-bodied male, and, in fact [...] a heterosexual male.

Spatial binaries are often determined through gendered practices. Critics call for a critical questioning of the entwinement between gendered dichotomies and spatial distinctions. Feminists call for a spatial

revolution that would undermine mind/body and public/private binaries. They argue that these spatial dualisms are used to “exclude, control, confine and suppress gender and sexual difference preserving traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures” (Duncan, 1996: 7-8). The public/private dichotomy is problematic both for its political and spatial dimensions: Confinement, whether it is voluntary or forced, in private spaces “contributes to a reduction in the vitality of the public sphere as a political site and diminishes the ability of marginalized groups to claim a share in power” (Duncan, 1996: 128).

The gendered opposition between public and private spaces legitimates gender-based oppression and regulates sexuality. Private spaces are associated with “the domestic, the embodied, the natural, the family, property, the shadowy interior of the household, personal life, intimacy, passion, sexuality, ‘the good life’, care, a haven, unwaged labour, reproduction and immanence” (Duncan, 1996: 128).⁸⁴ Immanence is additionally described as “the static realm of living-in-the-present, of reproduction, of servicing those who make history” (Duncan, 1996: 135-136). Public spaces are contrarily seen as the domain of the “the disembodied, the abstract, the cultural, rationality, critical public discourse, citizenship, civil society, justice, the market place, waged labour, production, the polis, the state, action, militarism, heroism and transcendence” (Duncan, 1996: 128). According to Duncan (1996: 135-136) transcendence “is the use of Reason in the production of History, Knowledge, Science and Progress”.

Feminist theorists additionally highlight the distinction between real and non-real spaces. The distinction is also constructed through the terms of sexual difference:

The real is simultaneously concrete and dynamic, yet both these qualities signify the masculine; the non-real is simultaneously fluid and imprisoning, but always engendered as feminine. Material real space could thus be re-described as the effect of masculinist power, its very materiality also its particular masculinity; but non-real space is also the effect of masculinist power, its lack of reality the sign of its feminization. The instabilities between and within these efforts to define real and non-real space are symptomatic of, indeed are constitutive of, a compulsive fixing of sexual difference [...] the distinction is a dualism which reiterates the

⁸⁴ Duncan (1996: 131) demonstrates how the private feminine space of the home is subject to patriarchal oppression: “Paradoxically the home which is usually thought to be gendered feminine has also traditionally been subject to the patriarchal authority of the husband and father. Personal freedoms of the male head of household often impinge on, or in extreme cases, negate the rights, autonomy and safety of women and children who also occupy these spaces [...] The private home has been historically seen as the place where men have assumed their right to sexual intercourse”.

constitutive relation between the masculine same and the feminine other. (Rose, 1996: 59)

This hierarchal engendering of spaces naturalizes certain masculinist perspectives of “real space and real geography”. It maintains certain modes of critique and act to exclude (Rose, 1996: 60).

Postcolonial theorists also explore the gendered spatial binary between the ‘known’ worlds of the surface and the ‘unknown’ interiors.⁸⁵ McClintock (1995: 23) indicates how Enlightenment metaphysics “presented knowledge as a relation of power between two gendered spaces, articulated by a journey and a technology of conversion: the male penetration and exposure of a veiled, female interior; and the aggressive conversion of its ‘secrets’ into a visible, male science of the surface”. She refers to the persistent gendering of the imperial unknown, the feminizing of the virgin land and the eroticizing of unknown continents (McClintock, 1995: 14, 22-24). She states: “Knowledge of the unknown world was mapped as a metaphysics of gender violence [...] and was validated by the new Enlightenment logic of private property and possessive individualism. In these fantasies, the world is feminized and spatially spread for male exploration, then reassembled and deployed in the interest of massive imperial power” (McClintock, 1995: 23). In these male explorations, men acted as agents of power and knowledge while women represented threshold figures through which men could orient themselves in space (McClintock, 1995: 24). Women are seen as being symbolically linked to the land, they are “the earth that is to be discovered, entered, named, inseminated and, above all, owned” (McClintock, 1995: 31). Kossew (1996a: 5) indicates how journeys into unknown interiors and encounters between “dominating colonial men and powerless colonized women” often resulted in literal and metaphorical rape.

The feminizing of the land also has a nationalistic value: Women’s bodies and the symbolic body of the nation are entangled in hegemonic nationalist discourse.⁸⁶ Women’s bodies are seen as the symbols of

⁸⁵ Cosgrove (2008: 26) observes: “Gendering the object of study is a recurrent feature of landscape representation and, it has been claimed, of attitudes toward nature and environment more generally in modernity [...] While I would resist the claim made in some feminist studies that the landscape idea inevitably constructs gendered landscapes as the passive, feminized objects of a rapacious and voyeuristic male gaze[...] the absence of any recognition in my discussion [...] of the sexual desires and power relations involved in the associated landscape representations, significantly narrows the interpretation”.

⁸⁶ Cosgrove (2008: 26) argues that the association of body and landscape has not only enriched the history of landscape representation, but it also addresses critical questions about the relation between landscape, environmental exploitation and modernity.

the motherland. It is of utmost importance for national state-security to prevent foreign penetration or 'metaphorical rape' of the motherland. The female, "a prominent symbol of nationalism and honour," is to be protected by masculine agency (Sharp, 1996: 100).

The myth of the feminized virgin land is also associated with the myth of the empty land. Both involve racial and gender dispossession: "Within patriarchal narratives, to be virgin is to be empty of desire and void of sexual agency, passively awaiting the thrusting, male insemination of history, language and reason. Within colonial narratives, the eroticizing of 'virgin' space also effects a territorial appropriation, for if the land is virgin, colonized peoples cannot claim aboriginal territorial rights, and white male patrimony is violently assured as the sexual and military insemination of an interior void" (McClintock, 1995: 30). It is in this context of dispossession within the so-called virgin and empty lands that McClintock develops the term 'anachronistic space':

The colonial journey into the virgin interior reveals a contradiction, for the journey is figured as proceeding forward in geographical space but backward in historical time, to what is figured as a prehistoric zone of racial and gender difference. One witnesses here a recurrent feature of colonial discourse. Since indigenous peoples are not supposed to be spatially there—for the lands are 'empty'—they are symbolically displaced onto what I call anachronistic space, a trope that gathered [...] full administrative authority as a technology of surveillance in the late Victorian era. According to this trope, colonized people—like women and the working class in the metropolis—do not inhabit history proper but exist in a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency—the living embodiment of the archaic 'primitive'. (McClintock, 1995: 30)

McClintock (1995: 41) describes Africa as the colonial paradigm of anachronistic space. It is a continent "perpetually out of time in modernity, marooned and historically abandoned".

Postcolonial feminist theorists insist on the need to deconstruct these examples of colonial spatial binaries. As Spain (1992: 239-243) observes, "'degendering' spaces requires work: first, to make gendered spaces and their links with knowledge visible and second, to oppose their persistence [...] when the importance of spatial institutions is recognized and the barriers to knowledge reduced, one of the supporters of the gender stratification is removed". Duncan (1996: 135) demonstrates how a Foucauldian conception of (albeit highly uneven) relations of power as suffused throughout society and across space can aid in undermining the public/private dichotomy:

'The personal is the political' is a proclamation commonly heard amongst feminists, gays and lesbians that challenges the public/private dichotomy as it has traditionally been formulated [...] It is a statement that personal relationships are also power relationships and that everyone is implicated in the production and reproduction of power relations.

Duncan (1996: 142-143) calls for the creation of progressive geographies that would require deterritorialization: "the creation of open-ended, proliferating and inclusive sites of empowerment and resistance against exclusionary, reterritorializing processes: place essentialism and homogenizing identity politics or coerced assimilation [...] Fluid geographies would construct and in turn be constructed by fluid identities". She suggests that the creation of such fluid geographies and identities requires a form of resistance. The important need for resistance to imaginatively de- and reconstruct 'clear' binaries is raised by various postcolonial theorists.

Postcolonial criticism often leans towards processes that can be categorized as 'poststructuralist' to reconfigure binaries such as the global south and north, east and west (or 'the West' and 'the rest') the periphery and center, etc. (Gregory, 1994: 74; McDowell, 1996: 38, Wilson & Tunca, 2015: 1). To counter and challenge these binary oppositions, postcolonial critics often make use of 'threshold concepts'. Wilson and Tunca (2015: 1) describe the notion of the 'threshold' as a "ubiquitous term in postcolonial criticism, which along with cognate labels like the liminal, the interstitial and the in-between contributes to the redefining of perceptions of space and place that is happening under globalization". They define the concept of threshold or the liminal as a "passageway across a boundary, an opening which permits movement from one space to another; in being associated with borders and gateways it comprises [...] zones of exchange and transit which signify entry into and exit from existing structures" (Wilson & Tunca, 2015: 1). Examples of such threshold concepts in current postcolonial thinking include the notion of 'between-ness', an idea developed by postcolonial theorists and feminists of color; and more specifically Bhabha's notions of the "middle passage" or the "middle ground" where "identities can metamorphose or be transformed and power relations negotiated [...] the place where translation, migrancy, ambivalence and the transnational are reconfigured (Wilson & Tunca, 2015: 1; McDowell 1996: 38). In an attempt to deconstruct binaries, postcolonial critics make use of interrelated notions of the 'middle ground' to analyze concepts associated with the liminal (gateways, doors, borders, etc.) in order to determine their performative and metaphorical functions. By accentuating threshold concepts, Wilson and Tunca (2015: 3) insist that they foreground the

“current trend in postcolonial writing and criticism to move away from the resisting strategies and counter-discourses associated with the earlier paradigm of ‘writing back to the empire’. They identify instead a more hybridized art, one that exhibits the porous thresholds of intercultural contact and transnational travel,⁸⁷ and that appropriates multiple cultural heritages through cross-cultural rewritings, generic crossovers, spatiotemporal expansions of cultural boundaries, and renegotiations of self/other”.

Homi Bhabha develops the concept of ‘between-ness’, or what he calls ‘in-between space’ or the ‘Third space’. He explains that the Third space “though unrepresentable in itself [...] constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity [...] the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew” (Bhabha, 2004: 55). We can deduce that Bhabha’s Third space represents a hybrid, flexible and innovative ‘border dimension’ which refuses any final and fixed meaning. Wilson and Tunca (2015: 2-3) refer to how the “the fluid and unfixable conditions of the threshold, when positioned between other forms, means it is susceptible to the play of multiple, often contradictory ideologies, discourses and political agendas; it may perpetuate and produce states of partial disablement and empowerment”. Through the notion of the Third Space, a threshold concept promoting the multiple, Bhabha insists that international culture should not be based on cultural divisions, but that it should rather focus on cultural hybridity. Bhabha (2004: 57) argues that the Third Space “makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the ‘people’”. By exploring the *inbetween*, he insists that “we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves”.

Bhabha’s threshold concepts additionally involve the idea of the ‘beyond’, a notion he associates with the term of postcoloniality in that it embodies “restless and revisionary energy” (Bhabha, 2004: 6).⁸⁸

⁸⁷ McDowell (1996: 38) refers to the ways in which migration and movement have “forced us to rethink ideas about identity, subjectivity and selfhood” by disrupting binaries. She argues that women are especially influenced by displacement and migration: “I wonder though whether the anxiety apparently caused by displacement and space-time compression is not gender-specific. For many women, the decentring of the local, the widening of spatial horizons may have liberating effects as well as raising new anxieties [...] as feminist geographers have documented in numerous case studies in the last two decades, it is often women who have the most spatially restricted lives [...] trapped in the net rather than free in (cyber)space”. She claims that the “disruption of space through migration [...] has parallels with women’s position in the West, perhaps making more visible arguments from within feminism about women’s awkward ‘place’ in the West. For women, too, were/are excluded by Western philosophical ideals, equally ‘out of place’ in that discursive space called the West” (McDowell, 1996: 31; 39).

⁸⁸ He states: “If the jargon of our times—postmodernity, postcoloniality, postfeminism—has any meaning at all, it does not lie in the popular use of the ‘post’ to indicate sequentiality—after-feminism; or polarity—anti-modernism. These terms that

He reasons that to be in the ‘beyond’ is more than merely inhabiting an intervening space. “(T)o dwell ‘in the beyond’”, Bhabha (2004: 10) insists, “is also [...] to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense, then, the intervening space ‘beyond’, becomes a space of intervention in the here and now” (Bhabha, 2004: 10). He calls for the ‘beyond’, or such a space of intervention in the world of art which will allow us to encounter with a ‘newness’ that which is not part of the past/present binary. He states: “The borderline work of culture [...] creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The ‘past – present’ becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living” (Bhabha, 2004: 10). The space of intervention introduces “creative invention” where there is a “return to the performance of identity as iteration, the re-creation of the self in the world of travel, the resettlement of the borderline community of migration” (Bhabha, 2004: 12).

Bhabha’s “space of intervention” shares some commonalities with Glissant’s concept of *Relation*, a notion that encompasses all the characteristics of his ‘ideal’ world view or *Tout-monde*.⁸⁹ He describes *Relation* as “totalité en mouvement” or “totalité ouverte” (Glissant, 1990: 147, 206) and accentuates its connection with the concept of *rhizome* due to its relational character. “Within the rhizome of the *totalité-monde*”, to quote Glissant (1996: 137, my translation), “the notions of the centre and the periphery are obsolete”. These notions should to his mind rather be considered as multiple participating elements (Glissant, 1996: 138-139). Glissant (1990: 147, 151, 206) insists that within *Relation*, there is constant action or movement. He describes the action as a double movement resulting from opposing forces working constantly on each other.⁹⁰ He maintains that the result is not

insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment” (Bhabha, 2004: 6).

⁸⁹ Glissant (1996: 130) defines ‘Tout-Monde’ as “la totalité du monde telle qu’elle existe dans son réel et telle qu’elle existe dans notre désir”.

⁹⁰ Glissant (1990: 153) describes the movement as follows: “Plus il concourt à un ordre oppresseur, plus il suscite aussi de désordre. Plus il produit de l’exclusion et plus il génère de l’attraction. Il standardise—mais à chacun des nœuds de la Relation nous trouverons des cals de résistance [...] Sa beauté naît du stable et de l’instable, de la déviance des poétiques particulières et de la voyance d’une poétique relationnelle. Davantage elle uniformise en léthargie, davantage elle suscite de conscience rebelle”. He additionally depicts *Relation*’s operation as circular: “Le cercle s’ouvre à nouveau, en même temps qu’il se forme en volume. Ainsi la Relation est-elle à chaque moment complétée, mais aussi détruite dans sa généralité, par cela même que nous mettons en acte dans un lieu et dans un temps particuliers. La Relation détruite, à chaque instant et dans chaque circonstance, par cette particularité qui signifie nos opacités, par cette singularité, redevient relation vécue. Sa mort en général est ce qui fait sa vie en partage” (Glissant, 1990: 219).

destruction, but rather openness and creation that springs forth from the margins (Glissant, 1990: 170).⁹¹

In accordance with Bhaba's Third Space, Glissant's *Relation* does not involve a smooth movement,⁹² as he contends that *Relation* is expressed in and through opacity and opposes it to the notion of transparency (Glissant, 1990: 200). He frequently refers to the opacity/transparency dichotomy in his discussion of 'difference'. The theory of difference according to Glissant (1990: 203) is precious, for it resists hierarchisations and what he calls "réductions provoquées".⁹³ He warns that the notion of difference can nevertheless lead to a form of reduction in the need for 'transparency'. Within the process of understanding in Western thought, the other's difference is often reduced to an ideal scale or "barème idéal" in order to be accepted.⁹⁴ In accepting differences, the hierarchy of the scale is disrupted: In 'understanding' the other's difference, I associate the difference, without classifying it, with my norms: "Je t'admets à existence, dans mon système. Je te crée une nouvelle fois. —Mais peut-être," Glissant (1990: 204) suggests, "nous faut-il en finir avec l'idée même du barème. Commuer toute réduction" (Glissant, 1990: 204). In the quest for transparency, the totality of the other's difference is often reduced to correlate with one's own norms. This allows for a 'clear' difference which is 'easier' to understand and accept. Glissant (1990: 203, 204, 208; 1996: 71) however, and frequently so, insists

⁹¹ He states: "Cette violence anti-violence n'est pas néant, mais ouverture et création. Elle ajoute un plein-sens à la violence opératoire des marginaux, des rebelles, des déviants, tous spécialistes de l'écart" (Glissant, 1990: 170).

⁹² Bhabha (2004: 8) maintains that the "middle passage" does not involve a smooth passage: "What is striking about the 'new' internationalism is that the move from the specific to the general, from the material to the metaphoric, is not a smooth passage of transition and transcendence. The 'middle passage' of contemporary culture, as with slavery itself, is a process of displacement and disjunction that does not totalize experience".

⁹³ Glissant (1990: 203) takes the field of genetics as an example and refers to the presumption of excellence or the superiority of race.

⁹⁴ Glissant (1990: 204) observes: "Si nous examinons le processus de la 'compréhension' des êtres et des idées dans la perspective de la pensée occidentale, nous retrouvons à son principe l'exigence de cette transparence. Pour pouvoir te 'comprendre' et donc t'accepter, il me faut ramener ton épaisseur à ce barème idéal qui me fournit motif à comparaisons et peut-être à jugements. Il me faut réduire".

on the right not only for ‘total’ difference, but also for opacity:⁹⁵ the right for singularities, shadowy margins and incomprehensible differences that can coexist.⁹⁶ He declares:

Non pas seulement consentir au droit à la différence mais, plus avant, au droit à l’opacité, qui n’est pas l’enferment dans une autarcie impénétrable, mais la subsistance dans une singularité non réductible. Des opacités peuvent coexister, confluer, tramant des tissus dont la véritable compréhension porterait sur la texture de cette trame et non pas sur la nature des composantes [...] Le droit à l’opacité n’établirait pas l’autisme, il fonderait réellement la Relation, en libertés. (Glissant, 1990: 204)

How is such an opacity ‘reached’? Firstly, as Glissant (1990: 216) maintains, through the imaginary. He explains how the imaginary does not hold on to binaries⁹⁷ and suggests that it has “une approche du chaos-monde” (Glissant, 1990: 216).⁹⁸ He describes how we live in a seemingly ‘chaotic world’ without landmarks. Chaos should however not be seen as something negative. We have lost faith in chaos for, in accordance with the notion of opacity, we try to create ‘clear’ or ‘transparent’ order. This again leads to a form of reduction. Glissant (1996: 71) pleads for an imaginary or utopic strength that will allow us not to conceive chaos as an apocalyptic chaos or the end of the world, but rather as something beautiful: a chaos in which all elements are equally necessary. He calls the chaotic world, or *chaos-monde* “le choc, l’intrication, les répulsions, les attirances, les connivences, les oppositions, les conflits entre les cultures des peuples dans la totalité-monde contemporaine [...] il s’agit du mélange culturel,

⁹⁵ Glissant (1990: 203) recalls: “Quand j’avais la proposition: ‘nous réclamons le droit à l’opacité’, ou que j’argumentais en sa faveur, il y a quelques années encore, mes interlocuteurs se récriaient: ‘Quel retour de barbarie! Comment communiquer avec ce qu’on ne comprendrait pas?’. He later insists that the notion of opacity is the most simple equivalent of *non-barbarie*: “C’est aussi que cette même opacité anime toute communauté: ce qui nous assemblerait à jamais, nous singularisant pour toujours. Le consentement général aux opacités particulières est le plus simple équivalent de la non-barbarie. Nous réclamons pour tous le droit à l’opacité” (Glissant, 1990: 208-209). He stresses the notion’s prophetic nature: “S’agit-il d’un retour de barbarie, ou d’une précaution prophétique contre la barbarie de la réduction et de l’uniforme?” (Glissant, 1990: 213).

⁹⁶ Glissant (1996: 71-71) contends that it is not always necessary to understand the other: “Il ne m’est plus nécessaire de ‘comprendre’ l’autre, c’est-à-dire de le réduire au modèle de ma propre transparence, pour vivre avec cet autre ou construire avec lui. Le droit à l’opacité serait aujourd’hui le signe le plus évident de la non-barbarie” (Glissant, 1996: 71-72). He stresses that differences, or opacities, can coexist without reducing the parties involved: “Je puis donc concevoir l’opacité de l’autre pour moi, sans que je lui reproche mon opacité pour lui. Il ne m’est pas nécessaire que je le ‘comprenne’ pour me sentir solidaire de lui pour bâtir avec lui, pour aimer ce qu’il fait. Il ne m’est pas nécessaire de tenter de devenir l’autre (de devenir autre) ni de le ‘faire’ à mon image. Ces projets de transmutations [...] sont résultés des pires prétentions et des plus hautes générosités de l’Occident” (Glissant, 1990: 207).

⁹⁷ The imaginary, according to Glissant (1990: 216) “travaille en spirale: d’une circularité à l’autre il rencontre de nouveaux espaces, qu’il ne transforme pas en profondeurs ni en conquêtes. Aussi bien ne s’en tient-il pas à ces binarités qui ont semblé tellement m’occuper, au long de cet ouvrage: l’étendue-la filiation, la transparence-l’opacité... L’imaginaire se complète en marge de toute nouvelle projection linéaire. Il fait réseau et constitue volume. Les binarités ne sont jamais que des commodités pour en aborder la trame”.

⁹⁸ Glissant (1996: 81) uses as form of departure for what he calls “la poétique du chaos”, the book *Des rythmes au chaos* (1994) by Pierre Bergé, Yves Pomeau and Monique Dubois-Gance.

qui n'est pas un simple melting-pot, par lequel la totalité-monde se trouve aujourd'hui réalisée" (Glissant, 1996: 82). Glissant (1996: 85) insists that what interests him is especially what emerges from this chaos: unpredictability. The idea of unpredictability has always scared Western cultures who tend to lean towards predictability: "changer le monde c'est ça, c'est donner au monde un avenir, c'est-à-dire prédire" (Glissant, 1996: 101). Accepting unpredictability involves stepping away from empirical and systematical ways of thought and encourages the poetical.⁹⁹ The poetical, or the exercise of the imaginary, is the only way we can inscribe ourselves into the unpredictability of the "relation mondiale" (Glissant, 1996: 90, 102).¹⁰⁰ The poetical allows for a conception of unpredictability not as negative, but positive (Glissant, 1996: 102). Glissant (1996: 95) suggests that the poetical intention also involves a form of resistance: "Remettre les principes en question, c'est peut-être lutter et rêver. Je ne crois pas que la lutte et le rêve soient contradictoires". The poetical is required for inventing new ways of resisting as Glissant (1996: 107) warns against falling into "le même trouble et le même acharnement et le même enfermement que le colonisateur proposait. Il faudra trouver d'autres manières de résister, sans faire de l'idéalisme". Resistance, as suggested by Glissant (1996: 107), is dependent on the space where you find yourself. He insists:

On ne vit pas dans l'air, on ne vit pas autour de la terre dans les nuages, on vit dans des lieux. Il faut partir d'un lieu et imaginer la totalité-monde. Ce lieu, qui est incontournable, ne doit pas être un territoire à partir duquel on regarde le voisin par-dessus une frontière absolument fermée et avec le sourd désir d'aller chez l'autre pour l'amener à ses propres idées ou à ses propres pulsions. Je crois que c'est un changement dans l'imaginaire des humanités que nous devons tous accomplir. (Glissant, 1996: 133)

To express the need for a resisting imaginary, our environment cannot be ignored. Glissant (1996: 140-141) signals that the spirit of a place, "le souffle du lieu", demonstrates the transformative qualities needed for resistance.¹⁰¹ It is this spirit of a place that I wish to examine within the works of Djébar and Brink.

⁹⁹ Glissant (1996: 89-90) notes: "connaître l'imprédictible c'est s'accorder à son présent, au présent que l'on vit, d'une autre manière, non plus, non pas empirique ni systématique, mais poétique".

¹⁰⁰ Glissant (1996: 90) declares: "Je crois que la poésie, et en tout cas l'exercice de l'imaginaire, la vision prophétique à la fois du passé et des espaces lointains, est de partout la seule manière que nous ayons de nous inscrire dans l'imprédictibilité de la relation mondiale" (Glissant, 1996: 90).

¹⁰¹ Glissant (1996: 141) observes: "Il arrive un moment où le souffle du lieu [...] le souffle du lieu rencontre d'autres souffles et se transforme en cette rencontre [...] A un moment ou à un autre, le souffle que vous respirez, qui sert à vous exprimer, se transforme lui-même. S'il ne se transforme pas ce n'est pas un souffle, c'est un relent stagnant et les relents stagnants ne provoquent pas de poésie ni de littérature".

Before setting out to explore this idea of a ‘spirit of a place’ or space from a postcolonial perspective in Chapter five, I believe that it is essential to firstly consider the field of postcolonialism from a critical perspective.

4.4 Questioning the postcolonial

Although the aforementioned postcolonial theories introduce valuable questions on space, it is necessary to consider some critique on postcolonialism as well. Varadharajan (1995: xi) argues that the problem in representing empirical and historical others remains unresolved in many postcolonial writings.¹⁰² Shohat (1992: 99) raises postcolonialism’s “ahistorical and universalizing deployments, and its potentially depoliticizing implications”. McClintock (1995: 10) also questions the ahistorical and linear use of the term ‘postcolonial’:

A good deal of postcolonial studies has set itself against the imperial idea of linear time. Yet the term [...] is haunted by the very figure of linear development that it sets out to dismantle. Metaphorically, the term postcolonialism marks history as a series of stages along an epochal road from ‘the precolonial,’ to ‘the colonial,’ to ‘the postcolonial’—an unbidden, if disavowed, commitment to linear time and the idea of development. If a theoretical tendency to envisage ‘Third World’ literature as progressing from ‘protest literature’ to ‘resistance literature’ to ‘national literature’ has been criticised for rehearsing the Enlightenment trope of sequential, linear progress, the term postcolonialism is questionable for the same reason. Metaphorically poised on the border between old and new, end and beginning, the term heralds the end of a world era but by invoking the very same trope of linear progress which animated that era. If postcolonial *theory* has sought to challenge the grand march of Western historicism and its entourage of binaries (self-other, metropolis-colony, center-periphery, etc.), the *term* postcolonialism nonetheless reorients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition: colonial-postcolonial.

In recentering and in a sense subordinating global history around the single and linear frame of European time, postcolonialism fails in its promise to decenter the history of hybridity. Echoing the sentiment of Williams and Chrisman (1994: 3), McClintock (1995: 11) claims that “colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance”. In this process cultures are not marked by what distinguishes them but by a singular, monolithic, and ahistorical abstraction. The term ‘postcolonial’ is seldom used

¹⁰² Varadharajan (1995: xi, 137) specifically refers to the work of Spivak and Said and suggests that their signature pieces, Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern speak?” and Said’s *Orientalism*, to his mind “fail”.

to express multiplicity. McClintock (1995: 12) doubts whether the world's countries could "in any meaningful or theoretically rigorous sense [...] share a single common past, or a single common condition, called the postcolonial condition, or postcoloniality". Shohat (1992: 109) also asks "whether it is possible to forge a collective resistance without inscribing a communal past". McClintock (1995: 13-15) additionally questions whether colonial-postcolonial binaries are adequate for analyzing the influence of imperial power:

[O]rienting theory around the temporal axis colonial-postcolonial makes it easier not to see and therefore harder to theorize, the continuities in international imbalances in imperial power [...] I remain unconvinced that the sanctioned binaries—colonizer-colonized, self-other, dominance-resistance, metropolis-colony, colonial-postcolonial—are adequate to the task of accounting for, let alone strategically opposing, the tenacious legacies of imperialism. Drawn historically from the metaphysical Manicheanism of the imperial enlightenment itself, such binaries run the risk of simply inverting, rather than overturning, dominant notions of power.

Mishra and Hodge (1994: 276, 278) focus on the danger that imperial power is reduced to mere discourse in postcolonial studies. They specifically refer to Ashcroft *et al's* *The Empire Writes Back*, a book that they describe as "a lucid, judicious and representative text" which plays a decisive role in the field of postcolonialism:

The danger here is that the post-colonial is reduced to a purely textual phenomenon, as if power is simply a matter of discourse and it is only through discourse that counter-claims might be made [...] the dominant tone in the book is the tolerant pluralism of liberal humanism. Difference is recognized but contained within a single pattern, the coexistence of two kinds of relationship to the language and culture of the centre: 'abrogation' or refusal, and 'appropriation'. The latter gathers under a single term a large and diverse set of strategies involving both accommodation and compromise, whose political meaning is highly dependent on specific historical circumstances. (Mishra & Hodge, 1994: 278)

Postcolonialism's tendency to reduce the post-colonial is suggested by Sajed (2012: 163) as well. She refers to how postcolonialism is critiqued for "reducing Third World peoples to mere resistant images to Western hegemonic practices". She also raises a concern on postcolonial intellectuals who "have been perceived as nothing more than Western-educated, Western-minded scholars who are engaged in reinscribing the imaginative geography of the West" (Sajed, 2012: 163). Dirlik (1994: 355-356) emphasizes postcolonial critics' lack of ongoing criticism on their own ideology and the need for a resistance against the system of which their theories are a product.

The aforementioned critique shares a common belief that a postcolonial framework might be a limiting tool in our interpretation of imperialism, colonialism and power. In Chapter six, I will additionally explore the concerns of practicing postcolonial critique, and literary critique (or the hermeneutics of suspicion) in general. I will introduce ‘post-critical’ theories that aim to ‘redescribe’ critique and to rethink the way that I interpret and analyze Brink and Djébar’s chosen novels.

The following chapter will however make use of the postcolonial frame provided in this chapter to offer a ‘critical’ postcolonial reading of space in the works of Djébar and Brink.

Chapter five: A postcolonial reading of space in the works of Brink and Djébar

5.1 Encounters with space

As the previous chapters demonstrated, space, place, and landscape are central notions in both Brink and Djébar's work. Their texts offer numerous examples of rich static and dynamic descriptions of spaces. *L'Amour, la fantasia* for instance offers a detailed depiction of the invasion of Algiers on the morning of 13 June 1830:

Devant l'imposant flotte qui déchire l'horizon, la Ville Imprenable se dévoile, blancheur fantomatique, à travers un poudrolement de bleus et de gris mêlés. Triangle incliné dans le lointain et qui, après le scintillement de la dernière brume nocturne, se fixe adouci, tel un corps à l'abandon, sur un tapis de verdure assombrie. La montagne paraît barrière esquissée dans un azur d'aquarelle [...] La ville, paysage tout en dentelures et en couleurs délicates, surgit dans un rôle d'Orientale immobilisé en son mystère. (AF, 14)

One of the generous delineations of landscapes from Brink's *'n Oomblik in die Wind* reads:

Tot hulle op 'n dag werklik by die laaste draai kom, nog effens hoër as die vloer van die vlakte, die nuwe wêreld voor hulle. In stilte kyk hulle daarvoor uit, verken dit met hul gretige oë: dor en waterloos, met dwarrelwinde wat wit stof en bros stingeltjies in die bleek lug laat opdans, mal oor die vlakte weg; lappies olyfbruin bossies lag en verskrompel teen die grond; bruin klipklossies soos groot versteende akkedisse; riffies, kaal panne, 'n dynserige verte wat omtrekloos wegraak. Hulle kyk nie na mekaar nie. Hulle sê niks. Hulle staar net, hul oë oop. (OW, 144)

The rich descriptions of spaces within the authors' œuvres are undeniable. This thesis, and particularly this chapter, is however not solely concerned with the mere portrayal of spaces but rather aims, as Ryan (2012: 10) insists, to acknowledge how a character experiences a certain space and how he/she embodies the lived experience of spaces. I intend to explore these experiences of spaces by examining not only the role of spaces in characters' identities, but also by investigating the different representations of spaces and the effects thereof on both Brink and Djébar's characters. The analysis will be divided in similar categories for the examination of both authors' work: After examining the association between space and characters' identities, a study of spatial boundaries, the possession of space as well as the notion of isolation within space follows. By investigating these categories, I aim to

establish how space works and what it does within characters' experiences. Due to the critical nature adopted by this chapter, the examination will make use of a critical, and mostly postcolonial frame in its analysis. Various 'critical' concepts and postcolonial theories will contribute in constructing my reading practice. After the critical reading of space in Brink's work, an analysis on Djébar's work, with special emphasis on its comparability to Brink's oeuvre, follows.¹⁰³ I will conclude the chapter by reflecting on the outcomes of my critical postcolonial reading and by highlighting the need for a postcritical comparative reading of the authors' work.

5.2 Space in the works of André Brink

5.2.1 Space and identity

Postcolonial critics often highlight the symbiotic relationship that exists between space and identity (Schama, 1995; Duncan, 1996; Viljoen *et al*, 2004). To determine this connection and the influence of the environment on Brink's characters' identities, I will firstly analyze the role of space on characters' knowledge of themselves as well as others. After examining the notion of the 'homeland' throughout the novels, I will also investigate characters' 'sense of place' and displacement by especially focussing on their conceptions of 'home'.

a. Space and knowledge of the self

Bachelard (2014: 221-223) argues that our understanding of ourselves is directly influenced by our understanding of the space which surrounds us. This statement seems to hold true for Brink's characters, for often the process of questioning their identities involves a questioning of the space around them.

The stage for *Kennis van die Aand*'s Josef plays a determining role in who he is and how he sees himself. Derek reminds him that as a passionate actor, the stage constitutes his world: "jy weet mos: vir my en vir jou is dit nie 'n kwessie van 'all the world's a stage' nie, maar van 'the stage is our world'" (Kennis, 347). Kossew (1996a: 80) insists that the extensive use of the theatrical metaphor in the text allows Brink to explore the notion of 'place'. She refers to how Shakespearean parallels are employed to

¹⁰³ Due to the general longer length of Brink's novels, I have decided to start the analysis by firstly examining his texts.

highlight the tragic relationship between Josef and Jessica and how the central role played by Jessica's balcony for example alludes to Romeo and Juliet (Kosew, 1996a: 80). Where the stage allows Josef to constitute his personal identity, Jessica's balcony serves as a place of reference ("oriënteerpunt") from where their collective identity, "us", is born. The balcony thus plays an important role for it is there where they first return to after they visit 'their' Bainskloof. Bainskloof becomes more than merely 'their place' as Josef describes it as a "state of mind" or "dimension" (Kennis, 21).¹⁰⁴ Other spaces' importance within the novel is accentuated as well. Some places are for example personified in order to highlight their influential power on his life:¹⁰⁵ Cape Town is portrayed as an old lover (Kennis, 197),¹⁰⁶ whereas Johannesburg represents the anatomy that is the South African 'body' (Kennis, 234).¹⁰⁷ Both cities have a determining role in how Josef shapes his life.

Characters also frame their identity on their environment in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*. Adam himself also alludes to the dependency between identity and space when he reflects on his real name, Aob, given

¹⁰⁴ Josef describes the role of Jessica's balcony as follows: "Die balkonnetjie het altyd 'n sentrale plek in ons jaar van saamwees ingeneem. Dit was 'n beginpunt van ekskursies, en 'n terugkeerpunt, 'n oriënteerpunt. Miskien was dit omdat ons juis soontoe teruggekeer het daardie nag nadat ons vir die eerste keer saam in Bainskloof was. Ek sê 'eerste keer', maar daar was nooit 'n volgende nie. En tog is dit 'n juister term as 'enigste keer', want hoeveel keer daarna is ons nie in die verbeelding daarheen terug nie? Daar is in elke verhouding sulke plekke, nes musiek, nes boeke, nes kleure, wat die betrokke paar altyd oombliklik eien as 'ons s'n'. Maar vir ons was Bainskloof meer as net 'ons' plek. In die loop van een jaar het dit selfs meer geword as 'n plek: dit was die naam van 'n geestestoestand, 'n dimensie. Uit my kinderjare, toe die Bybel nog saak gemaak het, onthou ek die indruk van één episode op my gemoed: daardie keer toe Jesus sy dissipels alleen oor die meer weggestuur het terwyl Hy self die berg in is om te gaan bid. Daardie soort afsondering van die hele wêreld, dus daardie soort heiligheid, had Bainskloof vir my en Jessica. Miskien omdat dit 'n vorm van geboorte was, die ontstaan van 'n 'ons'" (Kennis, 21).

¹⁰⁵ Within the chosen Brink corpus, personification of places is especially common in *Duiwelskloof*. Flip's personification of his surroundings is often revealing of his own character. When for example depicting the earth as a person who just woke up, Flip's representation takes a vulgar turn: "Die soort landskap wat 'n man soos 'n bledie mier laat voel. Asof die aarde self hier in 'n voordagslaap gewoel het voor die kom regop sit het, met vaak nog in die oë. En heel onder, daardie vrugbare diep skeur half weggesteek agter donker ruigtes. Die soort view wat 'n vuil uil aanspreek" (Duiwelskloof, 15). As he describes his way down the valley, he additionally personifies the mountains: "Soos ons ondertoe vorder, raak die kloof al ruier. En al droër. Wat van bo af nog vrugbaar gelyk het, is eintlik in sy moer in verdor. Selfs struie en bosse wat nog groenerig lyk, verkrummel in jou hande as jy 'n takkie probeer pluk. Die skeur raak ook smaller. Boontoe is dit asof die berg oor ons toemaak. Die ooblywende nerfie lug lê naderhand so potblou soos 'n fokken kneusplek tussen die kranse" (Duiwelskloof, 30). Other examples of personification include the description of the church, a central building within the middle of the Duiwelskloof: "Swaar en solied het die kerk daar gestaan, soos 'n fokken ding wat hurk, met die stomp toring soos 'n boggel tussen die skouers" (Duiwelskloof, 126).

¹⁰⁶ Josef states: "Daar was vir my iets privaats omtrent my terugkeer, iets wat net tussen my en die Kaap voltrek moes word; soos wanneer mens ná jare 'n gewese geliefde weer opsoek en nie weet of julle enigiets van die ou nabyheid gaan terugvind nie, nie eens weet of sy intussen getroud is nie. Daarom het ek aan niemand iets oor my terugkoms geskryf nie" (Kennis, 197).

¹⁰⁷ When visiting Johannesburg, Josef's friend Harry encourages him to spend a lot of time in court "omdat die hof volgens hom 'n operasiesaal was waar ek met die anatomie van die stad kon kennis maak [...] In vyf, ses dae se hofsittings het ek kennis gemaak met die lewer en longe en derms, die aarvertakkinge en geslag van die stad, van my land. Ek het siek daar uitgekom, en naderhand geweier om weer saam te gaan. En tog glo ek nie Harry en Jerry wou my skok nie: hulle wou my maar net 'hulle stad' wys" (Kennis, 234).

to him by his mother; a name that he associates with her homeland (OW, 22).¹⁰⁸ On their journey, Adam and Elisabeth's sense of self is determined by, but also reduced to, the never-ending wilderness which surrounds them: "Rondom hulle buig die sirkeltjie van die takkraal; die wildevyebome. Omring deur die oneindige, bepaal daardeur; gereduseer daartoe" (OW, 16). Adam also recalls the surrounding landscape when he escapes Robben Island and intends starting a new life in the interior parts of the country. The act of starting afresh and leaving his past behind leads to a deep contemplation of the world around him (OW, 27). Adam's past is rooted in his environment. He realizes, in a Bachelardian sense, that "to change space is to change being" (Bachelard, 2014: 221) as he notes: "Om anderkant hierdie berg van voor af te begin leer: dit is klip, dit is 'n boom, dit is 'n bok, dit is 'n giftige adder. My land, my wildernis: nou is dit ek en jy" (OW, 27). Adam suggests that in order to start over, he will have to renew his understanding of his new terrain as well. His surroundings will always have an effect on his selfhood. In a similar manner the slave Philida insists that her owner's farm, Zandvliet, shapes her being. She regards it as the beginning and the end of everything: "Dis op Zandvliet, sal ek kan sê, wat alles begin het. So ver as ek kan onthou, of amper, was die plaas nog altyd die begin en die end van alles [...] Die plaas en al sy mense, sy voormense en námense, sy mense van lankal af en tot ver vorentoe, heelpad" (Philida, 22). When contemplating her own identity, Philida poses questions that are spatially predicated: "Ouma Nella, waar is ek nie? [...] Sê my al die plekke. Ek moet weet. Dat ek my kan gaan soek" (Philida, 121). She recalls the questions at a later stage:

Ouma Nella, waar is ek nie?
Is ek hier of is ek nie hier nie?
Is ek slaaf of is ek nie?
Is ek Philida of is ek nie?
Is dié twee kinders hier of is hulle nie?
Is KleinFrans hier? (*Philida*, 306-307)

Determining where you are, or in Philida's case, 'where she is not', aids her in understanding who she is. It is not only a question of where you are, but also where you have been and where you come from—the places that form part of a character's life story. In many of Brink's novels an analogy is drawn between space and the stories used to form one's identity: Stories told and heard constitute the building blocks of a being. It is through stories that characters spatially orientate themselves. Stories

¹⁰⁸ He reflects: "Aob. Dit was ek. Dis my naam. Wat sy vir my gegee het en wat net sy ken; en ek. Adam vir die wêreld—Aob vir ons, as haar hande my pyn in die donkerte stil. Aob as sy vertel van haar mense anderkant die berge, haar vryloopmense wat agter hul bees en vetstertskaap aan trek soos die seisoene kom, van die groot Jagter Heitsi-Eibib se een klipgraf na die ander. En Aob nou, hier [...] 'n naam uit die vreemde land anderkant die berge" (OW, 22).

help shape their understanding of where they come from and who they are. As Adam in 'n *Oomblik van die Wind*, asks: "Seli, my ouma Seli: vertel my stories, dat ek kan weet waar ek vandaan kom" (OW, 39). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip evokes his difficult birth story his mother kept telling him: the doctor told her that she should not expect too much of him. Flip suggests that stories such as these predetermine one's life: "Op die duur leef mens jou maar in die stories in wat vir jou reggelê word, soos klere vir 'n nuwe dag" (Duiwelskloof, 251). He equates stories to the clay used to create the first human being (Duiwelskloof, 297).¹⁰⁹ He maintains that humans are just as much made from stories as they are made from 'clay'. We use stories to try to make sense of life. Stories are the cornerstones used to build one's identity. In comparing stories to clay, we can assume that since we rely on stories to understand ourselves, we can also look to our environment (the clay which surrounds us) for meaning. The idea is pursued throughout Brink's work: imprisoned, the character Estienne Barbier in *Inteendeel* is of opinion that his story remains the only thing he can be certain of: "In hierdie finale duisternis waar gesig verplaas is deur reuk [...] kan ek van my eie teenwoordigheid nie seker wees nie [...] Ek is afwesig van myself. Ek is self afwesigheid. Al wat ek het, is my storie. Wat in die vertel vermenigvuldig in ontelbare ander" (Inteendeel, 14). Ironically, his story, his 'only' certainty, is unstable for he does not stick to only one but imagines different versions and changes them as he goes along. He nevertheless maintains the importance of 'one's story' throughout the novel (Inteendeel, 104, 158).

Brink's characters do not only 'create themselves' through the stories they tell, but they also rely on stories for meaning. As analyzed by Herman (2009: ix), the act of narrating is one of the primary ways we make sense of our experiences, our perceptions, and our world. Philida notes how the long wait at the drostdy gives her too much time to think, but that it allows her to order her thoughts: "Dis 'n lang wag [...] jy kry eintlik oors te veel tyd vir dink en so, maar dit gee jou kans om alles mooi in jou kop *agtermekaar te sit* wat jy wil sê as jou kans die dag kom" (Philida, 20; my emphasis). Flip in *Duiwelskloof* points to the need for a type of order as well: "Miskien, as ek almal agtermekaar sit, sal ek eendag iets opgebou kry wat min of meer sin maak. Nou is ek klaar nie meer so seker nie. Nie net omdat daar soveel van die stories is wat ek nog nie gehoor het nie, maar omdat ek begin dink dat selfs as ek eendag

¹⁰⁹ Flip reflects: "En ek dink: met die leuens van stories—al die leuens, al die stories—maak ons onself soos wat die eerste mens uit die klei van die aarde gemaak is. Want dit is ons eerste en laaste klei. Wie weet, as ons verstaan het wat met ons gebeur, sou ons nie stories nodig gehad het nie. Ons maak vir ons gisters waarmee ons kan saamleef, wat die toekoms moontlik maak, alles bitterlik bedreigbaar en veranderlik, 'n hele fokken netwerk van flikkeringe, 'n soort van intieme weerlig om die binneste donkerte te verlig" (Duiwelskloof, 297).

álmal sou ken, daar nog steeds nie 'n *geheel* sal wees nie, net 'n eindelose verder glip van die een na die ander" (Duiwelskloof, 362; my emphasis). In ordering the different strands of stories that are told to him, Flip intends to find some meaning in them. As he demonstrates, the process of ordering these stories has a spatial element: he struggles to fathom a 'whole' picture of what happened in Duiwelskloof. Estienne also alludes to the spatial notion regarding stories when he refers to the different versions of his own: "Wat my nogal fassineer is dit: hoe elke storie ander *verplaas*, maar sonder om hulle ooit heeltemal te ontken of uit te wis" (Inteendeel, 114; my emphasis). The idea of displacing without erasing or denying the original's existence, reminds of Heidegger's notion of writing "sous rature" that is used extensively in Derrida's work. Reflecting on Heidegger's employment of the term 'vermeiden' and its different modes, Derrida (1987: 13) accentuates the significance of crossing out a word in a text whilst allowing it to remain in place: "dire sans dire, écrire sans écrire, à utiliser des mots sans les utiliser: entre guillemets, par exemple, sous une rature non négative en forme de croix". The writing device of placing in parenthesis or by crossing out the term, opens up a new possibility of the word: by leaving the crossed-out term where it is, one is saying without saying, writing without writing, for the word has been placed in a type of threshold position, "sur le pas de la porte ou retenu à la frontière, flanqué de signes discriminants". The word is still the same word, but it is also another: "elle appelle un autre mot, une autre appellation, à moins qu'elle n'altère le même mot, la même appellation, et ne rappelle à l'autre sous le même" (Derrida, 1987: 52). By crossing out, emphasis is placed on the fact that the word (signifier) does not suffice in representing the concept as it is (signified). By keeping the word crossed out, it is suggested that no other word (or signifier) has been found to be adequate (enough). The crossed-out signifier is the only thing we have at our disposal to conceive the signified ("on ne peut dériver ou penser le monde depuis autre chose que lui"): the erasure or *rature* signifies the inaccessibility of the *étant*. The act of crossing out is however not a sign of negation, nor is it a simple sign: it rather generates a type of "jeu du monde" within the space surrounding the 'crossing' of the cross ("rassemblé en son lieu (Ort), au croisement de la croix"). This place within the crossing out cannot, according to Heidegger, be regarded as a closing, for a closing supposes the pre-existence of an opening: it is not a matter of being closed off from the signified or *étant*, for the opening to the *étant* is deemed impossible as well. The place of the crossing out should rather be perceived as a place of gathering (Versammlung) for possibilities within the "jeu du monde" (Derrida, 1987: 82-85). Within Estienne's world, it is the gathering of different versions of his story.

These characters all emphasize the use of stories for meaning: to make sense of what happened to and around them, to order their thoughts and to orientate themselves with regards to the past. Their employment of stories highlights its spatial character as well: in a literal sense it is not only of value to know what happened, but also where it happened. The figurative spatial aspect of stories on the other hand is fundamental for meaning—creating a ‘whole’, ‘complete’ and ‘comprehensive’ understanding of a turn of events. As Mundell (2018: 1) suggests, “(p)laces and stories are innately entwined. The roots of this connection run deep: every story takes place somewhere—and every place is constituted, at least in part, by stories”. Herman (2009: 41) insists that people situate their stories or create *frames* to make sense of the world. Interpreting a story requires questioning how the story is grounded in (that is, shape and shaped by) a particular narrative occasion (Herman, 2009: 42).¹¹⁰ Places, to conclude, are part and parcel of the stories used by Brink’s characters to make sense of their existence.

Ruminating on the nature of their existence, many of Brink’s characters look to their environs: When asking himself who he is, the character Josef in *Kennis van die Aand* realizes that he was “te vreemd op die werf en die wêreld” (Kennis, 95-96) to understand the meaning of the question. *’n Oomblik in die Wind*’s Elisabeth poses the same question as she perceives herself through the land that surrounds her:

‘Is dit ek? [...] En as dit ek is—wie is ek?’ [...] Want dit pak haar skielik, soos paniek: dat sy juis hier is, juis sy. In die Kaap, op die sosiale ronde geïnspireer deur haar ma, was sy bekend—dis ook so klein, ’n broeiende gesin—en is sy op bal of party herken [...] En op reis: die vrou van die wit jagter. Maar nou, skielik, is daar niemand anders oor in terme van wie sy herken kan word nie. Niemand, daar’s net sy self, hier bokant die water; sy in dié ruimte waar die laat voëls deur trek. Wat maak ek hier, ek? Wie is ek wat so lyk? Sy tuur in die weerkaatsing en vroetel met haar halsdoek [...] Sy wil haarself ontken; sy wil nie so lyk nie. Sy is te bleek, en van laasnag se bloedmin slaap is daar donker skaduveegsels om haar oë. Sy probeer dit afwas, maar dit bly. (OW, 37)

Isolated in the wilderness, Elisabeth’s sense of self is no longer dependant on the people amongst whom she finds herself. Her identity is shaped by and is entangled within the space around her. As she stares at herself in the water, she wonders:

Is dít die kontoere van my ek? En as iets verander—as my borste of my buik begin te swel, my hande skraler word, my geslag ryp soos ’n vrug, my ribbes effens

¹¹⁰ Herman (2009: 37) defines narrative as “a mode of representation that is situated in—must be interpreted in light of—a specific discourse context or occasion for telling”. He insists that “narratives are both structured by and lend structure to the communicative contexts in which they are told”.

sigbaarder—word ek dan daarmee meer of minder, krimp en groei ek? Waar skuil dit: ek? Bo my, vraagloos, onbeantwoord, lug, lug, wit en wolke, son; en om my klippe en rooi grond, gras en boskaas. (OW, 38)

The distinction between her body and her environment is blurred: she becomes part of the contours of the space around her. She is however disappointed with the connection, or the lack thereof, which she discerns: “Maar wat maak ek hier? Ek het iets gesoek, ánderkant die Kaap en oorkant sy verste bekende berge, maar nie dit nie: net nog berge, nog vlaktes, nog skeure en riviere; wind en reën; droogte; stilte. Nie dit nie, dis niks van my nie” (OW, 14-15). Having been travelling for a long time through the country, Adam assumes that Elisabeth should have gotten used to the landscape and what travelling through it entails. She however answers with the question: “Raak mens dit ooit gewoond?” (OW, 41). She wishes not to be a part of the land. After her miscarriage she professes: “(E)k het nie gebreek nie. Probeer maar. Beproof my. Ek sal nie oorgee nie. Ek sal dié land se harde grond nie vrugbaar maak met my liggaam nie. Laat my vrugbaarheid my eie bly. Hy is bar: laat hom bar bly” (OW, 54). The idea of becoming part of the land haunts her dreams. She reminisces about a nightmare: “Dat hulle my in ’n ystervarkgat begrawe, en dat dit begin reën, en dat ek soos ’n boontjie word, soos saad in die grond: ek begin te groei, dwarsdeur die klipharde grond. My voete sit vas, hulle is wortels. Ek steek my takke uit en ek skree om hulp, maar niemand hoor nie, want mens kan mos nie ’n boom hoor nie. En daar ís niemand naby nie. Net ’n vreeslike vlakke vol aasvoëls” (OW, 100). Even when nearing death, the question of the space around her is central to her thoughts concerning the meaning of life: “Nou gaan ek dood [...] en ek verstaan nog altyd nie. Ek weet nie wat ek hier doen nie” (OW, 156).

Elisabeth does not want to identify with the space around her. She nevertheless cannot deny the role which it plays in shaping who she is. She states: “Miskien is die einde vir ons almal wel eenders. Uiteindelik word ons almal gebreek. Dis hierdie land: my ma het dit voor my al besef” (OW, 48).¹¹¹ Her perception of the land does not remain as negative as that of her mother’s and changes throughout her journey: “Dis nie ’n wrede land nie, net apaties. Hy neem van jou af wat oorbodig is: wa en osse, gids en staanplek en onderdak, aanspraak en hulp, man en kind, gewaande sekerheid, vooruitberekening, klere. Dat jy kan jyer word.” (OW, 51). Contrarily to her mother, Elisabeth is later

¹¹¹The idea of the land that ‘breaks’ is suggested in *Inteendeel* as well. Estienne refers to Dora who is “consumed” through the land itself (*Inteendeel*, 247).

even able to appreciate the dry country which surrounds her.¹¹² Despite experiencing first-hand how the land can ‘break’ you, as her mother warned,¹¹³ Elisabeth is grateful for what the landscape offers them through their hardships. “Neem ma,” she says, “kyk: ons het ’n eier gekry, die land is goed vir ons, mens kan hier lewe”. (OW, 134)

Different characters share Elisabeth’s initial aversion and find the environment strange or struggle to identify with it. Cornelis in *Philida* asks: “Is dít waarvoor Oupagrootjie Andries die lang seepad van Woerden af met die skip gekom het? Om hier tussen klippers in sand en stof te kreppeer? [...] Al wat mens op die ou end oorhet, is jou eie gat” (Philida, 95). In accordance to Elisabeth’s mother, Cornelis also holds pessimistic views about the country: “Al wat sal oorbly, is hierdie land self. En hy sal wel sy eie manier kry om mens te straf. Moenie ’n fout maak nie” (Philida, 99).¹¹⁴ *Inteendeel*’s Estienne’s changing connection with the land resembles the pattern of that of Elisabeth: He also at first does not identify with country and regards it as ‘strange’ and alien. He later however identifies with it and wishes to be part of it, an idea that I will further interrogate later in this chapter. Estienne even imagines how, after death, his body will be divided and sent to different regions where he has traveled to that had an impact on his life.¹¹⁵ Contrarily to Estienne and Elisabeth’s changing relationship with the land,¹¹⁶ other

¹¹² When Adam and Elisabeth hold hands on the carriage, Elisabeth again focusses on what the land made possible for them: “Hiervoor sal ek stry, dink sy. Dat niks dit aantast nie. Dit is ons s’n. Tot nou toe het dit nog net aan ons behoort : oor ’n paar dae behoort dit aan die wêreld. Maar ek sal baklei daarvoor. Om een vlees te mag wees. Waarom anders het ons dié lang pad gereis? Ons sal anderkant uitkom; saam. Tot nou toe was ons net man en vrou gewees, mens en mens in die land. Van nou af sal die Kaap ons al meer probeer dwing om wit en swart te wees [...] Ons self het bepaal hoe alles verloop het, en hoe alles hiervandaan sal verloop. Die land het dit vir ons moontlik gemaak” (OW, 195).

¹¹³ “Sy onthou haar ma se eindelose geteem in die Kaap: oor die twee seuns in die graf, die barbaarse land, die ondraaglike bestaan sonder haar mense; oor die musiek en skilderkuns van Amsterdam [...] en hier net dorheid, barheid, ’n stadige dood. Jy moet hier weggom, my kind, dis nie ’n plek vir beskaafde mense nie. Jy’s Europees, jy’t goeie bloed, jy moenie hier kreppeer in die kolonies nie. Hier word ’n mens geknak, hier word jy gebreek” (OW, 134).

¹¹⁴ Cornelis is however honest about his own family’s ‘influence’ on the country: “Moenie ’n fout maak nie. Vandat die Brinks hier aangekom het, is alles fout” (Philida, 99).

¹¹⁵ Estienne imagines: “Daarna sal my liggaam uitmekaar geskeur en die dele heinde en ver versprei word langs al die paaie waar ek die afgelope paar jaar so dikwels geswerf het. My kop nie ver van Hendrik Ras se plaas af nie [...] My bolyf? My bene? My arms? Een stuk miskien op daardie pad na die Bokkeveld. Nog een op die pad van Stellenbosch na Drakenstein, naby tante Louise se graf op Orléans, hoop ek. Met ’n bietjie geluk kan iets van my op die pad by die Bergrivier vertoon word [...] Een van my ledemate sal ongetwyfeld teen die Weskus opgespyker word, teen die pad na die Piketberg en verder, na die Olifantsrivier, die dor streek van die Klein Namakwas, die pettiest grens van die Gariep. Sal hulle dalk iets uithou—my penis miskien, skuldig aan veel misbruik—vir die pad na daardie nodige verbeelde land van Monomotapa [...] Ek wens daar was iets oor om oorsee te stuur, al was dit net binnegoed [...] na daardie modderige pad wat lei van Bazoches na Orléans, of die buitewyke van Domrémy. Maar dit is te veel om op te hoop. Ek wens ek was ’n seekat, daar is soveel plekke wat ek in my laaste greep sou wou bykom” (Inteendeel, 300).

¹¹⁶ Characters’ change of perception of the space around them is often portrayed through imagined deictic shifts: Many imagine how they are suddenly able to look at themselves from another perspective. Their frame of vision moves from a detailed focused to a wider spatial view. In *Kennis van die Aand*, for example, Josef is able to look at the scene of his mother’s death from a distance: “Ek wou treur oor my ma [...] Ek wou treur oor my self [...] maar iets in my het my weerhou, het my

characters identify with their surroundings from the start. Jerry in *Kennis van die Aand* for example prides himself with resembling the earth and his environment: “Swart, bruin, dis die kleur van grond, Capey, dis die kleur van ’n boomstam, dis lewe” (Kennis, 236). Philida similarly boasts about how the color of her skin recalls the earth: “In die bruin waters van die Gariep wil ek my kom skoon was. Ek wil nie witter as sneeu wees soos die Ouman altyd gesê het nie. Bruin is ek, bruin wil ek bly. Kyk hoe mooi bruin is jy, het Frans altyd gesê. Die mooiste kleur in die wêreld. Bruin. Soos klip en soos grond, soos die aarde vanself” (Philida, 309).

Whether initially connecting with the land or not; most characters concur that the space around them affects them in one way or another. On her journey back, Elisabeth recognizes the landscape and desperately scrutinizes the detail around her to look for some sort of proof that she has been there before. She describes the sensation as irrational and strange: “aanvanklik net die gevoel van ’n herkenning wat nie rasideel geskied nie maar anderkant die wete, soos uit ’n vorige bestaan” (OW, 127). As the land does not give her the slightest recognition, she becomes doubtful of her past and questions the reliability of the memories and past moments she carries with her (OW, 128). It is not only the memories of the land that Elisabeth bears, but she suggests that she sometimes carries the land itself too: “Hier is dit darem ligter, die wolke sonder dreigement. Maar die bos dra sy saam” (OW,

gedwing om met ’n verwonderde analitiese afstand die toneel te betrag asof dit heeltemal buite myself afspeel en slegs as toneel beoordeel moes word. Dit was die heel eerste keer dat ek my so pertinent bewus geword het van iets wat daarna altyd deel van my was” (Kennis, 121). In *’n Oomblik van die Wind*, Elisabeth too has the sensation of a changed vantage point: “Dit voel by wyle asof sy nie meer haar liggaam bewoon nie, asof sy ligweg daaruit losraak en uitsweef, entjies-entjies vooruit, en afkyk oor haar beweging, die swaai van haar bene, die roei van haar arms, die roer van haar borste. Asof sy soms baie ver opstyg, hoër as die berge, en net die twee stippels daar onder sien wat aanstryk, aanstryk, soos miere” (OW, 133). Estienne similarly has the sensation of seeing himself from a distance when he starts screaming out in court. He describes how he seems to be part of the audience watching himself as actor: “En tog is dit ’n vreemde ondervinding—soos soms tevore, net veel hewiger—asof dit nie regtig ek is wat daar staan nie, maar iemand anders wat lyk soos ek en praat soos ek; en oor ’n groot afstand kyk en na myself, sien ek my ingeskrywe in ’n rol wat ek nie wil speel nie en waarteen ek nogtans magteloos is” (Inteendeel, 161). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip imagines how Siener Lukas’ perspective shifts from him, his reality ‘here’; to a time and a space ‘there’ from before their existence: “Anderkant is dit asof hy dwardéúr my kyk, asof ek nie daar is om die kyk te keer nie, eenkant in en anderkant uit, asof ek ’n glas is waardeur hy kyk na alles in die landskap wat al langer as ek of hy daar is: die ry op ry kranse en rûens onder die lug sonder einde, die hange wat ondertoe padgee, af na die smal lang kloof heel onder. So fokken woes en leeg soos dit in God-en-Geneis se tyd moet gewees het” (Duiwelskloof, 12-13). In *Philida*, Frans experiences a similar shift in perspective: the world around him suddenly changes into what it was before his family’s arrival. He describes the strange sensation when arriving at Zandvliet: “Ek sien skielik nie meer so goed nie. Nie vóór my oë nie, maar binne-in my oë, is dit asof die mure deurskynend begin raak, asof hulle oplos en hulle vastigheid verloor [...] sodat niks naderhand meer is wat dit is nie [...] tot alles weer woes en leeg raak soos wat dit in die heel begin moet gewees het. Asof ons mense nooit hier was nie, asof alles wat ons oor jare en jare hier gebou en gedoen het, verniet was, asof dit net die HereGod se wilde wêreld is wat nog oorbly en niks van die mense nie. Heel niks” (Philida, 58). These deictic shifts accentuate character’s changing interpretation of their surroundings. In changing their frames of vision, characters’ insight into their situation deepens. Many of them seem to arrive at a type of acknowledgement of their size, role, or significance within the greater space around them.

90). The image of carrying the land with you is portrayed in *Philida* as well as she suggests that the soil forever sticks to their feet: “Maar hier waar ons nou loop, is nie ’n plek op ’n kaart nie. Dis net sand en pure klip, en dit brand jou voete gaar. Dis asof hierdie hele land aan mens se voetsole vassit. Dit sal saam met ons gaan waar ons ook al loop. Ons sal nooit weer daarvan loskom nie. Dalk wil ons ook nie (*Philida*, 306).

As the analysis above demonstrates, the space that surrounds Brink’s characters affects how they identify themselves: spaces are more than mere places, but possible dimensions through which they orientate the beginning and the end of their life stories. Spaces are perceived as points of reference and foundations for asking questions about identity. Characters also get entangled with their environs: to attain self-knowledge, they are obliged to look to the space around them.¹¹⁷ Their past is additionally inextricably linked to the landscape: the memories they ‘carry’ with them are equated to their natural surroundings that, whether they want to or not, cling to them. In this sense, Brink’s characters seem to echo Schama’s (1995: 6-7) words that “landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock”.

Besides being a dimension through which they can orientate their existence, the nature surrounding Brink’s characters also functions as a mirror for their psyches. On his way to the holding cells in the Cape, Josef reflects on the landscape he passes through and emphasizes how the physical changes in the passing landscape represent the emotional evolution he requires (Kennis, 263).¹¹⁸ On other

¹¹⁷ On some occasions, Brink’s characters do not necessarily draw on their direct environment, but they nonetheless employ spatial metaphors to convey their emotions and thoughts. Some for example point to the setting around them to stress their sense of isolation, loneliness, or despair: Estienne notes “Oral om my is my miserabele klein wêreldjie aan die inmeakaarsak” (Inteendeel, 275). When the community of the valley gathers, Flip refers to his physical, but also emotional position next to Emma: “Ons is maar ’n bleddie klein eilandjie in die see van soveel fronsende gesigte” (Duiwelskloof, 332). Flip additionally often employs spatial images when portraying his emotional state. His psyche is portrayed as a place. He refers to his ‘interior’ when he remembers how his wife kicked him out: “Sy’t gesê ek is nie eers behoorlik ’n man nie, ek is te vrot om ’n vrou te hê. Dit was of sy ’n hele kas vol borde in my breek” (Duiwelskloof, 284); and raises the idea of his psyche as space again after Emma’s death: “In ’n toestand van skok, my binnegoed soos ’n meulsteen in my, begin ek koeskoes die droë loop volg” (Duiwelskloof, 361). A corresponding spatial expression used to portray characters’ emotions is additionally identified in both *Kennis van die Aand* and *Duiwelskloof*: Josef’s mother says “Ek voel weer soos ’n fokken brommer in ’n leë melkbottel vandag” (Kennis, 96). ‘Stuck’ in Tant Poppie’s house, Flip similarly states: “Teen die vrydagaand het ek begin voel soos ’n fokken brommer in ’n bottel [...] wat ook al die rede, ek het net gevoel ek moet uit” (Duiwelskloof, 64).

¹¹⁸ Josef observes: “Nader aan die Kaap het die wêreld oper geraak, leër, ’n groot onherbergsame vlak waaroor die rukkerige wind stof opgewaai het. Dit was of mens die oopte nodig had voor jy in die stad intuïmel: of alles van ’n vorige bestaan eers afgestroop moes word, kaal gemaak tot eenvoudige feite van grond en lug, wind en hardnekkige flenters vegetasie. Dit was nie ’n terugkeer na die Kaap soos dikwels tevore nie, want dit was nie die Kaap wat voorgelê het nie, maar die tronk, ’n sel, dan ’n hofsaal en die uiteindelijke sekerheid van ’n vonnis” (Kennis, 263).

occasions, he has the sense that his surroundings directly imitate him. He points to the inseparability between him and the nature that surrounds him: “Die hele natuur is onbewoë en stil, net soos ek [...] ’n besef van ’n soort onskiedbaarheid tussen my en die gras en die berge wat so ongeroer voortbestaan. (Kennis, 392). The replication of characters’ sensations in the narrative space in which they live and move is present in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* as well. Elisabeth often assimilates her surroundings to the pain she experiences during their journey: When she suffers a miscarriage, she observes the “afsonderlike pyne soos die bome en klippe in die landskap” (OW, 46). She reiterates that their journey through different landscapes mirrors her pain: “Blydskap en pyn is wat oorbly; nou. Tot hierdie reis is ons gedoem. Elkeen tamaai soos ’n woestynlandskap, suiwer oneindigheid; uitsluitlik innerlik” (OW, 144). After their stay at the farm, reference is again made to their painful physical and psychological journey:

Sy dink; die siel het ver gereis, en is moeg, en wil rus [...] Dit is nog nie die einde nie. Daar lê berge voor: hulle moet daar oor. Hulle moet verder. Die Kaap kom nou nader; maar hulle is nog nie daar nie [...] Die berge kom stadig nader. Hulle is nie eens bly daaroor nie. Hulle ry maar net aan. Geledig, ánderkant ontgoëling, deur ’n landskap van gestroopte pyn. (OW, 180)

Physically and emotionally exhausted, the landscape does not merely resonate her suffering, but it ‘becomes’ (her) pain. Flip in *Duiwelskloof* coordinates his environment with his feelings as well. After asking Hans Toordenaar about the death of Maria, he remarks: “Op ’n manier is iets afgerond, en tog lê alles nog oop. In my is daar net so ’n fokken deurmekaarspul soos die werwe van die nedersetting vanmôre, na die wind. Dit sal lank vat om op te ruim” (Duiwelskloof, 238).¹¹⁹

As a mirror for their emotions, various examples point to the role of water in characters’ surrounding environment. Many characters find a sense of refuge for their emotions and thoughts in and through water or water imagery. Josef describes his frequent bath sessions in London as a refuge, a “terugkeer na dié surrogaat van die vrugwater” (Kennis, 155). Philida also finds a form of refuge in the dam as she tries to ‘purify’ herself with the water after Cornelis tries to rape her (Philida, 90, 100).¹²⁰ Water, or

¹¹⁹ Experiences and other abstract concepts such as silence are also spatially depicted in the text. When Hanna for example challenges her husband Jurg, one reads: “’n Doodse stilte sak oor die mense neer asof iemand ’n groot karos oor hulle uitgeskud het wat alle geluid doof” (Duiwelskloof, 329). When Flip goes and sits next to a hopeless Tannie Poppie, he says to himself: “Ek probeer nie meer praat nie. Die stilte lê uitgevlek tussen ons. Woorde wil ook nie meer werk nie” (Duiwelskloof, 334).

¹²⁰ Cornelis sketches the scene: “Sy plas en plas in die water asof sy nie genoeg kan kry van was nie. Asof sy haar vel heel van haar wil afskrop” (Philida, 90). He later realizes: “Dit was vir my wat Cornelis is wat sy van haar probeer afwas het, weet ek maar alte goed. Asof ek ’n siekte was. ’n Pestilensie. ’n Vlek. ’n Smeersel” (Philida, 100).

more specifically, rain, is significant for Adam and Elisabeth too. While intimately washing each other in the pouring rain, the narrator suggests that it seems as though they wish to dissolve into the water and mud around them (OW, 181). Soaked in rain, it is proposed that the water in a way alters them (OW, 74).¹²¹ In a pastoral sense, the image of rain is additionally likened to relief or welcoming news (Inteendeel, 284; Duiwelskloof, 211).¹²²

In addition to merely reflecting their emotional state, characters are also frequently directly equated to landscapes. The body/land metaphor is repeatedly stressed in for example *'n Oomblik in die Wind*. Larsson tells Elisabeth that he is better used to landscapes than people. She reflects on the “geslote wêreld” that he carries with him: “swerftogte en nagte, bakens, berge, onstuimige seë, inboorlinge, diere, eksotiese landskappe”. She asks him: “Dink u nie mense is ook maar landskappe waar jy moet deurreis nie?” and claims that she is “maar ’n baie klein stukkie land ingedruk tussen die berg en die see” (OW, 29). In comparing herself to a piece of land, Elisabeth echoes colonialist tendencies of feminizing the land (McClintock 1995). When Larsson talks about his travels, Elisabeth pursues the land/woman metaphor as she wishes to express: “Ontdek my. Hier is ek. Sien jy nie? Ek is vasgekeer” (OW, 31). She reiterates the image when she refers to the journey ‘into’ herself (OW, 126, 135). She equates her inner self to a secretive, impenetrable interior landscape (OW, 197-198).¹²³ Her body is again likened to soil when she and Adam struggle to get pregnant: “Ek wil nie kinders hê van kruie nie. Ek wil hulle hê van jou [...] Dit bly leeg in my [...] Dalk is dit die son wat alles doodbrand, tot binne-in my [...] Dis dor in my. Dis dor” (OW, 171). She pursues the connection between her emotions and imagery that draw on her environment when she relates her experience as a woman and the tradition of bonsai trees:

Om in die lewe nooit te mag doen wat jy wil doen nie, oor jy vrou is; om nooit te mag word wat jy wil word nie, oor jy vrou is. Soos die dwergboompies wat hulle

¹²¹ After huddling together during the storm, Adam also employs the image of rain to stress the need for recognition from Elisabeth: “Kyk om na my. Jy hoef niks te sê nie. Kyk net na my, eien my, moenie ontken wat gebeur het nie. Gee my vertrou, gee my geloof. Sien jy nie ek het dit nodig nie? As jy dit ontken, dan was ons nag net die saamdrom van diere wat skuil teen ’n storm, ek en jy en die os almal eenders. En dit wás meer gewees as dit; dit is meer: dis in ons ingeweek soos reën. Erken dit. Dis al. As jy my dit ontsê, dan ontken jy my” (OW, 74).

¹²² In *Inteendeel*, Estienne questions a Hottentot tribe about Rosette. An old man in the group finally says that they possibly saw her. Estienne reacts: “en dit kom na my soos reën in ’n droogte. (Dit is iets wat ek self beleef het, ek weet waarvan ek praat, ek het die ekstase daarvan gedans)” (Inteendeel, 284). A similar image of rain after the drought can be found in *Duiwelskloof*. When Flip tells Emma about Klein-Lukas, he describes her response: “Sy drink elke word in soos reën” (Duiwelskloof, 211).

¹²³ She reminisces: “Onthou jy die dag by die rivier toe ek op jou afgekom het waar jy geswem het, en hoe jy kaal na my toe uitgekom het? Om my te dwing om jou te sien: om my te dwing om jou te weet. En hoe bang ek in my begeerte was, nie vir jou nie maar vir myself. Altyd die onberekenbare in myself, dié geheime, ondeurtrapte binneland” (OW, 197-198).

vir die Goewerneur ingevoer het. Hulle sou ook groot en breed wou word, met nesmaakplek vir voëls, om koelte te gee vir diere en mense: maar hulle is klein gehou, klein gedwing, aaklige mooi kabouterboompies vir versiering, nutteloos op vensterbanke of in broeikamers. Maar dié keer sal ek uitbreek: ek sal nie luister nie. Dié keer gaan ek in my eie wildernis in. (OW, 49)

Elisabeth refuses to be constrained and to be ‘kept’ as mere décor. She resists what is expected of her as a woman and wishes to indulge in the potentiality of her own “wildness”. Adam also associates his body with places. After killing the dog, he is distraught and compares himself to hell. He reckons he deserves the anguish and torture he experienced in all the different spaces where he once was: “die géseling van die ysters onder die geroep van die meeu; die kettings op die eiland; die waterlose binneland. Ek is die hel” (OW, 165).

In *Kennis van die Aand*, characters’ inner thoughts and struggles are represented as spaces. Josef tells about his ancestor, Abraham Malan (1877-1902) who not only experienced external forms of suffering “(m)aar die stiller, meer verborge seerkry van ’n jong seun wat van kleins af ingestel raak op ’n binnelewe as skuiling teen die onbegryplikhede van buite—dít moet mens nie onderskat nie” (Kennis, 62). Josef calls up the spatial notion of emotions when he refers to South African expats in London:

’n moeilik omskryfbare eienskap, ’n suggestie van ’n holte, iets lugledigs in hulle, soos ’n elektriese speelmotortjie wat nie aangedryf word deur ’n battery binne-in nie maar wat oor ’n afstand van buite beheer word [...] hulle beheersentrum was nie intellek of wil of emosie nie, maar: Suid-Afrika. (Kennis, 174-175)

It is suggested that these outcasts experience a sense of exile or displacement as described by De Lange *et al* (2008: xv): they have been removed from the place where they used to live and where their identity and their sense of belonging were formed. Josef suggests that having been ‘removed’ from South Africa, the expats experience a void: they have been displaced from the place that ‘anchors’ their sense of belonging. The need for belonging nevertheless remains for, as Josef points out, it is the void (the lack of South Africa) that controls and drives them.

Josef frequently makes use of spatial comparisons when portraying his personal life.¹²⁴ After Jessica's death, he raises a significant reaction to and connection with the space around him. He reveals how he himself becomes a form of abstract space:

Die tyd was al amper twaalfuur dood. Ek was vry daarvan [...] Ek het by die uiterste jy-mag-nie verbygesteek, nou was die hele wêreld van moraliteit van my afgesterf, nou was alles oop en nuut om my: dit was soos 'n geboorte [...] Want ek had niks meer buite my nie, niks. Alles was afgerond, alles het huis toe gekom in my. Dit was selfs nie meer nodig om te speel nie, ek het die laaste rol afgelê: soos 'n ui is ek afgeskil, en nou was net die suiwer leegte in die binneste oor. Dit was baie mooi (Kennis, 391)

He describes his experience as a rebirth: he is free from worldly constrictions such as time and morality. He is 'reborn' an absolute, yet ambivalent 'space' or being: he perceives everything around him as new and open, for he has been 'filled' by 'everything' that has come 'home' inside him. He depicts how he is nevertheless also peeled and stripped, or 'emptied' of his layers and only the 'pure' interior remains. The beauty to which he refers lies perhaps in this ambivalence: he has reached a balance between the absorption of and the detachment from the spaces that surround him. His 'emptiness' differs from the void he identifies in the South African expats: while their voids represent something that lacks; Josef's emptiness is seen as a sense of fulfillment and completion.

In contrast to Josef, various characters emphasize the negative emotion which they associate with feeling 'empty' or 'bare': In *Inteendeel*, Estienne describes a sentiment of painful vacancy when he cannot hear Jeanne's voice (*Inteendeel*, 98). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip also describes the void he endures: "Ek weet nie wat daar in my was nie. Miskien fokol. Net 'n soort leegheid" (*Duiwelskloof*, 81). The need to 'empty oneself', a spatial act,¹²⁵ is also evoked: Josef writes "(o)m dit leeg te maak binne, sodat ek

¹²⁴ When tortured in prison, Josef describes how his body physically reacts in space: "Daar kom 'n ervaring van gewigloosheid, asof jy soos 'n swart ster in die ruimte verskiet" (Kennis, 267). Within his relationship with Jessica, the use of spatial comparisons is also prominent. He describes how their emotions can be likened to spaces: "Die stiltes was klein en kort: dan is ons weer teruggedryf na die wildernis van onsekerheid" (Kennis, 384).

¹²⁵ Other actions are spatially depicted throughout the various novels as well. Josef refers to his encounter with Beverley: "Ons het ingeplons in die gesprek soos baaiers wat op 'n warm dag lafenis in die water gaan soek: asof albei oorgretig was om die agterstand in te haal wat veroorsaak is deur die jare wat ons mekaar om 'n onverklaarbare rede nie geken het nie" (Kennis, 163). Conversations are also portrayed through spatial imagery in *Inteendeel*: Estienne refers to his "wandelende gesprekke in die lanings en *sentiers* van die Kompanjiestuin" (*Inteendeel*, 149-150) with Chrisjan. The spatial depiction of conversations is also introduced throughout *Duiwelskloof*. Flip refers to his discussions with Ouma Liesbet: "Ek het al die gruis van ons paar gesprekke deur die sif van my gedagtes gewerk, maar g'n diamant het agtergebly nie [...] Ek het opgestaan en in die donker heen en weer begin loop om my gedagtes om te woel. Tree vir tree terug in ons gesprek in" (*Duiwelskloof*, 254). Flip highlights the idea of spatially walking through exchanges again when he refers to his conversation with Emma:

kan terugkom in myself in” (Kennis, 11; my emphasis). He describes a similar need of ‘emptying’ “opgedamde praat” during his conversation with Jessica (Kennis, 283).¹²⁶ A similar necessity for clearing is also found in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* and *Duiwelskloof*. When Elisabeth recognizes the environment around her, she has the need to tell Adam about it: “lets dryf haar om met Adam te begin praat daaroor: om alles wat sy, byna skaam, in haar gehou het, nou *uit haar te praat* sodat sy dit op ’n afstand kan beskou” (OW, 128; my emphasis). In the mountains, a parallel demand of ‘talking it out’ is raised (OW, 140). In *Duiwelskloof* Flip refers to Annie when he says: “Ek weet nie of dit fokken stupid is van my nie, maar dit voel vir my sy moet nou uitpraat *om leeg te kom* van alles wat opgedam is” (Duiwelskloof, 272; my emphasis). While Josef is perhaps the only character within the corpus who positively experiences a sense of ‘emptiness’, the act of ‘emptying’ is commonly depicted as favorable by most characters. It is a means of purifying and of letting go.

The analysis above signals how, in Brink’s characters’ search of self-knowledge, the surrounding spaces have various roles: It can serve as a premise for orientating their existence and their life story; it can reflect their inner states; and on some occasions, as the frequent use of spatial metaphors suggests, it can even be regarded as the equivalence of the characters themselves. Brink’s characters find themselves, and form themselves, through spaces.

In the following section, I will demonstrate how characters also look to their environs not only for self-knowledge but also for insight into the ‘other’.

b. Space and knowledge of the Other

In the above examination of space and self-knowledge I identified how characters’ questioning of their identity is often equated to questioning the space around them. The same holds true when characters seek knowledge of the Other: when attempting to know the Other, an exploration of their place is also

“Ek kan nie nou weer al die lope en draaie van ons gesprek naspoor nie [...] Dit was soos fokken struikgewas waarin ons vasgerank het” (Duiwelskloof, 312).

¹²⁶ Josef declares: “Dit was asof ek in één nag ’n hele leeftyd se opgedamde praat moes uitstort [...] dit alles was ’n moeë verwildering in my binneste wat moes uit: soos ’n trop diere vasgekeer in ’n kraal, sat van spook, wat nou eensklaps ’n bres in die takke gebreek het en uit moes bondel. Ek was moeg om dit te bly opkrop, moeg vir uithou, moeg vir die spanning van aanhou glo: ek wou net praat, alles uit my uitpraat om my te ledig, om my heeltemal te ledig, sodat ek weer nuut en skoon, soos êrens nakend op ’n strand, kon begin [...] óns het deurgepraat” (Kennis, 283).

involved. In *'n Oomblik in die Wind* for example, the connection between spaces and people is central in Elisabeth's perception of others. Larsson's travelling history is one of the main reasons Elisabeth feels attracted to him. On their wedding night, she looks at him and sees "hoe groot en wit jou liggaam is, hoe sterk, gevorm deur lande en reise" (OW, 45). In trying to understand Adam, Elisabeth ponders his environment as well. Adam contends that he was never a slave, but rather kept as a slave. Elisabeth at first argues that "'n Plek kan tog nie verskil maak aan wat jy is nie'" (OW, 41) but later muses: "Wát is jou plek? Hét jy plek? Of kom en gaan jy soos die wind? Ons gaan see toe, het jy gesê: 'jou' see" (OW, 50).

In the quest for self-knowledge, as discussed earlier, spaces often aid characters in reflecting their emotions. We might say that landscapes 'repeat' people. In the search for knowledge of the Other however, a reversed movement is applicable: it is the recognition of spaces in others that comes to the forefront, in other words, people 'repeating' landscapes. Various examples point to the recognition of a specific place in a character.¹²⁷ When asking himself why he approached Elisabeth's camping sight, Adam realizes that it was the Cape that he recognized in her that attracted him in the first place (OW, 26). He continues to identify the environment in Elisabeth and depicts how he recognizes her in the world around him and how nature in a sense repeats her (OW, 90-91).¹²⁸ Elisabeth similarly recognizes landscapes within Adam.¹²⁹ At times, her comparison between him and landscapes shares similarities with colonial practices of map-making. She refers to the scars on his back for example when she says: "Ek vat aan jou soos mens aan 'n wond sou raak. Kan mens self littekens leer liefkry? Dat jy die kontoere met die teer punt van 'n vinger streel: dis jy, dis jou landskap, dis alles myne" (OW, 87). Adam's scars are likened to a landscape's contours. In a quest for knowledge, Elisabeth familiarizes herself with his scars or his "landscape". Just like the colonial process of map-making, in capturing his contours, she claims having the right of possessing him. This colonial quest for possession is confirmed with

¹²⁷ Too tired to carry on, Elisabeth for example recognizes the disappointment in Adam to slow down, for he already has their destination, the ocean, described as a "tuiskoms" (OW, 71) within him (OW, 36).

¹²⁸ Adam observes: "Alles herhaal jou, in alles herken ek jou. In die kuil anderkant die rotse, in die roer van vrouehaarvaring, die naat van 'n boerboon gedop uit sy peul, die skielike swenk van 'n meeu, 'n veer wat op die sand val, wildekalbassies, die sproei van 'n brander, seeskuim. Die manier waarop jy in die middel van 'n gesprek skielik stil word en wegstaar oor die see" (OW, 90-91).

¹²⁹ Outside their relationship, Elisabeth and Adam look to spatial imagery when attempting to understand others as well. When Elisabeth admits to the farmer that Adam is not her slave, but her husband, she observes: "Dit sal sy nooit vergeet nie: dié uitdrukking in die man se oë. Die algehele onbegrip; die verslaenheid. Die ondenkbare *wat sy wêreld binnesluip*" (OW, 178; my emphasis). Adam also alludes to distant worlds when he reminisces about a previous lover: "Jy met herinnering aan Java in jou amandel-oë en die name van sy strande op jou vogtige spits tong: in jou duisternis is alles verstaanbaar" (OW, 169).

Elisabeth's remark: "dis jou landskap, dis alles myne" (OW, 87). Other examples however point to a sense of deep respect and love that is born out of Elisabeth's recognition of the landscape that 'is' Adam. Their 'travels' through each other form the basis of their relationship. Both the 'drought' and the 'paradise' they experienced in their physical journey, but also in their psychological journeys through each other, is of importance: it strengthens their relationship and gives them hope (OW, 187).¹³⁰

Similar identifications of places in characters can be found in Brink's other texts. In *Duiwelskloof* for instance, numerous examples of comparisons between people and places (including its fauna and flora) are found.¹³¹ When portraying Dalena, Flip for instance regretfully refers to the strange and hidden "worlds" inside her "wat mens nooit sou vermoed nie" (*Duiwelskloof*, 226). Flip's perception of Henta is also centered on spatial notions. He observes how Henta's scent tragically draws on spaces that she, as a young girl, should not be familiar with: "Deur die perskegeur wat sy gewoonlik afgee, bring sy ander, donkerder dinge uit die nag uit saam, 'n soort ruimte waarvan sy nog nie behoort te weet nie" (*Duiwelskloof*, 318). Similar connections between characters and spatial elements are found in *Philida*. When Ouma Nella recounts their journey back to Zandvliet she describes Philida's behaviour as that of a stone: "Maar op die terugpad het sy nie gebrei nie, sy het net gesit. Met die stilwees van 'n klip, 'n

¹³⁰ Elisabeth declares: "Selfs as jy vannag hier in my arms doodgaan: hoe kan ek jou verlaat? Jy het by my gebly. Jy het my vrygestel. Jy het my vas; jy het my vas. Jy't my gedoop met bloed, en ek vir jou met die vog van my liefde. Ons het so ver gereis deur mekaar; daar was so baie droogte; so min om ons dors te les; dooie kinders. Maar daar was ook verborge jakkalskos, olifantsvoet; daar was volstruiseiers, en heuning op 'n dooie god se graf; daar was bokmelk en 'n pasgebore lam, geslag. En daar was 'n bos en 'n see. Moet dit nooit vergeet nie. Daar wás 'n paradys. En ter wille daarvan moet jy bly leef: Adam in die sweet van jou aanskyn. En ek. Dit het so gebeur. Dit is ons. Ons is" (OW, 187).

¹³¹ Flip perceives Grootvaar Lukas: "Op 'n afstand het ek die ou nommer al gesien sit, so vaal soos die gras" (*Duiwelskloof*, 11). He later pursues his drought comparison when he describes Lermiet's laughter: "die ou wetter gee net 'n moeilike laggie. Soos die eerste dag, klink dit soos droë blare wat ritsel" (*Duiwelskloof*, 294). Lermiet is moreover equated with seed when Flip refers to how he left the Cape "waar hy goed onder die oog uit sy saad tussen ditsels en dorings kon loop saai. En moontlik het Lukas Lermiet dan toe 'n eeu en 'n half later tussen die kliprantjies van die binneland begin blom" (*Duiwelskloof*, 19). Other spatial comparisons include Tant Poppie who, walking to and fro, is portrayed as "'n groot skip wat op donker waters vaar" (*Duiwelskloof*, 48); Henta Voorperske who lifts up her dress which leads Flip to remark: "Tot by die ronde wit knieë ontbloot, staan haar bene wyd uitmekaar geplant soos die twee suile in die tempel van Dagon waar hulle die blinde Simson staangemaak het" (*Duiwelskloof*, 73); Grootvaar Lukas who walks, "swaai-swaai", between them "soos 'n klok se klepel tussen ons" (*Duiwelskloof*, 73); after the death of her son, "stil-geskokte" Hanna is depicted as "'n bondel ongestrykte wasgoed daarby" (*Duiwelskloof*, 321); Anna-van-Alwyn who gathers with the other women rebels: "Sy sê vir eers niks, maar lyk soos 'n gryswit koeltjie wat skielik weer begin gloei het met rooi lewe" (*Duiwelskloof*, 331); and a distraught Tant Poppie who looks like "'n groot matras waarvan die stopsel begin uitkom het" (*Duiwelskloof*, 333). Tant Poppie uses spatial symbols when referring to Emma as well: "Dis dié dat alles met haar so op 'n rantjie staan. Jy kry altyd die gevoel dit kan enige kant toe, hemel of hel" (*Duiwelskloof*, 103). Other novels within the chosen corpus also present similar comparisons of people to the environment. In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, a Hottentot woman watching over Elisabeth after her miscarriage is described as a saltpan: "'n Ou vrou met 'n kwaggavelmussie waak by haar, die gesig verskrompel en gebars soos 'n soutpan in die droogte" (OW, 48).

klip wat jou laat weet: hy sit net daar, hy roer nie, maar dis nie asof hy 'n dooi ding is nie, in hom sit daar 'n lewe wat jy niks van weet nie, 'n ding soos vuur, wat jou kan brand tot daar niks van jou oorbly nie" (*Philida*, 120). In *Kennis van die Aand*, spatial imagery is often employed to describe the physical and emotional states of others. Reflecting on his mother's death, Josef recalls his regretful discovery that his mother remained strange and distant to him, almost like an unreachable place: "die hartseer ontdekking van hoe ver en vreemd sy eintlik vir my was en hoe onmoontlik dit was om haar nou nog te bereik" (*Kennis*, 120). Josef attempts to describe Richard's comportment with spatial imagery as well: "van party mense wat juis die liggaam probeer ontken en nooit mooi tuis voel daarin nie" (*Kennis*, 27). He again employs the idea of feeling 'at home' within your body when referring to his relationship with Jessica: "daar was iets in my, 'n illogiese blydskap, 'n dankbaarheid, iets soos 'n tuiskoms" (*Kennis*, 287). The idea of regarding people and their bodies as places of 'homecoming' is suggested in his relationship with Beverley as well. Beverley however represents not a mere 'home', but a type of center of gravity (*Kennis*, 171). The correlation between landscapes and people is again accentuated by Josef when Jessica enlightens him on Vader Mark's knowledge of their relationship. Josef reacts: "Dit is of sy momenteel 'n sluier gelig het voor iets waarvan ek in haar nog nie bewus was nie, 'n landskap wat ek nie vermoed het of wou vermoed nie, 'n skrikwekkende alleenheid" (*Kennis*, 333).

Characters in *Inteendeel* also draw on natural elements when describing others.¹³² Estienne himself is described by the female character, Leonie Burger, through spatial similes. She tells him: "Daar was 'n tyd toe dit 'n avontuur was om by jou te wees [...] Jy't soos 'n warrelwind gekom en gegaan. Daar was altyd opwinding waar jy by was, jy't die onmoontlike laat moontlik lyk. Maar nou—nou's jy net 'n man op vlug, 'n rondloper, 'n gejagte ding. Daar is nie meer plesier in nie, net vrees, en partykeer ergenis. En partykeer—minagting" (*Inteendeel*, 275-276). The role of space in Estienne's perception of others is particularly meaningful. My attention is drawn to a significant employment of spatial images during his third journey:

Ek sterf van die dors. Plat in die stof, uitgelewer aan ruimte, berei ek my voor om van alles afstand te doen. Maar 'n klein troppie swerwende Hottentotte kom uit die verte nader [...] hulle lawe my [...] Wat doen julle hier? vra ek hulle. Is julle nie bang julle word weer aangeval en verdryf nie? Niemand kan ons verdryf nie, sê

¹³² Estienne reasons that Madame Abbetje could not stand Rosette due to the "darkness" within her (*Inteendeel*, 57). After the death of Hendrik Ras' son, Estienne states: "Hy het hom al meer in die donkertes binne-in homself teruggetrek. Dit sou ook die gevoel versterk het dat ons almal saamgebind was in 'n oplaaiende storm waarvan hy die oog was" (*Inteendeel*, 202).

hulle. Hoe kan jy die wind of die stof verdryf? Ons is hier. Natuurlik, besef ek nou, natuurlik: dit is die ellende en die wonder van die land. (Inteendeel, 283)

It is only after recognizing the 'space' ("wind" and "stof") 'within' the inhabitants that Estienne is able to alter his perception of them, and of the country in total. The comparison between the Hottentot tribe and spatial elements leads to a deeper understanding of both the people and the land. It allows him to evolve: He no longer regards the land nor its native people as strange or wild. The correlation between the country's people and their landscape awakens a deep sense of respect and acknowledgement for the other.

My analysis makes it clear that in an attempt to gain knowledge of the Other, an exploration of their place is required. It is within characters' recognition of spaces, places and landscapes in others that brings about attraction, respect, acknowledgement, love and understanding for the Other.

Within the following section, I will explore how spatial imagery additionally serves to highlight the idea of 'sense of place' and displacement throughout Brink's novels.

c. 'Sense of place'

'Sense of place' is understood as the subjective and emotional attachment people have to places (Cresswell, 2004: 7). Mundell (2018: 2-3) argues that this 'attachment' alludes to "the full spectrum of emotions (positive, negative, mixed, or ambivalent); and as emotional bonds with places, and with values, meanings and symbols of place, as they are actively and continuously reconstructed within individual minds, and informed by cultural, spatial and historical context". In this section, I will investigate how characters perceive places of experience and meaning by analyzing their attachment(s) to it. I will start by examining characters' sense of being 'rooted' in a specific place. Thereafter, the notion of roots' link to a collective identity and the idea of a 'homeland' will be explored. Finally, this section aims to inspect the common notion of 'knowing your place' identified in Brink's chosen novels. I will focus on characters' reactions to the notion, and how it is related to displacement and the idea of being 'out of place'.

Plant-like imagery is frequently used to stress the connection between a character and his/her place. In *Kennis van die Aand*, Simon talks about the notion of identifying with Africa when he states: “Ek is seker sentimenteel [...] maar vir my is ’n mens nes ’n plant: as hy nie sý stukkie grond het om in te groei nie, dan vrek hy. Jy weet wat hulle sê van plante [...] positief heliotropies, dink ek: groei ál son toe. Nou, óns is positief iets anders, ons groei ál suide toe” (Kennis, 178). Josef later recalls the analogy when he considers returning to London: “Op daardie oomblik het ek Simon onthou, en die bitter nag toe hy in Hackney by my was: hoe hy stadig tot niet gegaan het soos ’n sonneblom wat verplant is in ’n koue klimaat; en hoe hy nie kon terugkom nie” (Kennis, 350). Simon suggests that it is more than a mere connection one has with one’s homeland: it becomes a matter of habitat and viability. Similar metaphors are found in Brink’s other novels. In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip is surprised to see Emma’s small bag of belongings: “’n Hele lewe in so ’n klein hopie. Om so opruimbaar te wees, en dit terwyl sy so in die plek *gewortel* was, was ’n knoop waaraan ek nie sommer vat kon kry nie” (Duiwelskloof, 338; my emphasis). Soon Heilig evokes the Glissantian concept of an *identité-racine* when he says: “Hier is ons geplant, hierdie stuk aarde het ons met onse bloed duur gekoop, en hier sal ons sterwe as dit moet. Want dit is beter om tot niet te gaan op die erwe wat God aan ons toebedeel het en waar sy meetsnoere vir ons geval het, as om te gaan lewe tussen die vleespotte van Egipteland” (Duiwelskloof, 187). In accordance with Glissant’s concept of an identity that is based on a single root, Soon Heilig suggests that Duiwelskloof’s inhabitants have a legitimate right to the valley for it is believed that the territory was ‘given’ to them by God. This supposed legitimate filiation is, as Glissant (1996) also insists, based on foundation narratives (*mythes fondateurs*): the story of Grootvaar Lukas Lermiet who, inspired by God, was directed towards the valley where a ‘promised land’ awaited them (Duiwelskloof, 19). This story forms the basis of the community’s collective identity. It establishes their patterns of filiation and legitimizes their ‘possession’ of the valley. By insisting that they will die in the valley if they must, Soon Heilig additionally echoes the argument made by Glissant (1996: 132), that people are willing to die for their *identité-racine unique*. Glissant’s insistence that a person’s ‘rooted’ identity (be it *identité-racine* or *identité-rhizome*) as a way of thinking, is also suggested in some of Brink’s texts. The ‘root’ or plant metaphor is employed to allude to how a character can become habituated to a place’s norms and ways of thinking. In *Kennis van die Aand*, Willem for instance says to Josef: “Namate mens in jou samelewing *ingroei*, word jy tog deel van sy patrone” (Kennis, 223; my emphasis).

Identity as a way of thinking (Glissant, 1996) involves how characters think about their homeland: the space that, together with ‘their’ people, they consider to be ‘theirs’. Characters’ repetition of possessive noun phrases such as ‘my country’, ‘my people’, ‘your people’, etc. is foregrounded in many of the novels. In *Philida*, Ouma Nella argues that Cornelis will never find rest amongst the graves on the farm for he does not know the people buried there. She describes them as ‘her people’: “Khoemense, Boesmanmense. Baie. Meer as wat jy ooit kan tel”. Cornelis however claims that it is Ouma Nella’s people and not his own. In reminding him that “(a)l daardie mense wat hier lê, is lankal in jou ingeteel sonder dat jy dit wil erken”; she encourages him to consider his Glissantian *identité-rhizome*; which Cornelis nevertheless refuses (*Philida*, 93). *Inteendeel*’s Rosette also longingly refers for ‘her people’. When she chooses to flee, Estienne asks her where she could go, and Rosette responds: “In die land in. Waar ons met die waens was. En nog verder. Daar sal ek by my mense uitkom”. Confused, Estienne replies: “Jy’t gesê jy kom van Bengale af,” signalling, we might say, a way of thinking that relates to Glissant’s homogeneous *identité-unique*, for how could Rosette find ‘her people’ if she is not returning to ‘her’ single homeland? From a ‘rhizomatic’ perspective, Rosette however replies: “Ek kom uit Afrika” (*Inteendeel*, 65).

Estienne, albeit less nostalgically, also refers to ‘his country’ and continent of origin. Having left France, his ‘fatherland’ (*Inteendeel*, 76), Estienne feels rootless. He explains to Jeanne that he does not have something to fight for because he does not have a group that he can call ‘his people’ like she did (*Inteendeel*, 132). His remarks suggest that it is a person’s sense of collective identity, the idea of having ‘a’ ‘my people’ that drives resistance. This ideal of fighting for your people and your country is also introduced in *Kennis van die Aand*. After a couple of setbacks, Derek suggests that Josef returns to London, but Josef refuses, for he envisions creating something for *his* people in *his* country:

Was dit genoeg rede om stert-tussen-die-bene terug te vlug nog voordat ek die land of myself kans gegee het? Ek het gekom om in die teater te werk, om iets aan die gang te kry onder my mense—om ’n drang in myself te verwesenlik én om vir hulle iets te gee waarna hulle honger. Dit was al. Dít sou die land my tog nie weier nie? God, hulle kan mos nie die deur in my gesig toemaak nie, dis dan my plek dié. Dis die saad en bloed van hoeveel geslagte wat ek in my dra: Hugenoot en Maleier en Hottentot, Xhosa en Ier en boer, wit, bruin, swart, almal. Made in South Africa, not for export [...] Om hulle almal se onthalwe kon ek nie sommer weer omdraai en padgee nie: dít was die illogiese drif wat my hier laat bly het. Dit, en die ou koppigheid in my wat nie verniet wou gaan lê nie. Ek sou bly. Op stuk van sake was dit ál wat ek regtig kon doen. Vrye wil is ’n oorskatte begrip. (*Kennis*, 210)

The call of his country and his people surmount all his free will: he regards reaching out to his people as the only thing he can, and must, do. He repeats: “Ek wil met die hele establishment niks te doene hê nie: ek wil deurbreek na *mense*. Na my *mense*” (Kenniss, 214). Even though it is *his* country and the country of *his* people; Josef emphasizes the irony that they have nothing of it: “Ek en my *mense*, elke bleddie hotnot van ons, elke gamat en gatiepie: ons is die enigste *mense* wat in hierdie land gemaak is. Ons het nie broers nie in Europa soos julle, of in Afrika soos die swartmanne nie. Al wat ons het, is hierdie land. En wat hét ons van hom? Presies fokôl” (Kenniss, 354). Having been ‘made’ in the country should, as Josef suggests, legitimize a sort of territorial possession. Alas, he insists that they have but an emotional connection to the only land they have.

The notion of being ‘made’ in a country is found in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* as well. Adam’s owner reminds him that he is “geteel vir hierdie land”. He recalls the conversation with Elisabeth: “Eendag, die dag toe hy my mantoor gemaak het oor sy ander slawe, het hy vir my gesê: ‘Jy’s geteél vir hierdie land, onthou dit. Masbieker vir krag, Oosterling vir verstand, Hottentot vir uithou. Dat jy kan weet jy hoort hier’”. Elisabeth asks what is wrong with being ‘bred’ for the country and wonders whether she is not bred for the country as well: “Hollander, en Hugenate, en drie geslagte aan die Kaap?” Adam responds that no one is bred for the country, but rather asserts: “Jy’s geteel om baas te wees en ek om slaaf te wees. Dis al” (OW, 59).

Being ‘bred’ in and for a country furthermore alludes to the distorted assumption that some have an instinctive knowledge of ‘their’ land. On route, Adam gets aggravated when Elisabeth insists on travelling further: “Wie’s jy om te sê? [...] Ek ken hierdie wêreld. Ek weet” (OW, 74). When considering all the pitfalls of their journey together, Adam accentuates the role played by someone who ‘knows the land’: “Toe die slang hom gebyt het, was hy nader aan sy dood as nou; toe die dors hom platgetrek het, was die einde al in hom. Maar toe was daar elke keer iemand wat kon help: iemand wat die land geken het. Nou is daar net sy” (OW, 185).

The idea of an ‘instinctive’ knowledge also entails a ‘natural’ and common understanding of a place, its people, and their ways of thinking. Once in the Cape, Elisabeth is asked by a slave if she will find her way and answers: “Ek sal hom kry [...] Jy vergeet: dis my woonplek” (OW, 196). In *Inteendeel*, Hendrik claims that he is not afraid of the military power of the Cape. He states: “Laat hulle kom [...] Ons ken

die land, hulle nie. Ons kan in die berge wegkruip, of in dongas in die veld, oral, en toeslaan as hulle naby kom. Ons kan jare so aanhou as dit moet” (Inteendeel, 226). Another character also born in the country, Madame van den Henghel, insists on joining them on their journey to the inner parts of the country due to her “aangebore kennis van die land” (Inteendeel, 19). Estienne also signals the Afrikaners’ sense of communal allegiance: “onder die boere op leenplase, dié wat in die kolonie gebore is en gevolglik na hulleself verwys as ‘Afrikaners’, besete met ’n diepgewortelde agterdog teenoor almal en alles in Cabo” (Inteendeel, 24). Their shared loyalty is emphasized when he later refers to the official, Swellengrebel: “Hy’s nie soos Van den Henghel of die ander spul amptenare uit Europa of Batavia nie, Jeanne. Hy’s hier *gebore*. Sy hart is hier” (Inteendeel, 147). In *Philida*, Frans is upset when he receives a subpoena to appear in court. He similarly alludes to the official’s origin: “al weet ek Mijneer Lindenberg is so ’n Afrikaner soos ek. Nie Engels nie, en ook nie ’n Hollander soos soveel van die Caab se ander here nie, maar ’n man wat hier gebore is en wat beter behoort te weet” (Philida, 43).

The concept of being born and bred in and for a specific place, additionally introduces the idea of belonging. Philida describes Zandvliet as the place where she is told to belong: “Zandvliet, Zandvliet, in jou binnegoed in, dat jy gou leer agterkom waar jy hoort. [...] dis mos nou jou plek dié, dit wat hulle sê Zandvliet” (Philida, 24). Her sentiment regarding her enforced sense of belonging signals an important issue concerning space and identity in Brink’s work. One might even say, borrowing from Ashcroft (1989: 8-9), that it forms the basis of Brink’s characters’ ‘special postcolonial crisis of identity’: “Jy ken nie jou plek nie” is a phrase used in many of Brink’s novels. The phrase is employed in a figurative and a literal sense. In the section that follows, the significance of both senses will be explored by examining the following interpretations of the expression ‘know your place’ that can be identified in the novels: respecting ‘your place’; being familiar with ‘your place’; recognizing ‘your place’ as home as well as denying ‘your place’ as home.

The figurative speech ‘Jy ken nie jou plek nie’ serves as an accusation that a character does not respect his/her ‘expected’ role in society. In *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth maliciously addresses Adam: “Ek wil jou nie hier hê nie [...] Nie vannag nie en nooit nie [...] Ek sal self regkom [...] *Jy ken nie jou plek nie*” (OW, 16). Adam considers her argument:

Hoe sál jy my verstaan? [...] Jy’s dan ’n wit vrou. En ek is mos maar ’n slaaf. Ek is twee hande en ’n rug en twee bene: ek is soos ’n os of ’n pakperd vir jou. Jy’s die kop, jy’s die een wat mag dink. Die enigste. Ek is die lyf. *Ek moet my plek ken*. Vir

mý is dit astant om te dink. *En ek hét my plek geken*, vyf-en-twintig jaar lank; maar toe nie meer nie. Vyf jaar lank loop ek nou al deur hierdie godverlate wildernis, en al wat ek doen, is om te dink [...] Jy probeer jouself beskerm. Jy wil my graag verag. *Jy wil my op my plek hou* en dink ek kán nie dink nie! Maar dit help jou niks. (OW, 60)

As a slave, Adam's place is not next to the white woman. He is not physically welcome near her, nor is he allowed to socially treat her as his equal. As someone she regards as beneath her, he is not expected to think, but to do and to obey. He should know where he fits in. He should respect his role in society for if he aspires to something 'above' it, he does not know 'his place' and is considered audacious. Various examples of this so-called arrogance are also observed in Brink's other novels: Philida's owner, Cornelis, reflects on a 'simpler time' when he was younger "[t]oe was daar nog 'n ding soos respek vir 'n witmens. Hulle het hulle plek geken" (Philida, 77). Another example in the novel points to the day of Philida's auction when she chooses to ignore a farmer of the district who tries to look up her dress. The commissioner reprimands Philida's behaviour: "Jy is 'n slaaf. Ek het die indruk gekry jy het nie jou plek met die man geken nie". Philida bravely replies: "Ek ken my plek, Meester [...] Ek weet ek is slaaf [...] Maar ek is nie sý slaaf nie" (Philida, 169). In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef touches on a similar alleged 'impertinence' when he remembers how his ancestor, David was attacked at a mine: "Bleddie Hotnot! Wie dink jy is jy? Vat ons werk af, kak op ons, hè? Dink jy's baas in witmansland, hè?" (Kennis, 73).

These prejudiced 'conventional' roles are not only racially bound. Elisabeth in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* recalls her mother saying: "Jy moet hier wegkom, my kind, *dis nie 'n plek vir beskaafde mense nie*. Jy's Europees, jy't goeie bloed, jy moenie hier kreppeer in die kolonies nie. Hier word 'n mens geknak, hier word jy gebreek" (OW, 134; my emphasis). Her mother insists that civilization isn't the only determining factor, but gender too shapes her role, and therefore her place in society: "Wat gaan die mense sê? 'n Vrou in die binneland?" Elisabeth responds: "Wat is verkeerd met 'n vrou in die binneland? [...] Wat is verkeerd met 'n vrou? Is dit iets om oor skaam te wees?" (OW, 144). I recall Spain's (1992: 25) relevant argument that imperialist systems of patriarchy and capitalism insures that "women are oppressed of both gender and class". A similar gender-based prejudice regarding space is found in *Inteendeel*: When they come across Dora, a white woman living amongst native inhabitants in the hinterland, Estienne is astonished and wishes to know what she is doing there. Determining her

position as unfit and absurd,¹³³ they deem it necessary to take her with them on their journey back and insists that she marries one of them: “jy’s ’n uitlander, jy hoort nie hier nie [...] Hier kan jy tog nie gelukkig wees nie! [...] Jy kan nog altyd ’n beter lewe saam met Matthuis hê as hier”, Estienne says to her. She refuses and claims that even though her being there seems absurd, she regards the wilderness as her home and considers the Houzouanas to be ‘her people’. She insists that it is precisely in the Cape where she does not belong (Inteendeel, 209-210; 227; 246).

Foreigners and outsiders should also ‘know their place’. Estienne believes that his place is with the other Boers and claims that he belongs with them; “(v)ir die eerste keer in my lewe hoort ek êrens”. Willem van Wyk assertively points out: “Maar jy hoort tog nie by hulle nie. Jy sal nooit by hulle hoort nie [...] Jy’s ’n godverdomde stommerik [...] Dis erg genoeg om ’n vreemdeling te wees. Maar ’n swaap is erger” (Inteendeel, 247).¹³⁴ In *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth’s perception of Adam as a stranger influences her judgement on his ‘place’ and where he belongs: “Jý, donker man, donkerte, dood of lewe: wie en wat is jy? Jy met die verskriklike waarheid van jou leuens: jy wat jou, sterk en maer, toemaak in my man se klere, uitheems in jou eie land, nar: wat soek jy by my? Waarom is ek bang vir jou?” (OW, 49). As a stranger, she considers him ‘misplaced’.

‘To know your place’ is also understood in a literal sense as being familiar with the place in which one finds oneself. In *Kennis van die Aand*, this second interpretation is introduced by Josef’s naïve understanding of the figurative expression. When he is invited to read out his recitals in front of guests, one of the visitors disapproves: “julle maak die skepsel vir die verderf groot. Een van die dae ken hy nie meer sy plek nie” (Kennis, 86). Josef reflects on her comment:

Maar hoekom word ek grootgemaak vir die verderf? Wat het die resitasie daarmee te doen? [...] Een van die dae ken hy nie meer sy plek nie. Waar is dan my plek? Dis mos hy hierdie, hierdie kamertjie met sy blomskerm tussen my ma en my, hierdie ry witgekalkte huisies onder die akkerbome, hierdie werf binne die veilige wit omsingeling van die ringmuur, hierdie opstal tussen die lower, met sy grasdak

¹³³ When they hear rumors about a white woman living in the interior, they react: “Geen vrou kon so ver op haar eie getrek het nie” (Inteendeel, 204); someone else is heard saying: “’n Vrou wat al dié pad allenig gekom het? Sy sal van haar kop af wees, man. Oor die wal” (Inteendeel, 205). When they finally see her, the text reads: “Dit is ’n ontsenuende ondervinding om daar in die wildernis die wit vrou teë te kom” (Inteendeel, 206).

¹³⁴ The treatment of strangers is again alluded to when Estienne refers to the official, Swellengrebel who should feel misplaced amongst his European colleagues: “anders as die meeste amptenare, nie van oorsee hiernatoe gekom het nie, maar hier in die kolonie gebore is, sou seker verklaar waarom party van sy kollegas geneig was om hom met heelwat snedigheid, selfs openlike vyandigheid, te bejeën [...] die hoë pos wat hy bekleed het (nogal verbasend vir ’n Afrikaner) [...] in die agterbakse, knoeierige, bepruikte en bepoeierde wêreld van Daniel van den Henghel en sy trawante moet dié reguit, ongeaffekteerde man bra ontuis gewees het” (Inteendeel, 117).

en die leer op na die solder waar die bossiestee lê en droog ná die smoor in die bakoond, en waar die droëperskes en appelkose in die ou balies opgehoop lê [...] Is dit dan nie my plek dié nie? Ek ken hom mos, ek kan hom donkeraand deurloop sonder om oor 'n boomwortel te struikel of in die leivoortjies te beland, sonder om 'n toon nerf-af te stamp teen 'n plaveiklip, ek sweer selfs sonder om 'n hoendermissie raak te trap: Here, só ken ek my plek. Vir wat sal ek hom dan een van die dae nie ken nie? En hel toe gaan, in daardie vuur op my brandende matras, soos 'n okkerneutskuitjie op die leivoor, vlamme water [...] En huilend het ek later oor die harde misvloer gesluip, óm die skerm, na my ma se kooi toe [...] 'Maar ek ken die plaas, ma. Ek wil nie hel toe gaan nie'. (Kennis, 87)

The guest's remark leaves Josef confused, for how would he suddenly not 'know' his, as he insists, very well-known place anymore? Worried, he frantically starts questioning his existence (Kennis, 97).¹³⁵ Josef's initial naïve interpretation of 'knowing his place' is pursued when he prays to his deceased father: "Pa [...] sê vir die Heer-Djiesus aan die voetbank van sy voete ek wil nie hel toe gaan nie ek ken my plek en kom terug pa nie uit verdienste nie maar enkel en alleen uit genade amen" (Kennis, 88). The question remains to haunt him into adulthood (Kennis, 95-96)¹³⁶ and he recalls the conversation with his mother even during his last days in prison (Kennis, 275)¹³⁷. The portrayal of Josef's naïve interpretation highlights the mere ridicule of colonial thought that maintains that the poor, black, uneducated, and uncivilised should 'know his place'. For of course he knows his place—he is even more familiar with it than his 'superior', white 'masters'. One could argue that his naiveté nevertheless strengthens certain binaries of colonial thought: as a young, black man he 'lacks' the intelligence to understand the white man's figurative speech. In this sense he is not only naïve, but also depicted as being ignorant. Josef grapples with the question throughout his life and finally comes to terms with the fact that 'his place' refers to his 'role' in society. At the end he finds an even deeper understanding of the visitor's figurative speech:

Waar lê dan die graf van klein Lea, waar is Adam se stukkies ingespit, waar lê Moos, of Dlamini/Daniël, of Ragel, of Abraham, waar Dawid, waar my vader Jakob? Nie een van hulle grafte het naam of datum nie en wie is ek dan dat ek my sou aanmatig? Mens moet jou plek ken, het my ma gesê. Anders sien jy tog net jou

¹³⁵ Josef discusses the matter with his mother: "Wat soek ons hier, Ma? / Hoe vra jy nou? Ons woon mos hier. Dis ons plek. / Wat maak dit ons plek? / Mens se plek is jou plek [...] / Ek praat nie van die plaas nie, Ma / Wat vra jy dan? / Hoekom lewe ons, Ma? / Ons is ma'ammal bywoners op baas Lewe se werf" (Kennis, 97).

¹³⁶ Josef ponders: "Ek tas na 'n sin agter los herinneringe. Ek weet dit is daar, êrens in die volgehoue poging—ook toe ek 'n kind was—om my plek tussen verskuiwende waarhede te bepaal. Alles uitinge van een sentrale stel vrae, selfs toe ek die woorde nie sou herken nie: *Waar is my plek dan? Wie is ek?*" (Kennis, 95-96).

¹³⁷ Josef declares: "Dit is my klere, dit is my matras, dit is my sel. Ek ken hom. Ek het hom lief. Wat soek ons hier, Ma? [...] Hoe vra jy nou? [...] Ons woon mos hier. Dis ons plek. Wat maak dit ons plek? Mens se plek is jou plek" (Kennis, 275).

gat. My plek is by haar en by die ander. Ek is nie alleen vannag nie, hulle is almal hier, die hele donker ry. Ek is nie die slagoffer van my geskiedenis nie. Wat gebeur, het ek gekies. Ek ondergaan dit nie, maar skeep dit. Ek gee my oor aan hulle. Ek is 'n ronde klippie wat val en tevrede is in sy val, stof tot stof, aan sy aard getrou. (Kennis, 400)

Ironically, it is the space offered by death that is 'everyone's place'. Josef realizes that 'to know one's place' is not solely understanding your role in society: it also entails coming to peace with it. It is accepting where you are and who you are and recognizing your own active role in the matter. Towards the end of his imprisonment he avows: "Julle sal my doodmaak. Nie omdat julle so slim of so magtig is nie [...] Omdat dit die enigste rol is wat hierdie lewe en hierdie land aan my toegesê het, en omdat ek dit aanvaar het. Ek sal ja sê vir die dood. Hy is my broer. Hy is deur geslagte en eeue in my ingebore. Maar vir julle: vir julle sal ek nooit anders as nee sê nie" (Kennis, 274).

The empowering act of identifying one's place is also found in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*: Adam refuses to listen to suggestions made by Elisabeth on the fastest route to the ocean. He insists: "Nee. Ons gaan na my plek toe [...] Dis wat ek besluit [...] Dít is die eintlike rede, dink hy. Nie die riviermondings en ruigtes en rotsplate wat hulle kan vertraag nie. Maar dit: dat hy in beheer moet bly. Dat sy afhanklik moet bly van wat hý besluit. Dat sy *haar plek* moet hou" (OW, 63; my emphasis).

For many characters, recognizing their place brings a sense of relief. Diagnosed with cancer, Josef's mother refuses to go to the hospital but rather chooses to stay at 'home' (Kennis, 117).¹³⁸ In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth's mother raises a similar stubborn-like characteristic of her husband (and daughter) of wanting to stay in the same place:¹³⁹ "Geknak deur hierdie land, gebreek deur hom. Maar jy bly hardnekkig hier sit. Jy kón al verskuif het Batavië toe of Patria toe, maar nee: Marcus Louw is hier gebore en hier wil hy doodgaan. Hoe kon mens ook verwag Elisabeth moes anders wees?" (OW, 31). Perhaps less stubborn and more afraid, Delphina in *Philida* also chooses to stay where she is kept as a slave for it is the only place that is familiar to her. Philida comments: "sy bly liever op die plek wat sy ken en waar daar vir haar gesorg word, dis hier waar sy hoort. Dit kan wees dat sy dalk later jammer

¹³⁸ She states: "Dit is my plek hierdie. As ek moet dood, dan dood ek hier" (Kennis, 117).

¹³⁹ Another example of a character who stubbornly wishes to stay in the same place is Cornelis in *Philida*. His insistence on staying is however more figurative: "Maar ek sweer voor die einste Here: ek laat my nie sommer so afwas nie. Ek sal staan waar ek staan. Al moet die wêreld om my vergaan. Ek staan. Hoor jy, Here? Piel-orent sal ek hier bly staan" (Philida, 100).

sal wees dat sy nie ook gaan kyk het nie, maar vir nou sien sy nie kans nie, dié land is vir haar te groot en te wild” (*Philida*, 293).

In choosing to stay with Adam on the beach, Elisabeth experiences a sense of calm as well. She realizes that she does not need anything else: no wagons, not her people nor the Cape. She agrees with Adam that they are crazy: “Daarom gaan ons nie terug nie. Dis ons plek dié” (OW, 107). Estienne finds peace in his place as well, even when it is the dark hole prison in the castle: “Ek is hier. En ek is nie spyt nie” (Inteendeel, 298). The comfort of knowing one’s place is depicted by *Philida*’s Cornelis as well. After his slave Adam’s death sentence, Cornelis longs to go home:

Ek moes by die huis kom. My plaas met sy spierwit mure tussen die baie groene van sy wingerde en sy boorde, my vastigheid, my plek, my plaas, so voor die HereGod, my Zandvliet. Ek wou terugkom by wat vir my bekend was: die diere wat my eien, wat vir my sê ek is hulle baas. En vandat ons die ringmuur deur is, was dit of die Here weer sy arms om my toevou [...] en dis daarom dat ek weer hier op my plaas, by my rondas en beukelaar, wou terugkom. Terug, terug. Ek kon weer asemhaal. (*Philida*, 79)

His home offers him well-known security, assurance and ‘piece of mind’ after the trauma he witnessed. Contrarily to Cornelis’ solace, many characters share a sentiment of discomfort and distress for not feeling at home. On their way back to the Cape, the slave Januarie converses with Adam about his way ‘home’:

‘Jy sal ook seker bly wees as jy nou eers by die huis is?’
‘By die huis?’
‘In die Kaap mos’
‘O ja, natuurlik’. Hy sit stil voor hom en uitkyk, en herhaal: ‘Ja. By die huis’”. (OW, 192)

Adam’s reaction suggests that his ‘prescribed’ home, his hometown, does not call up the expected sense of consolation. The character Estienne is also doubtful of his ‘destined’ home: as a child, he argues that he is adopted: “Ek weet dit, want ek weet ek hoort nie in hiedie armsalige ou krotjie nie!” (Inteendeel, 46). His sense of estrangement follows him through life. As an adult in Africa, Estienne describes how his unease regarding the space that surrounds him influences his self-awareness. He notes that he feels trapped in a space where he does not belong (Inteendeel, 152-153).¹⁴⁰ He never

¹⁴⁰ He states: “Vandaar dié vreemde, ontstemmende indruk dat ek uit pas is met myself, selfs wanneer ek werk aan die dokumente vir my verdediging: asof ek nie skryf nie, maar geskrywe word; nie waarneem nie, maar waargeneem word—

seems to find a country, home, or place that comforts him. When ‘let’ out of his “cagie”, he describes how he, as always before, moves like a stranger amongst others: “Ek was van elders. En selfs daardie elders kon ek nie omskryf nie: dit was beslis nie my cagie nie. Ook nie Europa nie—nóg Middelburg nóg Amsterdam, nóg Orléans of Bazoches: dit was, altyd, net ‘elders’. En weldra het die ongemak van dié besef vererger tot ‘n ondraaglike ellende” (Inteendeel, 150). Estienne’s sentiment evokes Bhabha’s notion of the ‘unhomely’ (1997: 445) for he constantly feels estranged. Even when finding a ‘home’, he remains ‘out of place’. His home becomes the place of displacement.

Other characters, such as the slave Achilles, knows his place of solace very well but is unable to return to it. Homesick, he reminisces:

Ek is ver van my land af. Niks wat hier is, is van my nie [...] ek sal nooit weer die pad na my land toe terug kry nie, ek sal nooit weer die mtilibome sien wat daar in die wind waai nie [...] Ek het altyd gedink dis daai mtilibome wat die wind laat waai, maar nou weet ek die wind laat hom nie aansê nie. Hy waai maar net. En as ek eendag dood is, sal hy nog altyd bly waai. Net ek sal nie meer daar wees om te sien nie. (Philida, 261)

The Zulu nightguard that Josef meets in Johannesburg similarly longs for his country. Josef describes how difficult it is to understand him due to his sense of displacement:

Ek kon die ou man nooit gepeil kry nie. Hy het die indruk geskep dat daar vir hom net één werklikheid bestaan: die groen heuwels van sy land, die ronde hutte, die groot vrugbare vroue, alles wat hy as opgekote umfaan verlaat het en waarheen hy—o, gewis—een van die dae sou terugkeer: vir hom was Sensangakona en Tsjaka nog ‘n werklikheid wat sy hele ruimte volgestaan het. (Kennis, 235)

Josef perceives the guard as being out of place in his present reality since he is nostalgically longing for his own country and his people. In a dream-like manner, his past, the country that he left, remains his reality.

Perhaps the best example of recognizing one’s place and one’s home and the effect thereof is found in *Philida*. While walking to Stellenbosch, Philida describes how well she knows Zandvliet, its plants, its

op ‘n groot afstand, ‘n afstand van tyd en ruimte, uit ‘n eeu wat nog nie aangebreek het nie. En wat sou so iemand verstaan van hierdie ek, vasgekeer in dié ruimte waar ek nie hoort nie?” (Inteendeel, 152-153).

animals, its house and the pains and pleasures that she associates with it (Philida, 38-39).¹⁴¹ Despite Philida's familiarity with the farm, she highlights the fact that it never was a place she could call her own. Her relation with Zandvliet alters throughout the novel: On her way back to the room that she shares with Ouma Nella, Philida walks past various animals and observes: "Elkeen op sy plek, en ek ook op my plek. Nou en vir goed" (Philida, 72). At times she nevertheless denies that Zandvliet is her place, but rather calls it the place where she belongs: "Dis nie my plek dié nie, maar dis waar ek hoort. Want dis hier waar ek weet: daar is 'n stilte van die nag en daar is 'n stilte van die dag, en hier kan ek hulle altwee hoor. Hier is hulle altwee myne. Dis soos my skaduwee en my stories. Hulle loop die hele pad saam met my" (Philida, 70). Philida finally concludes that Zandvliet is neither her home nor the place where she belongs: "[S]elfs dié plek wat my huis is, is nie meer myne soos ek gedink het nie. Ek hoort nie hier nie. Ek hoort nêrens meer nie. Daar kan altyd met my gemaak word wat ander mense met my wil maak. Ek is 'n stuk breiwerk wat deur iemand anders gebrei word. (Philida, 73). Ouma Nella shares a similar ambivalent relation with the farm. She is uncertain whether she could call it her home: "Maar hoe kan jy sê dis ons huis wat anderkant wag? Al het ek my eie kamer, is dit nog nie te sê nie" (Philida, 125). Notwithstanding a home, she describes it as the place where she wants to return to: "Dis die plek waar ek nou wil terugkom. Dis waar my gedagtes boer. Dis waar ek hoort" (Philida, 127).

Philida demonstrates how realizing where you do not belong is equally empowering. After a long and difficult journey to the Gariep, Philida is convinced that they should turn around: "Ja goed, dis die Gariep, dit moet wees. Dis wat hulle sê dit is. Maar dis nie waar ek moet wees nie: dié is nie my plek nie. Maar dan vra ek: waar is my plek dan? Ouma Nella, waar is ek nie? En waar is ek?" (Philida, 307). She believes that they should return home:

Woester toe. Huis toe. Want dalk is dit nou onse plek. Dit weet ons nou eers goed omdat ons heelpad tot hier geloop het. Ek en jy en die kinders [...] Want nou sal ons vir die eerste keer die plek behoorlik ken. *Ons* plek. Ek het jou al gesê ek het my Ouma Nella eenkeer gevra: Ouma Nella, waar is ek nie? Maar dis eers vannag onder hierdie sterre dat ek vir jou kan sê: Nou weet ek. Op hierdie plek is ek nie. Die enigste plek waar ek is, is daar waar ek vandaan kom. En die enigste manier om dit te weet, is om heelpad hier na die Gariep toe te kom. Gariep is die naam

¹⁴¹ Philida declares: "Met elke treetjie kom ek wegter van Zandvliet af. Dis soos 'n steekpyn in my bors, want dit vat my weg van alles wat nooit myne was nie [...] Ek ken daardie plaas, elke sloot en elke klip ken ek, elke treetjie land en wingerd, die palmiet en die bloekombos, die diep koelte van die bamboesbos, die klein afgewitte kerkhoffie tussen die langhuis en die bamboesbos, waar die paar dooie mense lê. Die pad waar Frans my daardie eerste slag gevat het toe dit net ek en hy was. Hoe goed ken ek nie daardie huis nie. Die lang stoep en die swaar voordeur van doodskisplanke en die breë gang, altyd koel in die somer as die sonbesies skree. Die klein tafeltjie in die gang, geelhout en stinkhout, en die spieël. Spieëls oral waar jy kyk, jy kom nooit van jousef af weg nie" (Philida, 38-39).

van die plek waar mens moet kom uitvind wat jy vantevore nie vir seker geweet het nie [...] Ons *moes* hiernatoe kom [...] Dit was die enigste manier om uit te vind. (Philida, 308)

Whilst acknowledging your place as your home brings comfort to some characters, and realizing that ‘your place’ is not your home brings discomfort to others, Philida concludes that it is equally empowering to discover where you do not belong—to know which places are not ‘your place’ or your home. Philida suggests that not identifying with a place is not necessarily negative: establishing the lack of a connection or even an uncertain attachment to a place is also of value for one’s sense of self. She claims that it is more than valueable; “Ons *moes* hiernatoe kom” (Philida, 308): it is essential.

The examination of characters’ sense of place aids me in making the following observations: Brink’s characters often employ spatial and plant-like metaphors to accentuate how they are deeply connected, or ‘rooted’, in a specific place. They emphasize how it is often their collective identity, the notion of having a ‘my people’; that is connected with a certain place that drives them and gives them energy for resistance. For some, the idea of identifying with a homeland or a place that they can call their own is positive: it gives them comfort, assurance, hope, security and a common sense of belonging. For others, the idea of belonging is ‘forced’: they are ‘bred’ in and for the country, but do not have the comfort of calling it their own. Characters such as Josef and Philida point out that it is not necessary to be attached to a certain place or home. They insist that their identity does not depend on ‘knowing your place’, but rather in recognizing their active role in society.

Throughout the selected works of Brink, there mostly exists a strong and deep-rooted connection between characters’ identities and the spaces that surround them. They look to the environs for sense; it serves as a medium for orientation, reflection and comparison when seeking self-knowledge. Spaces also aid characters in gaining knowledge, respect, and acknowledgement for the Other. While it is valuable to be able to form and recognize an attachment with a specific place, some characters insist that it is equally beneficial to their sense of self to experience a lack of bonds with certain places. Their identity is therefore not solely dependent or symbiotic, as postcolonial critics (Viljoen *et al*, 2004; Schama, 1995; Duncan, 1996) suggest, on space.

Although the focus of the following sections will predominantly fall on representations of space within the selected work of Brink, continual references will be made that allude to the role of space on the construction of characters' identities. In the next session, for example, I turn my attention to the representation of spatial binaries in Brink's novels and indicate how it is through binary logic, as Bhabha (2004: 5) reminds us, that identities of difference are often constructed.

5.2.2 Spatial boundaries, binaries, and beyond

Within postcolonial literature, the necessity to challenge universalist spatial dichotomies comes to the forefront (Crehan, 1998; Darian-Smith *et al*, 1996). In our postcolonial world, to reiterate McDowell's (1996: 38) words, "old boundaries are being transgressed and disrupted and replaced by new divisions" through a range of processes. In this section of the chapter, I will investigate the possible deconstruction or 'disruption' of such spatial boundaries and binaries in Brink's work by exploring the nature of their representation. After examining the notion of natural and social borders in the novels, I will explore three sets of spatial binaries or opposing narrative worlds that are commonly identified in the texts: the wilderness versus the civilized; the known versus the unknown as well as light versus darkness. I will end this section's examination by demonstrating how Brink's characters often tend to either transgress these boundaries or find themselves in the 'threshold' space 'inbetween'.

a. Boundaries

Within the chosen Brink novels, there are ample references to borders that are represented as forms of boundaries to characters. "A boundary", as Heidegger (in Bhabha, 2004: 1) however points out, "is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing". This section will examine the "presencing" that draws characters towards and over natural as well as social borders.

Various characters accentuate different natural borders or frontiers they come across on their journeys (OW, 24; Inteendeel, 26). The traversing of physical borders is often equated with the process of

crossing psychological barriers:¹⁴² Adam for example ponders the physical, but also emotional, frontier of freedom: “dié nag het ek al geweet: soontoe lê die Vryheid. Al soontoe-er. Maar presies waar begin dit dan, anderkant watter berg, oorkant watter rivier? Waar hou die suide op met trek aan ’n mens, soos ’n gety, ingesuig soos deur wind: diékant toe, mens toe, kindwees toe?” (OW, 16). Inasmuch as there is no definite border that will set Adam totally free, there is no border that will allow him to leave his past behind and to forget where he comes from.

Corporal borders are suggested too as characters question the body’s boundaries and margins. After Dilpert’s death, Josef feels physically and emotionally exhausted: “Nou was ek moeg. Nou was ek alleen. Ek het gedink: Ek kan nie verder nie. En toe het ek gedink: Nee, ek kan verder. Dilpert het gesê: Mens kan altyd, jy bereik nooit jou grens nie” (Kennis, 256). He again reflects on the body’s limits in prison: “Breek af, breek af. Maar tot waar kan dit gaan? Waar kom die liggaam by sy grens?” (Kennis, 268). Where natural borders seem to be sudden and definitive, the suggestion is made that corporal boundaries can always be deferred.

Arguably the most prominent borders found in Brink’s oeuvre are those that are set out by social structures. In the novels chosen for this study, most social borders are imposed by two settings: colonial South Africa and apartheid/post-apartheid South Africa. The notion of the border comes to the forefront in American political activist, Eldridge Cleaver’s words that are used as a motto in *’n Oomblik in die Wind*. It reads:

We live in a disoriented, deranged social structure, and we have transcended its barriers in our own ways and have stepped psychologically outside its madness and repressions. It is lonely out here. We recognize each other. And, having recognized each other, is it any wonder that our souls cling together even while our minds equivocate, hesitate, vacillate, and tremble?

Cleaver’s thoughts encompass a general atmosphere present in most of the chosen Brink novels. The ridicule of socially imposed structures is emphasized throughout his oeuvre. As Cleaver suggests, an attempt to transcend these imposed borders has a psychological effect: the following analysis will demonstrate how crossing barriers, or even the mere thought of traversing them, often leave characters feeling alienated.

¹⁴² The narrator in *’n Oomblik in die wind* for example notes that “(d)ie berg is ’n skeiding, en ’n brug, tussen herinnering en onskuld, tussen die halfbekende en die volstrek anderse—’n dimensie in sy eie reg absoluut” (OW, 139).

Within the borders explored in the chosen Brink novels, the segregation of or the margins between black/colored and white in apartheid South Africa are at the forefront.¹⁴³ In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef describes these borders as an essential part of his and his family's existence and often signals its determining influence on his identity and his spatial awareness (Kennis, 77, 89, 110). He remembers the connection between race and space throughout his childhood: "die kruis skemerwit van die kerk met sy rye banke, die witmense voor en ons klompie bruinmense agter teen die muur" (Kennis, 83). He recalls going to the circus: "Ek moes gaan toustaan by die sirkus se gatkant, en 'n kwaai man met 'n rooi gesig het ons aangeja en binnetoe geboender. Soos 'n trop hoenders het hulle ons op die hanebalke ingeryg, net soveel as wat daar kon inkom: naderhand sit ons twee-twee op mekaar. Aan Willem-hulle se kant van die tent, het ek gesien, was daar nog heelparty oop kolle" (Kennis, 91). When returning to South Africa after years in London, Josef is very quickly reminded of the eminent barriers that are still present in his country (Kennis, 199, 146, 209, 228)¹⁴⁴.

In *Inteendeel*, similar physical borders are visible. Charles and Estienne are portrayed talking in the living room when Charles "rek sy nek om deur die venster na die reëndeurweekte toneel daarbuite te kyk waar slawe en Hottentotte besig was om vore te grawe, wingerd te snoei, mis in die nat grond in te werk" (Inteendeel, 97). Estienne later observes: "Dan kyk hy weer deur die venster en staan op om dit oop te skuif—'n dun vlaag reën stuif oor die breë stoep in ons gesigte—en bulder op die slawe om verdomp op te skud, hulle het nie die hele donnerse dag tyd nie" (Inteendeel, 98).

These imposed physical borders all signal emotional effects on the characters involved: the imposed social structure leads to a possible schizophrenic existence (Kennis, 77); a feeling of being treated as

¹⁴³ The segregation portrayed in the novels is not always only racial, but also sexual. In *Duiwelskloof*, for example, emphasis is placed on the fact that women and men sit separately in the church (Duiwelskloof, 73).

¹⁴⁴ Josef describes how he arrives at the airport: "Meganies stap ek in die rigting waarheen die meeste mans die afgelope uur verdwyn het [...] 'n Jong man met 'n ligte kuif [...] maak 'n tereg wysende gebaartjie met sy vinger en beduie na die bordjie bokant die deur wat sê: HERE: SLEGS BLANKES/ GENTS/WHITES ONLY. Blindelings loop ek terug [...] 'n Motor wat haastig wegtrek, ry my byna raak. Ek voel net 'n droogheid in my keel, en asof my ledemate lam is. God, dink ek. Ek is tuis" (Kennis, 199). Josef wishes to accompany Derek to the theatre, but Derek regretfully needs to remind him: "jy kan nie saamgaan nie [...] Ons soek ons een-en-dertig kultuurmense baie sorgvuldig uit. Jy het nie 'n wit bruilofskleed nie, Josef" (Kennis, 209). The segregation is even observed in the morgue. Dilpert observes: "Het jy opgelet die lyke lê daar ook wit en bruin apart? [...] Maar hulle het ons in die wit saal toegelaat. As dit 'n eetplek was, sou ons eenkant moes gebly het. Maar tussen lewe en dood vrot apartheid af" (Kennis, 146). The physical borders of apartheid are also prominent when Josef visits Soweto: "ver anderkant, ver maar sigbaar, 'n doringdraad om alles af te kamp, om die opmars van die huisiesregiment te keer" (Kennis, 228).

animals (Kennis, 91) and being restricted and squeezed in (Kennis, 83, 110); a sentiment of self-consciousness (Kennis, 199) of superiority and of being mistreated (Inteendeel, 98). The barriers also have social consequences as physical borderlines often result in socially restricted spaces. Examples of such restricted spaces include the attic in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* and the “dispens” in *Philida*: due to their race, Adam and Philida are not allowed to enter these spaces alone.¹⁴⁵ The white man on the contrary, as suggested by Adam (OW, 39), knows no such restricted spaces:

Hy wat wit is en my baas, gegee deur God: vir hom is die wêreld oop; sy wet keer hóm nie [...] hy het toegang tot almal wat wit is soos hy self: maar ook tot ons, na willekeur. Die kere met die wynwa na die stad [...] Dan moes ek buite wag vir sononder, wanneer die witmans binnegelaat word na die vrouekwartier [...] Moenie vra nie, mens vra nie, sê my ma, tevrede met die wêreld. Vir haar was dit nooit nodig om te verstaan nie. Haar mense is dood in die groot siekte—as sy moes dood, ook goed—en toe't hulle haar opgetel en terugbring en kom leer van die Here-God en die Slawehuis, en gedweë het sy slavin geword. (OW, 39)

Adam argues that, as opposed to him, his white owner has access to everything and everyone. He suggests that in the white man's 'open world', he has the 'God-given' right to move freely amongst places and people: he is free to go where he pleases and to do what he wants where he wants with whom he wants. To echo Glissant (1996): through a type of foundation narrative (“gegee deur God”), the white man's possession of 'borderless' territory is supposedly legitimized. His 'territory' does not only refer to physical places: the land/body metaphor used extensively in the text allows us to assume that the spaces Adam's owner 'possesses' comprises of people (and especially women) as well. Contrary to the white man, the colored man and woman are not permitted freedom of movement. Men and women of color are told where to belong (“terugbring en kom leer van die Here-God en die Slawehuis”); told where they are allowed to be (“Dan moes ek buite wag”); and who they must be (“en gedweë het sy slavin geword”). The colored man and woman must submissively follow. In contrast to his white owner, Adam feels restricted when it comes to the 'spaces' represented by people. He refers to the 'forbidden space' that is Elisabeth: “Wit; met jou swart skaduwee [...] Jy: die allerlaaste jymag-nie, die onaanraakbaarste van alles, jy: wit, vrou” (OW, 16). He later pleads to himself: “Moenie

¹⁴⁵ Adam remembers the attic where he and Lewies used to play after they finished their work: “ek wat vir Lewies die stories moes oorvertel as ons die soet rosyne eet. Daar was niks geheims daaromtrent nie, dit het maar so gebeur: die solder was nie vir ons, soos die kelder, verbode nie” (OW, 21). With Lewies by his side, the attic is not forbidden, but on the day that he goes there alone, Adam is punished. Philida similarly refers to the “dispens” where, as a child, she was not allowed to go without Ouma Nella for she naively believes “daar was seker te veel wat kan breek en so” (Philida, 207).

my versoek nie, dink hy: bly wat jy is. Jy is wit; en ek is in my bruinheid bruin. Moenie my laat dink dat jy maar net vrou en mens is nie: moenie ons albei oor die afgrond laat val nie” (OW, 42).

Natural and social borders are part of characters’ physical and psychological journeys. When it comes to natural borders, characters insist on the necessity to traverse and sometimes to defer the barriers presented to them. Borders imposed by social structures are less easily crossed: they have a during emotional and social effect on characters from both sides. A closer examination of these opposing sides follows in the next section as I examine the following spatial binaries: the wilderness and the civilized; the known and the unknown; as well as light and darkness.

b. The wilderness and the civilized

The binary between the wilderness or the underexplored interior of South Africa and the civilized Cape’s colonial settlement is dominant in *’n Oomblik in die Wind*. The underexplored interior unquestioningly depicts that which is uncivilized or barbaric (OW, 32) and ‘unfit’ for civilized, white people (OW, 175).¹⁴⁶ Signs of civilization are on the contrary described as a type of achievement, accomplishment or progress (OW, 12, 36, 79)¹⁴⁷, which are ‘unfit’ or at odds with the local inhabitants of the country.¹⁴⁸ The Cape is regarded as the epicenter of the country’s civilization for it represents European standards and traditions.¹⁴⁹ Elisabeth for instance boasts about a feast held in the Cape

¹⁴⁶ Elisabeth’s mother often emphasizes the uncivilized, barbaric interior wilderness of the country in opposition to the civilized Cape. She asks Elisabeth: “Wat anders wag daar op jou tussen die barbare in die wildernis as waansin of die dood? [...] jy is gewoon aan ordentlik lewe, jy is ‘n gerekende mens in die Kaap, jy is ‘n voorbeeld vir ander” (OW, 32).

¹⁴⁷ Adam finds Elisabeth isolated in the wild amongst the remains of her trek, “die relikwieë wat hier in die wildernis die prestasies van haar beskawing verteenwoordig” (OW, 12). Elisabeth notes how her mother would have been proud for she had plenty of time on their journey to sit in front of the mirror and groom herself—in other words, she remained ‘civilized’ even in the ‘barbaric’ interior: “selfs in die wildernis behou mens jou waardigheid” (OW, 36). The wilderness/civilization opposition is again signaled when they come across an isolated house: “Hier is nie bokkies naby soos gewoonlik naby hul ander staanplekke nie: hier moet hulle al weet van mense en verder weggetrek het. Hier het dit, in dié klein kolletjie in die wildernis, beskaaf geraak” (OW, 79). The wife on the farm they come across additionally describes the interior as a place that is not suitable for white people: “Dis net Boesmans en Hotnos en goed wat dit hier hou” (OW, 175).

¹⁴⁸ As a colored slave, Adam is depicted as uncivilized. Dressed in her husband’s clothes, Elisabeth describes him as “‘n nar in die wildernis” (OW, 13). She later again points to his ‘barbaric’ appearance and notes how it makes him seem foreign in his own country. To reiterate her words: “Jý, donker man, donkerte, dood of lewe: wie en wat is jy? Jy met die verskriklike waarheid van jou leuens: jy wat jou, sterk en maer, toemaak in my man se klere, uitheems in jou eie land, nar: wat soek jy by my? Waarom is ek bang vir jou?” (OW, 49).

¹⁴⁹ It is important to note that the Cape in itself can be regarded as two opposing entities, for as Adam points out, he and Elisabeth do not have the same one in mind. When he asks Elisabeth where they are going, to ‘which’ Cape, Elisabeth says: “Daar is tog net een Kaap!”. Adam responds: “Toe ons nog ver was, het dit so gelyk. Ons wou dit graag so gehad het. Maar hoe nader ons kom... [...] Ons twee Kape is nie dieselfde nie. Jy weet dit tog” (OW, 182-183).

where nothing “indigenous” is served (OW, 45). The Cape/interior division additionally symbolizes the distinction between religiousness and heathenism (OW, 51, 144).¹⁵⁰

Adam expresses his aversion to the ‘civilized’ Cape that he recognizes in Elisabeth. When Elisabeth compels him to do as he is told, Adam replies: “In die Kaap sou ek moes doen wat jy sê. Hier besluit ek self” (OW, 57). When Elisabeth questions why he gets angered whenever she says something, Adam reacts: “Omdat alles wat jy sê, so Kaaps is. Omdat jy in niks kan loskom van jou wit Kaapse manier van dink nie. En omdat ek nou gatvol is daarvoor” (OW, 64). It is precisely the Capetonian way of thinking that Elisabeth tries to ignore later in their journey: “Die afgelope dae het hulle soms by plase verbygekom maar hulle doelbewus vermy. Nie net om herhaling te voorkom van die vorige keer nie, maar omdat sy bang was vir wat met hom kon gebeur as iemand hier, so ver van die Kaap, ’n snuf in die neus kry. Hierdie nabyheid van mense is eintlik ’n groter gevaar as die binnelandse wildernis” (OW, 185). Where earlier the presence of other white people would have been a haven, she now perceives it as a greater threat than the ‘dangerous’ wilderness. As Meintjes (2013: 47) points out, “(i)t is only in the natural environment of an African interior, totally isolated from the civilization of the Cape, that Elisabeth and Adam can manage to transcend white supremacist and male chauvinist norms and rules and escape from the ‘disorientated, deranged social structures’ which are referred to in one of the mottoes of the text”. Diala (2013: 196) echoes Meintje’s argument and refers to the novel’s “startling revelation that while the wilderness fosters and nurtures human communion, civilisation, in moral terms presented as a state of nature, blights love and impoverishes life”. The initial presentation of civilization as progress and the wilderness as the barbarian uncivilized interior is therefore reversed: it is the civilized that represents debilitation whereas the wilderness portrays a form of forward-thinking. It is this reversal that leads Viljoen (2004: 140) to emphasize how Brink deconstructs the wilderness/civilization dichotomy and the racialization it entails in his attempt to imagine a transformation of South African identity.

¹⁵⁰ Elisabeth states: “Maar die Kaap is dan so godsdienstig, Ma. Om so mooi gereken te word in die Groote Kerk op Sondag, elk op sy plek, die vroue apart op hul gemerkte stoele; rang en stand vir die hemel sekuur by voorbaat bereken. Selfs die bulgeveg is geopen met gebed. Dis eers hier anderkant die berge, Ma, dat die heidensheid begin” (OW, 51). She suggests a similar connection to the inner parts of the country to her mother: “Ma praat asof ek in die hel wil ingaan [...] Dis net die binneland” (OW, 144).

While Kossew's (1996a: 49-50) argument that Brink overcomes certain colonial boundaries in the narrative is of value, from a critical postcolonial perspective I have to agree with Viljoen's (2004: 142-143) reasoning that Brink 'naturalizes' and maintains certain spatial binaries: as a colored slave, Adam is portrayed as a child of nature with a deep, natural and intuitive bond with the wilderness around him, whereas 'European' Elisabeth and Larsson are not (or barely) able to survive in the 'uncivilized' interior of South Africa. Brink additionally, as Viljoen (2004: 144-145) points out, preserves the colonial tendency of feminizing the land through his inclination of portraying the land, and the wilderness specifically, as female. Brink's envisioning of a transformed South African cultural identity (Viljoen, 2004: 140) is moreover, to my mind, not as successful. Even though Elisabeth is able to imagine a new Cape ("Dit gaan vir ons albei 'n nuwe plek wees. Om van voor af te begin") and therefore, to paraphrase Cleaver, to 'transcend its barriers in her own way', Elisabeth maintains that it is only Adam who will (need to) change in order for them to live a 'new' life in a 'new' place: "Jy sal vry wees [...] 'n Vry mens net soos ek. Jy sal kan kom en gaan nes jy wil. Niemand sal ons hinder nie. Jy dink nog te veel aan hoe dit destyds was. Jy's nou 'n nuwe mens" (OW, 182-183). The so-called transformation of identity is consequently lopsided.

The distinction between the civilized Cape and the uncivilized interiors is implied in *Inteendeel* as well. Here, the difference is mostly highlighted in references to language. During his first journey, Estienne observes "'n naastenby beskaafde taal, Nederlands" that is spoken in the Cabo, but towards the outer districts of the colony, he describes the inhabitant's creation of a patois "wat vir 'n Europese oor skaars verstaanbaar is". Even further from the 'center', he describes the Hottentot language as "al minder menslik in sy klank en grammatika. Dit mag met heelwat reg bestempel word as 'n monsteragtige taal". Further away from the civilized 'center' of the Cabo, the languages to Estienne mind become more 'uncivilized'. He concludes: "En daarom lyk dit my volkome logies om aan te neem dat mens in 'n volgende geografiese sirkel, nog verder weg van die Kaap, wesens kan aantref wat biologies eenvoudig nie toegerus is om te praat nie" (Inteendeel, 28). He again refers to 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' use of language when describing a Hottentot woman who has been living with white farmers for more than twenty years. Despite living with "civilized people," Estienne is surprised to hear that she continues "nes die wilde stamme van die binneland," to speak her own language: "uitsluitlik die klikke en kreune te uiter wat onder die Hottentotte deurgaan vir taal" (Inteendeel, 218). Estienne's perception of the inhabitants' languages is therefore linked to his opinion of the space they inhabit: a 'civilized' language

in the civilized ‘center’; a “monsterlike” language in the ‘barbaric’ interior of the country. It explains why he is surprised to hear the Hottentot woman speaking her ‘uncivilized’ language for she lives in a ‘civilized’ environment. Estienne’s change in the way he sees these spaces is, as Kossew (1996b: 72) demonstrates, influenced by his change in perspective on the native inhabitants’ language. When discovering the beauty of their language, Estienne gets emotional and acknowledges that he still has so much to learn (Inteendeel, 286). He realizes that their language and the land are intertwined; that they have a “sigbare taal” through which they call the landscape into being (Inteendeel, 287-288). His realization leads to a deep contemplation of how his own language falls short: “Ek kan sê *buttes of rocher of plaine*, of in die taal van dié kolonie heuwels, rots, veld: maar dit bly leë geluide wat dobber op die wind, so onbeduidend as die ritseling van die gras” (Inteendeel, 287-288). His altered perception of his language’s “empty” sounds mirrors his change in appreciation of the whole country and its people. “He is able”, to reiterate Kossew (1996b: 72), “to acknowledge the ‘space’ as space, not as emptiness to be mapped and named”. He recognizes and accentuates the difference of the native inhabitants’ language to his own: “*Jou taal is anders, hierdie wêreld wat jy in bestaan in praat terwyl ek daarna staan en kyk: harde sediment, lui kontoere, bedrieglike afstande, ruimte, ruimte*” (Inteendeel, 287-288). This observation of Estienne allows him to change from Pratt’s anti-conquest’s ‘seeing-man’ “whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (Pratt, 1992: 7); into an onlooker who, conscious of his lack of power, is aware of his own inadequacy with regards to the vast space around him.

The ‘uncivilized’, distant, or dark wilderness is often equated with the ‘unknown’ (Said, 2002: 247). The margins between the civilized and the wilderness can therefore be likened to the borders between the known and the unknown, a binary that I will explore in the following section.

c. The known and the unknown

The known/unknown opposition is a prominent binary within Brink’s work. Different aspects and characteristics of the borders between familiar spaces or the known and unfamiliar spaces or the unknown can be identified in the chosen novels.

In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, the fear of the 'uncontrollable' and vast unknown is frequently evoked. Elisabeth regards the immense expanse of land as strange (OW, 80)¹⁵¹ and describes the space around her as a "world without end" (OW, 85). She wishes to get to the sea, "(e)nige plek by die see, net nie hier waar daar geen einde is aan die land rondom 'n mens nie" (OW, 19-20), for it is the infinite, unfamiliar space around her that frightens her. She longs to get to the ocean for at least there are physical borders that seem more manageable. Her fear of what lies beyond the controllable, finite 'known' is equated with the fear of the Other: "Sy bly allenig sit. Hoe verskriklik om teen die rand van 'n ander mens te leef. Te weet dat jy hom mag leer ken. Maar is dit moontlik? Mág dit met mens gebeur? Kan jy dit oorleef? Hoe lank kan 'n slak buite sy skulp bestaan? Waarom sou mens jou hand wil uitstrek oor die vlamme, na daardie ander duisternis, terwyl jy dit ook vrees? Juis dáárom?" (OW, 69). Adam embodies the unknown: he is likened to an unfamiliar, strange landscape that lies beyond her familiar space. The idea of crossing the familiar border and allowing herself to get to know him, is frightening; yet it attracts her. She refers to Larsson who awakened the thirst for the other side within her: "hoe vreemd, hoe heeltemal vreemd: wat Larsson ook al in my gekwets of doodgemaak het, dít het hy vir goed in my oopgemaak—dié dors vir anderkant-die-berge. Wat daar ook al mag gebeur" (OW, 138). It is the uncertain possibility offered by the other side or the Other which allures her.¹⁵²

Elisabeth's association of the unknown and the unfamiliar 'Other', raises the familiar Self/Other alignment of colonial subjects (Bhabha, 2004: 58). It recalls the universal practice of distinguishing between the familiar space belonging to the self and the 'unfamiliar' space beyond 'ours' which belongs to the 'other' (Said, 1978: 54). In a Levinasian sense, the Other can easily be understood as an 'unknown territory' beyond 'ours' for "the face of the Other", in Levinas' (1999: 25) terms, is enigmatic and "escapes representation". "A face", to quote Levinas (1991: 91), "is a trace of itself, given over to my responsibility, but to which I am wanting and faulty". He insists that we are responsible for (the face of) the Other,¹⁵³ but believes that our representation of the Other always falls short: we only have traces of the Other for the "face of the other" is in itself a "trace" (Levinas, 1999: 91). Levinas' insistence

¹⁵¹ Hassal (2013: 163, 167-168) indicates how Brink transposed the Australian story of Eliza Fraser to create the story of Elisabeth Larsson. When referring to the story of Mrs. Fraser, the idea of an 'alien' strange world also comes to the forefront: "Her tale of imprisonment and freedom, of old countries and new settlers, of blacks and whites, of love and betrayal in a wilderness that is both Edenic and terrifying, offers God's plenty to the postcolonial novelist searching for a myth embodying his forebears' experience of a new and alien continent" (Hassal, 2013: 163).

¹⁵² Elisabeth's father encourages her to pursue the 'Other side'. He tells her: "Jý moet anderkant uitkom. Iets moois, iets groots, iets wat die moeite werd is. Nie net vir jou nie. Vir my ook" (OW, 194-195).

¹⁵³ Levinas (1999: 25) refers to the face of the Other that "summons me, that demands me, that requires me".

on the enigmatic trace of the Other's face signals how the unfamiliar world of the Other remains out of reach.¹⁵⁴

When it comes to the representation of the Other, a central concern in postcolonial theory (Williams & Chrisman, 1994: 8), I deem it important to, for introductory purposes, consider Levinas' argument on the intertwined relation between the Self and the Other. Levinas believes that the self is inseparable from the other for the other is always already under my skin (Llewelyn, 2000: 204). Levinas (1991: 112, 125) himself describes how "I am 'in myself' through the others" and refers to how "(t)he other is in me and in the midst of my very identification". Levinas' theories on the inseparable connection between the Self and the Other forms a basis for Derek Attridge's (2004) argument on the unknowable other. Attridge contends that the notion of the other is based on a relation: to be 'other' is necessarily to be 'other to' or 'other than'.¹⁵⁵ He insists that the other can be considered as that which does not yet exist in the existent form of language that we have at our disposal. Alterity, to his mind, is that which exists beyond our frame of comprehension: beyond our language, our culture, our mindsets, or in other words, beyond the 'knowable' and the 'familiar'. The other, according to him, "is that which is not knowable until by a creative act it is brought into the field of the same" (Attridge, 2004: 31). We therefore only have parts, or traces to recall Levinas' term, that have been 'translated' into the language of the Self.

Postcolonial critics also explore the bounded nature of the Other in the realm of the Self. They specifically focus on the representation of the 'colonized' Other through the 'colonialist' Self. Bhabha (2004: 64) insists that "(i)t is not the colonialist Self or the colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the white man's artifice inscribed on the black man's body". He highlights the limits of language in "the production of an image of identity"

¹⁵⁴ Levinas' theories on the enigmatic trace that is the Other is used by Derrida in his elaboration of the notion of *différance* (Critchley, 1992: 36). Critchley (1992: 36) describes the notion of *différance* as follows: "The signified concept is never present in and of itself; it signifies only in so far as it is inscribed in a chain of systematic play of differences. This play of differences that is constitutive of meaning 'is' *différance* itself" (Critchley, 1992: 36). When referring to the notion of the trace, Levinas (2003: 41) signals the incomplete 'play' or process of meaning-making himself when he says "la signification de la trace consiste à signifier sans faire apparaître". The Other is therefore never present, we only have an endless chain of its enigmatic traces.

¹⁵⁵ Attridge (2004: 29-30) highlights that there cannot be an absolute other, or Other—an other that is entirely transcendental or an other that is not linked to a certain empirical entity: "Absolute alterity, as long as it remains absolute, cannot be apprehended at all, there is, effectively, no such thing" (Attridge, 2004 : 30). He signals that if there is an absolute other, it concerns religious faith.

(Bhabha, 2004: 64) and emphasizes the inadequacy of representation: “As a principle of identification, the Other bestows a degree of objectivity, but its representation [...] is always ambivalent, disclosing a lack” (Bhabha, 2004: 74).

The appeal to know and to represent the unknown is fundamental in *Inteendeel*. Estienne’s attraction for the unknown is the reason he leaves Europe to come to Africa.¹⁵⁶ He refers to how his desire, “’n brandende vuur,” for what lies beyond his known borders is initially awakened by a former lover (Inteendeel, 80-81). The distant and unknown region for which Estienne thirsts is exemplified in a paradise-like, “wild” and adventurous Southern Africa (Inteendeel, 81).¹⁵⁷ When describing the country, Estienne would say: “dié kolonie teen die rand van die bekende wêreld” (Inteendeel, 15); or “die einde van die bekende wêreld” (Inteendeel, 20, 70); and “hierdie kolonie aan die uiterste punt van Afrika, naby die rand van die aarde” (Inteendeel, 39). The colony is presented as a faraway, exotic place (Inteendeel, 116).

Once in the “exotic” colony, his thirst for the unknown is however not satisfied. Estienne is disappointed with the mundane routine he must keep (Inteendeel, 116). Once the Other, to paraphrase Attridge (2004), is ‘familiar’ to, or has been translated into, Estienne’s own “mundane” language, it can no longer be considered the exciting, alluring Other. The first journey Estienne undertakes to explore the country further awakens the need for a ‘new’ unfamiliar ‘other side’ once more: “Ek het my daar op die rand van ’n baie verlate grens bevind, en niemand het geweet wat daar ánderkant lê nie” (Inteendeel, 32). Travelling through “unmapped” territory, he describes how what lies “there” in “daardie Groot Anderkant”, beyond reach and out of sight, lures him (Inteendeel, 27, 38). The Other Side becomes his yearning passion. He equates it with the mythical city of Monomotapa: “Waarna ék hunker, is die ontdekking van iets heeltemal nuuts, nog sonder naam, skaars benoembaar; iets wat geen menseoë nog aanskou het nie, aarde wat nog g’n mensespoor vertoon nie. In die heel laaste instansie, Monomotapa” (Inteendeel, 22). Monomotapa awaits him on the horizon of the unknown. To reach it, he knows that he first needs to set forth into the known: “En selfs al weet ek [...] dat my

¹⁵⁶ The appeal of the unknown motivates other characters to leave their home countries as well. Josef for instance refers to Simon, a poet who did not leave South Africa as a result of political reasons, but rather “omdat hy ’n honger na die vreemde wou stil” (Kennis, 176).

¹⁵⁷ Estienne states: “Henri het my vertel van sy tante wat daar in die wilde land agtergebly het; en met Héloïse het ek afgespreek dat ons eendag saam na die tante toe sou wegloop. Ons sou van Orléans na *Orléans* trek, al die grense tussen die twee oorsteek, en daar vir altyd en altyd gelukkig en avontuurlik saamwoon” (Inteendeel, 81).

eintlike bemoeienis die *onbekende* is, aanvaar ek die nodigheid om eers die bekende te omskryf. Monomotapa lê en wag. Ek is op pad soontoe; en toewyding aan detail is die prys wat dit verg” (Inteendeel, 23).

Monomotapa is the destination he intends to finally reach and therefore he always has the mythical city at the back of his mind. He believes that any information about strange or unexplored spaces inexplicably point to this exotic place (Inteendeel, 27).¹⁵⁸ To his mind, strange people and unknown customs self-evidently signal the big unknown region. Even the strange insects coming through his window allude to Monomotapa (Inteendeel, 139).¹⁵⁹ Further data he gathers from the Other Side affirms that it represents an ‘Other Life’—a bizarre, strange, fearful yet exciting and new existence (Inteendeel, 27-28, 116). Monomotapa, the unknown, or the Other Side represent a whole new world for Estienne: a world that encompasses all that he ever searched for. He imagines that even Rosette, ‘the one who got away’, will be there waiting for him (Inteendeel, 116). When he finally has the (imagined) opportunity to cross over the “stream that forever separates the known from the unknown,” he enters the borderless forbidden Other Side (Inteendeel, 54, 152). He depicts the “unknown world” beyond limits as a place where anything is possible (Inteendeel, 203).

Estienne’s traverse is undoubtedly an imagined one, for he maintains that Monomotapa remains “unfindable”. Jeanne tells him: “Dis nog g’n rede om op te hou glo nie [...] Monomotapa is ’n stad van woorde”; and Estienne responds: “Dis waarom ek daarin glo” (Inteendeel, 207). Ultimately, Monomotapa, as “a city of words” does not suffice in representing the unknown Other Side for which Estienne longs. When Tante Louise asks him if it is still Monomotapa that he is after, Estienne replies: “Die naam is nie belangrik nie [...] Solank mens dit ’n naam kan gee, is dit nooit genoeg nie. Wat ek soek, lê daar ánderkant. Anderkant al wat naam is” (Inteendeel, 103). Estienne’s Other Side evolves

¹⁵⁸ Estienne states: “Daar is verontrustende gerugte van groot groepe skelms wat aan die oorkant van die rivier saamdrom—ontsnapte bandiete, wegloopslawe, vryswartes, rowers met pryse op hul koppe, wit jagters, ontstuimige half-bloede, allerhande voëlvry verklaardes. Daar is ook ander verhale, oor vreemde mense met rare gewoontes [...] (Ongetwyfeld ’n teken van Monomotapa?)” (Inteendeel, 27).

¹⁵⁹ He describes the insects coming through his window: “Snags kom daar groot insekte deur my oop venster binnegevlieg om langdurig selfmoord te pleeg in die vlam van my lamp: nie die gebruikelike motte of muskiete of muggies wat ek uit Europa ken nie, maar venynige gediertes met gif in hul angels of snuite, met wirrende geskubde vlerke en talle pote, miniatuurdrake uit die geheimsinnige nag daarbuite—’n nag vol vreemde opwindende of bedrukkende reuke, van droogtes, en stof, en naamlose aromatiese kruie uit afgeleë berge en vlaktes. Ek staar uit in die ruimte waarvandaan hulle op my afgevlieg kom, en probeer uitgryp tot ánderkant die riwwe en gebergtes wat ek gesien het: verder, altyd verder; ’n land wat vervloë reisigers Monomotapa genoem het. Maar wat beteken dié sillabes wat my tegelyk lok en vrees inboesem?” (Inteendeel, 139).

into something more than a mere place: it represents all that remains out of reach—that which he cannot understand or describe or in his own words, that which lies beyond words (Inteendeel, 90). He indicates for example how Dora reminds him of Rosette for they both portray that which is and forever will be ‘on the other side’ of his understanding and perspective:

Ook jy het padgegee na daardie ver plek anderkant ons grense. Iets omtrent haar taaigheid, haar soort onafhanklikheid, het my ontstemmend aan jou herinner. Goed, sy was ’n vrou van my ras; en jy is—anders. Maar in die kort ondervinding wat ek van julle gehad het, het julle albei iets beliggaam wat anderkant die greep van my manlike definisies lê [...] ’n Vroulikheid [...] onaantasbaar deur die wêreld, bevestigend [...] En nou, skielik, is sy verorber—nie deur roofdiere nie, maar deur die land self. En op die een of ander manier ondermyn dit my eie *raison d’être*. (Inteendeel, 247)

Estienne regards women (Dora, Rosette, and even on occasion Jeanne) as unknowable ‘others’ that remain unfathomable and unreachable within his limited “male definitions”.¹⁶⁰ Where Elisabeth equates Adam to the uncertain and unfamiliar environment around her, Estienne similarly likens Rosette to the unknown ‘Other side’. Both are attracted to the unfamiliar space represented by the Other: be it a real or imagined place, a man or woman. In a Levinasian sense, Estienne realizes that the Other will forever remain out of reach and on the Other Side of his understanding. In attempting to reach, know or produce an image of the Other, his limited language will forever be lacking (Bhabha, 2004: 64, 74). Estienne’s Other represents Levinas’ disappearing ‘enigmatic trace’ or the deferred signified in Derrida’s *différance*. It appears Estienne even suggests that the African landscape itself embodies the idea of *différance* when he says:

(H)ierdie land maak dit nie vir ’n man maklik om maklik ’n finale oordeel oor sake te hê nie. Daar is so min waarvan mens kan seker wees. As klippe maar net klippe was, en riviere net riviere en niks behalwe riviere nie, en die geel poffertjies van doringbome net stof; as dinge nie wou beduie na iets anders agter hulle nie, en elke ding kon volstaan met homself, sy eie betekenis: dan was daar dalk nog ’n kans. (Inteendeel, 201)

Estienne feels despondent, for the landscape presents, in Levinas’ terms, an endless chain of its enigmatic traces. Nothing simply ‘is’ for everything enigmatically points to something else. The

¹⁶⁰ Estienne describes Rosette as a memory and Jeanne as a mere “sweeping feather” of the Other Side: “Maar wat kan ek in hierdie tronk beetkry? Al wat daar is, Rosette, is jy, en jy is klaar ’n herinnering wat op homself begin teer. En Jeanne, ’n blote stem: onmisbaar en inspirerend, maar blote asem, ’n windroering, ’n veegsel van ’n veer van Anderkant, ’n roering van die onmoontlike” (Inteendeel, 178).

landscape comprises of an endless play of meanings. He realizes that he is unable to have a final 'grasp' or comprehension of the land. The lands in itself will remain unknown.

In *Duiwelskloof*, the notion of the unknown is represented through the inexplicable or the impossible, for as Flip himself declares, the valley becomes "'n fokken drumpel tussen die bekende en die onmoontlike" (*Duiwelskloof*, 258). Flip's description of the valley allows us to consider it as one of Pratt's (1992: 6-7) possible 'contact zones'. Although not necessarily a 'colonial encounter', Flip's perception of the valley does otherwise align with Pratt's definition: "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (Pratt, 1992: 6-7). In comparison with Pratt's term, the valley moreover invokes a spatial and temporal copresence, interaction, and interlocking of previously separated subjects: the known and the unknown.

An example of an interaction with the unknown is portrayed through Gert Kwas' paintings. Flip explains Gert's painting method:

Wanneer die ry vol was, het Gert weer by die oudste portrette begin en bo-oor geskilder. Sy verf het hy met lynolie verdun, nie uit kunstigheid nie, maar om spaarsamig te werk; met die gevolg dat die ouer gesigte nog vaagweg en ontstemmend, soos deur 'n fokken spieël in 'n raaisel, deur die boonste lae sigbaar bly [...] die blote gedagte aan al die gesigte wat daar so voorkop teen die muur staan, buite my bereik, het my gat lam gemaak. (*Duiwelskloof*, 60)

The 'unreachable' faces can be rationally understood: painting over older portraits and working sparingly with the paint he has, the deepest layers remain slightly visible yet inaccessible. Gert's painting creates a type of palimpsest that reminds of Derrida's *sous-rature*: the older paintings are 'crossed out' by the new, yet they remain legible where they are. Flip depicts for example the painting of Lukas Dood:

Maar soos die meeste van Gert Kwas se werk was dit in laag op laag geskilder [...] Maar duidelik sigbaar daaronder was nog 'n portret van dieselfde man, net heelwat jonger. In die dieper lae ondertoe, was daar die skim van nog 'n gesig met 'n bleddie skrikaanjaende voorkoms en twee gloeiende rooi oë. En agter hom nog ander. (*Duiwelskloof*, 143-144)

The ‘unreachable’ portraits however become inexplicable when Gert explains how the older paintings ‘break through’. When Flip asks him whether he will paint over one of the faces, Gert responds: “Man, hoe meer ek die oues probeer oorskilder, hoe meer slaan hulle weer deur. Gistermiddag, byvoorbeeld, kon mens glad nie meer die jong Lukas Dood sien nie. En ook nie sy ou pa, Lukas Duiwel, hier agter sy blad nie. Maar jy sien self, vandag sit hulle weer sterk” (Duiwelskloof, 144-145). Flip swears that he can discern how the figures in the deeper layers of the paintings become more restless (Duiwelskloof, 147).

Flip additionally adverts to an ‘encounter’ with the unreachable unknown when he describes how he is conscious of that which exists ‘on the other side’. The presence of the unknown is beyond his understanding:

Bedrieglik vreedzaam het die nag oor my bakhand gemaak. Daar was geen geluid nie, maar ek het geweet dat daar soos altyd net anderkant die oor se grense dinge gebeur, ’n rumoerigheid van lewe en dood wat mens sou kon mal maak as dit behoorlik tot jou deurdring. Teen wil en dank is ek tog in die rigting van Ouma Liesbet se huisie [...] En daar gewaar ek haar toe weer op die dak. So helder soos daglig [...] So waar as die Here. Maar net vir ’n oomblik. Toe ek weer kyk, was sy weg [...] die gevoel van onsigbare oë oral in die nag was weer baie sterk. (Duiwelskloof, 255)

Flip is conscious of the inaudible and the invisible: he is aware of what lies beyond the borders of the known. For a moment he is even able to see the deceased Ouma Liesbet. The ‘encounter’ with the unknown however remains mostly fragmental: he is not able to fully see and hear what lies on the other side but is rather only aware of it (Duiwelskloof, 136, 285-286). This awareness of inaudible and invisible things from the unknown is raised in some of the other novels as well.¹⁶¹ In *’n Oomblik in die*

¹⁶¹ Characters’ ability to see the unknown together with the known world around them is often indicated by a ‘clear-eyed’ frame of reference or outlook on space. In *Kennis van die Aand*, Annamaria warns Josef about keeping one’s eyes open for miracles: “’n Man wat sy oë oophou vir wonderwerk, loop hom maklik disnis teen die klippe van die werklikheid”. In contrast to Annamaria, Josef believes that being clear-eyed means being aware of the invisible as well and insists that his reality “ruimte laat vir baie moontlikhede” (Kennis, 191). Josef becomes aware of his own limited perspective through theatre. He refers to the character of the son in *Ses karakters op soek na ’n skrywer*: “Deur die jare het die Seun vir my ’n plaende skaduwee gebly: hy wat gedoem is tot nuttelosheid omdat hy betrokke was in ’n drama waaraan hy nie deel wou hê nie; hy wat sy oë bly sluit het vir die wêreldlike drama waarin hy sy rol gekry het. Hét ek my oë gesluit? Dan was die ergste dat ek al die tyd geglo het ek kyk met oop oë” (Kennis, 254). Josef always believed that he had his eyes open, but he realizes that he has been seeing blindly—an idea that is repeated in the novel (Kennis, 256, 339). The idea of not seeing clearly is raised in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* as well. Elisabeth declares to her father: “Mens doen iets met oop oë. Jy is so seker jou oë is oop. Maar dis soos wanneer jy droom jy wakker is” (OW, 194). *Inteendeel*’s Estienne also refers to the importance of seeing clearly. He mentions how Jeanne would play devil’s advocate: “Hoe anders kan sy my dwing om helder te sien, sonder vooroordeel of wensdinkery?” (Inteendeel, 260). Towards the end of the novel, Estienne regrets the blindness he had before that resulted in him mistreating others (Inteendeel, 298-299). In *Duiwelskloof*, Siener Lukas urges Flip to enter the valley with open eyes as well—words, Flip mentions, he remembers too late (Duiwelskloof, 14, 297). All the above-mentioned references to keeping one’s eyes open relate to characters’ approach to the world around them. For some being

Wind, Elisabeth for instance explains how, after taking a nap in the forest, the environment suddenly changed around them: “Die groen lig van die bos het giftig geword. Die klaarheid het verdwyn en die stamme staan soos suwwe skaduwees in skaduwee, byna bedreigend, stug, stom, groot hompe wrok wat in die skemer broei”. In a similar manner to Flip, she then explains how she is aware of invisible things that remain just out of reach: “’n Paar keer kyk sy skrikbevange om, maar daar is nooit iets nie; daar is altyd iets, onsigbaar” (OW, 90).

The unexplainable presence of things from the other side is emphasized in *Philida* as well. Here, the unknown is often personified through notions of shadows, ghosts or what Philida refers to as “Vaalvoete”.¹⁶² In accordance with Elisabeth in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* and Flip in *Duiwelskloof*, characters in *Philida* are also conscious of invisible and inaudible things that belong to the ‘other side’. Ouma Nella for example contemplates the world beyond the borders of the visible: “Agter al die diere en mense van die plaas kon ek ook ander goed sien: dinge wat roer tussen die bome, agter die boomstamme, in die fyntuin, skaduwees agter die vensters en die hortjies of oopstaandeure wat my laat weet het: die spoeke is ook almal daar, ons word heeltyd dopgehou” (Philida, 128). Philida also describes the strange sentiment that the unknown arouses in her when referring to her constant awareness of things “wat lewe, wat roer, wat vlak by jou hou”. Her knowledge of the unknown also remains fragmental for she observes: “jy sien hulle nooit heeltemal nie, net effens, net skuins” (Philida, 71) and on occasions even emphasizes “ek weet die niks lyk verniet na niks. Onder al die niks lê daar ’n heel ander wêreld wat mens nie kan sien nie, maar jy weet hy’s daar” (Philida, 117-118). Although a world beyond the familiar borders of the known can seem frightening, Philida maintains that the unknown and its inhabitants¹⁶³ bring her comfort and strengthens her sense of self (Philida, 69, 71).

clear-eyed means focusing solely on the physical, ‘real’ space around them for abstract notions do not form part of reality. Others posit that looking at the world clearly requires being conscious of and open for different realities: your own reality and that of others; visible and invisible realities.

¹⁶² She believes that her cat, Kleinkat, is one of the “Vaalvoete” for, to her mind, Kleinkat must be from ‘the other side’ due to the fact that she has a particular air, “iets besonders, iets anderster” around her. She explains how Kleinkat is also able to see what others cannot: “anderkant al die ringmure van die plaas, anderkant al wat plaas is, anderkant die wêreld, anderkant Ingeland, anderkant alles. (Philida, 35).

¹⁶³ Both Philida and Ouma Nella maintain that the ‘invisible’ other side is home for shadow and ghost-like figures: the outcasts and misfits of society. Ouma Nella observes: “Ek is ek, ek is Petronella, ek neuk nie met wat anderkant my weet en my wonder lê nie [...] wat gaan nog vorentoe in dié land van ons word? [...] Die moeilikheid kom by die kjeners, by diés wat nie wil weet hulle is wat hulle is nie. Elkeen bly eintlik sy hele lewe op soek na sy skaduwee wat iewers in die stof losgetrap is en bly lê het. Daar’s oorgenoeg verdwaalde skaduwees om ons” (Philida, 127). The ghosts or shadows of society’s outcasts are portrayed as lost. They are lost for their true identities are shamefully concealed. They are lost because they never had a space that they could claim for themselves. Philida again refers to the inhabitants of the unknown: “Onder al die niks lê daar ’n heel ander wêreld [...] En hy krioel van al die jare en jare se dooies. Dis die kinders wat dood is nog voor hulle gebore is of met die geboorte saam [...] almal wat sommer net opgehou lewe het oor hulle nie kans gesien het vir lewe in hierdie

She insists that the unknown and its shadows and ghosts are essential for her identity: “Daardie skaduwee kan my bang maak, hy kan my kwaad maak, enigiets, maar hy bly myne. [...] ’n Mens se skaduwee, dis soos Ouma Nella al baie gesê het, hy’s soos jou storie, hy kom ook heelpad saam, dag en nag” (Philida, 69). Here Brink’s analogy between space and the stories used to form one’s identity is recalled. Ouma Nella suggests that a person’s shadow, or possibly the shadowy, unknown spaces within and around you, shapes who you are. She is of opinion that it is therefore necessary to not only accept the shadow for what it is (unknown), but to also look to it for meaning.

Within the novels’ portrayals of the known/unknown binary, the space of the unknown has an array of representations: it embodies luring, unfamiliar and far-away places and serves as a metaphor for the unreachable Other. Characters’ attempts to ‘reach’ the unknown (an exotic Other Side, or another person), unmistakably fail for the unknown keeps being deferred. Even though it might be unreachable, characters do encounter fragments of the unknown for they become aware of things that exist beyond their known borders. These unknown things represent unknown spaces that play a defining role in characters’ perceptions of themselves and the world around them.

d. Light and darkness

Additional opposing narrative worlds that can be identified in most of Brink’s chosen novels is that of light and darkness. On the one hand, the light and darkness dualism in Brink’s work echoes the symbolism of traditional Western thought: darkness represents evil or the mysterious whereas light symbolizes good or that which seems transparent. In *Kennis van die Aand*, when scolding Oom Sassie, Ouma Grace says: “Kyk voor jou! [...] Agter is donker” (Kennis, 144). In *Inteendeel*, the night is portrayed as dark and secretive (Inteendeel, 139). Estienne also describes the cage filled with prisoners into which he shuts Rosette as dark. When he ‘releases’ her he depicts how she moves towards him ‘into the light’ (Inteendeel, 64). Darkness is additionally intimidating and frightening: “My lamp is uitgeblaas; daar is nog ’n geflapper van insekvlerke teen die mure. Maar afgesien daarvan is dit baie stil, ’n doodse stilte

land nie, al die slawekinders, al die kinders wat nie wit gebore is nie en ’n skande vir hulle mense was, die baasmense wat met daardie skande nie kon saamlewe nie, ’n hele duisternis van spookmense net-net onder die skil van die aarde, en wat nou daar lê en wag, of sit en kruip en wag dat die laaste basuin moet kom sodat hulle kan opstaan en die lewendes uit die pad kan stoot tot net hulle oorbly, ’n land en ’n wêreld van gebreklikes, die siekes, die halfdoories, die lammes en die kreupeles en die dowes, amman op wag vir die oordeel” (Philida, 117-118).

wat met die donker saamspan om slaap onmoontlik te maak [...] Jeanne is ook hier, in die donker, maar sy praat nie met my nie” (Inteendeel, 144).

An opposite interpretation of light and darkness is however more common in the chosen texts: light is often portrayed as a harsh element while darkness represents a merciful domain. This ‘reversed’ presentation of the dualism is signaled by Josef’s recall of one of his mother’s favorite psalms: “*Mag tog net die duisternis my oorval en die lig nag wees tot my beskutting, dan is selfs die duisternis vir U nie donker nie, en die nag gee lig soos die dag, die duisternis is soos die lig*” (Kennis, 289). In contrast to the psalm, it is not the idea that darkness obtains the qualities of light which makes it attractive to many of Brink’s characters. It is not the mere reversal of the ‘characteristics’ of light and darkness. Each entity remains ‘true’ to itself; the day brings light, and the night darkness and it is for these ‘true’ identities for which they are despised or longed for.

In *Kennis van die Aand*, the light in Josef’s cell is never switched off (Kennis, 13). He describes how he wishes to escape the light and how he longs for darkness outside: “En dikwels [...] staan ek op en klim op my bedjie na die tralievenster bo, net om die nag te probeer snuif wat buite lê” (Kennis, 33).¹⁶⁴ The darkness, just like the wilderness of Africa for which he yearns is close (he can smell it from his window), yet it remains unreachable. He again reiterates: “Bokant my het die ewige gloeilamp nog gebrand maar buite, wis ek, buite was die nag, herbergsamer as my verlate verligte sel” (Kennis, 95).

Many examples in the novels point to the harsh light characters are exposed to during or after their imprisonment. In *Kennis van die Aand*, after tortured in prison, Josef becomes dimly aware of his surroundings when he sees the daylight through the window of the police car: “die son was spierwit in my oë [...] Met my vingers ingehaak in die draad het ek dom gesit en uitstaar na die wêreld wat verbydobber” (Kennis, 262). Estienne in *Inteendeel* similarly describes how the bright and harsh light from the outside world comes as a shock for eyes that have gotten “used to the dark” (Inteendeel, 63).

¹⁶⁴ Josef describes his need for darkness as illogical: “My enigste werklike behoefte, en dié is baie intens, is heeltemal illogies. Ek is self daarvoor verwonderd. Dit is my honger na die donker. Miskien is dit omdat die gloeilamp nou naguit brand. Ek hunker daarna soos vroeër na ‘n vrou, ‘n leniging, ‘n sensuele welbehae. En dikwels [...] staan ek op en klim op my bedjie na die tralievenster bo, net om die nag te probeer snuif wat buite lê – nou al lank nie meer ‘n Kaapse nag waarin mens jou die see kan verbeel nie, maar ‘n Transvaalse. Vroeër sou hier oor klein kampvuurtjies ‘n primordiale donkerte gelê het, met die mal gelag van hiënas of die diep gesteun van ‘n leeu. Nou is daar soms motors, van die snelweg se kant af stad toe of omgekeer, en dis al. En tog is Afrika nie ver nie. Dis so naby soos die nag” (Kennis, 33).

Specific references are made to the crude light characters are subjected to on slave ships when they are sent to the upper deck to be 'cleaned' (Inteendeel, 36; Philida, 122-123).¹⁶⁵ Estienne frequently signals the bright light when referring to his imprisonment in the Dark Hole (Inteendeel, 164, 167) and argues that staying in the Dark Hole has a permanent negative effect on ones' sight (Inteendeel, 253). The harsh light is accentuated towards the end of his imprisonment. Before his death sentence, it is the harsh light that he most noticeably remarks: "Hulle het nou buitekant gaan staan. Daar is 'n gerinkel van sleutels. Nog 'n paar sekondes, dan gaan die lig my in die oë steek [...] Daar draai die sleutel nou [...] 'n Stem roep my naam uit. *Estienne Barbier*. Ja, ek is hier. Hier kom die vreeslike lig" (Inteendeel, 299- 300).

Characters' longing for darkness is often born from the desire for a shelter from the light which exposes them. Light is often equated with an all-seeing eye that prohibits characters from hiding (Kenniss, 32-33; Inteendeel, 16).¹⁶⁶ Josef demonstrates how Jessica does not turn on the light when entering her apartment to prevent people from realizing she is home (Kenniss, 296). Even after walking in the streets together, and therefore after having brought their relationship 'to light', Jessica and Josef prefer to stay in the dark (Kenniss, 390). The light represents that which threatens their relationship: "In die donker kon ek haar hoor vroetel: nie een van ons het oorweeg om 'n lig aan te skakel nie [...] Ons het so gestaan en kyk hoe die vroegste lumier aankom, hoe die stad stadig wakker word, asof ons wou sien, self wou *sien*, hoe alles wat ons bedreig in die eerste lig gestalte kry" (Kenniss, 293).

Besides its exposing element, light is moreover portrayed as harsh and crude. After spending the night with Jessica, Josef describes the "white" day as "kompromisloos lig" the following morning (Kenniss, 299). The grating character of light is frequently emphasized in *Inteendeel*. Estienne is of opinion that

¹⁶⁵ Rosette recalls: "die son was seer in ons oë" (Inteendeel, 36). Ouma Nella also remembers the harsh conditions aboard the ship and how they could no longer distinguish between night and day: "die rye-rye mense in die donkerte, met die stink van alle kante af, braaksel en stront en pis en sweet, dag en nag, maar alles voel soos nag [...] Sonder ophou, voel dit, aanhou, aanhou, in daardie nagdonker, in daardie stink. So een maal 'n week [...] dan kom daar manne met lang swepe af ondertoe en hulle jaag ons teen die lere uit boontoe [...] waar jy voel jy word blind van die son, en hulle gooi emmers vol soutwater oor jou dat jy dink jy gaan versuip, en na 'n ruk moer hulle jou weer terug, af met die lere en terug in die kettings in en dan maak die nag weer toe oor jou. Tot daar lankal nie meer 'n ding soos tyd, soos dag of nag, oor is nie, en dan is dit verby" (Philida, 122-123).

¹⁶⁶ In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef notes: "Dit moet diep in die nag wees, maar aan die lig in my sel maak dit nie verskil nie. Ek het selfs al begin gewoonnd raak aan dié kaal oog wat my so lidloos aanstaar, bestendig soos die sonoog van God oor die primitiewe mens" (Kenniss, 32-33). In *Inteendeel*, Estienne also points to the land under the staring eye of the sun: "'n dimensie van pure ruimte, hardgebakte aarde en korstelige bossies onder die stipstarende oog van die son" (Inteendeel, 16).

it is the first thing one notices when entering the country: “Die lig. Dis die eerste wat mens hier tref. Die lig, wat alles laat anders lyk. In Europa was die lig versag, *tamisée*. Hier is dit direk en ontoegeeflik, aggressief, verblindend” (Inteendeel, 16). On other occasions he describes the light of the country as “kru en ongenaakba[a]r(e)” (Inteendeel, 57); “fel en kwaai, deuringend, genadeloos” (Inteendeel, 83) and “blakerend(e)” (Inteendeel, 84) and accuses the light for Tante Louise’s poor sight (Inteendeel, 84, 89, 101).

The questioning of light becomes central to Estienne’s understanding of the country and its people. He remarks: “Daar is soveel donkerte in die mense van hierdie land. Kan dit wees dat die lig vir hulle te kwaai is, en elkeen teruggedwing word in homself?” (Inteendeel, 78). During his imprisonment in a dark cell, he describes how, in his imagination, he sets out to explore the light of the country once more:

Dikwels in die loop van daardie drie weke duisternis, is ek in my verbeelding uit na die land wat ek nog net een keer, so frustrerend oppervlakkig, probeer verken het. Sy helle lig, amper onvoorstelbaar in dié duisternis [...] Dié land wat ten spyte van sy lig—of juis daarom?—vir my onpeilbaar bly. Ek het toe al, amper fataal, geweet dat ek soontoe sou moes teruggaan, om my op die een of ander manier, selde hoe, daarmee te vereenselwig. (Inteendeel, 166)

The country remains unfathomable despite and due to its light. Estienne suggests that it is precisely this unbounded nature of the country, and its light, that creates a sense of anguish in the ones who travel through it.¹⁶⁷ Light is additionally depicted as an intruder. Walking with Jessica in Kloofnek, Josef delineates the effect the sun has on them:

Eers het ons nog gesels, maar namate die son hoër opgestoot het, het ons stiller geword. Die dag was soos ’n indringer tussen ons en dit was of ons eensklaps skaam geword het om na mekaar te kyk, miskien omdat ons gesigte so nakend was. Ons ademlose gesprek, die hele tuimeling en wonder van die ure wat verby was, dit alles was net moontlik in die nag: oor die weerloosheid wat mens voor die donker het, en oor die genade wat dit jou gee om openhartig te wees. Nou was die dag daar; en alles wat tussen ons gelê is, was amper ongelooflik, deel van ’n andersoortige ruimte. (Kennis, 287)

¹⁶⁷ Estienne believes that the anguish caused by the country’s merciless and harsh light is the reason for the fight that breaks loose on their journey: “Dit alles was nie die gevolg van oormoed of selfs van haat nie, maar van ang: ’n ang vir dié uitgestrekte land, vir sy ruimtes, vir sy ongenadige lig, vir wat skuilhou in dié lig, vir sy donker mense” (Inteendeel, 216).

Light represents a crude space that exposes and shames them. In opposition to light, the mercy offered by darkness is again signaled. The hospitality of darkness is often reiterated in Brink's work. Its most intricate portrayal is perhaps found in *Kennis van die Aand*. Here, darkness or the night becomes a space the characters inhabit and represents a familiar dwelling place. Josef declares that even as a child, he was never afraid of the dark (Kennis, 33-35). He describes how his first acquaintance with the darkness of the night is accompanied by his discovery of the grand piano in the farmstead:

Ek het die klap opgelig [...] geruisloos met 'n vinger oor die gladde tande gestreel. Daar was geen geluid nie, maar met elke sentimeter wat my vinger beweeg het, was daar die móóntlikheid van geluid. Eers toe my vinger op die heel onderste noot tot rus kom, het ek hom ingedruk. Ek het geluister hoe die diep basnoot in die nag indreun, soos 'n klip wat in water val en kringe maak, yler kringe van geluid, al verder weg, later skaars 'n roering, op die horison tussen geluid en stilte; en toe weer die noot ingedruk en opnuut geluister hoe hy nie net wegdreun van my af nie, maar in my in, deur vlees en bloed tot in my gebeente, tot waar die liggaam self ophou en iets verder begin. En in daardie stilte, in daardie geluid wat die stilte hoorbaar gemaak het, het ek die nag ontdek. Tot ek met 'n sonderlinge gevoel van vrede in my gebuk het [...] die klap toegemaak het, en my weg teruggevind het na die wêreld van dooies en lewendes buite. (Kennis, 35-36)

Within the moving silence, Josef encounters the night. He describes it as a boundless and divine space of possibility. The night awakens the idea of Bhabha's 'border dimension' where multiple and often contradictory entities co-exist (Bhabha, 2004): "op die horison tussen geluid en stilte [...] tot waar die liggaam self ophou en iets verder begin". For Josef it is a type of 'third space' of creation ("en iets verder begin") that emits a sound that makes silence audible.

Josef's discovery of the world of darkness or the night gives him peace and he describes how the night continues to be a comforting shelter throughout his life.¹⁶⁸ He depicts the night as the guardian and the landscape of his love for Jessica: "Nou is die nag my bestendige bewaarder, 'n groot vis wat my ingesluk het. En ek vind daar 'n troos in wat die dag nie het nie, 'n suiwerheid soos by Jessica: want die nag was ons domein, dit was die landskap van ons liefde; vir ons was die nag veiligheid en beskutting in die gevaarlike wêreld van die baie oë" (Kennis, 35-36). When night falls in Jessica's apartment, they again experience the solace of darkness: "Die skemer het verdiep, dit was naderhand donker [...] En hier het die volle vertroutheid tussen ons teruggekeer, hier was ons weer in ons genadige domein"

¹⁶⁸ The comfort brought by darkness is raised in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* as well. Adam reminisces over a previous lover and recalls how in her darkness he could understand everything. Contrary to the night, he underlines the humiliation brought by light (OW, 169).

(Kennis, 295). The familiar darkness brings comfort and safety and gives them courage (Kennis, 295, 378).¹⁶⁹ When Josef tells her he loves her, she replies: “Ek wil dit vir jǎou ook sê. Ek wil. Ek weet dit is so. Maar as mǎre kom, as dit weer lig word, as ons weer bang gemaak word...”. Josef reminds her that the night always returns and cites Saint John of the Cross:¹⁷⁰ “*O nag wat liewer as die dagbreek is! / O nag waar ons verenig het, / Minnaar met beminde, / Beminde in minnaar omgeskep*”. Jessica observes: “Ons twee heidene hier in die donker—en ons lê en praat oor Sint Jan!”. Josef believes that Saint John would understand, “Dalk raak ons donkerte aan syne,” he says (Kennis, 295). Kossew (1996a: 82-83) reminds us how their need for darkness “is linked with the necessity for Joseph and Jessica to keep their relationship secret, as this ‘miscegenation’ represents the ultimate sin against apartheid, love across the ‘colour bar’”. As a colored man and a white woman, they need to “inhabit their ‘place’ prescribed by apartheid”. Darkness therefore embodies the safe space in which they can live their relationship.

¹⁶⁹ The courage that characters experience in the dark is also suggested in *Inteendeel*. Estienne notes how the character Willem Meyer is at first afraid of sharing the name of the military man who trades illegally. Estienne observes: “Hy lyk ongemaklik; maar na ‘n rukkie lyk dit asof die toenemende donkerte hom laat moed skep en hy sê suutjies: ‘Dis luitenant Allemann van die Kasteel’” (Inteendeel, 94). Estienne experiences the solace of darkness himself. When trying to escape, he encourages his friend, Nic, to climb aboard the boat first. He reasons: “My eintlike rede om eers te wag, was verspot en sentimenteel: om vir oulaas ‘n rukkie allenig in die donker van my gevaarlike, aangenome land te wees. Om nog een keer op te staar na die Berg, swart op swart, solied, vreesaanjaend, gerusstellend. Om die bietjie wat ek weet, te koester; en die ontsaglikheid van wat ek graag sou wou weet, maar wat my nou vir my ontsê word [...] bewus van die geweld waarmee die land van agter aan my beur” (Inteendeel, 176).

¹⁷⁰ Joubert (2015: 105) indicates how Saint John of the Cross’ incarceration was a time of deep reflexion. She demonstrates how his understanding of God comes to the forefront in the book he writes during his imprisonment, *Die donker nag van die siel (La noche oscura del alma)*: for him God is not only light and joy, but also darkness and abandonment. Josef’s connection with darkness is also prominent in his quest for, in Saint John of the Cross’ terms, ‘purification’. When he is tortured in prison, he reflects on Saint John’s thoughts on the process of cleansing oneself: “Op die aktiewe fase van suiwering, sê Sint Jan, volg die passiewe fase van vervulling. Om die ware ‘donker nag van die siel’ te belewe, moet albei prosesse voltrek word. Om skoon te maak, om te ledig, om jou te pars. Eers as jy die liggaam en sy eise afgesterf het, sy behoefte aan vreugde én aan pyn, sy liefde én sy lus, sy vrese, sy sintuie, sy gewig, dan kan jy opnuut begin liefhê: blind in die donker, warm, en in stilte. Breek af, breek af. Maar tot waar kan dit gaan? Waar kom die liggaam by sy grens? Die donkergrys sel is my huis, maar onblywend en deurdringbaar” (Kennis, 267-268). Josef likens his torture to a process of purification. To free himself from corporal needs and to love once more, he must be broken down. But how long can the dismantling last? It feels as though there is no end to his torture: “Dit hou nie op nie. Vannag hou dit glad nie op nie. Dit is nag, ek weet dit deur die venster. Is dít wat jy bedoel het, Sint Jan? Suiwer my dan. Maak my los van myself” (Kennis, 277). He finally reaches a type of ‘breakthrough’ and admits: “Nou kom die aande makliker as tevore. ‘n Aand is net soos die herfs, ook ‘n oorgangseisoen en sonder trots. Dit is nie sy begin of einde wat belangrik is nie, net sy duur, sy geheime wording. Is dit dié dat Sint Jan ook soveel deernis en begrip het vir die aand?” (Kennis, 304). When finally looking back at their relationship, Josef regards Saint John’s purification as its frame: “Ná die aktiewe nag van suiwering, toe ons van Bainskloof teruggekom het, was dít, om by Sint Jan te bly, die passiewe nag van vervulling. Dit was waaroor ons gepraat het, sy *Donker nag van die siel*, wanneer daar geen lig is om die aandag te verstrooi nie en jy in die hart van die liefde kan indring, *o nag skoner as die dagbreek*” (Kennis, 338).

In accordance with its spatial representation, the night is additionally portrayed as a city. When visiting Johannesburg, Josef mentions his introduction to it: “’n Ander stad het hulle my ook leer ken, tegelyk vriendeliker en vreemder: die nag” (Kennis, 234). The space that the night or darkness represents, is not always perceived in the same way. Josef for example compares the darkness on Annamaria’s boat with that of Soweto: “By Annamaria was die donker in die boot só lewend en so vol rumoer, maar dít was van katte, en dié van mense” (Kennis, 229). He moreover discerns between different nights he has experienced: nights with Jessica, nights on the stage and nights of torture in prison (Kennis, 272).¹⁷¹ He additionally points to the existence of an ‘in-between’ night as well: “Buitekant sal dit skemer bly, ’n aand wat nooit nader kom nie en ook nooit wyk nie, ’n blywende purgatorium. Want daar is sulke vorme van die aand, ek ken hulle” (Kennis, 261).

Josef’s pursuit of darkness is likened to his search for truth and liberty. The idea that the notions of darkness, truth and liberty are intertwined is introduced by the mottos in the novel. The author cites Albert Camus: “Sur une même chose, on ne pense pas de même façon le matin ou le soir. Mais où est le vrai, dans la pensée de la nuit ou l’esprit de midi? Deux réponses, deux races d’hommes”. Camus argues that night and day represent two different but equal truths whereas Bertolt Brecht’s quote, “Das ist eine Nacht des Unglücks, wo der Mensch die Wahrheit sieht”, accentuates that truth can only be found in darkness—a sentiment that, as the analysis suggests, Josef possibly shares. Antonin Artaud moreover introduces the entanglement of darkness and liberty as a motto in the novel: “Toute vraie liberté est noire et se confond inmanquablement avec la liberté du sexe qui est noire elle aussi”. Josef himself is touched by these words of Artaud and cites them effortlessly: “*Alle ware vryheid is donker, en onkeerbaar verbonde aan seksuele vryheid wat ook donker is, ofskoon ons nie goed verstaan waarom nie. En daarom is al die groot Mites donker en kan mens hulle nie voorstel sonder ’n atmosfeer van slagting, foltering en gestorte bloed nie*” (Kennis, 356). After portraying the character Segismundo in “Life is a dream,” Josef reflects on arguments made by Artaud: “Artaud het gelyk gehad, ja, het ek gedink, met die opwinding nog in my: die teater wás iets soos die Swart Dood, ’n pes wat in die donker loop, ’n delirium, ’n verskriklike aansteeklike ding, omdat hy voortkom uit so ’n ou en donker drang, gevoed deur ’n swart son, onontkombaar soos die vryheid” (Kennis, 243). The contradicting character of darkness is highlighted: it is portrayed as a pest and yet it is also an attraction, and a yearning that,

¹⁷¹ Josef declares: “Maar die nag is nie oral eners nie, by Jessica op die berg was dit anders, saans in die teater was dit anders, op haar balkon was dit anders, en die tong is so gevoelig, dis of jy die pyn eet, of jy dit insluk, of jy nooit weer daarvan ontslae sal wees nie” (Kennis, 272).

just like total freedom, remains unreachable. Its interrelated connection perhaps suggests that through theatre, Josef aims to give a form of representation to the ‘unrepresentational’ concepts of darkness,¹⁷² liberty, and truth.

In alignment with Artaud’s musings on freedom and ‘dark urges’, darkness plays a significant role in Josef’s sexual activity. He depicts his best orgasms as dark spaces (Kennis, 169). With Jessica, literal darkness accompanies figurative darkness: “Dit was toe baie donker, die donkerste gedeelte van die nag net vóór dagbreek en ons kon mekaar nie sien nie [...] Nie ’n ontkoming nie, want ons sou nooit weer kon wegkom nie; nie ’n heelheid nie, want ons sou nooit weer heel wees nie. Maar net ’n skaars mededeelsaamheid, ’n donker genade” (Kennis, 380). Darkness is again ambivalently experienced as an almost ‘in-between’ space: it does not offer any form of final wholeness, but merely a shared feeling of mercy. The spatial notion of the ‘in-between’ night is also central to Josef’s final thoughts in prison. He muses:

Die tussentyd van die aand is mos, soos die dagbreek, ’n bars tussen wêrelde, ’n kraak waardeur mens ontsnap—maar na hel of hemel, weet ek nie. En dit word moeiliker deesdae, al moeiliker. Die einde is nou baie naby, alles lê so oop, en woorde is te dun om die gate toe te maak. Vroeër het my herinneringe langsaam en presies aaneengevloei, nou kom hulle hortender en fel. (Kennis, 367)

An ambivalent representation of the night can again be discerned. As something that is beloved and familiar to him, Josef admits that the span of the night becomes more difficult. He even signals how the expected nightfall remains surprising, and perhaps also frightening, to him: “Sommige lewe en sterwe beter as ander. En daarna die donker. Dit bly my verwonder: hoe skielik die aand kan kom. Jy weet die hele dag dat dit voorlê en tog, as dit kom, is dit ’n verrassing” (Kennis, 397). As his final request, he nevertheless asks for darkness. The disappointed warden declares that it is against their regulation but asks Josef: “Maar wat sal jy nou ook in die donker wil sit?”. Josef replies: “Ek hou van die donker” (Kennis, 398). He finally describes the night as an accord between happiness and darkness: “geluk is ’n

¹⁷² The important role of darkness in Josef’s work is stressed through his enthusiasm for a fresh portrayal of Othello: “om Othello voor te stel, soos Hugo en Kott hom gesien het, as personifikasie van die Nag, “’n ontsaglike, fatale Nag”” (Kennis, 355). Where earlier the representation of darkness in the theatre inspired him, Josef acknowledges how during his final days, his only motivation is to change the darkness into theatre: to give a spatial representation of darkness. His search for darkness in theatre is reversed to a search for the theatrical in darkness. Josef observes: “dat ek selfs dié laaste duisternis verander in teater [...] en tog was dit wat my aan die gang gehou het: dat ek dit kón beleef as spel, hoe makaber dan ook al, of hoe finaal, eindspel” (Kennis, 261).

funksie van blindheid. En tog sien ek ook die duisternis wat 'n blinde sien.¹⁷³ Êrens raak ons aan mekaar. Die nag is 'n groot versoener. Nie geluk nie, nee: net om *oop* te bly, om tot die einde bewus te bly van wat gebeur, om niks te ontken nie, en niks by voorbaat uit te sluit nie" (Kennis, 399). The happiness he had before was perhaps due to him being 'blind', oblivious, or 'in the dark', but he nevertheless underscores that he undergoes the desolated darkness of the blind as well. He concludes that it is not a sense of happiness that he experiences, but rather an openness. He aspires to remain open and awake to the end for he cannot neglect the night that is so dear to him: "As hulle môreoggend vyfuur kom op my te roep, sal ek wakker wees. Ek mag hierdie laaste nag nie slaap nie, dit is te kort, dit is te kosbaar. *O nag skoner as die dagbreek*. Ek wil elke uur wakker wees, ek wil elke uur weet" (Kennis, 400). The safe, familiar, and comforting night is his final yearning: "Jessica sal in my arm lê, in die aand, in die nag, in die vertroude donker" (Kennis, 401).

The notion of darkness is additionally paralleled with the world of the unknown discussed earlier: both represent spaces which might seem dangerous or alarming, and yet reassuring. Just like the unknown, an awareness or the acknowledgement of (the space of) darkness is fundamental for characters' identities. In a conversation between Jerry and Noni in *Kennis van die Aand*, the necessity of becoming familiar with the dark is emphasized:

(Jerry): Geluk, my dollie, is 'n funksie van blindheid. As jy eers geëet het van die Boom se vrug...

(Noni): Dan kry jy kat-oë [...] Dan sien jy in die donker.

(Jerry): Mens móét in die donker leer sien. Jy moet die nag leer ken. Anders val jy jou bedonnerd. Nou kan jy ten minste aanhou loop. (Kennis, 232)

In signaling the biblical tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the process of familiarizing yourself with darkness is equated to gaining powerful wisdom. Jerry argues that knowledge of darkness is essential for survival. In accordance with Jerry's sentiment, Josef does set out to acquire knowledge on darkness. His quest is however not one in search of celestial wisdom per se, but rather to understand who he is and where he comes from. In his exploration of his ancestors' history, he discerns darkness as a recurring element.¹⁷⁴ Darkness, or more particularly dark spaces, is part of Josef's family's identity.

¹⁷³ One is reminded of Shakespeare's words ("Looking on darkness that the blind do see"), that is also used as a motto in the novel.

¹⁷⁴ He concludes that the idea of darkness remains at the heart of his family's story: "In die loop van die seisoene kom 'n mens deur herfs en winter darem weer by die lente uit; die ritme van die natuur bring jou anderkant die nag terug by die daeraad—maar dit kom vir my voor asof óns verhaal eintlik 'n kruistog al dieper die nag in is, deur 'n donker wat net groter

His mother tells him: “Josef, ligdag werk ek my gat af vir die witmense, maar donkeraand is dit ons bruinmense se kans. Die Here het vir ons die nag gemaak lat ons ok ’n bietjie plesier kan hê, want die dae is hard” (Kenniss, 96).¹⁷⁵ Just like Josef, his mother feels at home in the dark (Kenniss, 97). Worried about his aspirations on stage, she warns him about the light: “Jy soek om in die lig te kom, is wat jy soek. En óns mense moet yt die lig ytbly, dis nie ons plek nie. Die Here het ons gemaak vir die skarewee, ons is sy aandmense” (Kenniss, 116). Josef also considers himself being part of the ‘people of the night’ when he refers to a Boesman legend: it is believed that there are people without knees “wat in die weste woon en saans die son eet, want die son is lewende vlees”. Josef declares: “Ons sonvreters van die weste, het ek gedink, ons aandmense, ja, ons het nie die rus van lê en slaap nie. Sonder knieë en sonder álles. Tot ons self nie meer is nie, tot net die aanhou aanhou. En die sterre is die oë van dooie siele” (Kenniss, 392). The intricate part of darkness in Josef’s identity is raised by the Zulu night guard as well. After throwing the bones, he tells of Josef: “Hy’s die man van die aand. Maar hy’s nog bang vir die donker [...] Hy kén hom nie. Ek sien hom ver kom, ek sien hom ver kom, van anderkant die dagbreek af” (Kenniss, 235). When the guard discerns a woman in the bones, Josef asks him what he offers her (“brood of klip?”). The guard replies: “Jy gee vir hom die nag” (Kenniss, 235). His profession raises incertitude: being depicted as a man of the night but lacking knowledge of the very element of his existence (darkness), the guard suggests that Josef’s identity is unstable. It can be deduced that all Josef can offer the woman beheld in the bones is the night, in other words, his own uncertain self.

In Brink’s depiction of light and darkness, the traditional binary of Western thought is reversed: in contrast to darkness representing evil and light symbolizing good, spaces immersed in light are portrayed as crude, harsh and exposing; whilst dark places represent safe shelters and dwellings of comfort and security from the judging world outside. Josef for instance also has a sense of pride in the

word: lyding wat nie suiwer nie en nie deurbreek tot tragiese wysheid nie, maar net getrou bly aan sy eie vergeefsheid. Sodat mens ná agt generasies eindelijk kan sê [...] Dit was alles eenvoudig verniet, en die donker is nou meer as aan die begin” (Kenniss, 74). The darkness or night to which Josef refers represents pain and hardship that is present in each of his ancestor’s life stories. His family’s ability to carry on despite the hardships, or darkness, they endure is mirrored by a tale Dilpert tells Josef: “Dilpert het my vertel: as mens in Indië ’n Brahmaan of ander adellike is, dan word die kwaliteit van jou moed bereken volgens jou heldhaftige dae en jou vermoë om jou op te offer; maar as jy tot ’n laer kaste behoort, is moed sinoniem met die woord wat ‘nag’ beteken, *kshatriya*: want onder die parias is die enigste denkbare vorm van moed die moed om te verduur” (Kenniss, 36). He again makes use of a darkness metaphor when he proclaims that his family’s history is of little importance, for it does not form part of History: “my verhaal is nie die geskiedenis nie, maar die skaduweekant daarvan” (Kenniss, 54). He later reiterates: “Dit is klaar geskiedenis; maar weer het ons familie by die skaduweekant verbygesteek” (Kenniss, 73). Their stories are not deemed ‘important’ in the historical narrative of the country.

¹⁷⁵ The idea of having the night for themselves is introduced by another motto in the text. In the words of Leroi Jones: “The day will not save them and we own the night”.

undeniable role of dark places in his family's identity. My analysis however demonstrate that darkness is continuously ambivalently expressed. The world of darkness, be it physical places without light like Jessica's apartment or the Dark Hole; figurative places for hiding or unashamed self-expression; or even the dark suppressed spaces or stories in Josef's family history all suggest a homecoming and at the same time a type of estrangement as well: even though dark spaces might be considered as havens or 'corner stones' of identity, it does not offer its dwellers wholeness or happiness. It does nevertheless provide a type of openness: To reiterate Josef's words in prison: "Die nag is 'n groot versoener. Nie geluk nie, nee: net om oop te bly, om tot die einde bewus te bly van wat gebeur, om niks te ontken nie, en niks by voorbaat uit te sluit nie" (Kennis, 399). In insisting on the openness provided by the albeit uncertain night, Josef's words recall Glissant's notion of a *Relation* from where openness and creation emerge (Glissant, 1990: 170). Just like Glissant's *Relation*, Josef's sphere of interrelated openness is also founded on its opaque character: it is the night that offers him a form of 'reconciliation'. Josef's insistence that the night moreover does not exclude also alludes Bhabha's theory of 'inbetween' spaces or interstitial passages. Bhabha (2004: 2) argues that these spaces provide a terrain to think beyond "narratives of originary and initial subjectivities". They represent "innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha, 2004: 2). In accordance with Josef's perception that the night represents an openness without exclusion or denial, Bhabha (2004: 3) reasons that borderline engagements "may as often be consensual as conflictual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity; realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, high and low; and challenge normative expectations of development and progress". These innovative terrains offered by interstitial passages prevent settling into primordial polarities and accepting fixed identifications. They create "the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha, 2004: 5). The novels' portrayal of other possible examples of such 'inbetween' spaces will be explored in the following section.

e. Crossing into the 'beyond' and the 'inbetween'

The previous sections established the presence of spatial binaries or opposing worlds within the various novels. These worlds are often divided by 'clear' natural or social borders or boundaries. The analysis thus far has only touched on what happens when characters attempt to cross these borders. This section aims to explore the notion of exceeding barriers in more detail. I will firstly demonstrate how

the idea of crossing boundaries into the ‘beyond’ lures characters. Thereafter, I will examine the effect the act of venturing in the ‘limitless’ ‘beyond’ has on characters. I will finally look at examples of characters that, as a result of testing limits, seem to be caught in a type of ‘inbetween’ world.

Bhabha (2004: 5-6) equates crossing boundaries with the act of “going beyond”. He reasons that ‘beyond’ “signifies spatial distance, marks progress (and) promises the future”. The intervention of the ‘beyond’, according to Bhabha (2004: 13), establishes a Heideggerian boundary:¹⁷⁶ the ‘beyond’ represents “a bridge, where ‘presencing’ begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world—the unhomeliness—that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations” (Bhabha, 2004: 13).

The promise that the ‘beyond’ holds according to Bhabha (2004: 13) is what motivates many of Brink’s characters to make their way across literal and figurative borders. Brink’s characters are often portrayed as having a common drive to exceed barriers and to test limits. In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef refers to his ancestor Abraham: “Dit is ’n nuk in ons geslag dat ons die funeste einde van ’n handeling kan voorsien en dan tog voortdwing om met ’n soort beheersde blydschap, te sien hóé ver ons die landskap van die onmoontlike kan in” (Kennis, 64-65). Going against what is expected and standing up to prohibitions is seen as the characters’ duty in society.

Crossing borders often leaves a character with the sentiment of being liberated. Elisabeth describes her sense of freedom when she, against the wishes of the other passengers, goes up to the deck of the boat during a storm. She recalls: “Dit was asof die wêreld vergaan” and describes the experience as “wild en pragtig” (OW, 29). Other characters also experience a liberating feeling when, not necessarily crossing borders, but when loosening themselves of limitations. In *Kennis van die Aand*, in Josef’s search for his ancestor Abraham’s poem, he describes his imagination as unbound:¹⁷⁷ “Dit het my heelwat behae verskaf om deur die bloemlesings van die Eerste Beweging te blaai en elke keer uit die naamlose volksversies ’n nuwe keuse te maak wat ek aan hóm kan toedig. Ek het hoegenaamd geen grond vir my veronderstelling nie—juis daarom voel my verbeelding so ongebonde. Enigiets *kan* syne wees” (Kennis 63). “(O)ngebonde”, his imagination is spatially depicted as free. A similar liberating

¹⁷⁶ To reiterate Heidegger’s definition of a boundary as “that from which something begins its presencing” (Bhabha, 2004: 1).

¹⁷⁷ Josef is told that Abraham wrote it anonymously for *Ons Klyntji* (Kennis, 63).

feeling when letting go of boundaries is experienced by Estienne. In accordance with Josef, it is also Estienne's imagination that he allows to soar unrestrained: he describes how Tante Louise encourages him to tell all his stories—the 'true' ones, the lies, and the imagined ones (Inteendeel, 90). Estienne believes that crossing the borders of what is true, imagined, or false is enlightening. He describes how it gives him insight: "Slegs deur die moontlikheid van die leuen toe te laat, kan ons uitgryp, soos ek in hierdie Donker Gat uitgryp, na wat werklik gebeur het, en gebeur, en nog mag gebeur" (Inteendeel, 31). The employment of the verb 'uitgryp' highlights the spatial notion of grasping or seizing a 'world of possibility' from within the enclosed dark space where Estienne finds himself.

Crossing borders and getting a taste of 'beyond' or 'other side' is not only liberating, but also empowering. Estienne even envies the man whose farm was destroyed by the storm, for this gave him an idea of what lies beyond his expected environment: "En ek wonder of selfs daardie man dit dalk op 'n manier gelukkiger getref het as ek: blootgestel aan die wispelturigheid van die natuur, begin jy naderhand die onverwagte te verwag; die onmoontlike raak moontlik; aan elke gebeurtenis sit iets kosmies vas" (Inteendeel, 152). Estienne's whole existence is motivated by the idea of crossing borders: physical borders, imagined margins, the confines of language and the limits of the self.¹⁷⁸ He states: "Om die grense te toets van wat gesê kan word. Om die grense te bevestig van wat reeds gesê het. Om die grense van die self te lewe" (Inteendeel, 288). When sensing that he is closing in on one of his last borders, he realizes that his death is near: "My dood is nou baie naby [...] Ek is 'n *trépassé*: die laaste grens het ek oorgesteek" (Inteendeel, 262). The end holds one last border into the unknown: "Dit was die einde dié, en ek moes dit so aanvaar. Opnuut het ek voor 'n grens beland, opnuut moes dit oorgesteek word. Opnuut moes ek padgee in die onbekende in" (Inteendeel, 276). His death is his ultimate 'beyond'.

In traversing barriers, not all characters experience a certain liberating 'beyond' or empowering 'other side'. Many feel that they are in a sense confronted with a 'threshold' or 'inbetween' space of two opposing worlds—a space in which definite margins such as dream and reality, the possible and the impossible, here and there, are blurred.

¹⁷⁸ Burger (1995: 123) demonstrates how Estienne even crosses borders between ontological layers within the narrative universe.

Josef initially experiences a sense of 'in betweenness' when he encounters the world of the circus. He announces: "'n Hele gewone wêreld is vir my omgeskep in mirakel [...] Dit was so fel en oorverdowend dat dit die gewoonheid van alle ander dae oordonder het: dit was werkliker as my werklikheid; dit het my wêreld bevolk met die onmoontlike, en ek sou nooit weer heeltemal daarvan loskom nie" (Kennis, 91). In making the impossible seem possible, the circus allows him to exceed the barrier of the 'possible'. His evokes Bhabha's act of going 'beyond' in the sense that "our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary [...] are unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the 'present' which, in the process of repetition, becomes disjunct and displaced" (Bhabha, 2004: 5-6). His confrontation with the circus forever changes his present reality. His 'present' or 'reality', that which seemed 'normal' and 'possible', has been displaced. Since the day at the circus, Josef subsequently often grapples with the idea of reality. At times he feels like his life can be compared to Pedro Calderón de la Barca's Segismundo in the play "Life is a dream". Josef expresses his confusion: "Alles was vir my ineens so verward soos Segismundo se twee wêrelde in Calderon se stuk [...] met (die prins se) wakker word, terug, in die kerker, moet hy aanneem dat dit alles net 'n droom was. Of, wonder hy, was dit dalk die paleis wat werklikheid was en hierdie kerker die droom?" (Kennis, 204-205). He additionally points out how Calderón's portrayal of uncertainty ironically offers him certitude: "Met die oproep van Calderon het iets gebeur wat so lank kenmerkend van my reaksies was: ek het rustiger begin voel, sekerder: want nou het ek 'n parallel vir my situasie gevind, 'n argetipe vir myself. En vanuit die teater, my enigste betroubare werklikheid, kon ek begin om my wêreld opnuut te definieer" (Kennis, 204-205). The world of the theatre is his only reality and certainty. In allowing the theatre to define his world, he bestows great trust or certainty in that, which by definition, is 'false', pretend, play or spectacle. Can his experience possibly be paralleled to Glissant's interrelated, open and rhizomatic *Relation* where no fixed, final or certain 'roots' or realities can be identified?

Other characters also struggle to discern between reality and imagination. In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth declares: "Ek weet niks meer van die Kaap nie, ek kan nie eens meer onthou hoe dit daar was nie. Party dae weet ek nie of ek my dit alles verbeel het nie. Al wat oorbly, is hier. En ek weet nie hoe lank ek dit nog kan uithou nie" (OW, 154). Estienne in *Inteendeel* notes his uncertainty as well: "Daar is geen sin in dit alles nie. Ek is nie meer seker wat werklik is nie. Al wat my hier bereik, is eggo's uit 'n afgeleë en meestal onverstaanbare wêreld [...] Daar is niks wat ek kan vasgryp, beetkry, ondersoek, verstaan nie. Nie eens die stokke wat my por, is werklik nie: ek glo hulle lankal nie meer nie"

(Inteendeel, 152). On another occasion he describes his uncertainty as “’n ontsenuende *dépaysement* [...] asof dit nie regtig ek was wat daar tussen die eksotiese bome en struike wandel nie, maar ’n leë dop” (Inteendeel, 149-150).

The feeling of being ‘inbetween’ is, in accordance with Estienne’s *dépaysement* or unfamiliarity, described by some characters as being present but also absent from a certain situation. Flip declares: “Die volgende paar dae het ek gereeld my gat gesien. Dit was asof ek daar was, maar ook nie daar nie” (Duiwelskloof, 50). The notion of being and at the same time not being somewhere suggests that the scenario could be imagined for how is a character to be certain that what happens around them is true? Philida has a similar experience when she stares at her reflection in the dark waterhole: “Ek is daar, binne-in hom, maar as ek weer kyk, is ek weg, asof ek nooit daar was nie [...] asof ek nie eers *nou* hier is nie, asof ek nog nooit hier was nie en nooit weer hier sal wees nie (Philida, 71-72).

Being ‘inbetween’ leads to doubting one’s reality. The same holds true for things that characters see that seem to be around them. For Estienne, Jeanne often seems to be a real presence (Inteendeel, 63); but her nonexistence is also signaled from time to time. He mentions for example how Jeanne suddenly disappears “soos ’n skaduwee die nag in, asof sy nooit daar was nie” (Inteendeel, 18). When Estienne comes across an egg in the road, he describes a world where the possible and the impossible are intertwined:

Voor in die pad, ’n eier [...] Dit is op die laaste skof na die Roodezandskloof, net mooi sononder, die uur van mirakels, wanneer die bekende wêreld meng met die onbekende. Dit was die uur waarop Jeanne die eerste keer haar stemme gehoor het; die uur toe ek die eenhoring teëgekom het; die uur toe ek en Jeanne op die strand oor die redoute en die onseker toekoms bespiegel het. *Hierdie land, ’n mooi sonsondergang* [...] ’n Hele wêreld, weet ek, kan uit ’n eier gebore word [...] En dit gebeur dan ook, presies op die oomblik dat die laaste skilletjie son verdwyn (wat ek eerder aanvoel as sien, want dit is agter my rug dat hy ondergaan). Sonder enige waarskuwing breek die dop oop en ’n vrou kom uit, ’n volgroeide vrou, mooier as enigiets wat ek kan sê, glinsterend met die natheid van geboorte. Dit is jy [...] toe ek die eerste tree in jou rigting gee, is daar eensklaps niks. Jy het nie weggehardloop nie: jy het gewoon in die nagloor van die lig verdwyn. (Inteendeel, 95)

Estienne describes his confrontation with ‘inbetween’ worlds where the known and the unknown or the possible and the impossible cohabit, as a familiar occurrence. He even likens the ‘golden hour of miracles’ to his experience of the country itself: the land ‘is’ a “beautiful sunset”. In this ‘inbetween’

world of Estienne, there is no difference between his reality and his imagination. Both are of same value: sensing or imagining (“wat ek eerder aanvoel as sien”) is just as real as seeing. The unknown can be known and the impossible can be possible. As he tells his story, he admits: “in hierdie gat is verbeelding werkliker as herinnering” (Inteendeel, 69).

Other characters are not so familiar with the blending borders around them. In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip for example struggles to make out the carvings around the pulpit. At a first glance, it looks like ‘innocent’ normal patterns on the wood, but from a different perspective he notices bizarre figures that he depicts as “’n hele bleddie kama sutra”. He describes his dubiety: “As ek naderkom, is daar net kabbellinge en knoetse in die hout; maar elke slag as ek half wegkyk, is die geil stoet terug. Was dit my donnerse verbeelding? Hallusinasie? Skaduwees van my nag met die fokken succubus?” (Duiwelskloof, 127). Flip questions the vision he had of the girl swimming naked in the pond: she was “’n werklikheid soos die klippe self. En tog het sy nie eens ’n nat spoor op die rotse gelaat nie. Sy was daar en sy was nie daar nie. Ek weet nog altyd nie hoe om dit uit te lê nie. Maar vandag is sy nog wegter” (Duiwelskloof, 357). The lack of rational proof (footprints) convinces him that it was but a delusion. When he later discerns her footprints, “duidelik soos daglig, diep in die klip ingetrap” (Duiwelskloof, 360), his reason is challenged again.

For others being caught between two worlds signifies that their whole lives are lived in the ‘inbetween’. Flip refers to Henta when he says: “Gister het eenvoudig nie gebeur nie, vir haar het niks nog gebeur nie. Sy lewe buitekant herinnering, anderkant enige geskiedenis” (Duiwelskloof, 230). Henta is not bound to anything: she does not hold on to memory or history. She lives as if nothing has happened. Her unbounded life does not however give her the freedom experienced by others (discussed earlier), but it creates an uneasiness and a deep sadness. Philida has a similar sentiment about her life on Zandvliet: “Wat het ek op Zandvliet? Jy kan nie sê dis regtig ’n lewe nie. Dis nie soos dag of nag, soos son of maan nie, dis half tussenin” (Philida, 20).

Where crossing borders allows some characters a sense of liberation and empowerment, being caught on the frontier in between two worlds often creates uneasiness and disquietude. Not all characters experience the ‘openness’ and innovation (mentioned earlier) that is associated with Bhabha’s borderline engagements or Glissant’s *Relation*. For many characters being in the ‘inbetween’ leaves

them with a constant uncertainty about their reality: they are in constant distrust or disbelief concerning the people and things that surround them. The ‘inbetween’ state is moreover a cause of self-doubt as well.

5.2.3 Possession of space

In *Representing the colonized*, Said (1989: 218) highlights the importance of “the acquisition, subordination and settlement of space” to understand colonialism. In this section of my postcolonial reading of Brink’s work, I explore some of these important spatial strategies by analyzing the following groupings: mapping, naming as well as ownership and mastery of spaces. I will conclude the section by demonstrating how the novels often accentuate the uncontrollability of spaces.

a. Mapping spaces

In many of Brink’s novels the map is portrayed, in postcolonial terms, as “a technology of possession” (McClintock, 1995: 27-28). In *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, ample examples point to the map and its (in)significance. Due to his profession, cartography plays a notable role in Erik Larsson’s life. Brink’s archival research mentions the real Larsson’s aims: “die katalogiseer en versamel van plante, voëls en diere onbekend aan Europa; en uitvoerige geografiese waarneming gemik op akkurate kartering van die binneland” (OW, 9). The character Elisabeth hyperbolizes the importance of maps for Larsson. Always busy with his map, she claims that if a map could cook, Larsson would probably have married one (OW, 14). Reflecting on their marriage, she signals that science was the only thing that he cared about: “Die res sou jy tog nie ontbeer nie. En ek moet maar lê en brand. Is dít waarvoor ek weg is van alles, die wildernis in saam met jou, één vlees? Een kaart, een joernaal—die vlees is vir jou presiese wetenskaplikheid te onseker en onberekenbaar, onfatsoenlik. Al waarop jy jou verlaat, is die lengte van jou barometer en die kwik wat styg en daal” (OW, 14). When Adam finds Elisabeth, she is surrounded, amongst other ‘tools of civilization’, by Larsson’s map. The map is depicted as follows:

die kaart op een van die kiste agter haar, die buitelyne aangegee deur vroeë Portugese en gepresiseer deur ’n eeu se kusvaart; van die linkerkant af ’n smal strook intens beskryf en gevul met die kontoere van heuwels en riviere, berge, gelyktes, breedte- en lengtegrade, hoogte bo seespiël, klimaatstreke, windsterktes—omgewe deur ’n leegte met tentatiewe strepe en stippels, oop en wit vir enigets, terra incognita, na alkante toe wyd. (OW, 12)

The description of the map captures its intent on scientific precision. The map is, after all, to reiterate the words of McClintock (1995: 27-28) “a technology of knowledge that professes to capture the truth about a place in pure, scientific form, operating under the guise of scientific exactitude and promising to retrieve and reproduce nature exactly as it is”. Yet Larsson’s map’s failure of knowledge is accentuated by the reference made to “’n leegte met tentatiewe strepe en stippels, oop en wit vir enigiets, terra incognita”. The liminal character of colonial maps and their failure of knowledge to which McClintock (1995: 27-28) refers, is again foregrounded when Elisabeth opens the map:

die kaart met die dig betekende strook omgewe die ruimtes met die tentatiewe strepe en name gesuggereer deur Kolb, deur De la Caille, deur die teruggekeerde olifantjagters, deur Hottentotte omgekoop met koper of krale, brandewyn of ’n paar span tabak. Dit en dit weet ek, kyk, dis sekuur afgemerk en ingevul en aangetken; oor dié rivier se loop bestaan daar geen twyfel nie, dáárdie bergreeks met sy uitlopers het ek verken en sy hoogtes vasgestel; op dié vlakke is die reënval in die somer laag. Maar die res? Dáár kan nog enigiets wees, Monomotapas, ’n streek waar wit mense met lang gladde hare woon, fabelagtige diereryke, goud; Afrika. (OW, 24)

The mythical nature of what lies beyond the margins and thresholds of the known, or scientifically established, areas of the map is illuminated. A map’s capacity to perfectly represent the ‘true’ environment is also questioned in the novel. When Elisabeth’s father wishes to know how far Elisabeth and Larsson will go on their journey, she replies: “So ver as ons kan [...] Dis onmoontlik om te voorspel. Hy probeer ’n roete uitwerk, maar niemand het ’n kaart wat hy vertrou nie en elke mens met wie hy praat, vertel ’n ander storie” (OW, 32). The subjective nature of maps is echoed by oubaas Roloff who continually revises his own (OW, 152). Oubaas Roloff claims that his map is the only ‘true’ representation of the country, yet he encourages Larsson to draw his own, for that is the only way that you can ‘truly’ see what the country looks like.

The idea of a ‘true’ representation of the country is questioned in *Inteendeel* as well. As scribe on their journey, Estienne is in a sense grateful when he is relieved of his duties,¹⁷⁹ for now he is no longer

¹⁷⁹ He observes how his notes are destroyed: “En so is my boek dan stelselmatig vernietig. Dag vir dag [...] het ek met ’n eienaardige gefassineerdheid dopgehou hoe Mentzel [...] my dig beskrewende blaaië een vir een uitskeur en verbrand, en vervang deur sy eie geskrif, die korrekte en behoorlike waarheid, geografies, topografies en andersins, omtrent hierdie besondere verkenning van die beroemde en (alles in ag genome) merkwaardige Afrikaanse Kaap van Goeie Hoop [...] nou hoef ek nie langer verantwoordelikheid te aanvaar vir amptelike waarhede nie” (Inteendeel, 42).

responsible to accept 'official truths'. "Uiteindelik was ek vry om op soek te gaan na my eie, en op my eie manier", Estienne notes (Inteendeel, 42). He is, similar to Larsson, free to explore his own perceptions of the country.

The presence of maps in Brink's novels additionally draws attention to the wilderness/civilization dichotomy discussed earlier in this chapter. In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth and Adam's different perceptions of Larsson's map highlight the difference between the two. Occupied with the map, Elisabeth calls Adam. The conversation between the two follows:

(Elisabeth): "Kom wys my hoe kom mens hiervandaan by die see".

(Adam): "By die see?"

Hy draai hom half om beduie met sy arm, ver, diékant toe, regs van die oggendson verby.

(Elisabeth): "Nee, wys my hier," sê sy ongeduldig.

Hy kom kniel oorkant haar, fronsend, en betrag die kaart 'n ruk benieud.

(Elisabeth): "Ons is nou hier [...] Só om lê die see. Maar hoe ver? Waar is die plek op die kus waarheen jy wil gaan?"

Hy skud sy kop, lig hom orent en beduie weer skuins agtertoe soos hy reeds beduie het.

(Elisabeth): "Het jy nog nooit 'n kaart gesien nie?"

Hy kyk haar net vraend aan, wrokkig in sy agterdog.

"Hier is die Kaap," beduie sy met haar vinger op die papier gespanne, met gedwonge geduld. "Hier is die Warmbron. Dan Swellendam. Daar is die Outenikwaberger. Só langs het ons gekom, tot hier. Wys my nou..."

(Adam): "As dít is hoe jy die land ken," vaar hy skielik uit "moet dan nie vir my kom vra nie. Jy ken hom só..."

Onverwags pluk hy die kaart onder die flesse uit; 'n paar val om en een begin te lek. Hy smyt dit weer neer en spoeg op die grond.

"Jy kan hom opfrommel en weggooi, so. En dan is die land nog altyd daar!"

(Elisabeth): "Los die kaart uit!" gebied sy, verbaas oor sy uitbarsting: oor die feit en die intensiteit daarvan; geskok daardeur, bedreig daardeur. Maar sy laat haar nie intimideer nie: sy hét nog nooit. (OW, 24-25)

While the map offers her a sense of security and order, Adam alludes to the nullity of it. Seemingly unable to understand a map, Elisabeth depicts Adam as uncivilized. She states: "Dis tyd mors om met jou te sukkel [...] Jy's onnosel". Adam reacts: "'Jou kaart het jou tot hier gebring [...] Nou goed, laat hy jou dan hier uitkry ook' [...] Oor jy verdomde kaart kan lees! Is ek dáárom slaaf? Ek dra nie papier met my saam nie. My land het ek met my oë gekyk en met my ore gehoor en met my hande gevat. Ek eet hom en ek drink hom. Ek weet hy's nie 'n ding dáár nie; hy's hier. Wat weet jy van hom af?" (OW, 25). Viljoen's (2013) critique of Adam's intuitive knowledge of the land and mistrust of 'abstract knowledge'

again comes to mind. The act of relying on a map as a tool of civilization is also raised in *Inteendeel*: Estienne often wonders how Rosette was able to escape without a trace, sans aide or a map (*Inteendeel*, 153).

The notion of the map also draws on the known/unknown and light/darkness binaries discussed earlier: the colonial map aims to capture the ‘truth’ of known or ‘light’ as well as unknown or ‘dark’ territories. Various examples in the novels point to characters’ excitement in crossing into unknown and uncharted territories. Estienne is drawn to Africa for he realized escaping France was not enough: “ek moes nog verder, na die terra incognita van die kolonies. Die vraag was watter een?” (*Inteendeel*, 20). In South Africa, he refers to the official reason for the first expedition into the interior of the country of which he was part: “om die VOC se buiteposte teen die Weskus te besoek en daarvandaan na verderliggende ongekaarte gebiede te reis ten einde die uitbreiding van genoemde poste te ondersoek en vas te stel of permanente betrekkinge met inboorlinge in die diep binneland aangeknoop behoort te word” (*Inteendeel*, 16-17). On a later journey, he signals how they dared to move even deeper into the interior parts of the country, “n gebied waar daar nog byna geen menslike voetspoor gelaat is nie” (*Inteendeel*, 203). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip experiences a similar sense of excitement concerning his approach to an undocumented region. When he is informed that no records exist in the valley, he reacts: “Ek voel my moed swaar sak. En tog is daar op ’n manier ook iets exciting in [...] Hier het geen geskiedskrywer nog sy donnerse voet neergesit nie. Elke woord is nuut. So moet die skrywer van Genesis min of meer gevoel het. *Laat daar lig wees. Hou, poephoh, hou*” (*Duiwelskloof*, 52).

In most cases, characters’ attractions to unknown territories are born from a noble purpose: Flip wishes to write up the valley’s history and Estienne carries out the VOC’s wishes by accompanying a group who aspires to explore the possibility of expanding posts as well as establishing possible connections with indigenous people. Estienne reflects on his notes’ contribution: “Behalwe dat dit my Hollands oefen, put ek bevrediging uit my klein bydrae tot die versameling van kennis omtrent wat ’n blote tagtig jaar gelede nog ’n woeste leegte was en nou stadig besig is om getem te word. Elke vlakte wat ons oorsteek, elk bladsy wat ek beskryf, vermeerder ons kennis van die onbekende” (*Inteendeel*, 23). He additionally notes their uplifting influence on the ‘uncivilized’ dark interior: “ons is voorwaar [...] ’n bedreigde maar onuitroeibare stroompie beskawing en edele aspirasie wat dag vir dag voortbeweeg deur ’n donker binneland, om dit te roer met geskiedenis en gewete” (*Inteendeel*, 25); and refers to

their 'calling' in Africa: "danksy ons gesamentlike swaarkry, het 'n besef van ons gemeenskaplike doel al sterker geword: 'n gevoel, durf ek sê, van ons roeping in Afrika in. Net die presiese aard van daardie roeping is nooit baie duidelik omskryf nie. Partykeer wonder ek—partykeer vrees ek—dat dit nie veel verder gegaan het as 'n woeste drif om te oorlewe nie" (Inteendeel, 199). Estienne's reference to their 'calling in Africa' recalls the notion of Glissant's (1996: 62) *mythes fondateurs* on which societies base their 'noble' claim to a piece of 'God-given' land as well as their right to expand and exceed the limits of this 'given' territory. Estienne's case can moreover be seen as an example of what Pratt (1992: 7) calls "anti-conquest". As, in the words of Pratt, a passively 'seeing' European man, Estienne seeks, as mentioned earlier, to secure his innocence. He is however fully aware of his involvement in the assertion of European hegemony and its close association with colonial plunder—an element that will be explored later in the chapter.

It is not only uncharted territories, but also the idea of nameless spaces that characters find captivating. As Estienne points out: "Waarna ék hunker, is die ontdekking van iets heeltemal nuuts, nog sonder naam, skaars benoembaar; iets wat geen menseoë nog aanskou het nie, aarde wat nog g'n mensespoor vertoon nie" (Inteendeel, 22). He also depicts how travelling through unmapped regions means traversing unnamed regions: "Ek trek deur 'n tamaai ongekaarte land, naamlose ruimtes, met bossies en bome en klippe waarvoor daar geen woorde bestaan in die tale wat ek ken nie" (Inteendeel, 38). When Allemann decides to turn the expedition around, Estienne muses upon the "empty names" that they leave behind: "leë name wat bly galm" (Inteendeel, 36). This yearning to name unnamed spaces will be explored in the following section.

b. Naming spaces

Naming, as previously mentioned by Seddon (1997: 23) is "an obvious form of taking possession". By using European constructs to give names, scientists are able to tie the unknown to the known and thereby reduce unfamiliarity. For Larsson in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, naming things (fauna and flora) as

well as places plays this exact role.¹⁸⁰ When talking about the act of naming spaces,¹⁸¹ Elisabeth for the first time recognizes a sense of excitement in his voice as he observes:

Mens kom soms op 'n plek en jy is oorweldig daardeur, magteloos omdat daar sovél is; jy wil dit alles met jou saamdra, jy wens jy kan uitswel om alles binne-in jou op te neem. Dis of jou oë en ore nie genoeg is nie. En dan begin jy werk, en jy gee name aan dit alles; jy kyk nie meer so ver voor jou uit nie, want dit sal jou oorweldig: jy werk net met die één ding wat vlak voor jou is, en so gaan jy verder... En skielik het alles name en dan ontdek jy dat dit nie meer vir jou te veel is nie. Nou het jy dit. Dis joune. Niks kan dit afneem nie, al is jy myle en seë en halfronde daarvandaan. Nou besit jy 'n stukkie van die aarde [...] Só iets van Afrika wil ek ook met my saamneem as ek eendag hier weggaan. Iets van hierdie ontsaglike kontinent vir myself. (OW, 30-31)

Larsson regards naming as a process to order his overwhelming surroundings. Through naming, the unfamiliar and foreign becomes familiar to him. Once he names an object, he has the feeling of owning and controlling it. His approach reminds of Joseph Banks' naming practices explored by Carter (1987).

¹⁸⁰ In many of the anecdotes told by Elisabeth, the importance of naming for Larsson is highlighted. She tells for example of hippopotamuses that come out of the water at night "(l)angs 'n rivier waaraan jy naam gegee het op jou kaart" (OW, 17). She recalls a trip they took in the Cape and the numerous flowers they saw next to the road (OW, 30). He would identify some of them to her, "name wat sy nie ken nie", and order the driver to stop to pick others that are unfamiliar to him. When he comes back with a bunch of flowers, Elisabeth mistakes it as a gift for her. He however wishes to keep it himself to press. He states: "Om te dink: nie een van hulle het nog 'n naam nie [...] Ek vernoem hulle net voorlopig [...] Daarna stuur ek hulle huis toe. Ek het 'n vriend daar [...] wat besig is om die hele wêreld se plante te sistematiseer [...] Oral waar ek kom, maak ek vir hom plante bymekaar". On a later occasion, Elisabeth refers to his systemized method and how he would shoot buck and birds, "al die mooistes wat hy op hul roete kon kry. As eksemplare, om op te stop of te teken; om later die besonderhede Stockholm toe te stuur sodat elke ding die regte naam kan kry" (OW, 123).

¹⁸¹ In alignment with the land/body metaphor employed throughout many of Brink's texts, we can consider including the act of naming, or perhaps rather baptizing, people to the argument of 'naming spaces' as well. In comparison with naming spaces, the act of naming people and its empowering effect is similarly accentuated in the novels. When Elisabeth at a point calls Aob Adam, he responds: "My naam is Aob [...] Adam behoort aan ander mense. Sal jy onthou? My naam is Aob" (OW, 94). Elisabeth wishes to know the meaning of the name, but he says: "Dit beteken niks. Dis net Aob. Dis al. Dis my naam" (OW, 95). Adam wishes to be called 'Aob' rather than the Europeanized 'Adam'. Kossew (1996: 50) indicates how the name Adam "incorporates him in the centre and functions metaphorically to express the prelapsarian, pre-colonial paradise temporarily established by Adam and Elisabeth". When at a later stage she calls him Adam again and not Aob, he is upset. Elisabeth states: "Soos ek jou ken, is jy Adam. So't ek jou geléér ken. As ek jou Aob noem, is jy iemand anders, iemand vreemd [...] As jy in my is, partykeer, somer skielik, ja, dan kom dit vanself in my op. Dan kan ek jou Aob noem. Maar vir my is jy Adam". She then moves her finger onto his forehead and makes a mark between his eyes. "Nou doop ek jou," she declares, "Ek doop jou van voor af Adam. Vir my" (OW, 141). In 'baptizing' Adam, she 'marks' him as her own. He becomes *her* Adam. The practice of baptizing is also mentioned in *Inteendeel*. Estienne refers to slaves: "Dié wat uitgesoek is om weggenom te word, is eers met geweld gedoop. Dit het die name doodgemaak waarmee hulle gebore is en hulle het nuwe name gekry, verspotte, betekenislose name soos Apolli, of Cupido, of Achilles vir die manne en Susanna, Catarina, Sabina of Rosette vir die vroue" (Inteendeel, 279). Through renaming them, they receive 'new' identities. They are no longer the (independent) people they once were, but they are now the 'insignificant' property of someone else.

The act of naming is also equated with the process of familiarization in *Philida*. On her way back to Zandvliet, she observes:

Langs die pad noem ek elke ding op sy naam, ook die dinge en plekke wat nog nie naam het nie, en stadigaan leer ken ek so met die opnoem alles langs die pad, totdat dit my terugbring by my eie naam en ek dit van voor af leer verstaan [...] En stadigaan ryg ek hulle aanmekaar soos steke wat mens brei [...] En as die trui nou klaar is, dan kom al die plekke ook bymekaar, en naand kan ek vooruit begin weet wat nou kom, en wat net om die draai lê, en waar ek by die onderarm gaan uitkom, alles. Totdat ek die hele plek ken asof ek hom self met my hande gemaak het. Ek kan sê: Ek brei my storie enduit. Of ek kan sê: Ek vertel my trui heelpad. Want die twee loop saam. (Philida, 65)

Naming is a tool Philida employs to grasp the space around her. Through naming her environment, she makes sense of her surroundings and where she fits into it. Not only does she gain knowledge of her milieu, but she also deepens her self-discovery in the process. The empowering practice of naming gives her a sense of mastery as well: it allows her to feel as if she “made” her environs “with her own hands” (Philida, 65).

As the above analysis demonstrates, both mapping and naming spaces express characters’ desires of mastery and control of these spaces. A more detailed examination of the role of dominion in the novels follows.

c. Ownership and mastery of spaces

The desire to own or to master spaces is dominant in most of the chosen texts. Paraphrasing the Cartesian expression, Estienne in *Inteendeel* states: “Om te verwerf, te verower, te hê, te besit: ek het, daarom is ek” (Inteendeel, 194), suggesting that one’s identity is determined by what you master. To be, you have to own.¹⁸² In *Philida*, Cornelis’ self-esteem is measured by his authority: He refers to a time “voor die Ingelse gekom het, toe ’n man nog baas was op jou eie plaas” (Philida, 78). He reasons he should know what happened in Stellenbosch for he is the owner of Zandvliet (Philida, 81) and scolds Philida for not having asked him permission to leave the premises (Philida, 86).¹⁸³ His dominion shapes his life (“Alles van wynmaak is soos vlees van my vlees en bloed van my bloed [...] Dis my lewe dié, kan

¹⁸² The significance of possessing is signaled in *Duiwelskloof* as well. When Flip asks Isak Smous what he does with all his money, he replies: “Dis nie vir die maak nie [...] Dis vir die hê” (Duiwelskloof, 116).

¹⁸³ “Ek is die baas van hierdie plaas hier en jy weet dit. Net ek kan pas gee”, Cornelis tells Philida. (Philida, 86).

jy sê [...] So lyk my lewe [...] ek is Zandvliet se baas”) and determines his way of thinking (“Dit was die HereGod self wat gesê het hulle moet houthakkers en waterdraers vir ons wees. Dis hoe alles aan die gang bly: dat daar dié is wat moet baas wees en ander wat moet werk”; Philida, 80-81, 131). When he is declared bankrupt and his belongings are carried away, Cornelis experiences an identity crisis for everything he has, or in his mind ‘is’, is taken away from him:¹⁸⁴ “Zandvliet [...] Wat alles was, het niks geword” (Philida, 210-211).

In *Kennis van die Aand*, the importance of ownership correlates with Josef’s identity and sense of belonging. He describes the privileged feeling of having his own space to which he can come ‘home’ to in London and in the Cape (Kennis, 160, 215). In his own domain, Josef experiences a sense of authority similar to Cornelis. When having sex with Beverley in his old room, he describes his mastery and control over her (Kennis, 169).¹⁸⁵ When imprisoned, the space Josef ‘owns’ is reduced to his body. He depicts his body as the only thing that remains his own: “Dit is myne. Dit is, ten minste, die topografie van die sekerheid wat oorgebly het” (Kennis, 11). In addition to his body, his story and the paper he uses to write it on, remain his own, too: “Die papier is dun, dit sal maklik vel vir vel in die toilet se spoelbak afgaan. So bly dit myne, want dit is al wat nou ter sake is” (Kennis, 12).

The desire to own and control spaces is moreover equated with the desire to capture. Estienne’s urge to cross into the unknown is driven by his urge to conquer: “Van nuuts af aan was daar die drang om meer te sien, om verder te gaan, ’n land te verower, die onbekende binne te dring, ’n vasteland te tem” (Inteendeel, 20). He stresses the idea that the country needs a firm, controlling hand: “Dit is duidelik dat die kolonie, en veral die buiteland, ’n ferm hand nodig het. Daar is iets bedrukkends, selfs aanstootliks, in die tekens van ’n Europese beskawing wat hier al yler raak namate mens verder van

¹⁸⁴ Cornelis watches how his belongings that determines who he ‘is’, are taken away: “Na alles staan Cornelis Brink en kyk, na alles wat syne is, na alles wat syne was, alles wat hy nie meer ken nie en wat hom nie meer ken nie, en waaroor die wind sal waai soos hy wil [...] Die lys bly ’n mens besig hou, want dit sê alles wat jy het en alles wat jy is [...] Wat bly oor? Wat bly oor? Is dit nou alles wat opgeskrywe en gesê kan word van my lewe? ’n Dubbelbed, leë wynvate, ’n gevlegte handsambok [...] Hoe opruimbaar is ’n mens uiteindelik, as alles opgetel en afgetrek en bereken is? Zandvliet [...] Wat alles was, het niks geword. Sand tot sand en stof tot stof. As daar ’n Bybel oor die plek omgekeer is en al die woorde uitgeskud is [...] Wat bly oor? Hoe maak jy ’n som van die mens? Here-God. Die ou Prediker sou kon sê: [...] Ijdelheid der idkelheden, zegt de Prediker, het is al ijdelheid” (Philida, 210-211).

¹⁸⁵ Josef states: “Ek was bewus van haar geurigheid en haar pragtige hare op die muwwe matras; bewus dat sy klein en jonk en vrou is, mooi en wit, weelderig, ’n anomalie hier in my misrabel kamertjie. Maar dit was my domein, hier was ek baas, hier kon my liggaam hare met elke beweging en geluidjie dwing en beheers” (Kennis, 169).

Cabo af vorder. Die plek is inderdaad nog wild” (Inteendeel, 25).¹⁸⁶ In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip understands the attraction to conquer space. As the valley opens before him, he mentions how he finds Grootvaar Lukas Lermiet’s initial perception of the land comprehensible: “Dis asof ek, hier, vandag, die eerste mens is wat sy spoor hier trap. Ek kan verstaan hoe die oorspronklike Lukas Lermiet moet gevoel het, die jags gevoel van elke eerste man: dat alles wat hier voor jou lê, wag om verower te word. Ek en my tape recorder en my kamera, hier kom ons” (Duiwelskloof, 15).

Ownership and conquering in the novels extend beyond things, places, and landscapes as the desire to own people is signaled as well.¹⁸⁷ The need to master people is generally signaled through the feminized portrayal of the environment. The gendering of the imperial unknown, the feminizing of the virgin land and the eroticizing of unknown continents to which McClintock (1995: 14, 22-24) refers, is especially prevalent in *Inteendeel*. Estienne states: “Land, jy is vrou. Vrou, jy is myne. Is dit nie pragtig nie? Ek is dronk met die ontblote skoonheid van die plek. Ek verspil my saad op die grond [...] my manier van besit [...] wat my dwing, kom van anderkant die bereikbare” (Inteendeel, 194). He equates women to the land that he can discover, enter, name, own and inseminate.¹⁸⁸ With a sense of guilt, he later reminisces about the way he sees Rosette as entwined with the land: “Wanneer ek aan haar dink, dan raak sy in my gedagtes vermeng met die land, met sy pramberge en sy ooptes, sy lig, sy kloue en ruigtes, sy geheime dieptes. Maar is dit nie net so beledigend teenoor haar as teenoor die ander wat ek verminder tot ’n blote skede van ondervinding nie?” (Inteendeel, 259). Kossew (1996b: 71) discusses how Estienne’s guilt is that of man and colonizer: his sense of guilt and his acknowledgement of his male exploitation of the female land lead Estienne to blame himself for the way he treats Rosette. The colonizing processes of exploration and exploitation of land and woman are therefore intertwined.

¹⁸⁶ The notion of a wild country that needs to be tamed is repeated in the novel: “Ek het agtergekom dat daar ’n oormaat weduwees in die kolonie woon, ongetwyfeld as gevolg van die haglike bestaan in ’n nog grootliks ongetemde land” (Inteendeel, 220).

¹⁸⁷ A distinct example is the possession of slaves. Ouma Nella recalls her arrival on the slave ship at the Cape: “Nou sê hulle jy is by die plek wat hulle die Caab noem. En van daar af weet jy. Van vandsie, en die manne wat jou kom koop en wat eers wil kyk en voel en seker maak jy is wat jy moet wees, en dan kom jy by iemand uit aan wie jy nou glo behoort soos ’n skaap of ’n bok of ’n hoepel of ’n wynkan of ’n kwispedor of watookal” (Philida, 123).

¹⁸⁸ Estienne likens the widows of the colony to landscapes that he explores: “Ek is ’n man van die vlees [...] Maar op ’n manier kan my verkenningstogte onder die jonger weduwees van die kolonie [...] gesien word as ’n monsterring van my troepe” (Inteendeel, 221).

Women are also equated with spaces that can be owned and possessed in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*.¹⁸⁹ Kossew (1996a: 51) demonstrates how “(t)he control of discourse, knowledge and power by the colonizers extends to Larsson’s colonizing of Elisabeth as a woman. Elisabeth links his cataloguing of the landscape and its contents with his patriarchal attitude towards her”. In alignment with the imperial and patriarchal tendency to feminize the land, Elisabeth’s father describes her as “untamed” (OW, 31) and additionally introduces a gendering of space when trying to understand his daughter. Elisabeth recalls:

Haar pa het soms gesê, juis hy wat ten spyte van hul soms kwaai botsings die naaste aan haar was: “Elisabeth, ek verstaan jou glad nie. Dis of jy ’n seun moes gewees het”. Want sy had dít in haar wat hulle gerieflik as ‘manlik’ sou wou bestempel het: niks hards of hoekigs nie maar ágter die mooi voorkoms en oënskynlik gemaklike geaardheid ’n kern van stilte, van ontoeganklikheid; ’n verbete wil om as haar eie te bewaar wat sy haar eie geag het; om met rus gelaat te word. (OW, 25)

Labeling her as ‘male’ for her ‘unapproachable’, reserved and introverted character, one can deduce that Elisabeth’ father expects women to be the opposite: approachable, accessible and (sexually?) penetrable. Adhering to the ‘accessibility’ of gendered spaces, Adam directly likens Elisabeth to the wilderness: “Hy staar na haar. Vrou: jy’s wildernis genoeg om deur te swerf” (OW, 70). Flip makes a similar observation in *Duiwelskloof*: “Al wat ek weet, is dat ek nog nooit ’n slag met vroue gehad het nie [...] Vrou, vrou: ’n fokken wildernis vir my” (Duiwelskloof, 83). While Adam’s comparison suggests a desire to explore, Flip’s association highlights the fact that women remain to an unknown and incomprehensible domain.

The desire to own, master or civilize spaces is additionally paralleled with destruction. In *Inteendeel*, one of the first examples of the violence analogous to the conquest of territory is the Latin inscription on the hospital’s entrance. The inscription, “*Belga tuum nomen populis fatale domandis—Horreat et leges Africa terra tuas*”, translated as “Die Afrika-aarde sidder voor jou wette” leaves a lasting impression on Estienne (Inteendeel, 72). He reasons that the inscription epitomizes his reason for being

¹⁸⁹ Elisabeth alludes to the association of women as possessions when she imagines addressing Larsson: “Toe was ek vir jou tog maar net ’n onbekende soort soogdiertjie wat jy in jou dagboek kon opteken, aan wie jy naam kon gee: en naam gee, het jy mos gesê, is jou manier van besit. Het jy dan gedink ek is ’n koei of ’n wa of ’n vat of ’n ding wat sommer besit kan word?” (OW, 49).

in the country:¹⁹⁰ Under European laws, trembling Africa will be tamed. Estienne additionally demonstrates how violence was part and parcel of their expeditions into the country (Inteendeel, 265)¹⁹¹ and even calls violence their language (Inteendeel, 194).¹⁹² He alludes to the idea of being enticed by the country's "impenetrability" to violate the land and its inhabitants (Inteendeel, 194)—a notion that is repeated throughout the text. He reasons that the desire for violence is not only a result of overconfidence or hatred, but, to reiterate, that it is also born out of fear: "'n angs vir dié uitgestrekte land, vir sy ruimtes, vir sy ongenadigde lig, vir wat skuilhou in dié lig, vir sy donker mense. (Inteendeel, 216). Besides conjuring up a sense of achievement and pride, destruction is moreover described as a necessity (Inteendeel, 196, 197, 199, 212, 216).¹⁹³ On their destructive journey, the epitome of violence is perhaps finally reached in the massacre on a group of Hottentot women and children whom they initially mistook for poachers (Inteendeel, 256).¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Estienne observes: "lets in daardie glimmende pretensieuse inskripsie het in my kop weerklink. Dit was asof dit verruklik beslag gee aan daardie vae drang wat my hiernatoe laat kom het. Om iets van die vreemde te ontdek, om die wildernis te tem, om naam te gee aan wat nog naamloos was, om orde en betekenis af te stempel op hierdie marge van die beskaafde wêreld" (Inteendeel, 72).

¹⁹¹ He recalls the appalling scene when Madame shoots a giraffe: "selfs Madame het haar koerasie bewys deur 'n kameleopardali plat te trek, al het die dier na vyf skote nog verseg om te vrek. En toe ons die dier afslag—want Madame wou uiteraard die vel terugstuur Cabo toe as 'n trofee om haar gaste mee te imponeer—het ons 'n amper volgroeide kalf in haar gekry, wie se bleek, skaars gevlekte vel ons toe ook moes afslag. (Dít sal jy darem seker onthou, want ek herinner my dat sy jou gestuur het om 'n kom warm water te gaan haal en haar ronde wit voete te was terwyl sy die gedoente sit en dophou het)" (Inteendeel, 265).

¹⁹² He describes their violent 'language': "Geweld ons taal. 'n Vyandige, leë, vreemde land: dit praat nie terug nie, bly ontoeganklik. En dít dwing ons tot hierdie geweld, die motivering daarvan iets pynlik puurs. Aan en aan beweeg ons deur die al meer barre landskap en saai verwoesting soos ons gaan, ledig die vlaktes van dierelewe, die wit perkament van die lug beskryf deur die trae kurwes van die aasvoëls wat ons vordering dophou. 'n Orgie van bloed, soos ons op die diere wat ons teëkom dié wreek wat ons bly ontwyk. En net so delg ons krale en nedersettings van vyandige of onverskillige inboorlinge uit, met die uitsluitlike doel om op dié maagdelike steriele vlak die tekens van ons koms te laat. *Ons was hier*. Die vreemde bevrediging van dié basiese taal op 'n al meer ontoegeeflike blad van klip en sand. Soos die diere wat ons waargeneem het as hulle hul gebied met pis afbaken—leeu, luiperd, buffel, hippogrief—so laat ons die vlek van ons teenwoordigheid op die onbekende" (Inteendeel, 194).

¹⁹³ The so-called 'fear' of the country is not the only motivation for their destruction. Estienne demonstrates how their elephant poaching was enticed by coming across a group of elephants without tusks: "Dit was veel meer as net frustrasie: dit was, dink ek, 'n soort wraak wat ons wou uitoeven op diere wat dit gewaag het om ons gegewe definisie van wat hulle behoort te wees, te fnuik. Daar was geen gevoel van prestasie, en sekerlik geen trots in die ondervinding nie. Dit was net iets wat ons moes doen; en daarna is ons verder" (Inteendeel, 196). The 'necessity' of violence is again emphasized when Estienne refers to 'stealing' cattle from natives: "Gevolgtlik was 'n mate van geweld maar altyd nodig om die Hottentotte te ooreed om van hul vee afstand te doen" (Inteendeel, 197, also 212, 216). When a Hottentot tribe shows resistance, they are again 'forced' to react with violence in anticipation: "Een nuttige resultaat van die affêre was dat ons nou geestelik en liggaamlik voorbereid was om verraad van die inboorlinge te verwag; en van toe af het ons elke keer dat ons op 'n kraal afkom, gesorg dat ons eers die spul uitroei (selfs dié wat ewe verraderlik gemaak het asof hulle ons goedgesind was) voordat ons die vee inpalm. Deur die skyn sou ons ons wragtig nooit weer laat bedrieg nie" (Inteendeel, 199).

¹⁹⁴ Estienne describes the brutality of the scene: "Niemand het eers oorweeg om 'n geweer te gebruik nie. Daar was 'n kru, dringende behoefte aan die onmiddellikheid van lyflike kontak [...] Selfs die massamoorde wat ek in die binneland meegemaak het, het my nie hierop voorberei nie: daar het ons ons op ons gewere verlaat, die moord is op 'n afstand gepleeg, dit was soos jag; nooit was daar so 'n besetenheid, so 'n waansinnige onmiddellikheid in die slagting nie" (Inteendeel, 256).

The violence associated with colonial domination is also stressed in the other texts. When Adam comes across people in the forest, he declares: “Laat daardie twee waentjies die land intrek en plunder so ver as wat hulle gaan, en die tekens van hul beskawing inplant op hul vernietigende pad: ek en jy sal hier bly, in ons grotjie teen die see” (OW, 105). In *Duiwelskloof* Grootvaar Lukas tells Flip how he, to reiterate Said’s (2002: 247) words, “by a spirit of domination”, took a Hottentot’s man’s wife. When the man resisted, Lukas killed him (*Duiwelskloof*, 296).

My examination of the novels’ representation of the mastery and ownership of spaces allows me to make the following observations: the dominion of spaces often shapes characters’ identities. ‘Having’ is equated with ‘being’: a character’s authority stretches as far as his/her domain. Owning spaces is additionally likened to the process of capturing and conquering territories. As a result of the portrayal of ‘woman as land’, the idea of mastering land therefore also implies mastering women. The mastery of spaces is finally also equated to destruction: the language of ‘civilization’ is characterized as a language of violence.

Although the close association between violence and the process of civilization is undeniable, the texts do however point to examples where the language of civilization, even though it might be violence, often fails. In the following section, I will examine how Brink’s chosen novels point to the ‘uncontrollability’ of certain spaces.

d. Uncontrollable spaces

Despite people’s attempt at mastering spaces, various examples in the novels demonstrate how the land cannot be owned or controlled. In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef observes: “In dié Afrika het driehonderd jaar se beskawing nog skaars sy letsels gelaat: hier het ons mense nog nie eintlik vashouplek gekry nie” (Kennis, 225). The earth and the land remain the untamable victor. In *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, when Larsson is gone, Elisabeth declares: “Hy is weg. Hy is nie dood nie, hy is net eenvoudig weg. Die land wat hy wou noteer en besit, het hom ingesluk” (OW, 34). Reminiscing about who holds the final power to own and control, Elisabeth ponders: “Wie besit nou wie? Jy die aarde, of die aarde jou? (OW, 49).

The inability to master spaces is stressed when Elisabeth refers to Larsson's naming practices. When asking Adam where he comes from, she observes:

Hy draai half om en maak 'n vae gebaar wat die meeste van die skemerige wêreld agter hom insluit [...] bome wat sy nie ken nie, bosse wat sy nie ken nie: naam gegee deur Erik Alexis Larsson, Latynse name, niksseggend vir haar ore. Hoe gepas dat jy net beduie en niks sê nie: want hierdie land hét nie naam nie, veral nie Latyns nie; dit bestaan eintlik nog nie. (OW, 14-15)

Elisabeth suggests that Larsson's meticulous naming practice falls short: the Latin names he gives the country are meaningless and inadequate. She additionally reasons that the land cannot have a name, for it is as if it does not exist yet. The land is still 'becoming'.

In *Inteendeel*, Estienne is also exposed to the power the land holds. He demonstrates how his perspective of the land changes: when looking at the inscription at the hospital's entrance once more, he observes: "En die Afrika-aarde sidder voor jou wette. Hoe waar het dit nie geword nie; en hoe is dit nie nou vir my binnestebuite gekeer nie" (Inteendeel, 150). Estienne suggests that it is no longer the colonized land that trembles under colonial rule, but rather the reverse: the colonizer's 'laws' and attempts to 'control' and 'civilize' seem to fall short to capture the 'uncontrollable' Africa. Estienne additionally accentuates his own failure to name, describe and therefore to 'possess' the land that represents Rosette:

En wat was die hele ekspedisie anders as 'n poging om jou op te spoor, te omskryf, te besit? Nie die 'jy' wat ek eenkeer begeer of omhels of onderwerp het nie [...] Maar die jy wat nou vir goed skuilhou in die leë holte van die land. Rosette, Rosette. Nie eens jou naam omvat jou nie. Minder as enigiets anders word jy deur jou naam beskryf. (Inteendeel, 193-194)

Names fall short to describe and understand Rosette. The same holds true for the names Estienne has at his disposal to describe the environment:

Ek ken nie meer die name van die plekke waar ek verbykom nie. Al die vroeëre name het nou ontoereikend geword. Ek besit niks. Ek moet hulle van voor af leer ken: nie die name nie, maar die dinge self. Die kliptheid van 'n klip, die koppigheid van 'n koppie, die doringheid van 'n doringboom, die stilte van stilte. (Inteendeel, 283)

Estienne suggests that the unnamable is unpossessable: he cannot possess that which he has no name for. The names once used to describe the land have become inadequate and he implies that he will have to learn the language of the land itself in order to know and to understand it. I am again reminded of Estienne's changing relation to the country and how it is paralleled to his changing perception to language: once he realizes that language remains inadequate to describe the world around him, he reaches a deeper understanding and appreciation of the land itself (Inteendeel, 287-288).¹⁹⁵

Regardless of the colonizer's endeavors, they struggle to grasp or to take hold of the land: Africa remains untamable and unpossessable. The novels suggest that the land's uncontrollability is predominantly a result of a nonexistent adequate language to describe and to know the land: a failure to name spaces inevitably leads to a failure to master these spaces.

5.2.4 Isolation

Postcolonial critics often question modes of critique that act to exclude: they emphasize the necessity of "resistance against exclusionary, reterritorializing processes" and insist on the need for a spatial revolution that would undermine hierarchical engendering of spaces and spatial dualisms that are used to control, suppress, confine, and exclude (Rose, 1996: 60; Duncan, 1996: 7-8, 142-143, McDowell, 1996: 31, 39). Glissant (1996) asserts that ways of thinking that are based on excluding practices (that of the *racine unique* or *mythes fondateurs* for instance), should evolve into more rhizomatic systems of inclusion and *Relation*.

The notion of exclusion is a common thread that runs throughout the chosen Brink corpus. Its representation is often interlaced with ideas concerning alienation, enclosure, and solitude. In order to explore all these interconnected notions, I aim to examine them from the point of view of isolation—an umbrella term that is able to encompass them all. In analyzing the concept of isolation within the

¹⁹⁵ To reiterate Estienne's revelation: "Op die vorige reis [...] het ek gedink dat hierdie harde helder dinge haar vergesalt; maar dit was natuurlik 'n dwase raaskoot wat die ontoereikendheid van my taal bevestig het. Nou, in hierdie lig, sien ek dit soos dit is [...] Dit alles is inderdaad jou sigbare taal. Maar waarom is ek dan so vreesbevange? Dit lê in my onmag om terug te praat, om in my eie taal te sê wat dit beteken. Ek kan sê *buttes* of *rocher* of *plaine*, of in die taal van dié kolonie heuwels, rots, veld: maar dit bly leë geluide wat dobber op die wind, so onbeduidend as die ritseling van die gras. *Jou* taal is anders, hierdie wêreld wat jy in bestaan in praat terwyl ek daarna staan en kyk: harde sediment, lui kontoere, bedrieglike afstande, ruimte, ruimte" (Inteendeel, 287-288).

novels, I will demonstrate how characters undergo active and passive as well as literal and figurative forms of isolation. For the purpose of this study, the different forms of isolation in the chosen texts are loosely subcategorized into the following sections: enclosure, alienation, solitude and exclusion. A closer examination into each of these categories follows.

a. Enclosure

The most common portrayal of isolation in the chosen texts is arguably represented through the presence of closed spaces. In the following sections I will distinguish between different forms of enclosures.

Imprisonment is a familiar form of enclosure present in each of the texts. In *Kennis van die Aand*, frequent references are made to Josef's prison cell: its layout (Kennis, 264); its size (Kennis, 11) and his perception of it (Kennis, 33, 266)¹⁹⁶. Adam's imprisonment is also central to *'n Oomblik in die Wind's* plot. According to the archives cited in the beginning of the novel, Adam Mantoor was "na Robbeneiland verban om in kettings lewenslange handearbeid te verrig. In 1744 word daar, sonder meer, aangeteken dat hy ontsnap het" (OW, 7). Estienne's confinement in the 'Dark Hole' is continually brought up in *Inteendeel* (56, 88, 119, 164, 167, 168, 170, 187, 222, 233, 235, 250, 263, 299). He describes the space and what he can observe from within it (Inteendeel, 162, 252-253). He also highlights its darkness (Inteendeel, 13, 14, 165) and one's loss of time and direction within it (Inteendeel, 13, 15, 43). *Inteendeel's* Rosette also experiences imprisonment at least twice: as a child (Inteendeel, 35) and as an adult (Inteendeel, 58, 63, 163). Characters are also imprisoned in *Duiwelskloof* and *Philida*. When an inhabitant of the valley is caught stealing water, he is punished and

¹⁹⁶ Josef likens his captivity with that of Hansel and Gretel: "Mens wórd primitief in hierdie geraffineerde holte van die beskawing [...] In die dae van my aanhouding vóór die verhoor het die behoefte van die liggaam my gekwel. Ek was voortdurend honger, ek het maagkrampe gekry en aanhoudend hoofpyn gehad. Nou nie meer nie. Nou voer hulle my vet, soos vir Hansie en Grietjie" (Kennis, 33). He also describes how his perception of the space around him, "die mure om ons, die sagte klankdigte asbesteëls" changes when he is tortured: "As hulle 'n deurskynende plastiëksak oor 'n mens se kop trek, is daar 'n eienaardige sensasie van verhoudinge in die ruimte. Een oomblik sien jy die wêreld duidelik, net soos altyd. Dan is dit asof hy hom insuig na jou toe. Jy probeer die kamer inasem, jy probeer gryp na hom, maar iemand hou jou hande vas. Dan verdubbel alles, en dop om, en verdwyn. As dit 'n paar keer gebeur het, weet jy nie meer aan watter ruimte jy behoort nie. Dalk is jy dood, net jou brein bly 'n rukkie voortgloei, en die vroe wat om jou galm, behoort moontlik tot 'n wêreld wat eintlik al van jou afgesterf het [...] deur die pyn kan jy jou opnuut oriënteer, dan weet jy dat jy tog nie dood is nie" (Kennis, 266).

confined (Duiwelskloof, 134). Philida is told to stay in prison as well when awaiting Frans at the Drostdy (Philida, 19).

Various other forms of confinement are found in the novels as well. Characters point to literal spaces in which they feel caged: In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef panics when Jessica shows him the chapel next to the school (Kennis, 330). In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth depicts the emotions of the enclosed bull during the bullfight in the Cape (OW, 23). She similarly demonstrates how she and Adam frequently feel caught in different spaces: albeit a thorn-bush enclosure (OW, 60); a small house in the wilderness (OW, 79) or a cave next to the ocean (OW, 88). These confinements often give rise to ambivalent emotions. Elisabeth describes her sensation when standing on the doorstep of the house in the wilderness: “En sy hier, vasgekeer. Wat as sy omdraai en teruggaan binnetoe, dan bly die oopte buite haar roep met verlange; maar as sy van die enkele kliptrappie afstap oor die werf, dan wil sy weer terug na die sekerder beskutting van mure” (OW, 79). She feels entrapped within the house and longs for the wide and open spaces outside, yet once in the open, she hankers for the shelter inside. Their other dwellings awaken similar emotions. The cave next to the sea offers them protection from the wind, the ocean, and the cold (OW, 88, 97, 99). Elisabeth initially describes the cave as a calm well-known shelter (OW, 99) “wat om ons toesluit soos 'n vuis” (OW, 97), but later admits that she feels suffocated within its stuffy interior. The cold, but clean and open world outside the cave attracts her (OW, 113-114). On their way back to the Cape, a cavern in the mountains secures them from the snow outside. Grateful for the harbor it becomes, they nevertheless feel pinned down and restless (OW, 119-121).

In *Inteendeel*, Estienne's frequent sense of confinement plays a prominent role in his life. As mentioned before, as a child Estienne believed that he was adopted for he felt he did not belong in his parents' poor shack (Inteendeel, 46). Although it changes in size and value, Estienne's captivity remains a constant throughout his life: he refers to doors or cul-de-sacs that stand between him and freedom (Inteendeel, 67, 78); when describing his voyage to the Cape, he depicts the ship as a close little world (Inteendeel, 67) and later claims that he was forced into his trunk and thrown overboard (Inteendeel, 113); once in the Cabo, he again feels cornered and threatened (Inteendeel, 102) and after being attacked by a gang, he awakes in a type of cage on a Maleier's wagon (Inteendeel, 110). He additionally describes his “humble little room” (Inteendeel, 111) as a cage or *cagie* (Inteendeel, 110, 112, 125, 126, 127, 150, 171, 177). He moreover likens his situation to that of a caged animal (Inteendeel, 152).

Estienne is additionally banned to the inside of the castle when, awaiting his trial, he is sentenced to 'interior exile' ("interne ballingskap") (Inteendeel, 129, 139). Jeanne reminds him that even though he might be trapped, his situation is still much better than hers ever was: "Jou lewe is nog maklik, Estienne [...] Jy kan nog binne-in die Kasteel kom en gaan soos jy wil [...] Twee maande lank, met kettings om my nek en aan my arms en bene, moes ek op my voete bly" (Inteendeel, 131). Estienne nevertheless does not allow the walls of the castle to limit his imagination. He states: "Ingekluiser deur die Kasteel se stroewe klipmure, en nog meer deur die skyn van sekerheid in blote roetine, verlaat ek my al meer op herinneringe aan wat ek ánderkant hierdie limiete gesien het" (Inteendeel, 152).

In *Duiwelskloof*, the valley itself is regarded as a type of confinement. Legend has it that those amongst the first migrants who tried to make their way back up the mountains never reached the outside world alive (Duiwelskloof, 25). After having injured his leg, Grootvaar Lukas Lermiet, and as a result his whole family, would never be able to get up the mountain again (Duiwelskloof, 26).¹⁹⁷ The valley poses to be a trap for Flip as well. Emma warns him: "Hulle het jou toegelaat om te kom [...] Dis nog nie te sê hulle sal jou laat gaan nie" (Duiwelskloof, 200). The bamboo copse in *Philida* can be seen as a similar form of entrapment as well. Philida explains to the Slave Protector that it is here where her and Frans' sexual relations started,¹⁹⁸ but that she is again forced to go there with Cornelis (Philida, 87-88).¹⁹⁹ A distant and closed space on the farm, the bamboo copse is deemed a suitable venue to violate Philida. Out of sight and out of ear's reach, it most definitely represents a form of captivity. Frans additionally describes the bamboo copse as a place where he is removed from reality: it is depicted as a strange and frightening world of its own (Philida, 136-137).²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Flip notes: "Van toe af was die familie daartoe verdoem om in die Duiwelskloof te bly, tot in fokken lengte van dae" (Duiwelskloof, 26).

¹⁹⁸ Philida informs the Slave Protector: "(W)eg van die langhuis af, deur die jong hermetykwingerd waar die kerkhoffie lê, tot waar die bamboesbos sy diepdonker koelte maak by die buig van die riviértjie [...] dis waar Baas Frans my saamgevat het na die bamboesbos toe waar dit so toemaak rondom mens, en toe hy sien ek huil, toe raak hy so jags, toe spring sy ding ook op [...] en dis toe dat hy my klim" (Philida, 13-14).

¹⁹⁹ Cornelis recounts: "Ek druk die eerste bamboese uit die pad uit en loop dan met die kombersbondel inner in die diepdonker koelte van die bos in. Ná nog 'n entjie dieper gaan sy agter my staan [...] Dit is Frans se plek dié, sê sy agter my [...] Nou moet ek mooi dink. Ek wil nie hier oop en bloot met 'n slawemeid staan en onweer maak en aandag trek nie. Selfs al is ons hier tussen die digte bamboese, wie weet wat alles gesien kan word? [...] Rondom ons vou die hoë bamboese toe en ek hoor die geritsel van die blare en die geknars van die stamme en die gekwetter van die voëls. Ek sweer ek hoor selfs die son en die skaduwee" (Philida, 87- 88).

²⁰⁰ Frans portrays the copse as "'n ander soort plek. Met die toemaak van die bamboese agter my, is dit asof die wêreld wat ek ken, heel wegraak. Hier is dit asof ek niks meer ken nie en daar is niemand naby my wat van my weet nie. Dit is net ek. Tot my skaduwee is weg. In die pikdonker kan ek nie meer sien nie, net ruik en hoor. Die swaar ruik van die bamboese, 'n ruik van vertes en afstande, van die see, van donkerte en vreemde gediertes, van plekke waar niemand nog was nie. Ou Petronella het ons kleintyd vertel die bamboese kom van waar sy self ook vandaan kom, van Java of so 'n soort plek af,

More figurative forms of confinement can be observed in the novels as well. In *Kennis van die Aand*, Willem encourages Josef not to simply fight against the authorities but to rather “renew” the powers that be “from the inside out” (Kennis, 352). His choice of words suggests a type of enclosure: “As jy nie sommer blindelings aanval nie, maar meer... van binne uit, kreatief, probeer vernuwe [...] Maar net aanval, aanval... só loop jy jou tog naderhand net te pletter. Selfs ’n donkie stamp nie twee keer sy kop teen dieselfde muur nie”. Josef replies: “Dink jy ek veg net téén ’n muur, of windmeulens, of skape? Dink jy nie ek veg ook vír iets nie?” (Kennis, 352-353). The notion of a figurative confinement is reiterated when Willem recalls a time “when nothing could get in between the two of them”. Josef responds by saying: “Kinders leef altyd in ’n paradys” (Kennis, 354). The novel moreover suggests that a romantic relationship can also be considered a type of imprisonment (Kennis, 13, 152). When Josef and Sheila talk about love, the topic of confinement is naturally raised as well:

(Sheila): Ek is amper bang om dit te sê [...] Want ek wil nie hê dit moet jou vaskeer nie.

(Josef): Dis ek wat jóú nie wil vaskeer nie.

(Sheila): Sê nou ek wil vasgekeer wees?

Juis deur haar volkome onselfsugtigheid het sy my vaster gebind as wat òf sy òf ek wou besef. (Kennis, 153)

In *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth also feels penned in. Hassal (2013: 168-169) demonstrates how she sees herself as betrayed and imprisoned: “first betrayed by being born a girl instead of a boy and then imprisoned in her girl’s role in the small-town society of the Cape”. Elisabeth accentuates the diminutiveness of the Cape when she tells Larsson: “Die Kaap is ’n baie klein plekkie [...] hier in die Kaap word mens vásgehou, hulle maak niks vir jou makliker nie. Vir elke ding moet daar eers toestemming kom van die Here XVII. En hulle... [...] Hulle wil ons hier hou tussen die berge en die see, hulle is seker bang vir wat sal gebeur as ons begin padgee. Dat hulle nie meer gesag oor ons sal hê nie” (OW, 28). She pursues the idea of being incarcerated within the colony when, as mentioned before, she describes herself as “’n baie klein stukkie land ingedruk tussen die berg en die see” (OW, 29). Elisabeth also

saam met slawe en speserye en kruie oorgebring op skepe met stories van jaloesie en bloed en moord en lang messe. En op ’n manier lê dit nou alles ingeweek in die bamboesbos in. Dis ’n bos vol lewe, en vol van allerhande geluide as die wind opkom, maar selfs as dit windstil raak. Toe ek kind was, het die geluide my altyd benoud gemaak, selfs helder oordag: dit het puur geklink soos die gekreun en geknars en gekerm en gehuil van spoke, mense wie se hande en voete met stomp messe afgeherm word, kele wat stadig afgesny word, ’n geroggel en geroggel, ’n vreeslike soort wêreld, anders as ons s’n, maar baie naby, té naby om mens ooit gerus te laat voel. Tot vandag toe, nou dat ek weet dis net die bamboese en die takke, laat dit my skoon aardig voel” (Philida, 136-137).

experiences a figurative form of entrapment in her relationship with Adam. When Adam first comes across her wagon, the narrator observes: “Die nag is koel op haar gesig; dis bedompig binne, sy is vasgekeer hier [...] Sy wil hom nie hier hê nie. Hy bedreig haar selfstandigheid, haar stilte; hy bedreig háár” (OW, 17). Later in their journey, the idea of confinement is highlighted again: “Wat ons eintlik vrees, dink sy, is hierdie ruimte wat ons indwing tot mekaar” (OW, 67). When it seems that Adam will not return, Elisabeth is frustrated for allowing herself to be trapped by someone again: “Waarom sou ek my in jou laat vaskeer? [...] Ek het my vry geveg. Het ek my dan losgemaak van alles—van die Kaap en van Erik Alexis Larsson, van ‘my eie mense,’ van my eie kind in my; los van verlede en toekoms—net om weer van voor af gevang en vasgekeer te raak? Want dit is vaskeer” (OW, 81). Hassal (2013: 170-171) signals how the love between Elisabeth and Adam, and even their idyllic existence on the beach, becomes a type of prison: “Their decision to commit themselves to each other is all too soon followed by entrapment”.

As discussed earlier, Estienne in *Inteendeel*'s sense of confinement starts from a young age. Thinking back on his time in France, he equates his supposed ‘entrapment’ with the act of being suffocated (*Inteendeel*, 20). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip's perception of enclosure commences before his arrival in the valley. After speaking at a symposium, he sits in a corner at a bar and confesses: “Ek kom kry my in 'n hoek, 'n plek wat nie aan my vreemd is nie” (*Duiwelskloof*, 23). Once in the valley, he compares himself to Jonah caught in the whale:²⁰¹ “Diep uit die Duiwelskloof, soos Jona op sy dag uit die bleddie buik van die vis, moet ek probeer uitroep. Wie kan hoor? Niemand, miskien. Maar ek moet die kans vat. Ek het g'n ander keuse nie” (*Duiwelskloof*, 16). Other figurative forms of confinement are highlighted in the novel as well: Flip starts asking questions when he hears rumors of assault in Jurg Water's house. Lukas Dood tells Flip: “Wat tussen die vier mure van 'n ouerhuis gebeur, is tussen hulle en die Here” (*Duiwelskloof*, 177, 326). Flip additionally feels trapped within the valley. He states: “Miskien is daar lankal nie meer oplossings nie. Die Duiwelskloof is 'n fokken doodloopstraat” (*Duiwelskloof*, 303).

²⁰¹ References to a bound Jonah in the whale is also made in *Kennis van die Aand*. Josef parallels his stay with Annamaria with that of Jonah: “Dit was 'n sonderlinge tuiskoms in die donker boot vasgemeer teen die oewer onderkant die markplein: alles was donker toe ons daar kom [...]. Dit was soos 'n terugkeer na die oerbegin; die byna onmerkbaare kanteling van die boot op die donker water—gemarkeer deur die trae swaai van die lantern aan sy ketting—had vanself iets dierliks: ons was daarbinne soos Jona in die buik van die groot vis” (*Kennis*, 189- 190). He reiterates the image at a later stage: “in die donker om ons grom en mor die katte, dis die buik van Jona se walvis. Uit die diepte het ek geroep, o God, en u het nie gehoor nie” (*Kennis*, 271).

Emma recognizes Flip's entrapment and encourages him to leave without her: "Jy kan nie toelaat dat dié plek jou ook insluk nie. Kan jy dan nie verstaan nie? My lewe is klaar afgesny. Dit sal my help om te weet dat jy daar buite êrens is, dat jy aanhou lewe (Duiwelskloof, 315). Their physical relationship equally evokes the topic of confinement. When Flip holds her, he admits: "Ek kon die liggaam nie ontken nie, dit was daar, en tog was dit asof ek nie vasgekeer was daarin nie" (Duiwelskloof, 288).

A further element of enclosure that is prevalent in Brink's chosen novels, is characters' pursuit of seclusion. After Josef returns to South Africa, Derek is astounded. He tells him: "Moenie bleddie mal wees nie [...] Jy kan nie vir my sê jy het uit vrye wil besluit om hier te bly nie [...] Kyk, enigiemand kan verstaan as 'n bandiet uit 'n tronk probeer uitbreek. Maar waarom om godsnaam sou iemand van buite af daar probeer inbreek? (Kennis, 207). Derek argues that Josef's return to South Africa is a willing return to imprisonment. For Elisabeth in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, captivity looks favorable as well. She recalls her visit to Robbeneiland and remembers the sweetest figs that are produced there. She contends: "ek het die bandiete daar beny" (OW, 49).

For many characters, seclusion displays a form a refuge. Alone in the carriage, Elisabeth in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* considers her isolation as a type of haven: "Verbaas dit jou dat ek laasnag geslaap het? Dat my vrees ook bevryding was, dat ek niks anders wou as om te slaap nie? In die hart van die storm was ek veilig en beskut, meer as ooit by jou: niks kon my in die geweld bykom nie" (OW, 14). In *Kennis van die Aand*, Jessica likewise recalls how as a child her isolation in the cottage in their backyard was blissful: "En as ek dáár speel, het niemand my ooit gehinder nie. Die hele tuin was soos 'n koninkryk, met kastele onder die iepes en die beukebome..." (Kennis, 282). As a child, Josef finds similar refuge in the world of books and his imagination.²⁰² He describes the escape into these worlds as his only defense (Kennis, 99).²⁰³ The theatre offers him the same flight from reality later in life (Kennis, 137, 143, 175).²⁰⁴

²⁰² Josef does not only find books as form of refuge, but he also reminisces on books written by incarcerated authors that offer him comfort: "Ek wonder soms wat van die mensdom sou geword het sonder die boeke wat in tronke geskrywe is. Die wonderlikste testamente van Villon. Bunyan se pelgrimsreis. Die *Don Quijote*. Sint Jan van die Kruis—dié klein, bruin, stil, Spanjaard tot wie ek my so aangetrokke voel. Dit het my nie verbaas toe ek hoor dat byna die hele *Cantico Espiritual* in 'n kerker ontstaan het nie. Daar kon hy, afgesonder van die te verblindende Spaanse son, die donker peil wat vir hom dierbaar is" (Kennis, 304).

²⁰³ Josef reminisces: "My enigste verweer [...] was om my al meer terug te trek binne die wêreld van verbeelding wat ek agter die damwal allening of saam met maters geskep het [...] toe ek laat een middag by die modderdam met *Robinson Crusoe* besig was. Ek was so ademloos aan die lees dat ek van die hele wêreld vergeet het [...] Hier tussen my eie eerbiedige hande was 'n hele wêreld besig om gebore te word met al die gesag van die gedrukte woord" (Kennis, 99).

²⁰⁴ Josef expresses: "Soos die damwal van my kinderjare het die teater my verskansing teen die wêreld geword. Meer as verskansing: 'n geleentheid om die disparate dinge uit die werklikheid te orden en vir myself begryplik te maak" (Kennis,

Dilpert illuminates Josef's hiding place and stresses the fact that it is the reason he is not profoundly affected by reality: "Jy het jou wêreldjie: jy het slaapplek, jy ly nie juis honger nie, jy neem partykeer 'n meisie bed toe; jy speel toneel. Jy weet hoe maklik dit alles bedreig kan word as jy jou oopmaak vir die wêreld om jou. Jy weet dit, en daarvoor is jy bang [...] eendag gaan daar 'n dag kom dat jy nie meer in jou wêreldjie kan wegkruip nie. Dan sal wit en bruin vir jou ook saak maak" (Kennis, 137). In accordance with Dilpert's prediction, Josef realizes how returning to his familiar and comfortable theatre means fleeing the real world (Kennis, 350).²⁰⁵

In the other novels, characters' search of enclosures is mostly in pursuit of privacy. In preparing for his court case, Estienne and Petzold meet "in 'n stil plekkie tussen die digste struik in die Tuine waar nóg Forster nóg Mentzel ons sou kon opspoor" (Inteendeel, 169-170). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip and Emma agree to meet in the blue gum copse to talk privately (Duiwelskloof, 197). The small opening amongst the trees becomes a secure space that allows them to openly talk about themselves (Duiwelskloof, 288). The bamboo copse in *Philida* represents a similar safe space for Philida and Frans. Philida refers to the copse when she says: "Dis vir enigiets wat ons wil doen die heel beste plek" (Philida, 107). Frans calls it 'their copse', "My en Philida se bos, van so lank terug af al" (Philida, 137), and supposes that is the reason why they always return to it: "Dis dié dat ons altyd weer hiernatoe moes terugkom, presies net hiernatoe, ek en sy tesame. Altyd tussen die bamboese met hulle kreungeluide en hulle stories van die see en ver lande" (Philida, 138). The bamboo copse plays an important role in Frans' individual life, too.²⁰⁶ He remembers how he would flee to it after his father gave him a hiding: "Hier in die bamboesbos het ek kom wegkruip [...] ek het geweet hier sal niemand my kry nie" (Philida, 139-140).

137). In a conversation with Josef, Dilpert argues that the theatre should not be a form of escape. Josef reasons: "En sê nou die teater help 'n paar mense om darem 'n rukkie te vergeet van die wêreld buite, sodat hulle dit daarna weer 'n bietjie makliker kan verduur: is dit nie belangrik nie?" Dilpert reacts: "Vergeet! [...] Jy moet hulle laat onthou, jy moet hulle nie paai met vergeet nie. Hulle mag nooit ophou onthou wat gebeur nie. Dis uit onthou dat revolusies gebore word" (Kennis, 143). Josef later also points to other South Africans in London's opinion "(d)at die teater vir my 'n ontvlugting en ontkenning van alles geword het" (Kennis, 175).

²⁰⁵ When he considers returning to London with Jessica, he professes: "Ek sou kon gaan en Jessica saamneem, ja: en toneel speel, en gelukkig wees; en dan stadig terugkruip in 'n teater wat my veilig, soos in 'n broeikamer, weghou van die lewe, terwyl ek diep in my binneste soos 'n verdoemenis sal bly onthou dat ek eintlik gevlug het, dat ek 'n papbroek was wat verkies het om op háár te teer; sodat ek algaande bitterder en bitterder sou word van my eie gif, en begin vreet aan myself en aan haar, en miskien nog soms met my vrotpootjie sentimenteel 'n kwêla dans en fantastiese revolusionêre planne smee, en saans al meer drink, en soggens al moeiliker uit die bed kom" (Kennis, 350).

²⁰⁶ Frans considers the copse as an attraction to his family's farm. When trying to seduce Maria, he says: "Jy moet weer uitkom na Zandvliet toe [...] Ek wil jou die wingerde gaan wys [...] en ek moet jou die bamboesbos gaan wys [...] as jy dit eers gesien het, sal jy weet waarvan ek praat. En dan sal jy dit weer wil sien". Maria provocatively reacts: "Ek wonder vir hoeveel mense het jy al jou danige bamboesbos gaan wys" (Philida, 253). He confesses that he even regarded the copse as an appropriate place to end his life: "Ek het al twee keer daar bo by die opstal uitgeloop met Pa se jaggeweer in my hande

The frequent presence of enclosures in the texts is significant. As the above analysis demonstrates, confinement, whether literal or figurative, is not only perceived as a form of restraint. Enclosures often play the role of sanctuaries that allow characters privacy and freedom. Enclosures additionally encourage characters to let their imagination soar and to cross limits: restricted, they aim to go beyond the literal and figurative bounds set around them.

b. Alienation

An additional result of isolation is the feeling of alienation. The most common representation of alienation is perhaps the idea of Brink's characters being identified as 'outsiders'.

In London, Josef is repeatedly depicted as a stranger despite his many years living there (Kennis, 155, 159, 161). When he wakes one night and confounds a thunderstorm for an atomic bomb, Josef stutters: "Ek wil hier uitkom. Dis julle oorlog, dis nie myne nie. Vir wat moet julle my daarin vaskeer?". He realizes that what he discovered in his bewilderment was no coincidence: "ek was 'n vreemdeling daar. Na nege jaar was ek nog 'n vreemdeling. Dit was nie my stad en my mense nie. Iets diep, atavisties, is in my losgeskud" (Kennis, 193). Estienne in *Inteendeel* is continuously portrayed as a stranger as well (Inteendeel, 88, 90, 92, 150, 163) and stresses that the idea of alienation is not strange to him: it remains a central part of his life. When no one is left to fight amongst his side, Estienne declares: "Uiteindelik was ek dan allenig oor. Hoe skielik het dit gebeur, hoe maklik. Die lewe is nie regtig danig dramaties nie" (Inteendeel, 274). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip is depicted, in the words of Grootvaar Lukas, as "die vreemdeling in onse poorte" (Duiwelskloof, 73). He is perceived as being alien: The inhabitants of the valley curiously pass by Tant Poppie's house "om die vreemdeling uit die buitenste ruimte welkom te heet in hulle midde" (Duiwelskloof, 83). His strangeness is comically exemplified in a conversation with the boy, Piet Snot:

(Piet): Kom Oom van ver af?

(Flip): Ja, ek kom van baie ver af.

(Piet): Kom Oom uit die hemel uit?

(Flip): Ek kom van daar heel bo af [*hy beduie na bopunt van berge*].

(Piet): Is Oom die Here? (Duiwelskloof, 62)

[...] een keer presies hiernatoe, hier na ons bamboesbos toe. Ek het nie geweet wat anders my te doen staan nie. Êrens moet 'n man se spore agter hom doodloop" (Philida, 138).

Flip is constantly reminded that he is foreign to the valley and their customs. Emma tells him: “Jy sal nie verstaan nie. Jy is ’n vreemdeling” (Duiwelskloof, 156). During a community gathering, Flip imagines how others perceive his behavior:

Uit die geroesemoes van stemme het ek gou afgelei dat ek uit my beurt uit praat; by ’n ding soos dié was ek nog ’n wildvreemdeling, en seker in geleende tyd boonop. Maar fok hulle [...] ’n Paar glimlag my selfs ewe goedig toe: die arme donner wat hier so uit sy plek is en nie verstaan hoe sulke dinge gehanteer word nie, wees hom maar genadig en gee hom kans, hy sal wel nog leer. (Duiwelskloof, 326)

He imagines how, as an outcast, the inhabitants esteem his ‘miscomprehension’ of their ways as pitiable. As an outsider, various inhabitants additionally signal the tension he creates within the community. Lang-Fransina tells him: “Jy moet onthou, ons klomp ken mekaar, maar jy kom van buite af. Jy’s vir die mense ’n aardigheid; en noudat Grootvaar Lukas die hek oopgemaak het, wil hulle met jou praat. Dit is die heel eerste keer dat hulle iemand ontmoet wat wil luister. Maar hulle is bang ook” (Duiwelskloof, 142). Emma raises a similar unease: “Jy kom hier in van buite af, jy wil alles oopgrawe. Hulle kan dit nie in die oë kyk nie. Hulle het gedink hulle kan hier klaarkom sonder om te onthou. Jy maak dit vir hulle moeilik” (Duiwelskloof, 196). A sense of fear is present in Annie’s plead to Flip as well: “Jy moenie vir die mense hier vertel wat ek gesê het nie [...] Hulle weet nie [...] As jy eers weer eendag buite is, ja, dan. Maar asseblief nie voor die tyd nie” (Duiwelskloof, 279).

Some members of the Duiwelskloof community are considered outsiders as well. Flip is of opinion that Ouma Liesbet “het eintlik lankal buitekant die maalkolk van hulle daaglikse gedoe beland” (Duiwelskloof, 253). Emma argues that the community is against her because she is not really one of them: “Hulle het dit van kleins af teen my dat ek nie heeltemal een van hulle is nie [...] my ma het my van buite af ingebring” (Duiwelskloof, 152). Hans Toordenaar is seen as an outsider as well. He insists that he is not fond of his powers since it casts him aside: “Want dis nie ’n lekker ding om mee rond te loop nie, en die mense begin jou skeef aankyk, niemand wil meer met jou in die weer wees nie. Jy sien hoe eenkant ek hier woon” (Duiwelskloof, 233). Even Tant Poppie feels estranged at a point: “Maar vandag ken ek my eie plek nie meer nie. Ek voel my ’n vreemdeling in ’n vreemde land” (Duiwelskloof, 334).

Characters in *Philida* also feel like outcasts. In the cemetery, Cornelis observes: “My geslag lê nog skaars hier geplant. *Ik ben een vreemde geworden in een vreemde land*” (Philida, 91). Philida experiences how she becomes estranged as she is sold to a different master. The feeling at first arises when she is told that she will be living in a different part of the country that is strange to her: “Nou gaan hulle vir my Binneland toe vat en verkoop [...] ’n Plek wat ons nie ken nie, in ’n land wat ons nie ken nie en nie meer wil ken nie. Iets is vir altyd verby” (Philida, 119). When she arrives at her new home in Worcester, she describes her sense of being ‘out of place’ by insisting that she does not have the same shadow she had in Zandvliet (Philida, 171-172).²⁰⁷ She reasons that she will have to get used to the feeling of alienation: “Sy sou dit maar gewoond moes raak. Maar gewoond raak wil nog nie sê dat jy jou plek gekry het nie. Dis soos wat sy by die vandsie gevoel het: dat iets tussen die Philida wat sy ken en die Philida wat vir haar vreemd is, ingeskuif het sodat die inpas nie wil werk nie” (Philida, 172). She implies that her displacement resulted in her becoming a stranger to herself: her physical dislocation gave rise to a feeling of being psychologically ‘out of place’.

Some characters have the sense that they have become foreign in their own ‘familiar’ space. Josef delineates how, during his first conversation with Derek, he felt as if he was an intruder on the stage, a space that he considered a home (Kennis, 141).²⁰⁸ In London, the South Africans Josef meets reminds him that he has become alienated from his home: “ek self het teen daardie tyd al so afgesterf van die land dat dit geregeleer is tot ’n terloopsheid in my lewe. Dit sou nooit eens meer by my opgekrom het om terug te keer nie” (Kennis, 174). Convinced that he has long lost touch with South Africa, he describes his realization that he could not live without it as a shock (Kennis, 194). Once ‘home’, he nevertheless continues to have a similar estranged feeling that he experienced in London: “Die mense om my was irreël, vaer as herinnering. Die afwesige Londen was my enigste sekerheid en sekuriteit” (Kennis, 204).²⁰⁹ Expecting a home, Josef realizes that he has but merely exchanged one foreign country

²⁰⁷ The narrator observes: “Heel aan die begin voel sy heelyd uit plek uit. Sy weet presies hoekom. Dis oor haar skaduwee nie saamgekrom het nie. Êrens in die wolke en die misreën op die lang pad tussen Zandvliet en hierdie nuwe dorp duskant die berge het die son weggeraak, en toe sy hier aankom en die son weer begin skroei, was daar weer skaduwee, maar nie die een wat sy so goed geken het nie. Saans veral, het sy die begeerte gevoel om by haar eie skaduwee te gaan inkruip en agter dié se rug lêplek te kry, maar dit was nie die een waarna sy gesoek het nie” (Philida, 171-172).

²⁰⁸ Josef relates: “Ná al die ander weg was, het net ek en hy in die teater oorgebly, voor op die rand van die verhoog [...] Ek was bewus van die stilte, en dit was of ek ’n indringer was, juis daar in die enigste ruimte waar ek werklik tuis was”. When Derek asks Josef: “Waar gaan jy verhoë kry in dié land?”; Josef adamantly replies: “Ek sal aanhou tot ek ’n verhoog het” (Kennis, 141).

²⁰⁹ Josef describes how District Six is strange to him: “Een keer tevore het ek met so ’n gevoel van amper astrale vervreemding in daardie dun straatjie afgestap. Dit was die oggend ná die eerste nag by Ursula. Maar toe was die vreemdheid daar omdat alles eensklaps deurstraal was van die wonderlike, omdat elke ding so oorvol was van onnoembare

for another. Ouma Nella in *Philida* similarly describes how her familiar environment becomes unfamiliar to her: “Soos mens so op die stadige wa sit en ry en in die stilligheid om jou rondkyk na alles wat jy ken, dan lyk dit partykeer vir jou jy ken eintlik niks, dis alles vreemd, die hele wêreld het vir jou vreemd geword” (*Philida*, 120).

The portrayal of characters as outsiders or outcasts is prominent throughout the chosen texts. Some feel alienated no matter where they find themselves. Characters’ ubiquitous sense of alienation demonstrate that they do not have a home base that offers them comfort: even in their ‘homes’, they always remain in the uncomfortable position on the periphery. Their constant outcast positions remind of Bhaba’s (1997: 445) concept of the ‘unhomely’: “the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world in an unhallowed place”. It is not that the characters are considered to be homeless, but rather the feeling that the borders between the home and the world have become confused: the ‘home’ has been relocated into the ‘world’ which remains an ever estranging place.

c. Solitude

Characters’ isolation is often deepened through their solitude. When Josef cannot find the circus at the Cape Town harbor, he wishes to run away. With a lump in his throat, he expresses: “Ek wou nie hier agterbly sonder die sirkus nie. Ek het my van God en mens verlate gevoel” (Kenniss, 92). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip also experiences a sense of anguish caused by a sudden solitude when all the residents leave for Communion. He states: “Toe het die donkerte oorgeneem en ek was alleen, van fokken God en mens verlate” (*Duiwelskloof*, 69). The fear caused by desertedness is voiced by Adam and Elisabeth in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* as well. On occasions when Adam leaves their shelter, Elisabeth describes how the solitude would hit her with “’n wellus van ang” (OW, 37). Alone and anxious with no one near to protect her, she perceives the world as “ontsaglik wyd” (OW, 81). The thought that Elisabeth is alone like him in the desolated wilderness, awakens a sense of bitter agony within Adam: “In dié verlatenheid,

moontlikheid, dat die wêreld uit sy nate gebars het en groter as gewoonlik geword het. Nou was dit anders. Nou het dit gekrimp [...] alles was tydelik en vals, vernietigbaar soos behangsels en décor van ’n stuk wat uitgespeel is: daar is nog net gewag op die verhoogpersoneel om te kom afbreek en opruim en uitvee, om die kleedkamers skoon te maak en nuwe toiletrolle aan te dra, om die verhoog voor te berei op die volgende stuk, op nuwe karakters wat soek na ’n skrywer. Hierdie wêreld van ontwapende karton waardeur ek afdraand loop, wat ek met my hande kan aanraak en met my oë betrag, was nou, selfs op die oomblik dat ek daardeur beweeg, verder van my verwyder en onwerkliker as Ovington Gardens of The Cut of Belsize Park of Navarino Road.” (Kenniss, 204)

bewus daarvan dat sy êrens op hierdie selfde vlak is, onbeskut deur die ruimte [...] is sy liefde 'n agonie; 'n angs [...] Daar is 'n bitter genade in om onverwags so alleen te wees. Te weeg, te dink" (OW, 136). Away from Elisabeth, Adam has the chance to reflect but insists that it is a bitter reflection filled with anguish. The effect of isolation on other characters is stressed as well: In *Kennis van die Aand* for example, Jessica explains how her solitude as a child had a lasting effect on her. She expresses to Josef: "Verstaan jy nie? So ontsettend eensaam. En dit doen iets aan 'n mens, later. Dit maak dit amper onmoontlik om te deel, al wil jy. Iets hou jou terug" (Kennis, 23). Jessica additionally accentuates how her isolation is the reason she cannot properly get involved in the situation in South Africa. She argues that due to her peripheral position, she is not necessarily "onraakbaar", but rather "onbetrokke" (Kennis, 338).²¹⁰ As an outsider, Jessica is always on the margin. She remains 'untouchable', but therefore also forever uninvested in the South African context. It is not the fact that she is foreign, but rather a bystander, that does not allow her to become committed. In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip also alludes to how his position influences his implication in certain matters. He for example compares the hunt in the valley to a necklacing that he witnessed in Khayelitsha and states: "Maar toe was dit 'n soort massahisterie waarby ek net 'n bystander was. Dié keer was ek deel daarvan" (Duiwelskloof, 90). After the death of Piet Snot, Flip decides that he can no longer remain on the perimeter, but that he must step in and become engaged: "Tot dusver [...] kon ek op 'n manier nog op die buiterand bly. Maar dié keer is daar g'n manier om onbetrokke te bly nie" (Duiwelskloof, 319). Throughout the various texts, the notion of becoming engaged is continuously portrayed as a spatial 'act' or position: "*buite te staan*" (Kennis, 338), "bystander", "buitrand" (Duiwelskloof, 90, 319).

Isolation is however not always negatively experienced. Elisabeth is at first afraid when she is left alone but however notices how the feeling in her evolves into a feeling that almost resembles excitement (OW, 37).²¹¹ She additionally describes the night spent alone as peaceful: "Eintlik was dit goed dat jy weg was [...] Mens raak so gewoond aan mekaar. Jy dink naderhand nie meer nie. Jou weg-wees het my so skoon gemaak binnekant" (OW, 137). In *Kennis van die Aand*, solitude is perceived as empowering: Josef, who stays with Annamaria on her boat for ten days, describes her withdrawal from

²¹⁰ Jessica describes her situation: "Soms dink ek dat niks ooit met my kán gebeur nie, dat ek onraakbaar is. Nee, nie onaanraakbaar nie; net: nie betrokke nie. Hoe kan ek dit verduidelik? In hierdie land... ek kan nie bruin of swart word of 'n pas dra of in Langa gaan woon nie. En dit is vreeslik om buite te staan. Nie oor ek 'n uitlander is nie. Oor ek ék is. En oor ek self nie weet wie ek is nie" (Kennis, 338).

²¹¹ The narrator portrays Elisabeth's change of emotion: "Sy trek die rok tot by haar knieë op en waad die water in, koel om haar kuite; sagte sanderige modder roer onder haar voetsole en tussen haar tone deur. En die angs in haar verander [...] Sy is alleen" (OW, 37).

the world as absolute (Kennis, 190). The novel furthermore demonstrates how characters' isolation from the world allows them a sense of freedom that they do not have when surrounded by others. When Josef and Jessica find themselves alone in Bainskloof, their privacy is described as a source of potential: "Dit is onaards. Asof die geskiedenis opgehef is en alles nog in 'n moederskoot wag om te gebeur: asof niks buiten hierdie kloof bestaan nie, net 'n woeste en leë leegte, asof die wêreld op óns wag om te begin gebeur, om van homself bewus te raak" (Kennis, 24-25).²¹² Josef and Jessica often find comfort in their seclusion from society. In the bathtub with Josef, Jessica declares how safe she feels (Kennis, 295). Their time spent alone in bed gives them courage to carry on: "dankbaar oor die paar uur van skuil teen die wêreld, net die paar uur om weer moed te skep vir aanhou" (Kennis, 329).

The safety offered by their solitude is contrasted to the danger posed by the outside world. After Jessica's friends knocked on her door, Josef notes how the secure atmosphere in her apartment has changed: "Dit was of ons sku geword het vir mekaar, of die indringing van buite iets besoedel het" (Kennis, 294). Intrusion from the outside world is perceived as a contamination. When Josef refuses to talk about his theatre group's financial problems, he again describes the outside world as a source of pollution that burdens their relationship: "Ons is so min bymekaar, ek wou jou nie belas met iets wat aan die buitewêreld behoort nie" (Kennis, 316). He reflects: "Ek sou haar wou vry gehou het van die wêreld buite, onaangeraak deur my geskiedenis, maagdelik vir my" (Kennis, 318).²¹³

Characters' longing for enclosures (discussed earlier) is paralleled with their yearning for a form of solitude. Flip prefers to be alone. He states: "Al wat ek wou hê, was om alleen in my kamer met my gedagtes te kom" (Duiwelskloof, 84). Towards the end of his sentence, Josef declares: "Ek was nog nooit bang vir eensaamheid nie" (Kennis, 399). He finds comfort in his solitude. On other occasions,

²¹² Josef describes their solitude: "Ons het agter die hotel verbygesteek en die klippaadjie gevolg, af teen die rotsige skuinste na die rivierbedding heel onder. Dit was 'n weeksdag en daar was nie ander mense in die omtrek nie. Ons het ons skoene uitgetrek en ligvoets van klip tot klip begin spring, heen en weer oor die water [...] Die hellings weerskante was steil, plek-plek amper onklimbaar. Af en toe het 'n voël geroep. Verder was dit heeltemal stil, net die sensuele gekabbel van die water. Die hange was swaar van die warm geur van boegoe en wilde kruie. Ons het op 'n groot gladde klip gaan sit [...] Ek onthou alles so presies. Asof dit bewaar gebly het in kwarts. 'Ons het niks saamgebring nie,' het sy na 'n rik stilweg gesê [...] 'Ek bedoel: ons het glad niks saamgebring uit die wêreld daar onder nie. Niks. Dis net ons. Dis asof niks anders ooit was nie'. Dit is onaards. Asof die geskiedenis opgehef is en alles nog in 'n moederskoot wag om te gebeur: asof niks buiten hierdie kloof betsaan nie, net 'n woeste en leë leegte, asof die wêreld op óns wag om te begin gebeur, om van homself bewus te raak" (Kennis, 24-25). He again reflects on Jessica's experience of their isolation in Bainskloof: "ons het niks saamgebring daar van buite af nie. Hier is dit net ons" (Kennis, 292).

²¹³ In wishing Jessica to be "onaangeraak deur my geskiedenis, maagdelik vir my" (Kennis, 318), we are reminded of McClintock's (1995: 30) words: "Within patriarchal narratives, to be virgin is to be empty of desire and void of sexual agency, passively awaiting the thrusting, male insemination of history, language and reason".

companionship is however depicted as being more comforting than solitude: Josef employs spatial metaphors to describe the powerful effect of coming together after Dilpert's death: "die bymekaarkom in kollektiewe verbystering, dat elkeen kon sien dat hy nie alleen was nie: dit het gevoel of ons deel word van een groot brander wat daar opslaan teen die hang, 'n blinde energie wat nie sommer kon gaan lê nie" (Kennis, 289). When spending a night with a Hottentot tribe, Elisabeth in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* anxiously imagines the solitude that will follow their departure the following day (OW, 168-169).²¹⁴

Often characters who find themselves secluded, will consciously reflect on their isolated position with regards to the world around them. Sheltering from the wilderness around them, Adam and Elisabeth are very much aware of the uncertain darkness that surrounds them (OW, 60).²¹⁵ Their awareness of the danger outside forces them to focus more on their isolation. Adam recalls the night's movement inwards on a later occasion: "Onthou jy die nag toe die leeus buite was, en hoe ontsaglik groot die wêreld om ons klein takkraaltjie gebroei het, hoe diep dit ons na binne ingejaag het?" (OW, 197). A similar observation about their position versus that of the world around them is made when they live in a cave by the sea:

Om voor sonop by die bek van die grot uit te kom en op die breë lip te bly staan en die wêreld in te kyk—enorm wyd [...] en met 'n skok te weet: hier is ek, daar is die wêreld. En om, miskien om die trae roering van die see, die sensasie te hê van beweging deur daardie wêreld, deur daardie ruimte, en tog niks aan te raak nie: ek te bly, terwyl die wêreld wêreld bly. (OW, 88)

In contrast to the notion of a symbiotic, interrelated, and blurred relation between Elisabeth's environment and her sense of self suggested earlier in this chapter, the focus here is placed on the clear distinction between her and the world, as if the world does not have an impact on her: the world remains the world 'there', while she remains herself 'here'. Despite the supposed 'distance' between the two, she nevertheless has the sensation (or the yearning?) to travel through the world 'there'.

²¹⁴ The narrator imagines their departure: "En more gaan hulle verder. Sy sal by Adam staan en die stofwolk sien kleiner word oor die vlakke; die geluid van hul trek sal afneem en verdwyn [...] En dan sal dit weer net wees soos tevore: hy en sy, omgewe van lig en ruimte en angs. Net nog erger as tevore, want die herinnering aan vannag sal hulle bespot en uittart en vereensaam [...] Sy druk haar vas teen die mens voor haar, vergeet selfs in die half-sluimering of dit Adam is of een van die ander: ons is almal saam hier op die oop vlak in die koue, bondels en bondels mense" (OW, 168-169).

²¹⁵ Adam ponders: "As dit lig was, of as dit net 'n ander nag was, sou hy nou by die takskerm kon uitloop—selfs net vir 'n paar uur—om weer die ruimte in hom in te trek; om weer sekerheid te kry uit die wêreld waarin hy beweeg. Maar vannag is alles afgeslote deur die donker waarin die leeus om die kampie hou; vannag is daar net oneindigheid rondom [...] Al wat bekend is, is hierdie klein flikkerende ruimtetjie binne die dun doringkraal. Uit kan ons nie, nie tussen die diere in die ewigheid nie; al wat ons kan, is om hier te bly maal: die oor-en-oor paadjie, in en in, binnetoe" (OW, 60).

Characters' awareness of the world 'here' and 'there' is accentuated in *Kennis van die Aand* as well (Kennis 33). When Josef and Jessica spend their first night together talking, Josef mentions how they were caught up in their own world, unconscious and almost oblivious of the world around them (Kennis, 283).²¹⁶ He describes how they are again "aware of the world around them" (Kennis, 296) when they find themselves alone on Jessica's balcony: "Ek durf nie eens voorstel dat ons êrens heen ry nie. Ons was beleër op haar klein balkon. Maar daar was 'n eiesoortige skoonheid selfs in die angste buite was die wêreld, hier was ons, net ons" (Kennis, 296). Where the previous example accentuated how, enchanted with each other, they are oblivious of the (harmless) world around them, the distinction here between the world "buite" and them "hier" emphasizes how they are in a position of safety, besieged from the dangerous world that threatens their relationship from outside.

Various examples also illuminate how characters who are physically surrounded by others, experience emotional solitude nonetheless. During the storm, Flip remarks: "Niemand het gepraat nie. Al was ons bymekaar, was elkeen eintlik fokken alleen" (*Duiwelskloof*, 349). In *Kennis van die Aand*, when Josef suggests getting a theatre group together, Derek tells him: "Met 'n groep en al... Mens bly maar alleen" (Kennis, 211). Within Josef and Jessica's relationship, they also often find themselves 'alone together' (Kennis, 351, 357).²¹⁷ Whilst watching the sunrise together on her balcony, Josef states: "Nou was ons saam, en in ons saamheid eensaam" (Kennis, 293). Josef emphasizes the fact that, even though their relationship is fragile, even though anything might happen to them, the only thing that they could be certain of, is their togetherness: "Alles het oopgelê en enigiets kon ons bykom. Maar ons was nog saam. Miskien het ons in alle ander opsigte 'n nederlaag gely. Maar ons was nog saam" (Kennis, 380). Similar statements are made about relationships in other novels of the corpus. In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth declares to Adam: "Ek het jou lief, hier is my lewe, ek hou joune in pag: hier is my hand, vat vas, ons spring die afgrond in, enigiets kan gebeur; maar selfs as ons ons te pletter val, goed, dan hand aan hand" (OW, 141). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip refers to his connection with Emma: "Ons is saam. Wat ook al anders mag gebeur, ons is ten minste saam" (*Duiwelskloof*, 253).

²¹⁶ Josef describes: "Ons wis skaars van die puin om ons: die oorvol asbakke, die stompies op die vloer, die half-leë drankglase, die bottels en bierblikkies, die groot plat borde met verlepte slaablare en aspersies en olywe: óns het deurgepraat" (Kennis, 283).

²¹⁷ Josef refers to their relationship when he describes them as being "eensaam teenoor die onbegryplike verwildering wat ons bedreig" (Kennis, 351). When Jessica prefers that Josef simply holds her tight in bed, a similar observation is made: "Dié verlatenheid was erger as enigiets wat nog tussen ons gebeur het. Die paar sentimeter tussen ons was 'n afgrond" (Kennis, 357).

The examples explored above demonstrate how solitude can be both inhibiting and empowering. On the one hand, it can be experienced as a stimulus for anguish, but it can also have a liberating effect. The texts furthermore stress that the sensation of solitude is often unavoidable: Even when surrounded by others, the feeling of being ‘alone together’ predominates.

d. Exclusion

An additional aspect of isolation that can be identified in the novels, is the idea of being isolated from certain spaces. In many of Brink’s chosen novels, the idea is frequently portrayed in characters’ search of faraway spaces from which they are excluded. In *Inteendeel*, Estienne describes the “thirst” he has for such spaces (Inteendeel, 28). He yearns for an “Ultima thule” (discussed earlier),²¹⁸ but he also refers to his need for shelter: “Watter skande [...] dat daar vir dié wat die waarheid praat, geen skuiling is in hierdie land nie” (Inteendeel, 251). In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef adverts to how Simon Hlabeni who, ‘stuck’ in London and unable to return to South Africa, longs for his home country: “Slegs ’n paar van ons het geweet hoe graag hy dit alles van hom wou afskuif om net weer stil tuis in die son te sit en in Zoeloe verse te skryf wat nooit gepubliseer sou word nie” (Kennis, 177). Simon does not idealize the space from which he is excluded. He knows his country’s imperfections, and yet the persistent yearning for it remains.

In contrast to Simon’s desire, some characters long for idealistic spaces that are often directly equated with ‘The Promised Land’ (OW, 182).²¹⁹ Other forms of ‘promised lands’ are conjured up in desires: Philida for instance dreams about an idealistic land of freedom: “Eendag, dit weet ek, eendag gaan ek nie meer hier wees nie; ek gaan op ’n plek van my eie wees, ’n plaas soos Zandvliet maar nie Zandvliet nie [...] ons almal saam, vry, vir altyd en altyd en met skoene aan. (*Philida*, 36). In *Philida*, the Gariep becomes the embodiment of such a paradisaal land. Frans hears rumors about “daardie ver plek waarvan die mense partykeer met storietyd half fluister-fluister praat en wat klink asof iemand dit uit ’n droom onthou het, die Gariep” (*Philida*, 219-220). A place on the other side of their familiar world,

²¹⁸ Reference to an “ultima thule” from which characters feel excluded is made in *Kennis van die Aand* as well. Josef regards the farmstead, “die huis van die Baas” as “die Ultima Thule, die Huis van die Baas, die binnekamer van die groot *Jy-mag-nie* wat my kinderjare oorheers het” (Kennis, 35).

²¹⁹ In *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, after many hardships on their journey, Adam and Elisabeth come across a valley that opens before them. In the distance they can make out smoke coming out of a farmhouse’s chimney. The image of what lies before them is idealized. The narrator comments: “Daar lê die beloofde land: hulle is op pad terug” (OW, 182).

the Gariep represents a paradise that welcomes all.²²⁰ Distant and unknown, the Gariep is also home for mysterious and strange people: “van rowers en skelms en lokvinke en bedrieërs, van vrouens wat jou met een vuishou kan platslaan en manne wat lewendige vuur kan insluk” (Philida, 246). It is additionally portrayed as a promising destination: “Gariep. ’n Naam soos ’n sonsopkoms, soos ’n onverwagte reënbus in ’n dor wêreld, soos ’n reënboog” (Philida, 220). Philida directly equates the Gariep with the Promised Land when she tells Labyn: “Jy onthou hoe Al-lah vir Moses die pad soontoe gewys het? Met die wolk in die dag en die vuur in die nag. Ons met net uithou en aanhou [...] Om by die Gariep uit te kom [...] moet klaar ’n voorproe van die hemel wees” (Philida, 301-302). She again calls the Gariep Paradise when she tells him: “En nou word ons hoeka vry en ons gaan almal deur die poort van die Paradys inloop” (Philida, 305).

Similar utopian spaces are pursued in *Kennis van die Aand*. Josef recounts how his ancestor Moos would proclaim the possibility of a free country where they would be considered equals and recalls how Moos started talking amongst the slaves: “vreemde verwarde woorde oor vryheid, gelykheid en broederskap; oor ’n beloofde land waarin hy net so vurig geglo het as die eerste Moses in syne. O, my gevaarlike voorvader!” (Kennis, 46). Josef insists on how Moos would address the people in the language of Wilberforce and Rousseau, “oor die mens wat vry gebore is en nou in kettings sit, en oor die dag wat voorlê [...] Moos het met al meer begeestering gespreek oor die Beloofde Land” (Kennis, 48). Josef himself wishes for worlds that seem dreamlike and ‘out of reach’. As a child, he longs for ideal worlds that are portrayed through fiction. When he and Willem are caught in the mist on the mountain and they must spend the night alone in a cave, they talk about Robinson Crusoe “en oor hoe graag ons op ’n eiland soos syne wou uitkom en vir goed daar bly woon” (Kennis, 108). Josef however longs for more than a mere space in a story, but spaces of stories itself. He emphasizes how, contrary to Willem, he was excluded from the fictional worlds offered by books: “lets soos ’n boek het ek self nooit besit nie: dit was deel van die witmenswêreld, soos Oukersaandkonserte, en skoolgaan, en poeding na ete, en nuwe klere” (Kennis, 99). Books are part of the white man’s world—a terrain that

²²⁰ Frans refers to the rumours he hears about the Gariep and its inhabitants: “Oor al die wegloopmense wat daar anderkant sy rooibrui waters hou, anderkant duskant se bekende wêreld. Drosters. Moordenaars. Slawe. Knegte. Jong manne op soek na avontuur [...] Maar ’n plek wat van al die oorvertel ’n soort Paradys geword het, ’n plek soos die een waaruit Adam en Eva verdryf is” (Philida, 219- 220). Floris depicts it as follows: “Daai Gariep is ’n anderse soort plek [...] Jy sal nooit dink daar kan soveel mense op so ’n haaivlak hou nie [...] En van alle soorte [...] al die kleure onder die son en maan en sterre, en op ’n manier woon almal daar gelukkig saam [...] Die wêreld is dro, maar naby die Gariep lyk die landerye mooi. En vir bees en skaap en bok is daar genoeg weiplek, nes vir die mense” (Philida, 242-243).

is considered forbidden. He recalls how he finally stole the book *Robinson Crusoe* and states: “Dit was nie net gewone diefstal nie [...] wat ek geneem het, het behoort aan ’n gans ander wêreld as myne, ’n terrein van volstreke taboe” (Kennis, 100). In stealing the book, Josef commits a double offense: it is not only criminal, but he also transgresses enforced borders in taking something from a space which, according to the social norms of the time, should exclude him.

An additional common pursuit present in the novels is couples’ yearning for utopian spaces which will allow them to hide or take shelter or repose together. In *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, Adam and Elisabeth frequently long for a new space. On their journey, the narrator stresses how their hankering for the Cape is intensified by the cold which surrounds them: “Maar stadigaan sou die triestigheid terugsyfer waar hulle vlak teen die vuurtjie in die beroekte grot sit. Sommer net sit. Of praat en praat: gewoonlik oor die Kaap, nou so ver, en so begeerlik anderkant die grysheid van dié winterse dae, ’n hunkering soos wat hulle vroeër na die see verlang het” (OW, 110). In *Kennis van die Aand*, the quest for a resting place is also prominent. Josef refers to his ancestor, Dawid who ran away when he states: “Wat Dawid en Katryn daar gaan soek het, weet ek nie: waarskynlik maar net ’n tydelike rusplekkie buite die onbegryplike wêreld wat hulle van kleins af verwilder het” (Kennis, 72). Within Josef and Jessica’s relationship, the search of spaces is central. Jessica equates ‘real’ love to such resting/ hiding places (Kennis, 287).²²¹ Josef expresses the urgent need that they had to find a place to be alone: “Vreemd watter nood dit in ons albei was [...] om by die see te kom, by ’n verlate strandjie waar ons alleen kon wees en kaal kon swem en ons skoon spoel van alles, van die hele wêreld. Maar dit het nooit gebeur nie [...] Mettertyd het ons dit maar aanvaar, asof ons stilswyend besef het dat dit nie mag gebeur nie” (Kennis, 336). The space for which they long remains unreachable. For Josef, the longing for ‘unreachable’ spaces is later even depicted in his dreams (Kennis, 12). Unable to reach a place where they can be free and safe together, Josef and Jessica settle on the only other alternative space that will allow them freedom: death. The decision allows them to break free from the rules set by the apartheid regime, and for the first and last time, they go and buy cigarettes together. The outing allows Josef to finally get a glimpse of the space from which he and Jessica as a couple are excluded. He defines walking

²²¹ Jessica tells Josef about her desire: “om net regtig iemand lief te hê, om liefgehê te word, om saam te wees... Iemand wat nie by my bly omdat hy iets nodig het nie, maar omdat hy *my* nodig het. En ek vir hom. En niks van buite nie... Maar is so iets regtig moontlik? Daar is so min skuilplek in die wêreld” (Kennis, 287).

next to each other as a feast (Kennis, 390).²²² Josef's final thoughts in prison depict the utopia of which he had a glimpse—a space that he will perhaps fully experience in death:

Jessica sal in my arm lê, in die aand, in die nag, in die vertroude donker. En ek sal vir haar sê [...] kom ons gaan uit na die strate, kom ons loop hand aan hand deur die stad, moenie bang wees nie, niemand sal omgee nie, niemand sal ons keer nie [...] Kom, my liefeling. Die wêreld is oop en die wette is weg. Kom, loop saam met my nakend oor die strand sonder einde. (Kennis, 401)

Josef's utopia is not incredible. He merely wishes for an open, familiar space that will allow him and Jessica freedom to move and to be who they are.

Amongst the novels' different variations of 'promised lands', new worlds, utopias and 'Other Sides', a common thread can be observed: all point to the importance of being isolated from the idealistic world to be able to believe in it. In *Kennis van die Aand*, when discussing the possibility of a new world, Josef tells Jessica and Richard:

Julle wil julle albei probeer uitsluit uit die nuwe wêreld, julle dink albei aan die moontlikheid van 'n hemel. Ek gun julle dit. Miskien beny ek julle dit. Maar die enigste wêreld waarin ék kan glo, is een waaruit ek *nie* uitgesluit sal wees nie—mét my bruinheid, mét al my gebreke, mét al my befoeterdheid, mét alles wat van my 'n mens maak. En ongelukkig beteken dit juis 'n wêreld waarin die stryd nooit sal ophou nie [...] Dis tog in elk geval stront wat ons hier sit en praat. Maak dit enige verskil aan die wêreld en al die hel daarbuite? En al die hel in óns?" En die eintlike hel, dink ek [...] is dalk juis die woorde wat ons moet gebruik om die hemel te beskryf. (Kennis, 342)

Josef longs for a world where he would be included. He realizes that a world where no one is excluded means a world where the struggle will never end. Inclusion will be a never-ending strife. He additionally suggests that the language used to imagine this new world is inadequate: the words at their disposal are a type of hell or prison for it does not allow them to describe matters on the other side of their known, existing borders. *Inteendeel's* Estienne similarly emphasizes the limits of language to describe the other side for, to reiterate his words, "(s)olank mens dit 'n naam kan gee, is dit nooit genoeg nie. Wat ek soek, lê daar ánderkant. Anderkant al wat naam is" (Inteendeel, 103). The necessity of exclusion is suggested in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* as well. Elisabeth observes: "Eendag was daar 'n paradys by die

²²² Josef describes the 'taboo' outing: "Vir die eerste keer, die enigste keer, het ons saam deur die strate geloop, in die reën, soos enige paartjie wat kafee toe gaan: nie hand om die lyf of ingehaak nie, net langs mekaar. Maar dit was soos 'n fees" (Kennis, 390).

see; ons was daar: onthou jy nog? Omdat ons daar uitgedryf is, kan ons daaraan bly glo” (OW, 164). Just like paradise, happiness too resembles a place from which she is isolated: “Bestaan geluk dan? Of is dit net iets waarna jy verlang? Maar met skielike hartstog dink sy weer: Nee! Ek het dit deurgrond, ek het dit gedrink, dit bestaan, ek ken dit. Die paradys bestaan” (OW, 193). Both Adam and Elisabeth also acknowledge the importance of the mirage. The narrator observes: “Dit is hy wat dit die eerste begin vermoed [...] Hy moes vanoggend al daaraan gedink het. Maar mens wil nie. Dalk het jy dit nodig: hoe sal jy anders aan die gang bly?” (OW, 158-159). After realizing that it was just a mirage, Elisabeth realizes that she could, contrary to her prior belief, go further: “Omdat ek skielik weer in iets geglo het” (OW, 159). They both needed the mirage, an unreachable ‘other side’, in order to believe and to carry on. The unreachable strengthens the need to continue the journey. The quest remains for there is a belief in the existence of an other side, even though it might remain inaccessible.

A corresponding recognition is made in *Inteendeel*. Jeanne encourages Estienne to be aware of his seclusion and therefore to know his borders and limitations. Only then will he be able to aim to move across them. She refers to the role of Jean de Luxembourg who sold her to the English:

Al wat hy gedoen het, was om die vreeslike perke van die moontlike te bewys [...] Dis hulle almal se sonde [...] die spel van die moontlike. Hulle word magtig omdat hulle die verbeelding aan bande lê. Dis waarop hulle hele mag berus. Hulle verbied ons om te onthou wat regtig onmoontlik is. En deur net op die moontlike te konsentreer [...] het hulle die wêreld ’n onmoontlike plek gemaak om in te woon [...] Ons het iemand nodig om weer ons oë vir die onmoontlike oop te maak, Estienne. Dis al manier om die wêreld te verander in ’n plek waar lewe weer moontlik is. (Inteendeel, 151-152)

Jeanne suggests that it is essential to imagine the impossible. The impossible and the unreachable is needed to survive in the mundane, enclosed, and realistic present. Estienne realizes that that is the secret: “Dit, dink ek, is die geheim: om te weet wanneer om jou rug op die alledaagse te draai en uit te gaan in daardie ruimte wat ander as waansin bestempel” (Inteendeel, 230). It is this belief in the unlikely, the absurd or impossible that drives most of Brink’s characters.

Borders, restrictions, impossible worlds, and spaces from which they are excluded are necessary to awaken the desire to cross and to continue, even if it is only imaginatively, forward into the other side ‘beyond’. Bhabha (2004: 1) also raises the idea of a movement *au-delà*, or a movement forward that results from borderline engagements. He states:

we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the ‘beyond’: an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà*—here and there, on all sides, fort/ da, hither and thither, back and forth. (Bhabha, 2004: 1)

Within the boundary or threshold between binaries (between past and present, between inside and outside, between exclusion and inclusion) there is a disaccord of opposing energies or forces. It is from this disaccord that the need for movement or action is born to pursue the *au-delà*, for it is from the boundary, to reiterate Heidegger’s words once more, that something begins its presencing. The boundary represents a bridge or passage, from where presencing, or in Brink’s characters’ perspective, movement begins. This drive of Brink’s characters has parallels with the constant movement or action of Glissant’s concept of *Relation*. In describing the movement present within *Relation*, Glissant observes *inter alia*: “Plus il produit de l’exclusion et plus il génère de l’attraction” (Glissant, 1990: 153). In a Glissantian sense, it can therefore be assumed that the more Brink’s characters are presented with exclusions, the more they feel attracted to cross them in a quest for inclusion. An endless movement is the result of the opposing forces of exclusion and attraction.

5.3 Space in the works of Assia Djebar

5.3.1 Space and identity

In accordance with the approach used in the section on Brink's work, the investigation of the connection between characters' space and identity in Djebar's work will also stem from the presumption posited by postcolonial theorists that space and identity are directly interrelated (Viljoen *et al*, 2004; Schama, 1995; Duncan, 1996). In this section I will firstly examine the role of space on characters' self-awareness by investigating how Djebar's characters look to their environment for a form of self-knowledge. I will moreover indicate how the ideas of identity, space and memory are closely associated in Djebar's work. Thereafter, the influence of space on Djebar's characters' 'sense of place' will be explored.

a. Space and self-awareness

In Djebar's œuvre, places, in comparison with that of Brink's, often too resemble points of reference or serve as a form of orientation for characters. The role of the stage as home base for Josef in *Kennis van die Aand* can be likened to the city of Alger in *Vaste est la prison* as the narrator states: "Alger, de nouveau port d'attache. Aller ailleurs, et toujours revenir!" (Vaste, 229). The spatial embedment of characters' sense of selves is additionally suggested in *L'Amour, la fantasia* when the narrator is represented with the 'maze' that is her family's genealogy: "J'écoute l'écheveau de la généalogie se dévider: de telle montagne à telle colline, en passant par la 'zaouia', par le hameau, puis enserrant le cœur de la ville" (AF, 233-234). It is spaces, and not names, that predominantly figure in her family's genealogy. In accentuating her family's whereabouts, the cousin of her grandmother implies that the places where they find themselves are just as important, or perhaps even more so, than the members of the family themselves.

Where some of Brink's characters undergo a 'blurring' of boundaries between themselves and their environment, Djebar's narrators similarly often experience a form of assimilation between who they are and where they are. The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* for instance describes how the "presence" of her film started when she found a place that resembles her: "Tout a vraiment commencé ce premier jour de la ferme [...] tandis que je trouvais mon espace quotidien. Cette liberté, mine de rien. Cet

espace, au vrai, me ressemble. Ainsi, me dis-je, commencer une fiction de film, lorsque l'espace qui lui convient est trouvé vraiment" (Vaste, 160). The place may not look like much ("mine de rien"), but she insists that the feeling she encounters there amongst the "murmures infinis dans des conversations avec des vieilles de ma tribu", makes it her place: "ma ville à moi—c'est-à-dire la maison où vivront mes trois personnages" (Vaste, 160). Other, more ambivalent identifications with spaces can be identified throughout the novels as well. The first-person narrator in *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père* reminisces about the cluttered holiday homes where she and her cousins often felt "à demi prisonnières". She remembers how as a child in the dark house, she would 'sharpen' her senses "pour ne rien oublier de ce monde qui est moi et qui n'est plus tout à fait moi!" (NP, 28). The narrator acknowledges the determining role of her environment on her identity, but she is also able to create a form of distance between the apparent symbiotic relationship: she simultaneously identifies an assimilation ("ce monde qui est moi") and a differentiation ("qui n'est plus tout à fait moi") of herself in the world.

Djebar's characters do not only identify with certain spaces, but just like Brink's characters, they also find a mirrored image of themselves and their emotions in their surroundings. When the narrator in *La Femme sans sépulture* perceives Césarée as "ma 'capitale des douleurs'" (SS, 236-237), I am reminded of similar words uttered by Elisabeth in Brink's *'n Oomblik in die Wind*: "'n landskap van gestroopte pyn" (OW, 180). These spaces do not merely reflect their pain, but become their pain. The affinity between a character's suffering and that of her environment is found on a more literal level as well as the narrator in *Nulle part* associates her own suicide attempt with Algeria's war of independence:²²³ "Ce jour d'octobre 1953 précéda de douze mois l'explosion d'un pays, de toute la terre dite Algérie" (NP, 415).

Just like Brink's characters, this analysis demonstrates that Djebar's characters also look to the spaces around them to help orientate their existence. Spaces also serve as an extension of themselves as they become entwined with spaces that mirror their emotions. In contrast to Brink, the connection between memory, identity, and space is more prominent in Djebar's work. An analysis of this relation follows.

²²³ This shortened version of the novel's title (*Nulle part* instead of *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père*) will henceforth be used.

b. Space, memory, and identity

“Sur ce, me voici en la mémoire, en ses terrains, en ses vastes entrepôts”. Saint Augustin’s (*Confessions*, X. 8) words, used here as a motto for the third part of *L’Amour, la fantasia*, suggest how the notion of space is doubly interlaced with the idea of identity: on the hand, the autobiographical text gives the impression that Saint Augustin’s sense of self can be found ‘within the terrains’ of his environment. On the other hand, it is his sense of self, embedded in his memory, that is spatially depicted: he finds or presents himself through the lands and warehouses that is his memory. Whether it be his identity or memory, the spatial portrayal of the “me voici” is echoed throughout the chosen Djébar corpus: The notion of a spatial memory (memory that is space), or a space resembling memory (space that is memory) is frequently reiterated. Hajila in *Ombre Sultane* for instance insists: “s’orienter, c’est se rappeler” (OS, 49). Spaces are personified, “Dans la chambre, la vitre est témoin de nos enlacements” (OS, 94),²²⁴ and inversely, people are ‘spatialized’, “Un ancrage demeure: ma mère, présente, grâce à dieu, pourrait témoigner” (NP, 13), to demonstrate how they (both people and places) are witnesses to memories. Spaces, be it actual places or people, serve as a repository for memories. In the epilogue of *La Femme sans sépulture*, Césarée, or more particularly its red stones, is regarded as a guardian of memory: “Les pierres seules sont sa mémoire à vif, tandis que des ruines s’effondrent sans fin dans la tête de ses habitants” (SS, 236-237). The narrator expresses how she rediscovers Césarée, her “espace d’enfance”, and suggests that her “lieu d’origine” has been snatched away from her own oblivion (SS, 238-239). She insists that she is not the only one ‘guilty’ of forgetting as she describes how the city’s inhabitants, specifically “hommes faits ou garçons oisifs”, give the impression of being oblivious of the city’s majesty, and in the process they seem to forget themselves: “les êtres ici [...] s’oublient eux-mêmes [...] Ils persistent là, ombres à peines mouvantes; ils hantent cette cité dont la majesté est trop ample pour eux [...]—oui, je les vois flotter en ombres qui n’entendent aucun chant perdu...” (SS, 238-239). The idea of space being intertwined with memory moreover involves the notion of characters (‘vessels’ of memory) becoming part of the land. To reiterate Schama’s (1995: 6-7) words once more, Djébar’s novels signal how landscape’s scenery “is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock”. In *L’Amour, la fantasia*, reference is made to the fire of 1845 that killed 1500 people from the Ouled Riah tribe (AF, 115). After hiding from the French in the Dahra mountains, French

²²⁴ Other examples of personification of spaces include the narrator in *Vaste est la prison*’s perception of Le Chenoua. She contends that before she starts filming, she has a private ‘meeting’ with the space: “Quatre heures de l’après-midi: seule ici, j’ai rendez-vous avec l’espace. Celui de mon enfance, et de quoi d’autre... peut-être de cette fiction à créer” (Vaste, 159).

commander Pélissier ordered to “smoke the population out” (AF, 96). The narrator insists how the people became entwined with the land:

Le paysage tout entier, les montagnes du Dahra, les falaises crayeuses, les vallonnements aux vergers brûlés s’inversent pour se recomposer dans les antres funèbres. Les victimes pétrifiées deviennent à leur tour montagnes et vallées [...] Pélissier, témoin silencieux, quand il parcourt ces grottes à jamais peuplées, a dû être saisi d’une prescience de paléographe : à quelles strates du magma de cadavres et de cris, vainqueurs et vaincus s’entremêlent et se confondent? (AF, 114-115)

The mountains recomposed into tombstones and the people conversely became part of the mountains. The narrator implies that the layers of magma, composed of the literal petrified corpses of the Ouled Riah, bear witness of both the defeated and the supposed ‘victorious’. Other examples also point to characters becoming part of the land: In Zoulikha’s last imagined monologue after her death, she notes how a boy from the caves came across her body and carried her on his shoulders: “Lourde je suis, et je l’étais davantage, non à cause de la douleur des sévices sous la tente, plutôt à la suite des heures ensoleillées qui m’avaient rendue bourdonnante et fertile, une plante grasse” (SS, 228). She depicts herself as a sunlit and fertile succulent. On a more figurative level, the narrator in *L’Amour, la fantasia* also experiences a type of unification between herself and the significant places of her ancestors. She delineates the difficulty of crying out and vomiting “son de barbare, son de sauvage, résidu macabre d’un autre siècle!” (AF, 164). Hitchcock (2010: 217) suggests that it seems as though the narrator “carries within her this submerged absence as presence, as if the organs of her body are themselves an archive: the difference between affiliation with place and affiliation with movement through space”.

Throughout Djébar’s chosen novels, a connection between language, memory, and space is also found. As already noted in the literature review of this study, language is a central concern in Djébar’s work. It is therefore not surprising to recognize the intimate link between language and space that is established throughout the texts. The narrator in *L’Amour, la fantasia* for instance reflects on how hearing a certain word of her childhood, “hannouni”, evokes a whole world within her:

Le frère [...] évoque devant moi le dialecte de nos montagnes d’enfance. Les vocables de tendresse, les diminutifs spécifiques au parler de notre tribu d’origine—à mi-chemin du berbère des crêtes et de l’arabe de la cité proche [...] Comment traduire ce ‘hannouni’, par un ‘tendre’, un ‘tendrelou’? Ni ‘mon chéri’, ni ‘mon cœur’ [...] Ce ‘tendrelou’ semble un cœur de laitue caché et frais, vocable enrobé d’enfance, qui fleurit entre nous. (AF, 116-117)

The word nostalgically recalls the space of her childhood. Pertaining to their specific dialect, she deems it impossible to translate the word into another language for no other language will be able to capture the world ‘hannouni’ evokes between the two siblings. She moreover describes how the word becomes a ghost or shadow-like figure (“le mot d’enfance-fantôme” or “ombre d’aile, ce mot-chott”) that moves through the obscure and fragmentary thickets of her personal as well as cultural memory (AF, 118).²²⁵ Examples from other texts within the chosen corpus also depict how language evokes spaces: The narrator in *Nulle part* recalls a time in the hostel during Ramadan where “nous restions souvent jusqu’à l’aube à chanter des chansons anciennes, à évoquer chacune sa ville, son village ou son aïeule...” (NP, 183). Similar to the word ‘hanounni’, these songs are able to call forth the students’ places of significance. Through language, their sense of place is evoked. This role of language in characters’ sense of place will be analysed in more depth at the end of the following section.

c. Space and a sense of place

Djebar’s representation of characters’ ‘sense of place’, or the subjective and emotional attachment they have to places (Cresswell, 2004: 7), has further parallels with Brink’s work. In this section I will focus on characters’ attachment to the following places: the home or a ‘chez nous’, Algeria as a ‘homeland’, and the possibility of a ‘place’ offered by and through language.

On occasions, Djebar’s characters’ sense of place refers to their feelings associated with home. Her characters are represented as seeking a home in and on which they can build their collective identities (OS, 58).²²⁶ Their sense of place moreover presents similarities with the notion of recognizing and respecting ‘your place’ discussed in Brink’s section. In her discussion of women’s ‘place’ in traditional Arabic spaces, Rader (2011: 129) maintains that men have the last control on women’s gender role and place within the traditional harem. Women’s ‘place’ then, to reiterate Duncan (1996: 128) and Best (2002: 873-875), is reserved to interior and private spaces: be it the house or the veil. In *Ombre Sultane*,

²²⁵ The narrator states: “le mot d’enfance-fantôme surgit—tantôt ce sont mes lèvres qui, en le composant dans le silence, le réveillent, tantôt un de mes membres, caressé, l’exhume et le vocable affleure, sculpté, je vais pour l’épeler, une seule fois, le soupiner et m’en délivrer, or, je le suspends [...] Ombre d’aile, ce mot-chott [...] l’obscurité de quels halliers de la mémoire, d’où ne surnagera que ce bruit de lèvres, qu’une brise des collines brûlées d’autrefois où je m’enterre. Où s’enfument ceux qui attendaient, dans le pourrissement de leur chair, l’amour cruel ou tendre, mais crié” (AF, 118).

²²⁶ Isma in *Ombre Sultane* for example specifies *their space*, “cet espace est le nôtre”, with the birth of her daughter, Mériem (OS, 58).

Isma accentuates both these imprisonments within the house and the veil as she describes the ‘cruel’ outside world where, veiled, women are presented as walking ghosts: “Le dehors annonce l’exposition cruelle imposée à nos corps amollis. Emmaillotées, nous nous présentons au monde, fantômes aux yeux ouverts. Est-ce pour maintenir sur notre peau le souffle de l’Eden et la douceur de ses eaux?” (OS, 205). The influential role of these arbitrary borderlines on characters’ identity is depicted by Hajila. When Hajila’s family hears that she goes out and does not stay indoors as she should, they are angered: “Fille sèche, fille perdue et qui nous perdra!”, they exclaim, insisting that in disrespecting ‘her place’, she ‘betrays’ her identity and is somehow lost. When Hajila insists that she does nothing wrong during her excursions outside, her family nevertheless reiterates: “fille perdue et qui nous perdra tous! [...] Travailler dehors [...] n’est-ce pas courir comme une chienne?” (OS, 68). Where someone like Josef in *Kennis van die Aand*’s so-called ‘disrespect’ of his place in society leads people judging him to be audacious (Kennis, 86), Hajila by contrast is merely denigrated: his ‘disrespect’ is deemed unfit; hers is deemed unacceptable—a source of disgust. A woman’s place additionally alludes to her conduct: In *Nulle part* the narrator for instance comments on how she should behave when meeting her father in the open (NP, 130-131).²²⁷

A woman’s ‘place’ is moreover suggested to be in her father’s house. Many of Djébar’s chosen texts highlight the association her characters have with their fathers: it is suggested that female characters’ identities are inextricably linked to the ‘space’ of their fathers. In *La Femme sans sépulture*, reference is made to how Zoulikha, in taking back her family or her father’s name after her divorce, embraces her ‘first identity’. The fortunate link with her father has a spatial connotation as the narrator suggests:²²⁸ “Tu as donc écrit sur la fiche le nom de ton père [...] tu as repris ta première identité, et c’est peu après [...] que tu reviens ainsi dans ta ville. Tu reviens en tant que fille de ton père” (SS, 114). The spatial significance of identifying with one’s father is alluded to in *Nulle part* as well: the narrator insists that “moi, de nom, je suis Fatima, ‘la fille de mon père’” (NP, 245), but as the novel’s title

²²⁷ The narrator declares: “dès lors moi, ressentie d’emblée comme une exception, moi une fille d’apparence européenne mais sans l’être, je dois, dans la rue, refréner tous mes gestes, même si la rue se trouve par hasard désertée. Ainsi, il serait indécent de ma part, par exemple, de me hisser sur la pointe des pieds pour embrasser affectueusement mon père, dans un joyeux désordre improvisé et exubérant” (NP, 130-131).

²²⁸ Hania suggests that her mother, and the narrator whom she addresses, are lucky to be regarded as the daughters of their fathers: “Heureuses [...] heureuses celles que, sur notre terre, nous pouvons appeler ‘les filles de leur père’! [...] Vous d’abord, je le constate aujourd’hui, mais Zoulikha, ma mère aussi, doit sa première force, dans sa jeunesse, à son père!” (SS, 150).

insinuates, it has spatial implications as well: what can be the cause of ending up 'nowhere', without a place, in her father's house, the space where she is expected to belong?²²⁹

Characters' sense of place in Djebbar's work generally allude to ideas concerning their national identities: their place in the homeland that is Algeria. Djebbar's novels highlight how the idea of Algeria as a homeland, 'patrie', or motherland on the one hand serves to unite its people. In accordance with the suggestions made in Brink's work, Djebbar's characters also often portray their homeland as a source of viability: In a comparable manner to Simon in *Kennis van die Aand* (Kennis, 178), the character Yasmina in *Vaste est la prison* comes to the realization: "Je ne peux vivre hors d'Algérie, non! Décidément, je rentre! [...] Je ne peux vivre hors d'Algérie, non! [...] Algérie-sang" (Vaste, 256-257). The land symbolizes the life-giving source that unites its people. In *Vaste est la prison*, the mother asks her son where the other prisoners are from. When she is told that they are from another region than their own, she comments: "Pas de chez nous!". In attempting to rectify her statement, her son insists: "Tout le pays, là-bas, c'est 'chez nous'!" (Vaste, 138). The idea of a single homeland or a 'chez nous' again echoes the idea of Glissant's (1996) *identité racine* and *mythes fondateurs* that form the basis for the perception of a unique, permanent and intolerant identity. The idea of structuring one's collective identity on the presence of a legitimate filiation with a certain 'given' territory is again reiterated in *La Femme sans sépulture* when a nursery rhyme is recalled: "Nous avons une seule langue, l'arabe. Nous avons une seule foi, l'islam. Nous avons une seule terre, l'Algérie!" (SS, 77). The narrator's classmate suggests a more relational, and might I say rhizomatic, song: "*Nous avons trois langues, et le berbère d'abord! [...] Nous avons trois amours: Abraham, Jésus... et Mohammed! [...] Nous pourrions aussi évoquer nos ancêtres illustres: Jugartha [...] La Kahina [...] Abdelkader [...] Le jeu des trois, sur une même terre: trois langues, trois religions, trois héros de résistance, n'est-ce pas mieux?* (SS, 78). Although the classmate maintains the idea of a single land, her suggestion is more inclusionary than the traditional nursery rhyme.

The notion of a rhizomatic identity is raised in Sokołowicz's (2021) study of *Nulle part* as well. Although she does not necessarily focus on the role of space, but rather the influence of multiple and opposing heritages, languages, traditions, and cultures on the narrator's hybrid identity, her argument is noteworthy here (Sokołowicz, 2021: 345, 349). She argues that the narrator's rhizomatic identity is

²²⁹ The notion of being "nulle part" will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter.

based on the entanglement of two heritages: the Orient and the Occident, or the colonized and the colonizer (Sokołowicz, 2021: 342, 346). She demonstrates how the narrator's father and mother embody both Algerian and European culture (and possibly space as well) and that this hybrid representation of traditions resembles an unpredictable, rhizomatic structure (Sokołowicz, 2021: 347).

Identification with the homeland, be it in a single or more rhizomatic fashion, is not always romantically portrayed. The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* for instance refers to Algeria as monstrous: "Au centre, que faire sinon être happée par le monstre Algérie—et ne l'appellez plus femme, peut-être goule, ou vorace centauresse surgie de quels abysses, non, même pas 'femme sauvage'" (Vaste, 258). Alluding to the gendering and feminization of spaces highlighted by postcolonial theorists (Rose, 1996: 59), the narrator contends that due to Algeria's heinous character, it cannot be considered female. She however maintains the gendered form as she concludes: "L'Algérie chasserresse, et moi, est avalée" (Vaste, 260).

The idea of the motherland as source of unison is also signalled as the reason for exclusion. In *La Femme sans sépulture*, Dame Lionne observes: "Comme si ces Maltais, ces Européens d'ici, ils la connaissent, la France. Ils l'appelaient 'leur mère', eux qui n'étaient de nulle part. Nous au moins, ajoute-t-elle avec vanité, pour nos fils, nous pouvons le dire: notre mère est sous nos talons, cette terre qu'ils ont cru nous enlever" (SS, 33). The Europeans are regarded as inferior, for they, in contrast to the Algerians, do not have their 'motherland' underneath them. They moreover are portrayed as being 'unable' to take the land from its native inhabitants, for it remains the native's 'mother'. Without a homeland to 'ground' them, the colonizers are portrayed as being "from nowhere". Unable to "remove" the motherland from under their heels, the colonizer's ability to obtain power and wealth from the Other's homeland is nevertheless accentuated in *L'Amour, la fantasia*. The narrator recalls how discussions amongst women of her family will often confirm that "Toutes les Françaises ne viennent pas de Paris [...] La plupart de celles que notre pays asservi a tentées savent seulement traire une vache à leur arrivée! Si ensuite elles se civilisent, c'est parce qu'elles trouvent ici force et richesse. Car les lois sont pour elles, pour leurs mâles, pour leurs fils!" (AF, 39). Although the colonizers find themselves on someone else's homeland, the laws allow them authority and fortune. This distinction between 'us' and 'our homeland' versus 'theirs' is continually alluded to in the chosen texts. The narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* again stresses the idea of their superiority, an idea, she insists, that repeatedly comes to

the forefront in the conversations amongst women of her family: “malgré les apparences, notre clan, même provisoirement déchu, était supérieur, par son raffinement, à l'étranger avec ses femmes libres” (AF, 40). In *Nulle part*, reference is also made to the “land of the Others” when signalling the death of the father “dans la métropole du Nord, sur la terre des Autres”. The necessity of bringing him home to be buried in his homeland amongst his sisters and women of his family (the feminized motherland?) is stressed (NP, 39).

This ambivalent portrayal of Algeria as motherland reminds of Hiddleston's (2006) assertion that within the last phase of her work, Djébar breaks away from any intention for a final identification with Algeria. Djébar's writing, to repeat Hiddleston's (2006: 181) thoughts, establishes “a movement outside all that is associated with the ‘patrie’, the fatherland and its attendant resonances of patriotism or pride in national frontiers”. In insisting that Djébar's ‘expatriation’ “does not imply rejection, dissociation or non-belonging”, it might be deduced that Djébar's expatriation rather draws on an idea of openness: acceptance, association and belonging. These notions all point to Glissant's concept of *Relation* that is based on rhizomatic systems of inclusion. Hiddleston's (2006: 181) suggestion that Algeria is depicted as that which “cannot be circumscribed as inside or outside, this or that”, moreover reminds of Levinas (1991) or Attridge's (2004) unreachable and untranslatable other.

As demonstrated in the literature review, literary critics additionally signal the desire of Djébar's characters for not only a physical place, but also a figurative space, be it mental, verbal, or psychological to express themselves and from where they can discover the world around them (Rocca, 2004: 17). This space, or sense of place, is possibly offered by language, an argument I will explore in the following section.

d. Space and language

According to Hirchi (2003: 87), Djébar is determined to rethink the place of women in Muslim society throughout her *œuvre*. It is argued that through language, Djébar is able to create a significant space for women who have previously been silenced (Ringrose, 2006; Pappas, 2010; Sharpe, 2013; Best, 2002; Rothendler, 2016). Critics such as Hitchcock (2010: 231) emphasize that Djébar does not wish to speak for these silenced women, but rather aims to articulate a type of counterdiscourse. This writing

or discourse, according to Hitchcock (2010: 231) can be seen as a kind of territorial engagement. The space that she creates through her counterdiscourse is regarded as an embodiment of postcolonial life “where past and present, tradition and innovation, and a multiplicity of voices and discourses can comfortably cohabit” (Best, 2002: 875).

Ringrose (2006: 95, 128, 132) argues that similar to Cixous, Djebbar explores new forms of language, *écriture*, or writing as a means to counteract exile. Language has the possibility to become a space, world, or ‘another country’ for those without a home. Best (2002: 878) is of opinion that contrary to feminist theory, Djebbar rethinks language in terms of space and structure. Language is therefore spatially perceived for, as Rothendler (2016: 296) points out, Djebbar establishes a “temporal landscape” in which she is able to “inhabit” the French language. But how is such a rethinking achieved? How is Djebbar able to create a significant female space through language? How is she, in the words of Sharpe (2013: 216) able to access the inaccessible and to emancipate “Algerian women from their state of subalternity within the nationalist and post-colonialist imaginary”? Literary critics focus on two possible strategies of Djebbar: her entering the semiotic order and her creation of a type of palimpsest. Both arguments will subsequently be examined.

In her study of Djebbar’s feminist writing practices, Ringrose (2006) makes use of theories proposed by Julia Kristeva. Within her work, Kristeva is, comparable to Djebbar, also in search of a new (theoretical) space as well as a language through which phallogentric and patriarchal representations can be undermined. Kristeva aims to create another form of writing through her work that offers a representation form for women as women (Rorty, 2005: 196; Grosz, 1990: 168-169). Her work is largely influenced by the work of Jacques Lacan on which she bases her signification theory: by adapting Lacan’s opposition between the imaginary and the symbolic, Kristeva proposes an alternation between the symbolic and the semiotic order (Grosz, 1990: 147, 150). She accepts Lacan’s symbolic order: that which refers to the patriarchal order of language and culture that constitutes a subject’s identity. The symbolic order refers to a system of signs that is based on a set of rules—grammar and syntax for example. The symbolic is moreover associated with an adult language user and is regarded as a language in which words correspond to meaning (Law, 2007: 345). Kristeva’s theory however differs from that of Lacan: rather than focusing on the association with the oedipal father, she places more emphasis on the pre-oedipal mother-child relation that is described in terms of the semiotic (Ringrose,

2006: 36). The semiotic order corresponds to the pre-linguistic phase of early childhood where a pre-verbal, but already social order of reality is produced. It refers to that which is instinctive and sensual (Kristeva, 1984: 43, 45, 48-49; Grosz, 1990: 152). Kristeva perceives language as a dialectic between these modes of the semiotic and the symbolic: the process of discourse, according to her, depends on the correlation between the two orders. The semiotic is regarded as the suppressed condition of a language that is regulated and grammatically as well as syntactically structured (Ringrose, 2006: 39-40; Grosz, 1990: 152). In her study of Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*, Ringrose (2006: 35, 44-45) maintains that the linguistic fluid movements within the novel remind of Kristeva's alternation between the semiotic and symbolic orders. She insists that the historical sections of the novel represent the symbolic order as it recalls corresponding spatial and temporal limits. On a linguistic level, Djébar nevertheless reverses these symbolic nuances with semiotic irruptions in the text. These are exemplified by an increase in a modelling of sound, the contrast between sound and silence, emphasis on light and colours as well as the interruption of syntax. The symbolic and semiotic orders are moreover compared to the narrator's identification with the paternal and maternal languages: the symbolic order, with its linearity and limits, corresponds to the use of French within the historical reports within the novel. The semiotic order on the other hand, with its lyrical movements, is associated with Arabic and Berber. Djébar's entering into the symbolic or paternal order of language is equated with Algeria's, or "L'Algérie-femme", entering into the colonial and paternal order, represented in the historical sections. Within these sections, Djébar is believed to be "thinking back through her fathers'—her biological father, the father land (France), and expressing her thoughts in the paternal language (French)" (Ringrose, 2006: 56-59). By 'thinking back through her fathers', she discovers a maternal and semiotic gap that is presented as a lost link with the mother and as a passionate identification with the motherland. Ringrose (2006: 56-59, 63, 90) believes that an inevitable consequence of Djébar's writing in the paternal or symbolic order is that she is forever separated from Algerian women: Djébar experiences a lack, and therefore a need for the maternal language as a result of her entering into the French (symbolic) language. Djébar is argued to consciously fill this maternal void in the last section of *L'Amour, la fantasia* by abandoning the historical objective tone: she frees herself from the paternal order by "thinking back through the mothers", by visiting maternal figures of her past and present. Djébar's re-entry into the semiotic corners of her mind allows her access to the repressed sounds of the maternal order as well as the voices of women who have silenced (Ringrose, 2006: 55, 58-59, 62-63, 77). Ringrose's conviction that Djébar is able to enter into the semiotic to reach the repressed voices

of the past is, to my mind, problematic (Steenekamp, 2017): Is it possible to re-enter into the semiotic order? Can voices of the past be accessed? I esteem that the representation of the semiotic order in Djébar's work should perhaps rather be regarded as an allegory for Levinas' unreachable Other, an Other that in the narrator's words "résidait nécessairement ailleurs, au-delà des mots" (AF, 43).

The second argument posited by literary critics is Djébar's creation of a significant female space through a type of palimpsest. Where Ringrose focusses on the distinction between symbolic/paternal and semiotic/maternal orders, critics that examine Djébar's palimpsest place emphasis on the differentiation between the written word in French, *écriture*, and oral speech or *parole* in Arabic, *kalaam*. Mortimer (1988c: 301, 303) demonstrates how these historical modes, just like space in traditional Algeria, are gendered concepts: the French *écriture* can be likened to the public masculine space, whereas the Arabic *kalaam* is associated with the private feminine space.²³⁰ From a feminist perspective, Djébar's ability to bridge the gap between the masculine *écriture* and the feminine *parole* suggests that she at first 'misreads' the French texts and that she then uses it as a sort of palimpsest by reorganizing their message in a subversive manner in order to make space for feminine voices (Geesey, 1996: 156). Murray (2008: 54, 77, 90) suggests that by privileging *parole* over *écriture*, Djébar counterbalances the hegemonic discourse of French historiography. Donadey (2000: 27, 30, 34) insists that Djébar creates a multilingual palimpsest in *L'Amour, la fantasia* by using Arabic words in her French text. Within the novel, Arabic words are never found in their original form: she transliterates the Arabic script into the Latin alphabet. The Arabic script is thus orally transcribed into French.²³¹ By modifying the French with traces from the oral Arabic language, Djébar inscribes a postcolonial and feminine

²³⁰ Mortimer (1988c: 303) refers to the Djébar's use of both *écriture* and *kalaam* in *L'Amour, la fantasia*: "The written account of the conquest of Algeria that she unearths from the archives is French and male; the oral account that she puts together from interviews with participants is Arabic and female. Most important, in this endeavour *écriture* and *kalaam* are unknown and unintelligible each to the other. Djébar uses her language skills, translating, transcribing, interpreting, to bridge the gap between the two". Both Mortimer (1988c: 302) and Donadey (2000: 27) contend that not only is History gendered by the distinction between *écriture* and *kalaam*, but language itself is also sexualized: French is seen as the paternal language whereas Arabic and Berber is considered maternal languages. Mortimer (1988c: 302) maintains: "The language of the colonizer, the official public written language, became an adopted paternal language because Algeria was administered by a French colonial bureaucracy supported by an indigenous male labor force. In contrast, the unofficial private oral languages, Arab and Berber dialects, remained maternal languages; Algerian women rarely had access to French schools and were excluded from most if not all forms of public activity".

²³¹ Djébar herself stresses the importance of this audial transcript: "C'était [...] la sonorité de la langue maternelle que je tenais à retrouver constamment dans la chair de la langue française" (Djébar & Gauvin, 1996: 84). She highlights that it is the sound of her maternal language that she wishes to represent through her writing: she aims to hear, and to make heard, the oral maternal language.

message through her text. In this sense, Djébar is believed to be able to reverse the discourse of French colonization by arabizing the French language.

The idea of a palimpsest is raised by the narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* herself. In an attempt to reconstruct the historical account of the Ouled Riah (AF, 103), she affirms that she uses the colonizer's account as a type of palimpsest: "Pélissier, l'intercesseur de cette mort longue [...] me tend son rapport et je reçois ce palimpseste pour y inscrire à mon tour la passion calcinée des ancêtres" (AF, 115). Whilst reading (and possibly writing 'over') this historical account, she describes the necessity of hearing the oral language:

Pour lire cet écrit, il me faut renverser mon corps, plonger ma face dans l'ombre, scruter la voûte de rocailles ou de craie, laisser les chuchotements immémoriaux remonter, géologie sanguinolente. Quel magma de sons pourrait là, quelle odeur de putréfaction s'en échapper? Je tâtonne, mon odorat troublé, mes oreilles ouvertes en huîtres, dans la crue de la douleur ancienne. Seule, dépouillée, sans voile, je fais face aux images du noir... (AF, 69)

The process of listening for the lost and suppressed voices of the past which are 'caught' within the environment, involves her whole body. It takes great effort in trying to hear their silenced cries in order to reproduce their pain. Within the act of listening, she aims to bring the past to light: she tries to reinscribe female Algerian voices in a historical account in which they have largely been ignored. The narrator however raises the difficulty, or even the impossibility, of hearing, and therefore of reproducing this oral language. She declares: "Ma mémoire s'enfouit dans un terreau noir; la rumeur qui la porte vrille au-delà de ma plume" (AF, 301-302). The sound of the sought-after oral language cannot fully be transcribed through her writing. The narrator explains that it is as if the separation from the oral tradition, her maternal language, makes her incapable to hear the voices from the past. Due to this impossibility, she describes how she has become more than a mere exile:

On me dit exilée. La différence est plus lourde: je suis expulsée de là-bas pour entendre et ramener à mes parents les traces de la liberté... Je crois faire le lien, je ne fais que patouiller, dans un marécage qui s'éclaire à peine. (AF, 303)

Excluded from the listening circle of the maternal language (AF, 267), the narrator is unable to reach the language which, according to her, holds the power to resurrect the silenced voices of the past. Without this absolute transcription of her mother language, her autobiography inevitably takes the form of fiction:

Ma fiction est cette autobiographie qui s'esquisse, alourdie par l'héritage qui m'encombre. Vais-je succomber?... Mais la légende tribale zigzague dans les béances et c'est dans le silence des mots d'amour, jamais proférés, de la langue maternelle non écrite, transportée comme un bavardage d'une mime inconnue et hagarde, c'est dans cette nuit-là que l'imagination, mendicante des rues, s'accroupit... (AF, 304)

Caught within the French language, the narrator declares that her 'lost' oral mother language is presented to her in a form of inaudible chattering; a description that reminds of Flip's perception of sounds that are "barely inaudible" in *Duiwelskloof* (Duiwelskloof, 285-286).²³² She nevertheless suggests that through her imagination, the personified 'beggar in the street', she can possibly imagine these lost voices.

The analysis demonstrates that the female space created through Djébar's palimpsest is not homogeneous: it is not a place where lost voices can finally come to light, and where women can come 'home' and be represented as women through solely a semiotic, feminine language as Kristeva suggests (Rorty, 2005: 196; Grosz, 1990: 168-169). The maternal oral language, just like the semiotic order, remains unreachable through Djébar's French writing practices. The place Djébar creates is rather, in the words of Ashcroft *et al* (2006: 391) a "language, something in constant flux, a discourse in process". The produced space is a language that does not necessarily succeed in filling the gaps, but rather, to reiterate Tomlinson (2005: 61), to accentuate them. Hitchcock (2010: 216) suggests that this language-space created by Djébar is more than a mere contact zone:

Like Fanon, Djébar is always questioning, but for her this means transcription is also reinscription and rearticulation. This reveals the continuing struggle to wrest silence from the unwritten [...] in the spaces where patriarchy offers asphyxiation [...] Time after time [...] she draws attention to the opening created between the voices of Algerian women and Djébar's French in? representing them. This space is not just the contact zone of colonial encounters theoretically elaborated by Mary Louise Pratt, but a chronotope in which an encounter does not find the space of Algeria chronological.

Hitchcock argues that the encounter between the French language and the unrepresentable voices of Algerian women, as represented in Djébar's work, requires repeated reinscription and rearticulation in no linear order. He insists that Djébar's space for women is not a contact zone in Pratt's terms, but

²³² Flip describes the sounds: "net-net onhoorbare geluid, daardie lae risteling van stemme wat fluister en kreun en uitroep, van fokken liggame wat wriemel en worstel" (Duiwelskloof, 285-286).

might I suggest that it possibly embodies, in the light of Derrida's *sous-rature*, a type of gathering? Hitchcock indirectly also refers to Derrida's practice when examining the section of Tzarl-rit in *L'Amour, la fantasia*:

The musical motifs remain, as does the striking emphasis on transcription, here interpreted not as writing over but as writing under and through [...] the reverse palimpsest creates in the space of whispers, a woman's space where voices do not so much confirm presence as trace, a verbal edge between women as they remember history as an alternative archive. (Hitchcock, 2010: 224).

The space generated by Djébar can be seen as a gathering of possible *écriture* and imagined traces of *paroles* or voices. Djébar's palimpsest, just like the practice of reading *sous-rature*, acknowledges the inadequacy of certain words, or in Djébar's case, language(s). The words (or language) are however left intact, for it is all she has. The forgotten voices or silences from the past cannot be written: it is untranslatable.²³³ The meaning of her palimpsest, just like the meaning from the practice of *sous-rature*, is derived from the endless possibility (might I even say the imagination?) of other words, signifiers, openings, differences or sounds that are presented by not being presented. As Hitchcock (2010: 230) suggests, the spaces, silences, or the non-said are considered just or even more valuable than the words, or the said, themselves.

The above analysis on space and identity in Djébar's work supports the argument made by postcolonial critics that space and identity are symbiotically entwined. Djébar's characters orientate their sense of selves through the space that surrounds them, and they come to a deeper self-knowledge by looking to their surrounding environments. They moreover also identify with certain spaces. They demonstrate the importance of having a 'sense of place': a significant relation with a specific space that grounds them, be it an identification with the home ("chez nous"), a nationalistic or rhizomatic identification with the native land, or an identification with a language-space. The investigation however also acknowledges that a sense of place cannot always be established: Djébar's attempt to for instance create a significant female space through the semiotic order, as posited by critics, fails. She is not able to enter the semiotic and thereby to create a female space for women as women wherein stifled female

²³³ Hitchcock (2010: 230) signals that "(i)t is the silence of writing as translation (a translation from silence) and underlines a specific untranslatability in Djébar's Algeria, if not Algeria per se" (Hitchcock, 2010: 230). Rothendler (2016: 299) also indicates that Djébar characterizes "putting of voice into writing" as a "putting to death of voice".

voices of the past can be transcribed. The (female) space that she creates through her counterdiscourse is not a space proper, but rather a form of palimpsest: a gathering of the possible said and the imagined non-said. This notion of a gathering between what is possible or available (the symbolic) and impossible or unreachable (the semiotic) brings the idea of the in-between to mind. The following section will explore how the concept of the in-between as well as notions of thresholds and opposing narrative worlds are paramount within Djébar's work.

5.3.2 Thresholds, two worlds, and the 'inbetween'

The study of spatial binaries and boundaries is eminent within the postcolonial critique on Djébar's oeuvre. This section aims to explore the significance of borders, thresholds, and spatial binaries for Djébar's characters. In a similar manner to the approach on Brink's work, I will also examine how Djébar's characters seek to cross spatial boundaries or thresholds. My analysis will conclude by similarly focusing on the 'in-between' state of many of her characters.

a. Borders and thresholds

Various borders can be identified within the chosen Djébar corpus. These borders, in contrast to Brink's work, are mostly portrayed as thresholds and not as barriers. The emotions and values with which the chronotopic motif of the threshold is charged (Bakhtin, 1981: 244-248), will subsequently be examined.

References to both literal and figurative spatial thresholds are made within Djébar's work. Literal thresholds generally relate to the home: reference is made to the scary, dark room beyond the doorstep where the grandmother is heard chanting (AF, 19)²³⁴; the moveable dividing wall in the husband's home that threatens "propriety" (OS, 24)²³⁵; and the lack of curtains in the windows looking

²³⁴ The narrator recalls how she and her cousin never dared entering the room in their house: "Je n'entre jamais dans la pièce au fond : une aïeule, brisée de sénilité, y croupit dans une pénombre constante. La benjamine et moi, nous nous figeons parfois sur le seuil : une voix aride tantôt gémit, tantôt se répand en accusations obscures, en dénonciation de complots imaginaires. De quel drame enfoui et qui renaît, réinventé par le délire de l'aïeule retombée en enfance, frôlons-nous la frontière? La violence de sa voix de persécutée nous paralyse. Nous ne savons pas, comme les adultes, nous en prémunir par des formules conjuratoires, par des bribes de Coran récitées bien haut" (AF, 19).

²³⁵ When the concierge proudly demonstrates how, by the click of a button, the two rooms can be opened into one large hall, Hajila's mother is not impressed. Worried, she expresses: "S'il se trouve des femmes d'un côté, des hommes de l'autre

out on landscapes (OS, 35).²³⁶ Physical thresholds also serve to demarcate the limits between the known world of the Self and the unknown space of the Other: on more than one occasion, Djébar's narrators would comment on how they for instance never dared stepping into a house of a French classmate (AF, 38; Vaste, 189; NP, 201; NP, 152). Various examples allude to Algeria's war of independence and its influence on this 'segregation'.²³⁷ The spatial effect of figurative thresholds is accentuated as well. In *L'Amour, la fantasia*, the narrator refers to the significance of the young man stepping through the door, a literal threshold, on his wedding night (AF, 152)²³⁸; but the new marriage is also filled with figurative borders, as the narrator suggests: "Le mariage signifiait d'abord pour moi départ: frontières à franchir à la hâte, conspirateurs nouveaux à retrouver sur une autre terre" (AF, 151-152). For her, the marriage signifies crossing borders into a new and hypocritical space. In alignment with the thresholds within a marriage, Isma in *Ombre Sultane* suggests that her ex-husband (and Hajila's current husband) forms a shared "wall" between the two women: "Je mêle nos deux vies: le corps de l'homme devient mur mitoyen de nos antres qu'un même secret habite" (OS, 116). She insists that it is the man as common denominator between the narrator and the narrated that allows her to combine their two lives or stories. Rader (2011: 124) also alludes to the notion of a threshold when stating that the "dialogue between the narrating Isma and narrated Hajila is bridged by the thematic blueprints of spaces outlined by light and liberated by windows and, at times, doorways".

In representing borders as thresholds, the idea of possibility and openness comes to the forefront. Although the world beyond the threshold is commonly depicted as unknown, strange, and frightening; its light (Rader, 2011: 124) and even its darkness is alluring. Albeit not barriers they face, but thresholds,

– je pense à Hajila, ma fille, quand elle recevra des invités [...] à quoi cela peut-il lui servir?... Comment sauvegarder la... la pudeur?" (OS, 24).

²³⁶ Isma signals how she and her husband never had curtains in most of the houses they lived in: "Jamais de rideaux. Par oubli, ou par dédain ensuite. Rideaux contemplés de la rue et qui mentent avec leur allusion à un foyer feutré: à l'intérieur, leur retombée frôle un tapis, à peine si leur légèreté tremble le long de la vitre impersonnelle. S'ils sont voiles de gaze, ils éloignent tous les paysages" (OS, 35). The absence of curtains is also stressed in Brink's *Duiwelskloof* (Duiwelskloof, 45, 47, 135, 235). Where Flip perceives that the lack of curtains increases his vulnerability, the couple in *Ombre Sultane* deem curtains as a border that creates unnecessary distance between them and the outside world.

²³⁷ In *L'Amour, la fantasia* the narrator observes: "Durant toute mon enfance, peu avant la guerre qui aboutira à l'indépendance, je ne franchis aucun seuil français, je n'entrai dans aucun intérieur d'une condisciple française..." (AF, 38). The narrator in *Nulle part* recalls how she never visited her French friend, Mag's house either: "Est-ce que, malgré tout, la guerre d'Algérie aurait laissé une ombre d'ambiguïté entre nous deux ? Plutôt une invisible frontière" (NP, 152).

²³⁸ The narrator declares: "Le jeune homme l'avait toujours su: lorsqu'il franchirait le seuil de la chambre—conque d'amour transcendantal—, il se sentirait saisi d'une gravité silencieuse et, avant de se tourner vers la vierge immobile, il devrait se livrer à des dévotions religieuses" (AF, 152).

we can also determine that it is the world and its Heideggerian ‘presencing’ (Bhabha, 2004: 13) on the other side that Djébar’s characters find appealing.

b. Two worlds

The idea of binaries and the relation between open or public, private, or closed, and inner and outer spaces have repeatedly been analyzed in Djébar’s work (Huughe, 1996: 867; Mortimer, 1998b: 199, 204; Mortimer, 1988c: 301, 303; Zimra, 1992: 69, 70). References are frequently made to how private inner spaces are reserved to women, where public outer spaces are reserved to men. This spatial distinction is exemplified in *La Femme sans sépulture* as the narrator states:

Après tout, la maison, à Césarée, reste encore domaine presque exclusif des femmes, en somme, le gynécée. Le ‘maître de maison’, qu’il soit l’époux ou le frère ou le fils adulte [...] ce maître donc, l’homme, ne se sent vraiment maître qu’au-dehors, dans l’espace presque ségrégué des rues, des cafés maures, de la mosquée parfois, partout où son individualité est multipliée par les membres (femmes, filles et garçonnets) de la famille qu’il est censé entretenir, donc à la fois commander et supplanter dans la cité. (SS, 152)

The ‘master of the house’ only feels like a true ‘master’ in the outside world where his self-worth is seen to be multiplied. Spatial segregations are not only bounded to gender,²³⁹ but also to language and race as is regularly stressed throughout Djébar’s novels. Rothendler (2016: 297) refers to the different physical language-spaces which are an ever-present element in *L’Amour, la fantasia* that literally divides “the world inhabited by Arabic from that inhabited by French”. These dividing language-spaces are alluded to in many of the chosen texts. In *Vaste est la prison* for example the narrator stresses how they are the only ‘native’ family next to five or six households of French teachers (Vaste, 186). The language division strengthens the opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentioned earlier as she describes how she perceives “eux, les étrangers” as coming from a different bank:

Eux, les étrangers, et pas seulement les adultes—hommes, femmes, enfants indifféremment, pour lors nos voisins d’habitation et qui, plus nous frôlaient dans les allées et venues du quotidien, davantage, me semblaient alors des êtres d’une autre rive, flottant dans un éther qui n’était pas le nôtre [...] Etranges me paraissent-ils: vraiment tout à fait, est-ce sûr? L’étranger [...] faudrait-il rappeler

²³⁹ The narrator in *Nulle part* for instance also refers to how the bus is separated by gender: “(je) m’apprête ensuite à rejoindre ma place (‘assise’, m’a-t-on précisé, et dans les premiers rangs, car l’arrière du car est réservé aux hommes, paysans ou prolétaires—et ce, pour ne pas gêner les quelques rares femmes, ou les fillettes comme moi...)” (NP, 125).

qu'il ne se présentait pas seulement comme différent; non, il restait sinon 'l'ennemi' [...] L'étranger était perçu, était reçu, sauf en de très rares exceptions, comme le 'non-ami' [...] Un silence compact quoique invisible, une neutralité blanche comme une condamnation l'entourait, nous séparait... J'étais évidemment trop jeune pour analyser ou comprendre cet impossible passage. (Vaste, 188)

The French foreigners are viewed as more than mere 'different', 'alien' and even on occasions "unreal beings" from "elsewhere" (Vaste, 189, 194): they are regarded as the enemy or the non-friend as well. This distinction is the cause of a figurative barrier that seems to be impossible to cross. When French visitors unexpectedly spend the night in their house, the narrator describes her reaction when she hears "un bruit 'français'" in her sleep: "comme si la chambre parentale avait glissé horizontalement, s'était entrouverte vers la place du village [...] nous nous retrouvions exposés aux quatre vents, devant tous, devant 'les autres'. La France alors, c'était pour moi simplement le dehors" (Vaste, 190). The presence of the strange 'Other' in her familiar home, turns her world upside down. She moreover describes the night as a "transmutation" (Vaste, 192): that which always seemed to belong to the world outside or the representatives of the "other world", has become part of her own private space. The barrier has been broken which leaves her feeling exposed: "Je fermais les yeux. Je ne voulais voir personne. Je me sentais à la frontière, mais laquelle?" (Vaste, 193).

The spatial segregation between colonizer and colonized, Arabs and Europeans, 'us' and 'them',²⁴⁰ or in the words of *Nulle part's* narrator, "nous qui construisons parce que nous avons détruit" and "ce qui reste d'avant" is also frequently accentuated. She describes how the colony can be perceived as a world divided into two, with two opposing 'species' (NP, 127-128). The imbalance between the two 'societies' is highlighted as the narrator walks with her father: "Nous deux, mon père et moi—moi, ombre minuscule—cheminons à pas incertains, presque au bord du déséquilibre (mais c'est lui, mon père, qui perçoit le danger) entre la société des 'Autres' et celle des indigènes" (NP, 97). The visibility of this segregation is often stressed: in the streets, public spaces like beaches and restaurants, as well

²⁴⁰ The narrator depicts the division that is usually expressed in terms of the "Europeans" versus "the Others". She however refrains from referring to the Others for, as her father reminds her, the so-called 'Others' are in fact the 'theirs': "ce monde des villages traversés, ces rues exclusivement peuplées d'hommes toujours réparties en deux groupes, les 'Européens' et les autres, ou plutôt non, je ne me dis pas ces deux derniers mots, car ces 'Autres', ce sont en fait les 'nôtres'—ainsi s'exprime mon père, quand il me parle en français, à propos des 'indigènes', comme les appellent ses collègues" (NP, 129).

as in the school system (NP, 127-129; 146; 157; 171-172; 201). As a result of this division, she maintains that “(l)a colonie est un monde sans héritiers, sans heritage” for those that find themselves on the frontier position between the opposing worlds. She contends that “(l)es enfants des deux bords ne vivront pas dans la maison de leurs pères!” (NP, 37). With this statement, one questions whether the narrator on the one hand implies that children with a shared identity from both opposing worlds will suffer a form of identity loss for they will no longer be welcome in the house of their fathers? Or does she suggest that the children born in the future will see a spatial revolution: it will no longer be the divided country that their fathers knew? Perhaps it is both.

Albeit closed or open, inner or outer spaces, the world of the colonizer or colonized; or the world of the Self and the Other, many of Djébar’s characters demonstrate a type of resistance to these spatial binaries. Hiddleston (2004: 93) highlights the difficulty in traversing the rigid frontier that exists between these territorially divided spaces. She specifically refers to intersections between feminine space (the domestic sphere) and masculine space (public life) in Muslim society that can only be crossed “in abidance with accepted rules”.²⁴¹ Many of Djébar’s female characters allude to this adversity: the outside world represents another country (OS, 84) from which they are excluded and for which they long. When the proposition is made to close the patio with a glass roof in *Ombre Sultane*, the only sunlit inner space they have that is not completely closed, the women of the household are unanimous in their revolt and protestations: “Pas de verrière, pas de verrière, un coin de ciel seulement!” (OS, 111-112). It is the sun and sky for which they collectively and repeatedly yearn: “Imaginons des jours sans nuits, ô mes sœurs! Les crépuscules finiraient par devenir aubes! L’homme resterait dans cette cuisine, s’abreuvant d’alcools et de philtres, tandis que moi je ne me laisserais pas du monde! Et le soleil me regarde!” (OS, 121). The liberated Isma openly rebels against the spatial restrictions imposed by the patriarchal society as she states: “Je tiens la main de ma fillette, je la tire au soleil, je l’aiderai, elle, à ne pas s’engloutir!” (OS, 100). For the cloistered Hajila on the other hand, the outside world remains a distant dream. When she sees a woman without a veil playing with her child outside, she imagines: “Sans voiles, dehors, en train d’aimer son enfant! [...] Sans voiles, dehors,

²⁴¹ Borders that are not only gendered, but also racially bound are challenged as well throughout Djébar’s œuvre. In *Nulle part*, the narrator recalls how her “audacious” father rebelled against the racial segregation imposed on the beach: “il s’était permis, sur la grande plage aux portes de Césarée, de fouler le sable de la partie strictement réservée aux Européens, puis, devant les jeunes Françaises en maillot [...] comment, du pied, ostensiblement il avait renversé toutes les plaques affichant les mots ‘interdit aux Arabes’ [...] il les avait retournées sur le sable, négligemment. Puis le corps nu, seulement sanglé d’un maillot noir, il s’était élancé dans les vagues, après s’être en vain attendu à quelque esclandre” (NP, 45-46).

en train... Sans voiles, dehors...” (OS, 42). The dream becomes recurrent as she imagines the woman, free and happy outside, again (OS 44). The narrator observes: “Dans le noir où tu te plonges, tu vois encore l’inconnue aux cheveux rouges trôner au centre du square, le visage élargi de bonheur” (OS, 45). When she does venture into the frightening outside world,²⁴² and thereby resists the imposed spatial restrictions, it has a doubled-edge effect. After walking unveiled outside, the address to where Hajila should return almost slips her mind. The fleeting moment of forgetfulness makes her panic, and she starts questioning her presence in the ‘taboo’ outer space. She decides to give up, as if it was her only possibility forward (“comme si c’était le seul ‘Sésame’ pour trouver la voie”). Despairingly, she puts on the veil again in a dark corner of a building, “créant dans ce noir ton propre noir”, to become a walking ghost once more: “Dehors, te revoici fantôme et la colère grisâtre replie ses ailes sous la blancheur du drap [...] Anonyme de nouveau, tu retrouves la voix” (OS, 51). Ironically, she feels like she only has a ‘voice’ when veiled or when anonymous, and therefore in a sense by being ‘bereft’ of a voice. She again raises the feeling of being without a voice when unveiled in the outside world:

Comme si tu pouvais parler! Dehors, tu es; ne le savent-ils pas? Le souvenir de la femme qui riait te revient. Tu pourrais t’entendre à ton tour t’exclamer, ou chanter, pourquoi pas... Mais, quand tu te libères du drap, que tu déambules, ta voix te semble reléguée ailleurs. Elle ne te redevient présente qu’aux derniers moments, après que tu t’es réenveloppée de la pelisse, juste avant ta remontée du retour. (OS, 62)

Hajila yearns for the outside world and to be free like the woman she saw, yet once ‘free’ outside, her voice is seemingly ‘elsewhere’. The outside world is not as liberating as expected for it leaves her feeling voiceless and unable to express herself. She only gets her voice, and possibly her sense of self back when veiled once more. The outside world with its light nevertheless remains a yearning, desire and need as she observes the night around her: “Respiration de la nuit tout autour. Soudain une inquiétude te mord: si le jour ne revenait plus, si, plus jamais, tu ne te retrouvais au-dehors, si tu ne devais plus jamais marcher en pleine lumière, si...” (OS, 81). Hajila’s experience demonstrates that by simply ‘reversing’ the imposed spatial roles, freedom is not achieved: by taking the ‘man’s position’ in the outside and public world, she does not feel liberated, nor is she able, in the words of Faulkner (1996: 852) to claim public space, to seize control and to assert a certain power. Even through removing the

²⁴² The narrator describes: “Surgissant au-dehors, tu sens peser sur ton dos le regard du concierge [...] Depuis que tu as claqué la porte, la peur te mord, comme si c’était ta première évasion” (OS, 45).

veil, stepping into male ‘territory’ and thereby challenging masculinist discourses of seclusion (Hitchcock, 2010: 214), she feels, and in a sense remains, voiceless.

Besides crossing barriers in an attempt to revolt, Djebbar’s characters also traverse boundaries in order to find a type of ‘Other side’ that is comparable to some of Brink’s characters. They wish to be “elsewhere” or even lost or abandoned in a distant and exotic space (OS, 29, 175; Vaste, 55-56, 58)²⁴³: a yearning that is comparable to Brink’s characters’ desire for a type of Promised Land. The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* is, in a similar fashion to Estienne in *Inteendeel*, in search of a lover that is to be found in an enigmatic unknown ‘Other Side’ (Inteendeel, 116). She describes her constant quest for “l’Aimé”: “Ainsi l’Aimé vivait sur un bord. Moi sur un autre, plus jamais n’interviendrait la rencontre! Je le chercherais indéfiniment; c’était même pour cela que mon corps n’aspirait qu’à marcher; il finirait peut-être par traverser la secrète frontière, se retrouver sur l’autre versant, dans l’autre ville, réelle ou irréal, celle au moins où l’Aimé existait!” (Vaste, 43). In further alignment with *Inteendeel*, Djebbar’s novel also alludes to what lies on the other side of borders,²⁴⁴ beyond representation (Inteendeel, 193-194). The motto for *Vaste est la prison*’s chapter entitled “L’effacement sur la pierre” introduces the notion of the unreachable, by signalling an alphabet that is employed “not to think nor to write”, but rather to traverse frontiers: “J’avais peut-être enterré l’alphabet. Je ne sais pas su fond de quelle nuit. / Son gravier crissait sous mes pas. / Un alphabet que je n’employais ni/ pour penser ni pour écrire, / mais pour passer des frontières...” (Ch. Dobzynski, *Prologue à Alphabase*). When shooting her film, the narrator experiences this ‘unreachable’ irrepresentability first hand when she encounters a woman whom she is not allowed to film: “comme si sa beauté qui concentrait le secret familial devait nous rester inaccessible [...] ‘non’, ce fut un ‘non’ calme, que dut m’opposer la mère, avec comme seule raison paraissant évidente: ‘non, parce que son mari—mon fils—travaille à la capitale et est absent

²⁴³ Isma notes in *Ombre Sultane*: “Dans le sommeil qui enfin te saisissait, tu te voulais ailleurs, non pas dans le bidonville, non pas dans la chambre où dormaient à cette heure ta mère et ta sœur serrées l’une contre l’autre, tandis que le frère et le vieil oncle devaient être allongés contre la porte d’entrée. Non, ailleurs, égarée, ‘une caille battant des ailes’, aurait dit la mère, dans une grotte ou au cœur d’une mer opaque” (OS, 29). She also alludes to the need to escape to an exotic place: “Moi, je rêvais à la pension comme à une contrée exotique” (OS, 175). In *Vaste est la prison*, the narrator also has the desire to flee to a distant place. She does not want to sleep in her own bed with her husband, and searches for a “coin où dormir préservée, abandonnée” (Vaste, 55-56).

²⁴⁴ Rader (2011: 124) offers valuable insight with regards to the notion of crossing and going beyond borders in *Ombre sultane*. She reasons: “Isma’s lines underscore the potential for redesigning space—in the psychological and phenomenological realms—that do not reinstate an architectural succession of walls that encase and contain women within demarcated spaces. Here, Isma redefines the narrative boundaries by inscribing both an ontological and outwardly linear path that exceeds the frame, allowing the object of the gaze to depart from the containing frame as the acting subject. Djebbar’s Isma becomes the narrative’s architect of a new, boundless space of alterity” (Rader, 2011: 124).

d'ici” (Vaste, 161). Due to the absence of her husband, and the consequential refusal of her mother-in-law, the narrator is not permitted to catch her on film. She explains the effect of this inaccessibility:

Elle qui, la première, avec ce sourire timide offert à moi, aurait pu dire: ‘Je représente ici toutes les femmes que tes machines ne cerneront pas. Je suis la frange de l’interdit et je t’aime’ [...] Elle fut l’ailleurs—par là même tout mon passé au féminin. A présent, je comprends: à partir du moment où me fut refusé de saisir son image, à cause même de la proximité autant de sa beauté que de la pénombre dans laquelle elle vivait constamment, sa présence fut un prolongement, arrière-plan rendant ceux du film incertains. Elle évoquait la durée pour toujours en arrière... [...] En moi l’évidence qui, par lancées, se cristallisait, c’étaient les autres: frères, mari, voisins, résumés tous par la mère toute-puissante, qui maintenait la barrière entre les deux espaces. (Vaste, 162)

The ‘taboo’, inaccessible woman from the other side or on the “edge of restriction” becomes the embodiment of all inaccessible women: those who cannot be fathomed through her work and films. She represents the forever “elsewhere” that, do to her/its irrepresentability, will forever cast a shadow over her work.

c. In-between

In comparison with Brink’s work, many of Djébar’s characters also experience a sense of being caught between polarities and definite opposing worlds. For some of her characters, the in-between signifies leading a type of borderline existence: Schéhérezade is for instance described as “celle qu’on salue sultane d’un jour et qui se sait victime offerte au soleil, elle qui, à chaque mot proféré, se meut entre le trône et l’holocauste” (OS, 133); Hajila is depicted as being neither here nor there: “Tu ne te sens ni là, ni ailleurs; au-dehors, des gerbes de sons te parviennent par bouffées” (OS, 64); whilst the narrator in *Vaste est la prison* similarly feels rootless, floating ‘in between’: “ma dépense de moi-même semblait réservée à l’air, aux nuages, aux visages inconnus flottant devant moi! Comme si je n’avais nulle racine, comme si je ne me posais pas à terre” (Vaste, 229).

Another form of in-betweenness with comparable qualities to Brink’s work, is the sentiment some of Djébar’s characters have after being exposed to the world of the arts. The revelation *Kennis van die Aand*’s Josef undergoes when seeing the circus for the first time (Kennis, 91) is comparable to the narrator in *Nulle part*’s experience at the piano concert. She expresses: “Pour moi, ce n’est pas une

fête, plutôt une révélation. Une mise à nu. Je m’essuie le visage comme je peux mais demeure bouleversée—cela n’en finit pas, au-dedans de ma frêle poitrine” (NP, 137). Her physical and emotional reaction implies that, in a similar fashion to Josef, the narrator’s exposure to the world of the arts also leaves her present reality forever changed. She additionally describes how, after his concert filled with “ample musique”, the pianist stood up “laissant les auditeurs à jamais orphelins” (NP, 137). Bereft of his music, she believes that the audience will forever feel ‘homeless’. She also experiences a comparable confusion or state of ‘inbetweenness’ to that of Josef after the concert as she observes: “je n’entends ni la foule ni la ville que nous allons bientôt traverser tout entière, le long du boulevard longeant les casernes. Je ne sais plus où je suis. C’est mon premier concert. Je suis toute seule dehors, me semble-t-il” (NP, 138). A similar experience is related in *Vaste est la prison*. After an evening at the theatre, the narrator expresses: “nous n’allions plus jamais dormir, cette soirée au théâtre s’était déroulée pour moi hors territoire, ni en France ni en mon pays, dans un entre-deux que je découvrais soudain [...] Moi, je n’étais ni là-bas ni ici; je ne cherchais pas ma place, je ne m’en souciais même pas, toutefois je ne pouvais m’empêcher de sentir approcher les nuages, s’annoncer les tempêtes. Le pays, me semble-t-il, devenait un cargo ayant déjà amorcé le début d’une dérive en mer inconnue...” (Vaste, 36-37). Just like the narrator in *Nulle part*, the revelation caused by the theatre changes her present reality: she finds herself drifting in a dreamlike space between two worlds.

It is yet again the idea of language, or more specifically Djébar’s narrators’ French education, that evokes perhaps the deepest sense of in-betweenness throughout the chosen novels. As mentioned in the Literature Review, the French language is often analyzed as a source of ambivalence within Djébar’s work. On the one hand it offers the narrator a sense of freedom (AF, 261, 297) but it also increases her sentiment of geographical dislocation and her sense of exclusion: she is not fully present within either the French paternal order, nor the maternal Arabic/Berber tradition (Mortimer, 1988c: 304, Ringrose, 2006: 60, 88, Zimra, 1992: 71). *L’Amour, la fantasia*’s narrator expresses how she always remains on the margins between these two worlds:

Je ne m’apercevais pas que ma présomption signifiait une reprise du voile symbolique. Ayant dépassé l’âge pubère sans m’être immergée, à l’instar de mes cousines, dans le harem, demeurant, lors d’une adolescence rêveuse, sur ses marges, ni en dehors tout à fait, ni en son cœur, je parlais, j’étudiais donc le français, et mon corps, durant cette formation, s’occidentalisait à sa manière. (AF, 181)

The narrator in *Nulle part* also expresses this in-betweenness by referring to how she is both visible and invisible within the two worlds to which she belongs:

Ainsi j'étais 'visible', et je m'en étonnais, car, à force de vivre parmi des femmes voilées, masquées, calfeutrées sous la laine, la soie, n'importe quelle étoffe, de même je m'imaginai en quelque sorte 'non vue'—je veux dire: certes 'visible', présente à l'autre monde, celui du lycée, de la pension, de nos professeurs et même des gens de la rue, visible à ce monde 'européen' qui croyait nous voir mais sans nous voir vraiment, puisque je me sentais de toute façon appartenir à l'autre côté. (NP, 285)

In contrast to the veiled women of her family, she is regarded to be 'visible' to the outside world for not being veiled. Yet, she deems that even though 'visible', her 'true' self is not properly seen when unveiled, for a part of her belongs to the invisible or 'veiled' other side. Even just on the one side, amongst the women of her family, she experiences a state of in-betweenness as well: "Mes rêves, que nourrissait toute lecture, en avais-je besoin pour réduire la dichotomie des deux mondes où je vivais: la claustration que nous connaissions au quotidien, ma mère, ma sœur et moi, au village, mais aussi la chaleur de la vie féminine à Césarée, dont je savais qu'elle ne serait jamais la mienne, plus tard?" (NP, 222). She argues that due to her French education and therefore her 'Westernization' she does not properly know either the confinement nor the warmth associated with the women of her family's lives.

This in-between existence caused by language is also the motivation for creating a space that, as previously stated by Tomlinson (2005: 60-61), creates the possibility "to make those in-betweens, those alien walls, alien lines, into something approaching a home: to furnish women with an imagery, and a language, of their own". The spatial language, or the space that is language, created through Djébar's work is, as demonstrated in the previous section, however yet another form of 'in-betweenness': a palimpsest and a gathering of the 'writable' and the 'unspeakable'. In this sense, the space created for women should perhaps not be regarded as a space 'proper' as suggested by Tomlinson (2005), but rather as an inbetween, Third Space, as suggested by Bhabha (2004: 55) that, in its palimpsest form, remains hybrid, flexible and innovative border dimension which refuses all final and fixed meanings.

It becomes clear that the notions of thresholds, spatial binaries and 'in-between' spaces are central in Djébar's work. Her characters often find themselves confined in a strictly divided space. When crossing boundaries in an attempt to revolt or to explore the other side, the result is often ambivalent: the

'taboo' other side does not necessarily offer them freedom or a type of revelation. The other side is also frequently inaccessible and remains out of reach. As a result, her characters are often situated on the margins in an in-between space.

5.3.3 Possession of space

The "acquisition, subordination and settlement of space" that Said (1989: 218) deems essential to understand colonialism, is also portrayed in Djébar's work. In this section of the thesis, the representation of space will be explored by analyzing how space is often presented as a territory to be acquired, controlled, and mastered. This section will primarily focus on the notion of the ownership and mastery of spaces and the effects thereof on characters.

Although the act of mapping and naming spaces is much more common in Brink's œuvre, some noteworthy parallels can be identified in Djébar's work. Naming as a form of taking possession (Seddon, 1997: 23) is raised through the narrator in *Nulle part's* observation of the names given to the villages she passes by when on the bus. She observes: "A chaque arrêt, le contrôleur descend une minute ou deux en claironnant le nom du village; souvent, ce sont des noms de villes d'Europe où les armées napoléoniennes ont gagné des batailles, un siècle et demi auparavant, tandis que les indigènes réservent les noms des tribus voisines à ces mêmes localités [...] ces stations portent deux noms si différents—l'un venant du pays, l'autre même pas vraiment de France" (NP, 128). The different names suggest that both colonizer and colonized wished to attach a certain familiarity to the given spaces in an attempt to claim it as 'theirs'. The absence of names is also significant. One of the voices in *L'Amour, la fantasia* recalls how, after being captured by the French, the French soldiers get aggravated when she keeps refusing to give them details and names of places on the maquis' whereabouts. She tells them: "Quand on marche dans une forêt [...] pourquoi connaître forcément le nom de cette forêt" (AF, 194). Her statement reminds of Adam's reaction to Elizabeth's maps in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* (OW, 24-25): both she and Adam, 'native inhabitants of the land', deem it unnecessary to name (or map) the country that is theirs. It is their presence within it that makes the space familiar to them.

In many of the novels in Djébar's chosen corpus, the notion of possessing territory is portrayed as a passionate yearning for French colonizers. The narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* mentions how baron

Barchou de Penhoën, a witness to the Battle of Staouéli, writes his report almost fervently: “il rédigera presque à chaud ses impressions de combattant [...] d’amoureux d’une terre qu’il a entrevue sur ses franges enflammées” (AF, 27-28). The ownership of this desired earth or the colony’s “nature vierge” (AF, 26) is seen as the ultimate decisive stage: “Pour les troupes victorieuses, c’est l’étape décisive d’une possession véritable. On pourrait s’étendre sur les sofas et se faire servir le café” (AF, 30). Although their motherland at first seemed impenetrable (AF, 28-29)²⁴⁵, the colonized are moreover portrayed as accepting that their rightful land is taken away from them. When a boy dies amongst other Algerian prisoners on a boat to France, the mother cries out: “Notre terre est à eux! Cette mer est à eux! Où abriter mon fils mort? N’y aura-t-il plus jamais un coin d’Islam pour nous, les malheureux?” (AF, 268). She argues that there is no safe space to bury her child, for “they”, the French, own it all.

Just like Brink’s novels, Djébar’s texts also demonstrate how the conquering of spaces includes the mastery and ‘possession’ of its people as well. The second section of *L’Amour, la fantasia* is introduced by an extract from Ibn Khaldoun’s autobiography that is employed as a motto for the text: “Je dus moi-même diriger une expédition chez les tribus berbères des régions montagneuses de Béjaïa, qui refusaient depuis plusieurs années de payer l’impôt... Après avoir pénétré dans leur pays et vaincu leur résistance, je pris des otages en gage d’obéissance...”. By taking hostages as “proof of submission”, it is suggested that, just like space, people too can be conquered and ‘kept’.

The land/woman metaphor is also central in Djébar’s work. Various depictions within the novels allude to the feminized portrayal of the land and how women are equated with the “earth that is to be discovered, entered, named, inseminated and, above all, owned” (McClintock, 1995: 31). Within the Battle of Staouéli, the surrounding nature is described as “vierge, silencieuse, même pas menaçante, presque purificatrice” that “semble les attendre” (AF, 26). This depiction recalls McClintock’s (1995: 30) explanation of patriarchal narratives wherein “to be virgin is to be empty of desire and void of sexual agency, passively awaiting the thrusting, male insemination of history, language and reason”. The metaphorical rape of the motherland to which Kossew (1996a: 5) and Sharp (1996: 100) refer, is

²⁴⁵ *L’Amour, la fantasia*’s narrator refers to the conquest of Algeria and how “Les tribus bédouines sont venues comme à une fantasia de plus où le risque est paré d’insouciance. Elles ne croient pas, elles non plus que la Ville puisse être prise” (AF, 28-29).

also repeatedly signaled: the narrator refers to the aporia that results between the colonizers and the colonized when she asks: “Est-ce le viol, est-ce l’amour non avoué, vaguement perçu en pulsion coupable, qui laissent errer leur fantômes dans l’un et l’autre des camps, par-dessus l’enchevêtrement des corps, tout cet été 1830?” (AF, 28). The text additionally refers to the colonizer’s desire to appropriate Algerian women: “Notre capitaine s’adonne à l’illusion de ce divertissement viril: faire corps avec l’Afrique rebelle, et comment, sinon dans le vertige du viol et de la surprise meurtrière?...” (AF, 82). The narrator directly equates the colonizer’s appropriation of the strange land to the act of rape: “Ce monde étranger, qu’ils pénétraient quasiment sur le mode sexuel, ce monde hurle continûment vingt ou vingt-cinq années durant, après la prise de la Ville Imprenable... [...] Y pénètrent comme en une défloration. L’Afrique est prise malgré le refus qu’elle ne peut étouffer” (AF, 84-85).

In comparison with Estienne in *Inteendeel*’s revelation (Inteendeel, 287-288), the French colonizers cited in *L’Amour, la fantasia* also regard the land, which represents woman, as uncontrollable: “Les lettres de ces capitaines [...] parlent, dans le fond, d’une Algérie-femme impossible à apprivoiser. Fantôme d’une Algérie domptée: chaque combat éloigne encore plus l’épuisement de la révolte” (AF, 84). In contrast to *Inteendeel* though, this ‘uncontrollability’ does not lead to a form of respect, a change of perspective or acknowledgement to the country and its inhabitants. The passionate need to tame and to own prevails.

The parallel between conquering spaces and destruction found in Brink’s texts is also continuously highlighted in Djébar’s œuvre: the land is eroded (AF, 51, 312)²⁴⁶; women are violated (AF, 282-283)²⁴⁷; people are annihilated (AF, 77, 94, 96, 109)²⁴⁸; cultural sites are demolished (Vaste, 96, 100, 105)²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ The narrator refers to the erosion of the earth by the French army: “La terre, que l’armée française pour l’instant grignote, ne leur paraît qu’une partie de l’enjeu immédiat” (AF, 51). The earth is moreover imagined as crying out together with its people: “- O mon ami, je suis tuée! soupire la jeune femme sous la tente. Ainsi soupire la plaine entière du Sahel, hommes et bêtes, les combats une fois terminés” (AF, 312).

²⁴⁷ In *L’Amour, la fantasia*, the narrator refers to the Arabic words for ‘damage’ and ‘injury’ used to suggest rape: “Dire le mot secret et arabe de ‘dommage’, ou tout au moins de ‘blessure’: - Ma sœur, y a-t-il eu, une fois, pour toi ‘dommage’? Vocabulaire pour suggérer le viol, ou pour le contourner: après le passage des soldats près de la rivière, eux que la jeune femme, cachée durant des heures, n’a pu éviter. A rencontrés. A subis. ‘J’ai subi la France’, aurait dit la bergère de treize ans, Chérifa, elle qui justement n’a rien subi, sinon, aujourd’hui, le présent étale” (AF, 282-283).

²⁴⁸ The narrator signals the massacre that often went hand in hand with the raids committed by the French army: “La razzia s’annonce propice: rapt, pillage, peut-être même massacre des ennemis qui, mal réveillés, ne pourront pas combattre. ‘La nuit est à nous’, rêve l’un ou l’autre de ces capitaines... Bosquet note les couleurs de l’aube qui se lève” (AF, 77). Other references are for instance made to the order to reduce the Berber communities who still showed resistance under French rule (AF, 96) of which the Ouled Riah (AF, 109) is a pertinent example.

²⁴⁹ In *Vaste est la prison*, the narrator refers to the French flag hanging over the conquered casbah—a sign of the French occupation (Vaste, 96). The shameless demolition of the mausoleum containing the stele of Douga (and the ancient script

and homes are torched and destroyed (AF, 96, 176, 209; SS, 146-147, 222).²⁵⁰ The destruction and violence is celebrated and seen as a prerequisite for victory. After the massacre of the Ouled Riah tribe in the caves, the narrator notes how some French soldiers chose to forget the 600 exposed corpses that were thrown in a mass grave; and rather focussed on congratulating each other with boastfulness for “ces grottes, pendant trois siècles de domination turque, n’avaient jamais réussi à être violées!” (AF, 109). In comparison with the suggestion made in *Inteendeel* (194), violence is also depicted as the colonizer’s civilization process: the narrator in *L’Amour, la fantasia* mentions how in his writing J.T. Merle refers to “ce formidable levier de la civilisation, fut établie sur le sol africain. Des cris universels de ‘vive la France! vive le Roi’ éclatèrent [...] de nos premières victoires” (AF, 52-53). On more than one occasion, the ‘beauty’ associated with the violence committed by the French army is noted: after a murderous raid, the French officer Bosquet “note les couleurs de l’aube qui se lève” (AF, 77). Bosquet also writes of “toute la poésie possible dans les détails de la scène, qui fait le fond de la razzia” (AF, 81). In a report written by Montagnac, the scenes of combat are also romanticized: “Ce petit combat offrait un coup d’œil charmant. Ces nuées de cavaliers légers comme des oiseaux, se croisent, voltigent sur tous les points, ces hourras, ces coups de fusil dominés, de temps à autre, par la voix majestueuse du canon, tout cela présentait un panorama délicieux et une scène enivrante...” (AF, 81).

It is however noteworthy to demonstrate how the appropriation of space is not only performed through the colonized: Djébar’s characters also highlight how women can empower themselves by taking charge or control of the spaces in which they find themselves. In her analysis of *Ombre Sultane*, Rader (2011: 129) notes how through her narrative Isma tries to demonstrate that the “the bedroom need not be a space for Hajila’s rape and Scheherazade’s life-saving tales, but it can be a site for owning

of the Berber language) is also accentuated: “L’Anglais Nathan Davis [...] avait dénoncé encore plus violemment ‘la démolition éhontée’ due à ‘l’avarice d’Européens poussés seulement par des considérations pécuniaires’. Il décrivait aussi ce mausolée mis en pièces d’une façon barbare’; il qualifie le pillage de son compatriote de ‘crime’” (Vaste, 100). The crime is again recalled: “Nous sommes en 1857... Juste avant que les voyageurs anglais et français à Dougga ne découvrent le ‘crime barbare’ du consul Reade contre la stèle bilingue et se désolent: mais à ce moment, c’est le sens même—et la musique, et l’oralité palpitante—de cet alphabet qui se ranime et réussit à ne plus être étouffé!” (Vaste, 105).

²⁵⁰ Various references are made to how the French army, often just referred to as “La France”, destroyed homes. A voice in *L’Amour, la fantasia* for example notes: “La France est venue et elle nous a brûlés. Nous sommes restés tels quels, parmi les pierres noircies... [...] De nouveau, les soldats revinrent; de nouveau, ils nous brûlèrent [...] Ils nous brûlèrent la maison une troisième fois” (AF, 176). It is significant to observe how their torched homes encompasses their identities, “avant que la France nous brûle” (AF, 209, my emphasis): the idea is repeatedly stressed that they are destroyed themselves, and not necessarily (only) their houses. In *La Femme sans sépulture*, Zohra Oudai also remembers how “they” were incinerated: “les Français sont venus au douar. ‘Sortez!’ nous dirent-ils, et ils nous ont tout brûlé [...] L’armée était venue la vieille chez le président du douar: ils avaient trouvé chez lui la liste de ceux qui donnaient de l’argent pour les maquisards. Ils ont tué ce responsable. Nous, ils nous ont tout brûlé! J’allais sortir quelques effets; ils ne m’ont pas laissée. Ils ont mis le feu partout!...” (SS, 146-147).

and inscribing one's own desires as a woman" (Rader, 2011: 129). By infusing her text with "the arabesque, odalisque, the patio, and hammam of Moorish design", Isma is believed to "liberate the women from the man's harem and the Orientalist's exoticizing gaze". By insisting on the right for her own sexual pleasure and desire, Isma gives "the heavily cloaked feminine body form which arabesque lines permit" (Rader, 2011: 131). She is represented as the master of her own sexuality as she emphasizes not so much being the desired object, but the desiring subject as well. By individualizing the Muslim woman's sexual experience, Isma "creates potential for an experience that has been shamed and silenced by the locked harem doors of the past". Rader (2011: 131) additionally underscores that through likening herself to the harem's odalisques, "Isma frames her desires to be at home in her body and in her country—to put down roots".

Throughout Djébar's oeuvre, the process of French 'civilization' and its consequential violence, abuse and destruction across Algerian spaces is emphasized. In contrast to suggestions made in Brink's work, it seems that the narrators in Djébar's novels imply that the colonialization process succeeded in capturing, owning, and mastering spaces. The land is not, as Estienne in Brink's *Inteendeel* signals, untamable and unpossessable, for its destruction and violation is continuously stressed. The texts propose that the desire for power and the quest to master spaces for both the colonizer and the colonized, especially colonized woman, remains.

5.3.4 Isolation

Within Djébar's oeuvre, the postcolonial critique against exclusionary practices can be identified as well. In accordance with Brink's work, the spatial notion of isolation can also be employed to encompass other interrelated concepts such as alienation, solitude, exclusion, and enclosure.

In comparison to Brink's characters, Djébar's characters also demonstrate a sense of alienation in certain places: some highlight the feeling of estrangement (Vaste, 172)²⁵¹, whilst others focus on the experience of being considered an outsider (NP, 349). In contrast to Brink's characters, the ubiquitous sense of the 'unhomely' is not repeatedly stressed in Djébar's work. Some of her characters even

²⁵¹ In *Vaste est la prison*, a woman is regarded a stranger for her different accent: "Moi, reprit l'étrangère (on l'appela ainsi parce qu'elle n'avait pas l'accent de Césarée, dans son dialecte)" (Vaste, 172).

accentuate the possibility of feeling at home even when displaced (Vaste, 80). With regards to solitude, just like Brink's texts, many of Djébar's characters also demonstrate how a sense of seclusion strengthens their isolation in space. The feeling of solitude is predominantly experienced as a source of lonesomeness (NP, 134; 302)²⁵², distress (Vaste, 71)²⁵³ or a feeling of abandonment (NP, 14; 98; 100)²⁵⁴; but it can, similarly to Brink's work, also be regarded as empowering (Vaste, 37)²⁵⁵. It is however the notions of enclosures and exclusions within space that are especially dominant within Djébar's œuvre.

a. Enclosures

Throughout the chosen texts, various examples point to enclosed spaces that surround and closes in on characters (AF, 97; OS 214; SS, 217).²⁵⁶ This section aims to examine the effect of the following

²⁵² The narrator in *Nulle part* refers to the loneliness of her mother who, cloistered in their apartment, is far away from her family and her native town: "Certes, je n'ai jusqu'alors jamais pensé à elle comme 'cloîtrée' dans l'appartement, elle qui devait surtout souffrir de son éloignement de sa ville d'origine et de n'avoir comme loisir que les émissions de Radio Alger en langue arabe, diffusant de larges tranches de folklore" (NP, 134). She moreover again alludes to the idea of solitude when suggesting that the big difference between them and the French girls in school can be summarized with the word 'accompagnées': "Nous, musulmanes de l'internat, quand nous faisons le bilan de nos frustrations, en comparant notre vie à celle des adolescentes françaises, c'était ce mot-là, 'accompagnée', qui faisait la différence entre notre condition (une fois le voile jeté aux orties) et la leur" (NP, 302).

²⁵³ When the lover in *Vaste est la prison* turns his back on the narrator, she experiences a deep sense of anguish which leads her to isolate herself in her daughter's room: "Il n'a pas affronté [...] il aurait pu se tourner vers moi [...] Une heure après, je m'écroulais dans la chambre de ma fille; seule. Sur le matelas, à même le sol. Je ne quittais plus cette place. Une journée; peut-être deux. Je gisais. Je fixais devant moi le dos de l'Aimé—et je me disais 'autrefois l'Aimé', puisque j'avais vu son dos" (Vaste, 71).

²⁵⁴ In *Nulle part*, the narrator describes her sense of being forsaken when walking with her father through the streets, for he no longer holds her hand like he used to: "Il me laisse marcher toute seule, en le précédant. Il ne me prend pas la main, comme le matin, ou plutôt comme les deux premières années, quand j'étais plus petite [...] Nous remontons donc à partir de la boutique de l'épicier, moi devant, en jupe plissée, et lui derrière, saluant, je suppose, les indigènes du café maure, sur l'autre trottoir, au centre de ce villages du Sahel. C'est à cause de ce public d'hommes de sa communauté [...] qu'il ne me tend plus la main. Un homme arabe, père de famille, doit marcher seul, son regard posé sur ses enfants (en général mâles, mais je suis l'exception), et avançant, lui, comme un vrai 'chef', d'un pas tranquille" (NP, 98-100). In contrast to walking ahead of her father, she depicts how she would walk next to her mother as her "accompagnatrice": "moi, sa fillette, je lui tends la main dans le corridor du rez-de-chaussée, chez Mamané, sa mère [...] ma main tendue accroche le coin du voile, tout près du corps masqué de la jeune dame. Est que, dehors, je saurai la guider lorsque, toutes deux, nous nous avancerons? [...] moi, je ne me sens pas seulement sa suivante, mais l'accompagnatrice qui veille sur ses pas" (NP, 13-14).

²⁵⁵ The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* describes how she prefers to dance alone: "'Je danse toujours seule', affirmai-je [...] Une pénombre enveloppait le reste du public [...] Je repartais, je virevoltais, le temps d'un sourire aux musiciens, mes ombres accompagnatrices, mes guides nocturnes. Je me croyais en même temps seule" (Vaste, 37). Even though she is 'alone', her insistence that she is accompanied by her shadows or "guides nocturnes" reminds of Philida's perception that she, too, is never completely alone: "Hier bly ek dan aan tussen al my spoke. Ek en my skaduwee. Orals kom dié skaduwee met my saam" (Philida, 69).

²⁵⁶ Depictions are for instance made about the Ouled Riah tribe who hides in caves: "des grottes considérées comme inexpugnables et qui leur servaient d'abris déjà du temps des Turcs [...] Là, dans de profondes souterraines d'une longueur de 200 mètres environ, ouvertes sur des gorges quasi inaccessibles, les tribus se réfugient en cas de nécessité,

recurring enclosures represented in the chosen Djébar corpus: the house, the harem, and the veil as well as various forms of imprisonments: be it literal incarcerations or figurative captivities in the form of relationships or language. After exploring characters' desires to escape these mostly inhibiting enclosures, an examination of possible empowering enclosures will follow.

Most of Djébar's characters perceive the house as a type of confinement. As previously stated by Mortimer (1988c: 306), Djébar's heroines are represented as "*odalisques en fuite*, women fleeing confined space". Rader (2011: 130) demonstrates how the *oda*, the Turkish prefix signifying room, connects "the odalisque etymologically to her sexualised function in an enclosed chamber". She insists that "the patriarch's harem then confines and defines the odalisque's body". For these so-called "odalisques", the house or harem²⁵⁷ is a structure which serves to seclude or cloister (AF, 12; OS, 148; Vaste, 124; 223)²⁵⁸, incarcerate (AF, 18; OS, 91; 133)²⁵⁹, restrict (AF, 43; 183; SS, 38; 41)²⁶⁰ and suffocate

avec femmes et enfants, troupes et munitions" (AF, 97). Other examples of enclosures include the notion of nightfall that furthermore binds women to the household: "Ô ma sœur, j'ai peur, moi qui ai cru te réveiller. J'ai peur que toutes [...] nous nous retrouvions entravées là [...] ce lieu de la terre où si lentement l'aurore a brillé pour nous que déjà, de toutes parts, le crépuscule vient nous cerner" (OS, 214); and the darkness of torture and cruelty that surround a character like Zoulikha: "De la longue durée de la torture et des sévices, ne te dire que le noir qui m'enveloppait" (SS, 217).

²⁵⁷ To reiterate Mortimer's (1988c: 306) argument, it is important to remember that "although the harem no longer exists in an Algerian society as a physical reality, psychological walls are still present".

²⁵⁸ Various references are made to female characters being cloistered (AF, 12; Vaste, 223) within a harem-like structure by the 'patriarch' of the family to insure their "invisibility": "Seules étaient préservées de cette surveillance celles qui, de par le haut rang du père, du frère ou de l'époux, ne sortaient jamais—le maître, installant dans sa demeure un harem privé, tirait orgueil dès lors de l'invisibilité totale de ses femmes" (OS, 148). The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* insists that the image of cloistered women is the symbol she wishes to capture in her film: "Peuple des cloîtrées d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, une image-symbole est le véritable moteur de cette chasse aux images qui s'amorce" (Vaste, 124).

²⁵⁹ The narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* visits her cloistered and "confined" cousins over the holidays: "Trois jeunes filles sont cloîtrées dans une maison claire, au milieu d'un hameau du Sahel que cernent d'immenses vignobles. Je viens là durant les vacances scolaires de printemps et d'été. Me retrouver dans ce lieu, enfermées avec ces trois sœurs j'appelle cela 'aller à la campagne'" (AF, 18). The idea of being confined or locked up is suggested in *Ombre Sultane* as well: "Une semaine d'enfermement [...] Maculée, atteinte, te lavant à chaque aube dans la pièce de céramique rose, tu as heurté les murs..." (OS, 91). The husband is also considered to be imprisoned within his own room as he drinks: "Tu l'as laissé dans cette chambre de céramique et de murs blancs qui devient chaque soir sa prison. Toi, tu dors là-bas, enfin seule, le dos à plat contre le sol" (OS, 101). Even the bed is depicted as a "lit-cage" (OS, 133).

²⁶⁰ The narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* refers to how she, together with her cousins, are bound to the inside of the house: "nous qui, dès l'année suivante, allions rester à notre tour cantonnées dans l'espace de la maison et son verger..." (AF, 43). She moreover describes the harem or "the taboo" as the ultimate railing imposed by men: "Je vivais, moi, dans une époque où, depuis plus d'un siècle, le dernier des hommes de la société dominante s'imaginait maître, face à nous [...] Jamais le harem, c'est-à-dire l'interdit, qu'il soit d'habitation ou de symbole, parce qu'il empêcha le métissage de deux mondes opposés, jamais le harem ne joua mieux son rôle de garde-fou" (AF, 183). This notion of being limited in a confined space is also explicitly portrayed through an excerpt of Germaine Tillion's *Le Harem et les cousins* (1966), used as a motto for the chapter entitled "Toute femme s'appelle Blessure" in *Ombre Sultane*: "Autour de la maison: des murs hauts, sans fenêtres, hérissés de tessons de bouteilles; autour du village: toutes les défenses naturelles, les fossés, les figuiers de Barbarie; autour de la tente: une horde de chiens à demi sauvages, mais plus sauvage encore que les chiens, une 'sacralisation' de l'espace qui la protège et dont l'inviolabilité se confond avec l'honneur: la *horma*".

(OS, 16; 63-64; 79)²⁶¹. The confining space of the home is moreover depicted as commonplace: women's restriction to the interiors of the home is seen as "natural" (AF, 35; Vaste, 27).²⁶² It is however not only the house that seems to "cloister" Djebbar's heroines, as suggestions are also made that the school system can be seen as a prolongation of the harem's customs (NP, 158; 189).²⁶³

As previously suggested by Faulkner (1996: 983), women are not only imprisoned by the city's architecture and their society's customs, but they are also confined through the veil. Rader (2011: 128) argues that enclosed spaces in Djebbar's *Ombre sultane* represent figurative veils that "conceal and reveal cultural designs in architecture and ornamentation". It is suggested that the veil mirrors the city's high-walled streets as well as the enclosed interiors of the harem. Many examples throughout the chosen novels equally point to how the veil functions as a barrier and a symbol of separation and seclusion. Its inhibiting role is incontestably depicted in *L'Amour, la fantasia* as the narrator declares:

Voilez le corps de la fille nubile. Rendez-la invisible. Transformez-la en être plus aveugle que l'aveugle, tuez en elle tout souvenir du dehors. Le geôlier d'un corps sans mots—et les mots sont mobiles—peut finir, lui, par dormir tranquille: il lui suffira de supprimer les fenêtres, de cadenasser l'unique portail, d'élever jusqu'au ciel un mur orbe. (AF, 11)

The use of the veil is suggested to be a form of imprisonment for the young girl: she is made invisible and blind to the outside world. By caging her in and closing all possibilities and killing all memories of the outside, the "jailer" can supposedly sleep soundly. Other illustrations of the veil also signal how

²⁶¹ References are made to how the walls of the house seem to close in around them: "Les murs nus te cernent" (OS, 16); "La journée commence: les murs semblent trop proches, les meubles encombrant. Un désir incoercible te prend d'effacer le contour des choses. Les fenêtres béantes aveuglent, fontaines d'azur" (OS, 63-64); "Tu as repris les sorties, les après-midi. Tu rentres le soir [...] Une écharpe de bruits émiettés en toi te fait redresser le torse, pencher la nuque; tu retrouves les murs dont la vue te heurte" (OS, 79).

²⁶² In her cousins' house, the narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* describes a typical day of being "immobilisée dans des intérieurs de maison, toujours des intérieurs naturellement" (AF, 35). In *Vaste est la prison*, a woman tells the narrator: "Vacances d'été et de printemps, c'est pour nous le retour force au harem!" (Vaste, 27), suggesting that the confinement is a common practice.

²⁶³ The narrator of *Nulle part* argues that even though it might be in a lesser degree, the Muslim girls are cloistered in boarding school as well. She insists that at least at school they are secluded together: "Pour l'heure, ces jeunes filles ou fillettes, provisoirement cloîtrées comme pensionnaires, l'étaient avec moins de rigueur qu'à la maison sous l'œil sourcilieux d'un gardien de harem; elles souffraient certes de rester des semaines entre les murs de ce collège—mais en souffraient-elles vraiment? Elles se retrouvaient là ensemble, un peu comme de futures nonnes, contraintes de demeurer, deux moins ou davantage, sans voir leurs parents" (NP, 158). One of the narrator's classmates similarly declares: "les vacances de Noël approchent. Moi, à Orléansville, quand j'irai, j'échangerai cette prison, mon Dieu assez vaste, contre une autre, toute rétrécie. Pas plus!" (NP, 158). Her friend and complice, Messaouda, also states: "Enfermées comme internes durant l'année scolaire, puis, l'été, séquestrés comme nos mères: rien ne change pour nous toute l'année, hélas!" (NP, 189).

those who wear it are rendered invisible (AF, 181; Vaste, 207-209; NP, 60)²⁶⁴ and imprisoned (SS, 130; 186-187; 192)²⁶⁵. On the other hand, the veil is however also associated with a form of liberation: as previously insisted by Hiddleston (2006: 91) the veil also provides female characters anonymity which allows them to circulate freely “sheltered from the other’s gaze”. In *La Femme sans sépulture*, the young Mina experiences this liberating feeling when she for the first time leaves the house veiled: “J’étais arrivée, avec mon voile blanc de jeune fille, le visage entièrement masqué, sauf un œil libre [...] Fièvre d’abord de descendre la rue El Qsiba de mon quartier, pour la première fois de ma vie ainsi: droite, invisible aux regards, et même non reconnaissable par les badauds, toujours à l’affût” (SS, 208). Zoulikha also suggests that by being the one who chooses to wear the veil, and not having it been imposed on her, the veil should not necessarily be considered a shroud: “Mariée à El Hadj, je reprenais moi-même et tout naturellement le voile ancestral, sans même me dire une fois, une seule, qu’il était linceul. Non” (SS, 190-191). The complex role played by the veil is accentuated through these examples. The novels suggest that its possible imprisonment or liberation is dependent on the one who wears it.

Another form of enclosure that is just as familiar than in Brink’s novels, is the notion of imprisonment. Although various references to literal prisons are made throughout the texts (Vaste, 63-64; 237; 250;

²⁶⁴ In *Vaste est la prison*, the narrator’s mother, “engloutie sous ses voiles” (Vaste, 207), is supposedly being protected through her father. The narrator imagines her father’s voice: “Et moi (c’est le discours paternel que je réinvente a posteriori) [...] je n’expose pas ma femme—le cœur de moi-même; certes elle est tout enveloppée de ses voiles raidis et immaculés, selon nos coutumes elle demeure silencieuse au-dehors, les yeux baissés au-dessus de la voilette!” (Vaste, 208). Even when the narrator’s father, like many of his friends, considered “deveiling” his spouse, it seemed that there were always other, more important matters at hand: “mon père pensait alors à tant de ses amis, médecins, instituteurs, avocats qui, comme lui, avaient rêvé, dix ou quinze ans trop tôt, de ‘dévoiler’ leurs épouses, de voyager avec elles! [...] Or nous vivions en pays colonisé [...] L’Algérie en lutte [...] avait d’autres urgences: peut-être même était-ce une chance que, dans ces petites villes anciennes, les familles fussent ainsi recroquevillées, et les citadines, tremblantes mais préservées, dans la chaleur des gynécées” (Vaste, 209). The narrator in *Nulle part’s* mother is also in a sense regarded as invisible due to the veil. The narrator explains how her mother, “contrairement aux épouses d’instituteurs [...] ne pourrait jamais, elle, du jour au lendemain, sortir ‘nue’, selon le vocable arabe utilisé alors—c’est-à-dire sans le voile blanc dit ‘islamique’—, et par conséquent ne jamais apparaître au soleil” (NP, 60). Wearing of a figurative veil also has a role in a character’s visibility as is previously suggested by the narrator in *L’Amour, la fantasia*: “Je ne m’apercevais pas que ma présomption signifiait une reprise du voile symbolique. Ayant dépassé l’âge pubère sans m’être immergée, à l’instar de mes cousines, dans le harem, demeurant, lors d’une adolescence rêveuse, sur ses marges, ni en dehors tout à fait, ni en son cœur, je parlais, j’étudiais donc le français, et mon corps, durant cette formation, s’occidentalisait à sa manière” (AF, 181).

²⁶⁵ Zoulikha describes how by putting on the veil, she imprisons herself: “Je relevais mon voile qui avait glissé sur mes épaules; je le remettais sur ma tête, j’emprisonnais à nouveau mes cheveux! [...] J’émergeais dans la rue. Je masquais alors mon visage presque entièrement: seul, mon œil libre, en triangle ouvert” (SS, 130). She again refers to the veil as a type of prison or shroud on the day of her husband’s (El Hadj) death: “Ce même jour, remettant le pan de voile sur ma tête pour me dissimuler dans les vieilles rues jusqu’à la maison, oui, ce jour-là, je sentis que tout allait recommencer: j’allais de nouveau me déguiser, sinon ce voile accepté jusque-là deviendrait linceul, ou prison, il me fallait l’arracher, ou alors le mettre comme costume pour quel théâtre, pour quel jeu immense, quel affrontement nouveau” (SS, 192). This imprisonment is contrasted to the freedom she experiences when persistently choosing not to wear the veil; “je ne pensai pas une seule fois à me ‘voiler’ [...] la Mauresque qui travaillait dehors et qui sortait sans voile!...” (SS, 186-187).

SS, 62), its figurative employment is however more often observed. A profound representation of both literal and figurative forms of imprisonments can, perhaps evidently, be found in *Vaste est la prison*. The novel's title derives from a Berber song that is used as a motto for the text. Schyns (2015: 144-145) refers to how the song is used as a refrain or a "fil rouge" throughout the text: as plight of cloistered women and as a song of mourning after the death of the narrator's younger brother as well as her aunt, Chérifa. The song is moreover also used to refer to Jugurtha,²⁶⁶ the king of Numidia who, after years of struggle to try and free his North African kingdom from Roman rule, was thrown in prison in Rome where he was executed. The song is quoted in its entirety after Chérifa's death when a relative from the mountains sings it as a form of mourning:

Depuis le premier jour de l'année
Nous n'avons eu un seul jour de fête!
Vaste est la prison qui m'écrase
D'où me viendras-tu, délivrance? (Vaste, 173)

The oxymoron ("vaste est la prison") emphasizes that the confinement experienced is not that of mere imprisonment, but rather that of life itself: it is the idea of a constraint existence itself that is considered vast and even immeasurable. The relative's singing of the ancient song has a spatial effect as the narrator describes it as "une sorte de marche rude, qui tanguait, mais qui calmait aussi" (Vaste, 174).

In comparison with many of Brink's texts, various relationships in the chosen corpus of Djébar also allude to figurative forms of confinement. On the one hand, relationships are portrayed as a form of unification that positively bounds a couple together in space. The narrator in *Nulle part* for instance refers to the way her mother talks about father: "elle ne se risquait pas à parler du père comme d'un être séparé d'elle (certes séparé d'elle au-dehors, dans la rue arabe) [...] alors que, dans son cœur, il a été et reste l'époux, l'autre moitié d'elle" (NP, 102-103). Other examples suggest how, through romantic relationships, couples are able to exist within their own worlds. Isma in *Ombre sultane* recalls such a connection: "Barrière refermée sur le monde. Derrière elle, tous les couloirs commencent, les êtres se lèvent, ou s'agitent. Contre nous, le temps se tresse, l'espace se courbe, les fleurs s'inventent

²⁶⁶ When referring to Jugurtha, the song however takes a more pessimistic and hopeless tone: "Ai-je dit que je le vois? Non, je l'entends surtout. Car il ironise, il émet, les boyaux serrés et desséchés, un dernier râle d'une ardeur toute gratuite: 'Vaste est la prison', murmure-t-il dans l'avant-dernier souffle, pendant que le souvenir de la mélodie berbère le berce pour finir, l'emporte: '... délivrance!' [...] Immuable c'est lui, le mot qui traverse, d'un coup d'aile, vingt et un siècles pour m'apporter, tout près, le dernier souffle de vie de Jugurtha [...] Il est mort dans un trou, à Rome. Étroite la prison, et de nulle part la délivrance!" (Vaste, 250).

dans nos paumes pleines” (OS, 35). The feeling of being closed off from the world on the opposite side of a barrier, reminds of Jessica and Josef’s relationship in *Kennis van die Aand* (Kennis, 296). Just like Brink’s couple, Djebar’s characters also seem to be caught up in their own romantic world, oblivious of the world around them.²⁶⁷ They also demonstrate the desire to remain ‘secluded’ together, no matter where they go.²⁶⁸ The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* insists: “Allons n’importe où dans la ville: dans un bar, dans une salle de danse, dans un lieu mal famé, ou chez vous, là-bas sur la plage, rouvrez pour moi cette maison si vous l’avez fermée! N’importe où, mais restons ensemble, et toute la nuit!” (Vaste, 25). An additional parallel that can be identified concerning the seclusion of romantic relationships involves the notion of a paradisiacal existence. In *Vaste est la prison*, the narrator signals the idea of an Edenic kingdom or oasis (Vaste, 27)²⁶⁹ that she gets a taste of in her relationship with her lover: “Peu importait: tout amour n’est-il pas retour au royaume premier, cet éden, puisque je n’avais pu autrefois le connaître (les interdits de mon éducation musulmane ayant fonctionné doublement), je le goûtais au cours de ces jeux, en ce début d’hiver” (Vaste, 17-18). Her observation can be equated to Elisabeth in *’n Oomblik in die Wind*’s perception of the paradise she and Adam encountered during their time by the sea: “Eendag was daar ’n paradys by die see; ons was daar: onthou jy nog? Omdat ons daar uitgedryf is, kan ons daaraan bly glo” (OW, 164). In a similar manner to Elisabeth, the narrator in *Vaste est la prison* also in a sense feels isolated from the paradise she experienced: where Elisabeth has to convince herself that the paradise does exist and that her experience was true (OW, 193)²⁷⁰, the narrator in *Vaste est la prison* maintains that she only gets a taste of paradise. Both women therefore seem to be excluded from being properly absorbed within the ‘Edenic kingdoms’ offered by their romantic relationships.

²⁶⁷ The idea of a couple occupying their own secluded space is reiterated in *Vaste est la prison*: “Une fois, nous avons dû parler plus de deux heures continûment; à la fin, l’illusion m’avait prise de nous trouver dans la même chambre, chacun à un bout, installés dans le noir, et, de fait, nous nous étions tellement oubliés que je n’avais pas allumé dans le bureau, la nuit s’était insinuée, m’avait engloutie; lui-même convint de la même négligence” (Vaste, 22). This episode echoes the experience of Josef and Jessica’s first encounter in *Kennis van die Aand*.

²⁶⁸ The idea of being together no matter what or where is also stressed in Brink’s *Kennis van die Aand* (Kennis, 380) and *Duiwelskloof* (253).

²⁶⁹ The narrator maintains: “Ne nous quittons plus dans votre maison aux baies ouvertes, au jardin abandonné. Passons chaque nuit sur la sable [...] Je n’aurais pas jugé cela acte de déraison, plutôt une course vers l’oasis où nous aboutirions enfin, à bout de souffle” (Vaste, 27).

²⁷⁰ To reiterate Elisabeth’s words: “Bestaan geluk dan? Of is dit net iets waarna jy verlang? Maar met skielike hartstog dink sy weer: Nee! Ek het dit deurgrond, ek het dit gedrink, dit bestaan, ek ken dit. Die paradys bestaan” (OW, 193).

In contrast to this idea of uplifting confinement, relationships in Djébar's texts are more often portrayed as a source of isolation (Vaste, 151)²⁷¹ and incarceration (Vaste, 2-3)²⁷². In *Vaste est la prison* the narrator experiences a type of imprisonment in both her relationship with her husband and her lover. The confinement she experiences with her husband is characterized through violence. When her husband abuses her after she told him about her affair, she depicts the imprisonment she experiences as follows:

je l'entendis, comme en écho d'une prison où il se trouvait, où il se débattait, où il tentait de me maintenir. Ainsi, dans cet espace de cauchemar et d'effroi de mon corps, mes yeux fermés sous mes bras, sous mes coudes levés, sous mes mains déjà ensanglantées, j'entendis et j'aurais presque répondu par un rire, non de folle ni d'éplorée, mais de femme allégée, s'efforçant de se libérer: "Femme adultère", répéta-t-il, "ailleurs que dans cette ville de perdition, tu mériterais d'être lapidée!" (Vaste, 56-57)

In describing the nightmarish prison in which her husband tries to maintain her, she also highlights her persistent urge to break away from his literal and figurative grip: she wishes to laugh, not out of folly or tearfulness, but in an effort to liberate herself from the situation. Despite the abuse, she decides to return to the 'prison' their relationship embodies: "deux ou trois semaines après cette rupture, j'acceptais, oui, j'acceptai de reprendre ma vie d'épouse [...] En somme, à peine avais-je pansé les blessures de mon corps, que je retournais aussi vite dans ma prison" (Vaste, 65). In questioning her decision of return, she tells herself: "Tu reviens vers les lieux du danger, pour comprendre, ou plutôt être sûre: y a-t-il vraiment là-bas danger?—là-bas, c'est-à-dire le lieu du délire, alors que l'époux, avait voulu, au cours de cette nuit de violence, t'aveugler? [...] Oui, je retournai à la prison" (Vaste, 65). Her relationship with her lover is however also regarded as a form of confinement: she describes how her thoughts and emotions were bounded to, and therefore in a sense imprisoned by, the lover. In contrast to her husband's grip, she is however able to cut herself loose from her lover's "spider's web" (Vaste, 8-11)²⁷³.

²⁷¹ Referring to her marriage, the narrator in *Vaste est la prison* notes: "La petite Fatima se sent brusquement petite, isolée" (Vaste, 151).

²⁷² In *Vaste est la prison* a woman the narrator comes across in the hammam describes how she is shackled for she needs to rush to her husband, nicknamed the "enemy", who is at home: "je suis... entravée! [...] impossible de m'attarder aujourd'hui. L'ennemi est à la maison!" (Vaste, 2-3).

²⁷³ The narrator muses after a decisive nap: "Une seconde encore, j'aurais pu me croire prisonnière d'un immense, d'un étrange tableau échafaudé contre le néant [...] La chimie de cet effacement, dois-je l'éclairer à rebours, risquer de faire réapparaître, de la mémoire pas encore putréfiée, quelque toile d'araignée friable, un enchevêtrement de soie ou de poussière, à effet mélancolique? [...] pour que je prenne conscience de ce que je pressentais et qui allait me rendre prisonnière des mois durant" (Vaste, 8-11).

The narrator in *Nulle part* also alludes to the notion of spatial confinement within her relationships. Walking with Tarik, their arms linked together, she repeatedly stresses the idea of her arms being “imprisoned”: “Le bras prisonnier de sa poigne vigoureuse” (NP, 312); “moi le bras emprisonné (donc pas tout à fait à l’aise) [...] J’écoute [...] le bras toujours prisonnier” (NP, 313). She furthermore declares that she allows herself again to be ‘imprisoned’ (“Je me laisse emprisonner”) when she accepts his caresses on her face and shoulders (NP, 354). The narrator also alludes to a sense of confinement present within her relationship with her fiancé. When she refers to the big argument she has with him, she does not only highlight the dark space of confinement where the quarrel takes place (NP, 379, 382;386; 390)²⁷⁴; but also stresses the role of a captive she undertakes in their conversation: she refers to her fiancé or rather “le fauve qui montre ses crocs” (NP, 382); the building’s spider webs that seem to grasp her (NP, 385)²⁷⁵; her “motionless” position (“figée, suis-je devenue de pierre, sans voix ni pleurs?”), and his words that are equated to rocks used to lapidate her (NP, 390, 387). She additionally introduces the idea of a theatre stage, a technique that is similar to Brink’s Josef in *Kennis van die Aand* (Kennis, 274, 391), to describe her situation: “Métamorphose du lieu et de sa lumière [...] Changement de rôles, de masques, de fantômes? [...] Voici que je me trouve, me dis-je, dans une pièce que je n’ai pas choisie, du bien mauvais théâtre...” (NP, 387-389).

Djebar’s chosen novels additionally suggest that figurative imprisonments are not only encountered within relationships, but that confinement is often something that is carried within an individual. In the narrator in *Vaste est la prison*’s second marriage, she tells herself: “Toi qui aimes tant partager, toi qui désires tellement découvrir, rire, dormir et mourir à deux, est-ce qu’au contraire tu ne porterais pas, avec toi, ta propre prison?” (Vaste, 79). In *Nulle part* the narrator also becomes aware of her own seclusion, or “enfermement” after her suicide attempt (NP, 400-401).

Another figurative form of confinement already suggested in the literature review is that of language: critics describe Djebar’s attempt to break out of a patriarchal prison-house of language (Velčić, 2017:

²⁷⁴ The narrator repeatedly stresses the darkness of the lobby where they have their fight: she remembers regretting leaving the autumn sun behind them as they enter the building (NP, 379) and its obscure and dim interior (NP, 382, 386, 387, 390). She additionally refers to it as a “prison [...] béante” (NP, 390).

²⁷⁵ The narrator observes: “Je sens qu’une arrière-pensée s’est installée en lui, mais je n’y comprends rien, sauf qu’il me semble soudain que des toiles d’araignée ont envahi ici tous les recoins... Pour m’enserrer?” (NP, 385). It is noteworthy to observe that the image of a spider web is employed in both *Vaste est la prison* (Vaste, 8-11) and here in *Nulle part* to emphasize the narrators’ sense of captivity within their relationships.

114, 118; Ringrose, 2006: 155). Throughout her texts, the French language in which her narrators seem captured, is represented as a type of mask (AF, 183-184)²⁷⁶ and veil (Vaste, 6; NP, 292)²⁷⁷ that seizes her (NP, 342)²⁷⁸. This repeated employment of the images of masks and veils suggest that the French language does not only offer her another identity (masking), but it also hides her 'true' identity by rendering it invisible (veiling). The narrator in *Nulle part* emphasizes the significance of the language that veils and masks: "Pas question de vous dévoiler devant eux, nie de révéler votre identité: alors que vous l'étiez de fait, dévoilée! Mais aussi 'masquée', oui, masquée par la langue étrangère!" (NP, 337). In *L'Amour, la fantasia*, the narrator expresses her incapability to express her true self, her love as well as passion, through the language of the Other: "Quand l'adolescente s'adresse au père, sa langue s'enrobe de pruderie... Est-ce pourquoi la passion ne pourra s'exprimer pour elle sur le papier? Comme si le mot étranger devenait taie sur l'œil qui veut découvrir!" (AF, 93). The prison-house of language in which she finds herself does however not only influence her own sense of self, for she describes how it inhibits her from representing others, too. When writing the story of Chérifa, she declares: "Petite sœur étrange qu'en langue étrangère j'inscris désormais, ou que je voile. La trame de son histoire murmurée, tandis que l'ombre réengloutit son corps et son visage, s'étire comme papillon fiché, poussière d'aile écrasée maculant le doigt" (AF, 201). Chérifa's experience, as noted by Hitchcock (2010: 219), is "buried by official discourses about the war". It is impossible to fully transcribe it through the French language.

Whether it be literal enclosures like the house, the veil, or a prison; or more figurative confinements embodied through relationships and language, Djébar's characters portray a general urge to escape these imprisonments²⁷⁹. This desire is emphasized not only through characters' evident longing to

²⁷⁶ The narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* refers to how "les mots se transformaient en un masque que, dans les préliminaires du jeu esquissé, l'interlocuteur se résignait à prendre" (AF, 183-184).

²⁷⁷ French words are not only masks, but they seem to serve as veils as well: "un masque, c'est cela, j'ai maintenu héroïquement le masque, mes mots sont voilés, mes rires, s'ils ne sont pas faux, s'ils ne craignent pas de zigzaguer, je les fais fuser plus haut, sur un rai de lumière lointaine, contre les brisants de dialogues éparpillés..." (Vaste, 6). In *Nulle part*, the narrator also claims how "Le français, si neutre, me tiendrait lieu, en quelque sorte, de voile" (NP, 292).

²⁷⁸ The narrator declares how the language of the Other offers her freedom on the one hand, but it nevertheless confines her: "Toi qui marches, en ces premiers jours de l'automne 1953, libre, à travers cette cité populeuse et bourdonnante, c'est voilée dorénavant au-dehors mais de la langue des 'Autres' que tu avances—celle que justement tu écris, j'allais dire: que tu étreins!" (NP, 342).

²⁷⁹ Hiddleston (2006: 100) argues that the idea of breaking away is central in Djébar's character's sense of self. The texts demonstrate that the desperate need to break away encourages the characters to consider any means possible. In *Vaste est la prison*, the narrator demonstrates how she was even desperate enough to turn to religion, a possible "confinement" as well, as a possible "remedy" for her situation: "Tout à l'heure j'avais prononcé la *fatiha*, sans doute pour la première fois de ma vie [...] comme si seul Allah, dans le noir de ce corridor du sixième étage, m'avait protégée, ou emprisonnée, je ne savais, j'avais agi en amoureuse qui n'a recours qu'à la magie de la religiosité comme remède ultime" (Vaste, 25).

move freely outside (AF, 18; 285; OS, 114; SS, 213; NP, 338)²⁸⁰, but also through the repeated portrayal of them being drawn to clearings in enclosed spaces (OS, 207)²⁸¹: Rader (2011: 128-129) highlights how Hajila in *Ombre sultane* is attracted to such openings that serve as a haven and refuge within confining marital interiors. Within her new apartment, she for example “gravitates to the illuminating balcony and windows that permit sunlight”. In *Vaste est la prison*’s violation scene, the narrator also fixates on the space she perceives through such openings and considers them a possible escape from the husband’s abuse: “Il frappa. La large baie béante derrière nous [...] Il frappa et je ne pouvais me réfugier vers le fond, comme si la baie ouverte faisait immédiatement appel [...] ‘Femme adultère’, gronda-t-il, la bouteille de whiskey que représentait la baie trop ouverte” (Vaste, 56-57). The possible liberation of these openings is also suggested in *La Femme sans sépulture*: Mina associates the door in the ancient wall surrounding Césarée to her mother, Zoulikha, who people considered a symbol of freedom (SS, 170)²⁸².

The need to escape spatial confinements, be it literal or figurative, is moreover equated with the necessity to revolt. The need for such a revolt is accentuated in *L’Amour, la fantasia*, where the narrator depicts veiled women as prisoners whose voices have been veiled as well:

En somme, les corps, voilés, avaient droit de circuler dans la cité. Mais ces femmes, dont les cris de révolte allaient jusqu’à transpercer l’azur, que faisaient-elles, sinon attiser le risque suprême? Refuser de voiler sa voix et se mettre ‘à crier’, là gisait l’indécence, la dissidence. Car le silence de toutes les autres perdait brusquement son charme pour révéler sa vérité: celle d’être une prison irrémédiable. (AF, 285)

²⁸⁰ *L’Amour, la fantasia*’s narrator states: “A peine si je languis de ne pouvoir errer dans les ruelles poussiéreuses du village” (AF, 18). In *Ombre sultane*, when her aunt asks her why she didn’t return to her country, Isma says: “J’avais besoin de réfléchir, pour cela, d’être dehors! De marcher, de dévisager des visages inconnus. J’avais besoin d’être dehors, mais qu’on m’oublie! D’une certaine façon, qu’on me tue! [...] Ici, sur cette terre, on vous tue en vous enfermant derrière des murs et des fenêtres occultées. A peine fais-tu le premier pas au-dehors que tu te sens exposée! Là-bas, personne ne regarde, personne n’a vraiment d’yeux!” (OS, 114). The desire for the outside world is stressed in *La Femme sans sépulture* as well. After visiting her mother at the maquis in the mountains, Mina is upset to return home and wishes to stay in the forest: “Je ne retournerai pas rester parquée dans la maison, alors que vous êtes là, libres, tous! [...] Avec toi je veux rester! Avec toi, je veux aller dans la forêt, à l’air je veux vivre!” (SS, 213). The urge to move carelessly outside is signaled in *Nulle part* as well: “Trouble inépuisable à vous immerger dans le bleu intense de l’air: pouvoir vivre ainsi au-dehors et expérimenter tous les âges, s’imaginer fillette légère un jour, puis jeune fille riieuse, plus tard vieillarde vagabonde” (NP, 338).

²⁸¹ In *Ombre sultane*, Isma imagines speaking to Hajila: “tu as vécu enfermée depuis l’enfance. A partir de ce lieu, tu cherches ta percée; tu quêtes ton échappée” (OS, 207).

²⁸² Mina refers to “la fameuse enceinte qui cernait Césarée, et qui datait justement de la prise de la ville par l’armée française en 1841, a été détruite à l’indépendance. Mais cette porte où est passée si souvent ma mère, transformée en paysanne au cœur palpitant, est encore là dressée. Moi, je l’appelle toujours: ma porte Zoulikha” (SS, 170).

The narrator suggests that when women, who are traditionally expected to be veiled, invisible, and silent, scream in rebellion, their voices break confinements: by “indecently” and “rebelliously” refusing to “veil” their voices, the truth of their irreparable prison is revealed. The idea of revolt as a form of escape is also signaled in *Nulle part*. When the narrator’s father is furious when she shows her legs in public by riding a bike, a deep trauma sets in. She later in her life rebels against the ‘confinement’ proposed by her father by frantically playing sports in boarding school, without his knowledge (NP, 59)²⁸³. She moreover considers her suicide attempt as an additional revolt against her father’s imposed confinement^{284 285}: “Je me suis projetée à dix-sept ans dans l’ampleur du panorama de la baie d’Alger, en cette aube d’automne. C’est le père que je fuyais, dont je craignais le diktat: je me suis lancée au plus loin pour ne pas avoir à avouer—mais quoi, quel forfait?” (NP, 425). It is her father’s ‘imprisonment’, his imposed restrictions and taboos as well as their prison relationship that she attempts to flee from by throwing herself under a tram. It is significant to note how her suicide (revolt) is spatially depicted: she tries to rebel against her father by imagining throwing herself into Algiers’ open bay.

Not all enclosures are however deemed to be evaded:²⁸⁶ some, similar to Brink’s work, are also considered as safe havens and refuges (Vaste, 178, 185; NP, 25, 53, 191; SS, 231, 234)²⁸⁷. The following

²⁸³ The narrator declares: “Ce trouble, ce trauma, le ressuscitant si tard, je découvre toutefois que mon corps, sourdement, à la préadolescence et à l’adolescence—mais dans l’internat de jeunes filles, un lieu fermé, un ‘harem’ nouvelle manière—, prendra sa revanche: de dix à seize ou dix-sept ans, au collège, par des entraînements prolongés au basket-ball et à l’athlétisme...” (NP, 59).

²⁸⁴ It is noteworthy to mention that the space created by her father is not only that of rules and restrictions. The narrator also insists that he was a loving father: “Voici que l’auteur se met à nu... Seulement parce que le père est mort? Le père aimé et sublimé? Le père juge, quoique libérateur et juge forcément étroit?” (NP, 425).

²⁸⁵ The idea of escaping or revolting against the father’s imprisonment is also signaled in *Vaste est la prison* where reference is made to the story of the Captive and Zoraidé in *Don Quichotte*: “signal d’alarme d’une Algéroise peut-être pas forcément la plus belle, ni la plus riche, ni la seule héritière de son père, non, mais sûrement une femme enfermée [...] Libérant l’esclave-héros des bagnes d’Alger, elle se libère elle-même du père qui lui a tout donné, sauf la liberté” (Vaste, 118).

²⁸⁶ McCullough (2005: 126) indicates how the same enclosed space can be both positively and negatively experienced: “For Sheherazade, the bedroom is a space of both pleasure and anguish: she can freely indulge in sexual pleasure with her husband the king, but she must also cleverly tell stories that enthrall him so that he must wait until the next night for her to reveal the endings, and will not want to behead her. For Hajila, her modern counterpart, the bedroom, and more specifically the bed, are sources of disgust, dread, and pain. It is the place where ‘l’homme’ exerts his authority [...] Hajila feels no pleasure [...] The rape reinforces the idea of imprisonment and helplessness within an enclosed space. Isma feels the opposite of what Hajila does. When she describes her love-making with her former husband, she recalls immense pleasure [...] How ironic that the same space, the bedroom, can be associated with pleasure and pain, with ‘volupté’ and horror”.

²⁸⁷ In *Vaste est la prison and Nulle part*, the ancient city of Césarée is presented as a refuge: In *Vaste est la prison*, it is described as a “havre, cocon” for the narrator and her mother (Vaste, 178), whereas in *Nulle part*, the joyous feminine interior spaces are celebrated: “cet univers féminin clôturé mais aux images aussi colorées que contrastées: un été où se succédaient les noces, de terrasse en terrasse, et où les clameurs de joie l’emportaient sur les sanglots à demi étouffés de l’une ou de l’autre [...] nos vacances peuvent être aussi joyeuses que variées: les bourgeoises, voilées bien sûr, se répandent, à tout propos, en visites les unes chez les autres!” (NP, 191). Other examples of literal enclosures that serve as havens

significant enclosures that are perceived as empowering will subsequently be discussed: the hammam, the world of the arts; and the metaphorical place of the 'no'.

Even though 'imprisoned', Djébar's characters' enclosures amongst women are often positively portrayed. In *L'Amour, la fantasia*, the narrator for instance refers to the positive effect the fests amongst women during her childhood had on her: "Les rues de la ville sont loin, les hommes n'existent plus. L'éden s'étale immuable: danses lentes, visages mélancoliques qui se laissent bercer..." (AF, 286). *Nulle part's* narrator also reminisces about 'wrapping herself up' amongst the voices she remembers at female gatherings: "Quant aux voix démultipliées, entremêlées ou à demi ensommeillées durant les longues siestes de l'été étouffant, je m'en envelopperai, comme langes d'une mémoire précoce quêtant obscurément quel ailleurs, quel avenir" (NP, 29). It is however the common female meeting place of the confined hammam that comes to the forefront in many of Djébar's novels. While critics such as Woodhull (1993: 85) stresses how female space in Djébar's work is depicted as a tomb or sarcophagus from which women must emerge, I believe that the confined representation of female space is more complex: the female space of the hammam for instance is indeed often associated with, or even directly equated to a type of prison (Vaste, 139-140),²⁸⁸ but it is simultaneously also portrayed as a space of peace and refuge (NP, 67; 70)²⁸⁹. Various examples accentuate how the hammam is at

include the courtyard amongst the teachers' houses, depicted by *Nulle part's* narrator as "cet enclos, donc, presque privilégié par sa paix, devenu un havre pour nos jeux, nous, enfants d'instituteurs, jouions là, dans l'ignorance provisoire de nos différences. J'avais le droit d'y rester, une heure au plus chaque soir, mais des heures entières parfois, les jeudis et dimanches" (NP, 53). Zoulikha's grave in *La Femme sans sépulture* is an additional confinement that is positively portrayed. The narrator imagines the boy who comes across Zoulikha's body and buries her: "il réussit à m'enfermer, à me plomber. Il m'enterra. C'était sa forme d'amour [...] Il m'enterra, mais c'était pour calmer ce tremblement qui l'avait habité toutes ces nuits, celles que tu as vécues dans la corbeille de mes bras..." (SS, 231). She furthermore describes how he receives solace through the act of burying her: "C'est à la lumière de la lune, dans une clairière que je ne reconnus pas, qu'il choisit de m'enterrer consciencieusement. La tâche accomplie [...] il se découvrit l'âme soulagée" (SS, 231- 234). People are also seen to be able to create favorable enclosures. Various examples point to the narrator's grandmother who plays such an uplifting role. In *Vaste est la prison*, the narrator refers to the grandmother's bed that symbolizes a warm and welcoming nest. She highlights the sensation of warmth when tucked away in her grandmother's arms: "j'ai rejoint la couche de ma grand-mère paternelle et de m'être, à partir de là, assoupie chaque soir dans ses bras, de m'être laissé réchauffer les pieds dans ses mains, d'avoir été ainsi enveloppée, quelques années, par cette chaleur maternelle fut, je le sais, comme une seconde naissance pour moi" (Vaste, 185). In *Nulle part*, the grandmother represents a similar haven when caressing the narrator: "les mains de ma grand-mère, la nuit, me caressant contre le froid, ces mains, où les retrouver, sous quel ciel, courir jusqu'à la mer, jusqu'au port, jusqu'au bout!" (NP, 25).

²⁸⁸ In *Vaste est la prison*, when the mother visits her son in prison, she directly associates the prison with the hammam: "Le brouhaha autour d'elle: 'Comme au hammam', songe-t-elle, et cette odeur de l'humidité, tenace, son fils plongé là, à demeure!" (Vaste, 139-140).

²⁸⁹ The narrator in *Nulle part* emphasizes the comfortable interior of the hammam and its serenity: "Dans la salle froide de l'entrée du hammam, au fond d'un coin sombre avec estrade, est réservé un lieu où sont installées des divas confortables et où s'amoncellent des matelas couverts de tapis aux vives couleurs. Chaque jeudi après-midi, ma mère et moi [...] nous y prenons place avec sérénité, comme dans un véritable salon" (NP, 67). She again observes its dreamlike interior: "Il me

the same time a confinement and a refuge: *Nulle part*'s narrator associates the hammam to hell, but then stresses that it is not necessarily a threatening hell (NP, 74); the voices from within the hammam's interiors are also described as "tantôt éraillées, tantôt joyeuses" (NP, 74); in *Ombre sultane*, the hammam is at the same time depicted as a respite and/or an engulfment (OS, 11)²⁹⁰; a prison as well as the only remission from the harem and a seclusion as well as a maternal cocoon (OS, 203)²⁹¹. It is this simultaneity, the concurrence between imprisonment and haven that possibly leads Abdelkader (2010: 98-99), as previously noted, to liken the hammam to one of Bhabha's 'in-between spaces'. Djébar's depiction of the hammam rightfully coincides with Wilson and Tunca's (2015: 2-3) explanation of the 'inbetween' in that it is "susceptible to the play of multiple, often contradictory ideologies" and that "it may perpetuate and produce states of partial disablement and empowerment". I however remain doubtful whether the hammam represents the flexible, innovative border dimension that Bhabha (2004: 55) insists on, for Djébar's texts maintain that the hammam still divides and maintains a certain polarization.

An additional empowering enclosure is represented through the world of the arts. The narrator in *Nulle part* explains the effect the music hall had on her when she first attended a concert: "Au concert des Jeunesses musicales, cette première fois [...] tout me fut nouveau: le noir dans lequel fut plongée la salle" (NP, 136). The confined space of her boarding school's vast and empty piano hall is also favourably resounded (NP, 143). She describes how, isolated with the grand piano, "au cœur de ce désert", the music soothes her (NP, 141)²⁹². These enclosures remind of Brink's *Kennis van die Aand* wherein Josef, too, finds a refuge within the sounds offered by the piano (Kennis, 35-36), and the art world in the form of theatre as a whole (Kennis, 137, 143, 175). In further accordance with Josef (Kennis, 99), the narrator in *Nulle part* also finds refuge in the world offered by books: she remembers

semble parvenir aux rives d'un monde souterrain dont le ruissellement des eaux paraît infini [...] Où suis-je soudain, dans un rêve de cascades et de nuit, de sorcières peut-être qui en plein cœur de cet antre, m'attendraient?" (NP, 70).

²⁹⁰ The narrator observes: "Aucun échange ne s'est établi entre toi et moi [...] assises côtes à côte dans la pénombre du hammam—l'eau, courant à nos pieds sur la dalle ou fumant dans les vasques, devenait signe de trêve ou d'engloutissement" (OS, 11).

²⁹¹ She describes the hammam as a "refuge du temps immobilisé. L'idée même d'aire close, et donc de prison, se dissout ou s'émiette [...] Hammam, seule rémission du harem... Le bain turc secrète pour les séquestrées (comme autrefois le chant de l'orgue pour les nonnes forcées) une consolation à cette réclusion. Dissoudre la touffeur de la claustration grâce à ce succédané du cocon maternel..." (OS, 203).

²⁹² The narrator recalls her visits to the music hall: "Je me souviens pourtant d'avoir goûté parfois le plaisir de jouer en solitaire, presque chaque soir, dans cette salle de fêtes si vaste! [...] Chaque soir, je me levais, mes partitions sous le bras, j'empruntais mon chemin habituel tout au long des couloirs obscurs, jusqu'à la salle où semblait m'attendre le grand piano. Dans ce vide des lieux [...] la présence de la musique m'apaisait: au cœur de ce désert" (NP, 141).

how as a child she would get absorbed within a book, forgetting time and the world around her (NP, 19)²⁹³. She additionally depicts how the space offered through her reading practices grabbed hold of her (NP, 20-21, 149)²⁹⁴. The world of literature, exemplified through her literature class in school, is moreover portrayed as an almost idyllic space where divisions are non-existent. She states: “ce qui me rassura—sans doute grâce à Baudelaire et à madame Blasi—, ce fut la certitude que, dans ces cours s’étalant sur les six années à venir, il n’y aurait pas, malgré les apparences, nous les ‘indigènes’ [...] différentes des autres, et, d’autre part, les ‘Européens’ [...] Non, pas un monde divisé en deux dans ce cocon que représentèrent mes années de pensionnaire” (NP, 121-122).

A final enabling confinement that is found in both authors’ work, is the metaphorical space offered by characters’ resistant noes. The spatial quality of expressing ‘no’ is suggested in *La Femme sans sépulture* when Zoulikha is questioned by the commissioner Costa. She describes how he tries to metaphorically grab hold of her, “his prey”, in his invisible spider web. She however refuses to be caught: “Non”, she scorns, “je ne serais pas sa proie immobilisée, non!” (SS, 133). The metaphorical space provided through resistance is also suggested during the quarrel between the two lovers in *Nulle part*: “M’efforcer de l’entendre? C’est une voix inconnue: je me trouve devant un étranger. Le ‘non’, ce mot unique, bien à moi, a jailli de moi par effraction, de partout: de mes yeux, de toute ma face, de la moue dédaigneuse de mes lèvres...” (NP, 380). Comparably, the empowering confinement of the ‘no’ is also splendidly portrayed by Brink’s *Philida* when she refuses to sleep with Cornelis Brink: “Daardie stront van ’n Ouman het my nie genaai nie en hy gaan my nooit weer naai nie. Ek het vir hom nee gesê. En dit weet ek nou is die grootste sê wat ’n mens kan sê. Nee! En nou gaan ek in daai Nee inklim en daar bly net so lank as wat ek wil” (*Philida*, 103). The ‘no’ becomes an enclosed space she can

²⁹³ She describes the memory of reading her first book: “Remonte en ma mémoire le souvenir d’une fillette de cinq ou six ans, lisant son premier livre: elle est arrivée en coup de vent dans cet appartement du village, avec, à la main, un roman emprunté à la bibliothèque scolaire. Sans embrasser sa mère dans la cuisine, elle a foncé dans la chambre parentale ; elle s’est jetée à plat ventre sur ce lit qui lui semble immense (en face, dans le haut miroir ancien, elle peut s’entrevoir, tout au fond, en une autre fillette). Oui, à plat ventre, les genoux pliés, ses pieds ayant rejeté les sandales, elle a ouvert le livre et elle lit: comme on boit ou comme on se noie! Elle oublie le temps, la maison, le village, et jusqu’à son double inversé au fond du miroir” (NP, 19).

²⁹⁴ She alludes to how the book captures her: “Ainsi, pour la première fois, la fillette est saisie—je suis saisie—par la vie si proche, si palpable d’un autre être, le héros de *Sans famille* imaginé par Hector Malot [...] Et les larmes de l’enfant [...] suscitées par cette première lecture? Tant d’années après, elle se demandera si ces larmes évoquées ne tenaient pas leur douceur du lit de ses parents où elle s’était jetée, alors que le garçonnet du livre, lui, ne connaissait nul repos, nul havre dans ses malheurs tout au long des pages tournées” (NP, 20-21). It is noteworthy to additionally mention how the narrator emphasizes that the books she read refer to a European reality: “peut-être n’avais-je qu’un soif irraisonnée de lire, de lire sans relâche, sans avoir, moi, aucune des références du monde ‘européen’ auquel ces ouvrages renvoyaient” (NP, 149).

figuratively step into: it becomes a space of resistance she can inhabit. All three these characters, the two narrators of Djébar and Philida of Brink, demonstrate how the 'no' constitutes a type of haven from which, secured, they can continue their resistance.

b. Exclusion

Djébar's characters do not only allude to spaces which confine them, but they also experience being excluded from certain spaces: whether it be taboo areas in the house (AF, 20-23; NP, 55-56, 110-111)²⁹⁵; an exclusion from the outside world (Vaste, 124; NP, 29; OS, 136-137)²⁹⁶; a sentiment of exclusion due to estrangement (SS, 79, 100-101, 237)²⁹⁷, or figurative interdicted spaces constituted for instance by romantic rendezvous (NP, 409).²⁹⁸ In this section emphasis will be placed on spatial isolations that result from the following pretexts: exclusion due to gender, exclusion due to death, and exclusion due to language. The section will conclude by examining the common exclusionary notion of being "nulle part" that can be regarded as a consistent thread running throughout Djébar's œuvre.

²⁹⁵ In *L'Amour, la fantasia* the narrator recalls how she and her cousin were not allowed to open the brother's bookcase. It becomes a restricted area in the house: "Au cours de ce même été, la benjamine et moi avons pu ouvrir la bibliothèque—celle du frère absent et qui jusque-là avait été fermée à clef [...] Nous nous imaginons surgir d'une région interdite; nous nous sentons plus vieilles" (AF, 20-21). The narrator in *Nulle part* perceives her parents' bedroom also as a forbidden space on certain occasions. After the bike incident, she describes the effect it has on her when her father goes into their impregnable room: "il rejoint leur chambre—qui, lorsqu'il est là, devient le lieu inviolable du couple que forment mes parents [...] Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire: sa phrase, son ton, sa colère, le fait que pour la première fois, il se rue dans 'leur' chambre, cet antre? Comme s'il venait soudain d'être acculé à quelque chose d'obscur... [...] c'était presque sûr, le père s'était soudain changé en un autre!" (NP, 55-56). She again experiences the room as a type of taboo space after the birth of her baby brother: "Comme si un énorme interdit, un mur de brumes et de nuit avait dû s'installer entre la couche parentale et mon petit lit de cuivre" (NP, 110-111).

²⁹⁶ The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* expresses the 'interdit': "Tu ne peux exister dehors: la rue est à eux, le monde est à eux. Tu as droit théorique d'égalité, mais 'dedans', confinée, cantonnée. Incarcérée" (Vaste, 124). *Nulle part's* narrator makes a similar observation: "il y a trop de corps de femmes entassées, elles qui ne sont assoiffées que du dehors, de cet espace qui leur demeure interdit" (NP, 29). In *Ombre Sultane*, the narrator depicts how the sea and the beach represent "un théâtre interdit" for girls: "Sur le muret de la large terrasse, les fillettes tentent d'apercevoir la mer : là-bas, les garçons peuvent rejoindre pères et oncles, là-bas se dresse un théâtre interdit [...] Un enfant en évoque le goût ; longtemps après, la fillette que je fus rêva aux mots égrillards qu'utilisa ce gamin complice, comme si, le fruit m'étant interdit, ce n'était pas seulement la mer et ses nourritures dont je me trouvais écartée" (OS, 136-137).

²⁹⁷ The idea of being regarded as a stranger is repeatedly highlighted throughout *La Femme sans sépulture* (SS, 75, 79, 100-101, 118, 165, 237). The narrator accentuates that her estrangement has a spatial effect as she is considered a "visiteuse" or "invitée" within her own native town (SS, 235).

²⁹⁸ The narrator in *Nulle part* fears that her father learns about her rendezvous, a "terrain interdit": "à chaque rendez-vous caché auquel j'étais allée auparavant, je m'étais répété: 'Si mon père l'apprend, je me tue' [...] Comment oser avancer même la pointe du pied sur ce terrain interdit par la pudeur devant le père? Chaque fois, une conclusion venait clore le dilemme: 'Si je suis convoquée au tribunal du père... je me tue!'" (NP, 409).

As previously discussed in the literature review, the gendering of space and its consequential exclusionary practices is central in Djébar's œuvre.²⁹⁹ The spatial effect of sexual discrimination especially comes to the forefront within references made about characters' education. The narrator in both *L'Amour, la fantasia* and *Vaste est la prison* emphasizes the spatial distinction in school and insists that it is her sex that excludes and isolates her (AF, 257; Vaste, 195-196, 198-199)³⁰⁰. The narrator in *Vaste est la prison's* sex also plays a role in her spatial exclusion within her work environment. In the process of making her film, she describes the others' confusion for not having a male boss: "Je sais qu'ils sont désorientés bien sûr, parce qu'une femme pour la première fois est le 'patron'" (Vaste, 143). She additionally observes a female bystander's bafflement: "Elle a observé ma répétition [...] elle m'a regardée, ne comprenant pas ce que, femme, je faisais là" (Vaste, 200).

Death can additionally be considered as a source for many characters' sense of exclusion.³⁰¹ The death of a loved one on the one hand can, as demonstrated in *Nulle part*, cause spatial discomfort for those who are left behind. The narrator in the novel often reminisces about her beloved paternal grandmother and signals that after her death, she felt like an intruder in the house (NP, 26). She depicts her sense of

²⁹⁹ As mentioned earlier, Djébar is especially interested in portraying the spatial exclusion of women within a traditional Muslim society. She regards one of the aims of her film *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua*, to capture the image of "peuple des cloîtrées" (Vaste, 124). Within the film she reverses the traditional roles and portrays the man as the one who is spatially excluded. The narrator in *Vaste est la prison* describes: "Le 18 décembre de cette année-là, j'ai tourné le premier plan de ma vie: un homme assis sur une chaise paralytique regarde, arrêté sur le seuil d'une chambre, y dormir sa femme. Il ne peut entrer: deux marches qui surélèvent ce lieu font obstacle à sa chaise d'infirmes. Chambre comme un antre, chaude, si proche et si lointaine à la fois" (Vaste, 123). It is this, in the opinion of Algerian officials, "disrespectful" portrayal of an Algerian manhood, that led to the film not being aired on national television. To recall Woodhull (1993: 79), Djébar jovially reacted and said that the handicapped man "was the only man she could find occupying interior space, which was the space she was interested in exploring".

³⁰⁰ The narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* observes the isolation that exists in the Koranic school: "la masse des garçonnettes accroupies sur des nattes [...] me paraissait informe, livrée à un désordre dont je m'excluais. Nous ne devons être que quatre ou cinq fillettes. Je suppose que notre sexe, plus que ma condescendance étonnée, nous isolait" (AF, 257). The spatial distinction amongst sexes is also alluded to in *Vaste est la prison*. The narrator alludes to the "interdict" of being the only girl in a class of boys (Vaste, 195-196). She recalls the day when class photos were taken and how her father, the teacher, reacted after becoming aware of his daughter's exclusion: "Il (son père) m'a regardée, il m'a vue seule, dans l'attente, intimidée à mon habitude. Que lui a-t-il pris? Une brusque tendresse? Un sentiment d'injustice vague de me voir seule, écartée de ces enfants, comme exclue? Il a oublié une seconde que j'étais une fille, donc pour ses élèves garçons quelqu'un à part... Il est venu me chercher, il m'a prise par la main; il a fait reculer les garçons du premier rang et il m'a fait asseoir au centre, face au photographe..." (Vaste, 198). The narrator insists that she did not at the time fully comprehend her father's act: "Et moi alors, comme trônant, reine inattendue parmi ces futurs guerriers! Trônant et ne le sachant pas [...] Elle se tient là, la fillette [...] Elle perçoit, mais si confusément, qu'elle détonne: ailleurs, cela ne doit pas se faire, de placer une fillette toute seule parmi ces quarante garçons, en outre plus âgés" (Vaste, 198-199).

³⁰¹ In her study of *Ombre Sultane*, McCullough (2005: 122) signals Scheherazade's fear of death. She observes: "we can also interpret death as a metaphor for lives with no freedom, i.e. death to the outside world and enclosed in a limited space, against one's volition" (McCullough, 2005: 122). She implies that death can therefore also be regarded as a form of exclusion: excluded from the outside world entails a nonexistence (or 'death') from the forbidden area.

exclusion and abandonment when she received the news of her grandmother's passing: "je cours parce que je ne veux pas croire à cette séparation, à cet abandon (Mamma m'a abandonnée), elle est partie ou on l'a enlevée de force, qu'est-ce que cela veut dire: 'elle est morte' [...] sinon que [...] je ne pourrai plus jamais traverser la nuit dans ses bras, que personne ne m'aimera, que ma mère..." (NP, 24). On the other hand, the sense of exclusion with regards to the deceased's 'space' is highlighted as well. In *La Femme sans sépulture*, as the title of the novel itself illuminates, Zoulikha's grave is never found. As a result, her children feel excluded from the space where she has been buried (SS, 93, 100)³⁰². After hearing rumours about her mother's death, Hania recalls how she was certain they would find her, or even just a trace of her (SS, 63)³⁰³ in the forest:

J'étais sûre [...] que sitôt que nous pourrions parvenir jusqu'à la forêt d'où ils l'avaient sortie [...] je la chercherais, je la trouverais: vivante ou morte! ... J'étais sûre de cela. Plusieurs fois je vis, dans un rêve, sa sépulture: illuminé, isolé, un monument superbe, et je pleurais sans fin devant ce mausolée [...] Tout de même, j'étais certaine [...] que sa tombe, je la retrouverais et que je pleurerais, enfin soulagée, comme dans mes rêves! (SS, 61)

Without a tomb, Hania is not able to properly mourn the loss of her mother and cannot, as she often dreams, be consoled. She insists that by talking about her mother, she finds a sense of relief: "Si je parle d'elle, je me soulage, je me débarrasse des dents de l'amertume" (SS, 51). Despite the possible comfort, she nevertheless stresses the pang resulting from the gap left by her departure. Her absence is again spatially depicted as "un trou noir que je n'ai pas épuisé! [...] Il reste en mon cœur une morsure..." (SS, 51)

In alignment with the central notion in Djébar's œuvre, language is also at the heart of many of her characters' sense of spatial exclusion. While references are made to the French language that causes a type of exclusion for some characters (NP, 20-21)³⁰⁴, it is predominantly the idea of being excluded

³⁰² Hania affirms: "je n'ai même pas une tombe où aller m'incliner [...] Une tombe de ma mère [...] Nous voici plus défavorisées que de simples orphelines" (SS, 93). A friend of Mina also states: "Zoulikha sans tombeau connu, engloutie sans quelle fosse, elle, l'éparpillée dans l'air bleu, l'envolée...?" (SS, 100).

³⁰³ Hania recalls the day they spent looking for her mother in the forest: "Nous avons passé la journée entière dans cette immense forêt: j'étais sûre, si sûre de retrouver quelque chose d'elle. Une marque, un signe que ses compagnons d'armes, ceux qui en avaient réchappé, lui auraient dressé, en hommage... Mais rien [...] Et de sa sépulture, majestueuse, apparaissant en vain dans mon rêve? Je ne cessai d'errer jusqu'au crépuscule. 'Où trouver le corps de ma mère?' Je criais, je me bâillonnais la bouche de mes deux mains pour ne pas hurler ces mots aux oiseaux du ciel [...] Hélas! Pas la moindre trace d'elle sur la pierre, ou dans un fossé, ou sur un tronc de chêne: rien..." (SS, 63).

³⁰⁴ The narrator in *Nulle part* explains how her mother does not understand why she was crying whilst reading for the first time: "La jeune femme de vingt-quatre ans—qui ne sait pas encore lire le français, seulement l'arabe—imagine quels obstacles, quels ennemis pour sa petite, dans 'leur' école" (NP, 20). Her sense of exclusion is deepened by her isolation:

from her maternal languages, Arab, but especially the Berber language, that is continually emphasized (NP, 121-122. 315)³⁰⁵. Across her œuvre, this exclusion from the mother tongue is spatially depicted. In *L'Amour, la fantasia*, the narrator notes: "Silencieuse, coupée des mots de ma mère par une mutilation de la mémoire, j'ai parcouru les eaux sombres du corridor en miraculée, sans en deviner les murailles [...] De quelle roche nocturne du plaisir suis-je parvenue à l'arracher?" (AF, 13). The narrator implies that, cut adrift, she is spatially removed, albeit figuratively, from her maternal language. The narrator in *Nulle part* similarly admits that she realized too late that she has all along been in love with this "lost" language. It remains 'lost' for even in an attempt to study it, the language turns into mere rhetoric: "Je la recevais en poésie ressuscitée des batailles ancestrales, alors qu'il ne faisait que l'étudier comme rhétorique. 'Poèmes suspendus' dans le désert d'Arabie, parmi la foule et la poussière [...] Je me suis ainsi attachée, je me suis voulue prisonnière de cet héritage-là" (NP, 408). In a comparable manner to Josef in *Kennis van die Aand* (Kennis, 207), the narrator in *Nulle part* also wishes to break into a prison from which she feels excluded: where South Africa represents Josef's prison, it is the spatial heritage and lost maternal language that constitutes the space in which she wishes to be confined. The idea of being displaced as a result of language is repeated when, to reiterate the narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia'* words, she insists that she is expelled: "On me dit exilée. La différence est plus lourde: je suis expulsée de là-bas pour entendre" (AF, 303). She additionally suggests that she has been denounced: "au-dehors, votre langue maternelle vous aurait trahie, elle vous aurait dénoncée; on vous aurait presque montrée du doigt!" (NP, 337). Having been "removed" from her mother tongue moreover gives her a feeling of being deserted: she describes how, abandoned by her maternal language, she was 'raised' by her stepmother language (French): "Le français m'est langue marâtre. Quelle est ma langue mère disparue, qui m'a abandonnée sur le trottoir et s'est enfouie? [...] Sous les poids des tabous que je porte en moi en héritage, je me retrouve désertée des chants de l'amour arabe. Est-ce d'avoir été expulsée de ce discours amoureux qui me fait trouver aride le français que j'emploie? [...] Les mots d'amour s'élèvent dans un désert" (AF, 298). The idea of being abandoned is additionally heightened by suggesting that she has been orphaned. The notion is raised when she describes her

"elle, seule, citadine au village et qui devait souffrir de solitude, cloîtrée qu'elle se trouvait dans cet appartement pour instituteurs" (NP, 21).

³⁰⁵ The narrator in *Nulle part* explains how during her years at boarding school, she was amongst the minority Arab and Kabyle girls: "moi ne parlant pas le berbère, seulement l'arabe et le français" (NP, 121-122). She moreover exclaims: "Je n'ai jamais pu apprendre ma langue maternelle comme je l'aurais désiré!" (NP, 315).

envy towards Tarik who studies pre-Islamic poetry: “ce garçon possédait un trésor que j’avais souvent envié, dont l’accès me restait fermé” (NP, 308). She insists that French translations of the texts will forever fall short in representing the texts’ beauty, meaning, and its underlying lyricism.³⁰⁶ It is due to the fact that she feels exiled from these original “trésors” or texts, that makes her to her mind an orphan (NP, 308, 322)³⁰⁷. Removed, abandoned, and exiled from her mother tongue, the narrator in *Nulle part* illustrates how she wishes to have her maternal language as a skin (“ma langue-peau”) and to be able to carry it around outside and expose it to the sun. She however points out that she can merely, and hardly, whisper it indoors and that once outside, she is obliged to keep quiet or to talk another language (NP, 340-341)³⁰⁸. She describes the urgency she experiences: “Une urgence me presse: je veux sortir, sortir ‘nue’, comme ils disent, laisser mon corps avancer au-dehors impunément, jambes mobiles, yeux dévorants. Mais je ne peux jouir de cette licence qu’à la condition de dissimuler ma langue de lait, de la plaquer tout contre moi, au besoin entre mes seins!” (NP, 341). It is again the idea of exclusion that comes to the forefront: she is unable to move freely and ‘unveiled’ in the outside world and is therefore excluded from this liberating space. Her only alternative is to move around ‘veiled’, for her mother tongue, the language that is equated to her mother’s milk, is ‘veiled’ or hidden within her.

³⁰⁶ She also demonstrates the difficulty she has to express her love in the (French) language she has at her disposal: “Nous parlions, je me souviens, en français: subsistait en moi une certaine résistance, ou une forme de pudeur, le français me devenait langue neutre, alors qu’avec lui, mon premier amoureux, les mots d’amour dans ma langue maternelle—qui était aussi la sienne—auraient jailli maladroitement. L’usage de l’arabe pour exprimer l’amour m’aurait sans doute semblé, je ne savais pourquoi, indécent...” (NP, 355).

³⁰⁷ The narrator describes the treasure to which the boy has access: “ce garçon possédait un trésor que j’avais souvent envié, dont l’accès me restait fermé. Hormis par des traductions aussi plates que savantes, à la beauté en creux, le français ne pouvant en rien rendre les allitérations, les allusions, les double ou triple sens d’un mot pivot, le jeu intérieur des rimes arabes... Oui, vraiment, le français devient langue morte quand il n’est capable que de traduire le ‘sens’, non la pulpe du fruit, ni la vibration de la rime ! Le sens est livré prosaïquement, jamais avec le ‘chant’ sous-jacent: voilà pourquoi la traduction française des *Mo’allaquats* les réduisent, hélas, à une peau desséchée: cela, j’en souffrais, je m’en sentais orpheline!” (NP, 308). She moreover delineates the effect on her when the boy sends her the original Arabic text, but writes it out phonetically (“*voyellé*”): “Seule dans la pénombre de ce salon au décor exotique, je me répétais les vers des *Mo’allaquats*, devenus mes trésors à moi. Mais de qui, à mon tour, serais-je l’orpheline?” (NP, 322).

³⁰⁸ The narrator states: “Dehors, me voici à marmonner dans ma langue, la vraiment ‘mienne’: sur le mode du malaise ou du mécontentement puisque je ne peux l’exposer au soleil. Elle, cette langue maternelle, pourquoi ne serait-elle pas à jamais ma langue-peau? [...] Cette langue dite ‘maternelle’, j’aimerais pourtant tellement la brandir au-dehors, comme une lampe! Alors qu’il me faut la serrer contre moi, tel un chant interdit... Je ne peux que la chuchoter, la psalmodier avec ou sans prosternations, la réserver, calfeutrée, à d’étroits espaces familiaux ou aux patois de naguère...” (NP, 340). She expresses how she is forced to speak other languages in the outside world: “Dans la rue, alors que je peux laisser mon corps vagabonder, libre, il me faut me taire ou bien parler français, anglais, et même chinois si je pouvais, mais surtout ne pas exposer cette langue première en public, celle de tant de femmes qui demeurent incarcérées” (NP, 340-341).

Finally, I wish to further explore the common notion in Djébar's œuvre of being "nulle part" that I touched upon earlier in this chapter. Not only is the expression used as title for Djébar's last novel, but many intertextual references also allude to it. When looking at the house where her cousins used to live, the narrator in *La Femme sans sépulture* laments: "Nulle part dans la maison de mon père!" (SS, 87). A strange complaint to read at first, for many of Djébar's narrators accentuate how they are considered the daughters of their fathers.³⁰⁹ If identifying with their fathers, where does this lamentation of being nowhere within their fathers' houses arise from?

When treated as a French girl amongst her mother's friends, the narrator in *Nulle part* feels estranged: "Je me tais, je me sens soudain étrange, étrangère à cause de ces menus commérages" (NP, 17). She realizes that she does not belong to their world, and expresses: "Moi, silencieuse dans ce patio bruissant des voix de ces femmes de tous âges qui ne sortent qu'ensevelies de la tête jusqu'aux pieds, soudain alarmée par cette remarque, je me sens 'la fille de mon père'. Une forme d'exclusion—ou une grâce?" (NP, 18). Being her father's daughter can on the one hand be considered a grace, for by following in his footsteps through adopting the French language, she is given a form of mobility, freedom,³¹⁰ and power (Sokołowicz, 2021: 347). On the other hand, her identification with her father is most certainly at the heart of her exclusion as well for she feels both isolated from her compatriots as well as her French classmates (NP, 195).³¹¹ She states: "j'oublie que, pour mes camarades, je suis différente, avec le nom si long de mon père et ce prénom de Fatima qui m'ennoblissait chez les miens mais m'amointrait là, en territoire des 'Autres'" (NP, 117). Her sense of exclusion goes even further: she even feels excluded from the one 'place' which is hers—the space that has the ability to confine and even imprison her (NP, 231-232): the house of, or identification with, her father. She describes her ambivalent position of being both the loved as well as the "dispossessed" daughter of her father by associating her situation with that of the prophet's youngest daughter, Fatimah: "l'amour paternel qui vous confère le statut envié de 'fille de son père', de 'fille aimée', à l'image, dans notre culture islamique, du Prophète, qui n'eut que des filles (quatre, et chacune d'exception; la dernière, seule à lui

³⁰⁹ Sadiqi *et al* (2009: 50) observe: "A North African woman's name is her identity, her home. She lives in it and carries it throughout her life. Unlike her Western counterparts, a North African woman has never been bound socially or legally to take her husband's name after marriage. But her father's name is a badge she carries through life".

³¹⁰ Her French education and her consequential French westernization (AF, 181) allows her to freely enter public space.

³¹¹ The narrator ponders her difference from her French classmates: "Pourquoi, à cette entrée hésitante dans l'adolescence si vulnérable, mais inconsciente de cette fragilité, oui, pourquoi me suis-je sentie si à part, à côté des Françaises de mon âge, elles que je côtoyais à l'internat, surtout Jaqueline, ma voisine de lit?" (NP, 195).

survivre, se retrouvant dépossédée de l'héritage paternel, en souffrira au point d'en mourir. Je pourrais presque l'entendre soupirer, à mi-voix: 'nulle part, hélas, nulle part dans la maison de mon père')" (NP, 231-232). She moreover questions her own conflicted position:

Mais vous—je me parle à moi-même, comme ferait une étrangère sarcastique—, où en êtes-vous, vous qui avez commencé votre vie par l'intervention du père, du père et de sa fille prétendument aimée ou réellement aimée—et qui déclarez soudain presque à la face du monde: 'nulle part dans la maison de mon père'? Dépossédée? Vraiment, et quel aiguillon vous incite à l'écrire? Pourquoi vouloir ainsi la clamer à tous vents? (NP, 404-405)

In doubting her own sense of place, she signals the difficulty of accepting and coming to terms with her lack of a significant space with regards to her relationship with her father. This lack of space is initially signalled after the bike 'incident': the fury her father publicly demonstrates and his refusal that she ever show her legs in public again, bruises their relationship and forever mars her identification with him (NP, 57)³¹². She accentuates that this denial of her father is perhaps "la seule blessure que m'infligea jamais mon père" (NP, 57). It is after this peculiar "injury", once at home after her father's outbreak, that she has the need to look for a space that is her own. She recalls: "Je suis allée dans un coin opposé à eux deux (car, déjà, ma mère l'avait rejoint dans leur chambre). Je me voulais loin d'eux, dans la maison certes mais me cherchant une place bien à moi" (NP, 57). Can it be deduced that it is this search and consequential 'absence' of "une place bien à moi" within her father's house that lies at the heart of her feeling forever "nulle part" in his house? "Nulle part", or in other words, without her own, secure, and personal space in which she can work through her own emotions? The notion of being nowhere and without place is reiterated by the narrator during another 'quarrel'—the fight with her boyfriend: "Il prétend me donner un ordre que je n'entends pas [...] Dès la première minute face à face, je sais, je sens en effet que je n'ai plus de lieu! Je n'aurai même plus la maison de mon père! [...] La sensation abrupte de n'avoir désormais plus de lieu ni d'espace pour respirer..." (NP, 380). The fight with the lover deepens the narrator's awareness that she has no place, not even her father's house, nor a place or space in which she can breathe, or possibly, just be herself. Sokołowicz (2021: 350) argues that this lack of place is due to the narrator's inability to find herself between the Oriental and

³¹² She declares: "J'étais froissée de sentir qu'il avait ainsi délimitée ma personne, retranché de moi quelque chose qui n'était pas à lui; or, c'était moi! Mes jambes, et alors? [...] Les avoir ainsi séparées de ma personne, c'était, je m'en rendais compte, insultant, mais pourquoi? [...] Je me rappelle cette blessure qu'il m'infligea (peut-être, en fait, la seule blessure que m'infligea jamais mon père), comme s'il m'en avait tatouée, encore à cette heure où j'écris, plus d'un demi-siècle plus tard!" (NP, 57).

Western world. It is for this reason, Sokołowicz insists,³¹³ that the narrator chooses to commit suicide. To her mind, the narrator demonstrates a will to continue to look for both a place (possibly the space offered by death?) and herself when she states: “Je suis sans lieu là-bas depuis ce jour d’octobre [...] Depuis cette aube de 1953, [...] je cherche, moi, inlassable, où se trouve la petite, l’obscur maison de mon père” (NP, 386). Sokołowicz (2021: 350) reasons that postcolonial writers such as Djébar write from outside their country and language, within a type of non-space in which they seek at least a “petite, l’obscur maison de mon père”.³¹⁴ I agree with Sokołowicz that it is the narrator’s sense of finding herself without a place, “nowhere” or in a type of non-space, that pushes her further in her quest for space. She declares:

Ainsi, depuis le début, s’agissait-il davantage du père—du père qui mourra sans savoir que sa fille aînée, de justesse, n’est pas morte, cet automne d’avant la guerre d’Algérie [...] Revivant cet épisode au plus près, quoique si longtemps après, me laissant conduire, toutes rênes lâchées, par l’ébranlement de cette poussée irrésistible de la mémoire, celle-ci galopant soudain telle une pouliche de race une fois libérée, une conclusion s’impose: ‘nulle part dans la maison de mon père!’ (NP, 419-420)

It is the narrator’s sense of exclusion, her conclusion of being “nulle part”, that drives her forward. It serves as the source of energy for her constant quest for a liberating space that includes: she moves forward (be it towards death or through life), propelled by her exclusion or non-space, in search of a space that can finally be hers. This drive has similarly been pointed out in Brink’s characters: it is a desire for movement and action that is born from the existence of barriers, borders, and thresholds that serve to exclude. Both Brink and Djébar’s characters can therefore be said to portray an inclination toward a Glissantian (Glissant, 1990: 153) *Relation* of endless movement or action.

³¹³ Sokołowicz (2021: 348-349) declares: “Sa tentative de suicide est un essai de se libérer, d’en finir avec la tradition patriarcale islamique difficile à accepter face à la tradition française, beaucoup plus libérale. Djébar montre par cela la fragilité de l’identité coloniale, l’impossibilité de réconcilier l’Orient et l’Occident”. She concludes: “La tentative de suicide montre que la recherche de soi dans la société coloniale peut échouer” (Sokołowicz, 2021: 350).

³¹⁴ Sokołowicz (2021: 350) maintains that it is not a matter of finding one’s roots, but rather of accepting them. Djébar’s roots, as previously stated by Sokołowicz, are rhizomatic: it is the “mélange”, “magma” or “architecture arachnéenne” to which Djébar (NP, 406) refers. She moreover highlights the rhizomatic identity represented by Djébar when she concludes: “Entre Orient et Occident, colonisé et colonisateur, parmi plusieurs langues, plusieurs héritages culturels et traditions, pousse un moi (post)colonial fracturé, tubéreux, enchevêtré, tel un rhizome d’où il émerge” (Sokołowicz, 2021: 350).

5.4 Marginal spaces: a critique on the critical

This chapter set out to provide a postcolonial reading of space in the works of Djébar and Brink. By using a critical postcolonial framework, I explored how their characters experience spaces, places, and landscapes by firstly examining the interrelated role of space on characters' identities and secondly by investigating different representations of spaces throughout the chosen novels.

Various parallels were drawn amongst the authors' texts. Both Brink and Djébar's novels accentuate the symbiotic relationship that exists between characters' identities and their surrounding environments: their characters are often portrayed as being dependent on the space that surrounds them for knowledge of the self as well as of the Other. Although the importance of a deep connection with a specific place is accentuated in order to form a 'sense of place', the significance of a lack of a connection and a consequential absence of a meaningful place that characters can call their own is also emphasized.

The investigation additionally identified the common spatial representations of borders, barriers, and thresholds within the authors' work. Their characters often express their desire to cross these borders into the opposing world or 'Other side' in an attempt to revolt and to liberate themselves. The 'Other' side is however not always reachable, and they are left in a type of borderline existence: not being on either side of opposing spatial binaries, not here nor there. Where some characters experience this 'in-between' state as empowering and enlightening, others consider the marginal space as a source of doubt, uneasiness, and disquietude.

Within the examination of the novels' representation of the possession of spaces, the desire of both colonizer and colonized to name, map, master, and control territories are highlighted. The violence equated to the process of colonizing and civilizing spaces is stressed. The land is ubiquitously portrayed as feminine: it represents a virgin space that can be violated and conquered. Where Brink's work suggests the difficulty and often impossibility of 'taming' territories and the absolute possession of spaces, Djébar's texts in a sense do the opposite: the colonizer's success in conquering and violating the country is continuously emphasized.

The final analysis on the representation of spatial isolations within the two authors' novels signalled the significant presence of spaces of alienation, solitude, and exclusion as well as enclosures within the characters' lives. Enclosures are on the one hand depicted as spaces of anguish, fear, and imprisonment, but on the other hand some forms of confinement also provide characters with the possibilities of empowerment. The study additionally establishes that it is the characters' constant sense of exclusion that drives them forward in their quests: the barriers, borders and thresholds that exclude them from possible and imaginative other spaces motivate them to continue their search for a space that includes and liberates all.

The critical theories used throughout this comparative study framed my reading practice to often focus on the notion of marginal, borderline or 'in-between' spaces as characters repeatedly find themselves on the frontier: incapable of situating themselves in a specific space and unable to fully identify, inhabit or possess a space that is theirs. They are continuously excluded and never wholly included in spaces. Theorists to which I referred to in this chapter, such as Levinas, Kristeva, Bhabha, Derrida, and Glissant all in a sense emphasize inaccessible spaces: the unknowable Other, the repressed semiotic order, the unrepresentable, the unhomely, the forever deferred signified, etc. The employment of their theories and concepts resulted in often limiting my perspective with regards to the analysis of space in the author's work: their critical framework prompt me to predominantly focus on the unreachable as well as the forever relational, rhizomatic, 'in-between' space in which characters, often inevitably, find themselves. By employing this critical framework in the analysis on space in Djébar and Brink's work, the examination is therefore in a way centred on the inadequacy of spaces: the spaces that cannot be represented or accessed or that what spaces cannot do. In the following chapters, I wish to turn my attention to what spaces, as active participants in the authors' work, however can do and rightly achieve in the novels. Such an examination is made possible by making use of a post-critical framework on the analysis of space, as the following chapters aim to do.

Chapter six: A postcritical framework

6.1 Critical thinking and beyond

The previous chapter's analysis made use of a 'traditional' approach that is rooted in Critical Theory to investigate the representation of space within Djébar and Brink's work. Various critical frameworks that stem predominantly from the critical tradition of postcolonial theory were employed to explore notions of space within the authors' chosen novels. Throughout my examination I however became aware of how these critical theories restricted my analysis. Within the chapter's critical discussions, I was for instance frequently unable to integrate the emotional effect the texts' portrayal of spaces had on the reader. The postcolonial frameworks allowed me to critically comment and reflect on the representation of spaces in the authors' work. I could for example explore the significant gendering and politicizing of spaces, examine spaces' ability to exclude and investigate the colonial desire to conquer and control spaces. When reading for instance how Estienne in *Inteendeel* states: "Land, jy is vrou. Vrou, jy is myne" (Inteendeel, 194), I could make use of the valuable frameworks proposed by critics such as McClintock (1995: 14, 22-24) and expose colonial tendencies to gender the imperial unknown, feminize the virgin land and eroticize unknown continents. These critical frameworks however did not invite or encourage me to explore why I find Estienne's statement so alluring. I can comment on how Estienne represents the land as feminine, how he falls short to describe it, but when I wish to enquire why I find his declaration so gripping, the critical framework falls short. What is it in Brink's use of language that leaves Estienne's words echoing through me? Why does both Brink and Djébar's portrayal of spaces have a lasting effect on me? Why am I moved when I for instance read how Josef is marvelled by the taste and texture of sound (Kennis, 85); the depiction of his solitude ebbing away through whispered words in the dark (Kennis, 98); the depiction of French literature that "te faire fuir dans les fumées de l'imaginaire" (NP, 426); the multiple beauty of French words (NP, 117), their softness, the way they chime (OS, 93) and protect (OS, 42); Estienne's heartfelt recognition of the beauty of the native inhabitants' clicking sounds (Inteendeel, 286); and Simon's English translation of his poems—"Dit was waar hy sy hartseer kon bêre, in woorde soos bloed uit sy keel" (Kennis, 177). What is it that satisfies me when I read the accurate spatial portrayals of sounds and languages: the sounds for example of the church bells, "klanke wat onverwags soos 'n spul duiwe uitgeskud is in die nat lug" (Kennis, 261); or the laughter of a hyena, "die roep van die hiënas [...] soos uitroeptekens in

die donker” (OW, 17); and the secret respiration and rhythm that lie beneath the words of a French poem (NP, 117)? The critical postcolonial theories employed in Chapter five are of great value, but, to my mind, they do not provide sufficient space to explore the appeal these representations of space have on me, the reader. By highlighting the lacks or gaps within the critical approaches of the previous chapter, I by no means imply that the previous analyses should be discarded. I rather seek to indicate that the emotional captivation of the authors’ portrayal of spaces remains underexamined within a critical framework. There is to my mind room to approach the reading practice from a different perspective that will allow for a deeper embrace of the reading experience.

Various scholars similarly experience a form of discontentment not only regarding the practice of postcolonial critique, but of the limiting practice of critique in general. The critical attitude associated with the current rhetoric of critique can, according to Foucault (2007), be traced back to regulations that emerged in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as well as the religious attitudes and spiritual struggles of the Middle Ages. As a response, critique arises as an expression not to be governed: it condemns authority and seeks to disclose its injustices. Foucault (2007: 49) describes how critique is seen as the “art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability”.³¹⁵ Notwithstanding its noble origin, several current scholars seem to be skeptical about the ongoing dominance of these “critical approaches” to literature: Michael Roth (2010) associates scholars to bloodhounds who are tenaciously sniffing out a text’s insufficiencies of meanings, values, and norms, as well as its collusion, coercion, or exclusion. Bruno Latour (2004) asks whether critique has run out of steam. He wonders whether critique has not been critical enough and asks: “What would critique do if it could be associated with *more*, not with *less*, with *multiplication*, not *subtraction*” (Latour, 2004: 232, 248). Felski (2015: 15) signals how rigorous thinking is not only often equated with, but also reduced to the mentality of critique. She moreover voices the fear that our appreciation of works of art has been reduced and restricted due to the spread of critique. (Felski, 2015: 114). An example of such a diminishment is given by Elaine Scarry (1999: 57) who argues that beauty has been banished from the humanities: by beauty she does not mean beautiful things themselves (like beautiful poems, stories, paintings), but rather that the “conversation about the beauty of these things has been banished, so

³¹⁵ Felski (2015: 41-45) traces the power of critical thought back to 16th century: “Before Ricœur’s triad of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, there was Descartes, with his enshrining of doubt as a philosophical method, as well as Kant, with his famous injunction ‘Sapere aude’—dare to know—where a stance of critical questioning and self-questioning is hailed as the means by which humanity will free itself from its self-incurred tutelage”.

that we cohabit the space of these objects [...] yet speak about their beauty only in whispers”. She gives two distinct arguments that make up the political critique of beauty: the first argument posits that by focussing on beauty, our attention is supposedly distracted and inattentive from wrong social arrangements; the second argument holds that pleasurable perception (accepting an object as it is) is seen as morally bad whereas aversive perception (a need for intervention or change in what is seen or heard) is perceived as morally good (Scarry, 1999: 58- 61). She observes:

The first urges that beauty, by preoccupying our attention, distracts attention from wrong social arrangements. It makes us inattentive, and therefore eventually indifferent, to the project of bringing about arrangements that are just. The second argument holds that when we stare at something beautiful, make it an object of sustained regard, our act is destructive of the object [...] The complaint has given rise to a generalized discrediting of the act of ‘looking,’ which is charged with ‘reifying’ the very object that appears to be the subject of admiration [...] looking or hearing without any wish to change what one has seen or heard (as often happens in the presence of the beautiful)—is unacceptable; whereas instrumental perception—looking or hearing that is prelude to intervening in, changing, what one has seen or heard (as happens in the presence of injustice)—is good [...] [a] proposal that pleasurable perception is morally bad and aversive perception is morally good. (Scarry, 1999: 58-61)

This chapter seeks to explore concerns such as Scarry’s about the restrictions imposed within the current rhetoric of critique or what is often called the *hermeneutics of suspicion* (Felski, 2015; Sedgwick, 1997: 4).³¹⁶ By appropriating Paul Ricœur’s phrase, ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’, in her book, *The Limits of Critique*, Rita Felski (2015) employs it in various directions that are different from Ricœur’s own. She describes her book as an attempt to decenter, reimagine, and a revitalize the notion of the hermeneutics of suspicion that will allow us to no longer see it as the be-all and end-all of interpretation (Felski, 2015: 3, 9, 10, 33-34)³¹⁷. Although redefining critique as the hermeneutics of *suspicion* evokes a negative sense of anticipation,³¹⁸ Felski (2015: 36-37) argues that the term opens up an ampler frame

³¹⁶ Sedgwick (1997: 4) surmises that the phrase ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ is “perhaps by now nearly synonymous with criticism itself”.

³¹⁷ Renaming critique the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’, according to Felski (2015: 9), opens up other possibilities of critique: “In contrast to the powerfully normative concept of critique (for who, after all, wants to be thought of as uncritical?), the hermeneutics of suspicion does not exclude other possibilities (for Ricœur, these include a hermeneutics of trust, of restoration, of recollection). Leaving room for differing approaches, it allows us to see critical reading as one possible path rather than the manifest destiny of literary studies”.

³¹⁸ According to British psychologist Alexander Shand (in Felski, 2015: 37) suspicion is a “sensibility that is oriented toward the bad rather than the good, encouraging us to presume the worst about the motives of others—with or without good cause [...] Suspicion thus involves ‘a general, deliberate and secret preparation for evil eventualities that is possessed by no other emotion’”.

of reference to interpretation.³¹⁹ In redescribing critique as the hermeneutics of suspicion, she is able to throw fresh light on several of critique's practices, of which symptomatic reading is only one. These practices to her mind, all have, in differing ways, the following in common: "an attitude of vigilance, detachment, and wariness (*suspicion*) with identifiable conventions of commentary (*hermeneutics*)" (Felski, 2015: 3).

The aim of the chapter is to explore a theoretical framework that is not based on such a hermeneutics of suspicion. Drawing primarily on Felski's *The Limits of Critique* (2015), the chapter will investigate critique and its practices. This will allow me to reconsider the way we analyze and interpret literary texts and more specifically, encourage me to reexamine the ways in which the novels by Djébar and Brink have been discussed and analyzed in the previous chapter. I will firstly examine the concerns, limits, and 'critique' of current critique by focusing on two of the hermeneutics of suspicion's qualities: its assumed 'superiority' and its negativity. Thereafter I will consider possible alternatives to critique and explore new methods embraced by a variety of scholars (whilst remaining cautious of the potential return to a naïve humanism). This analysis will lead me to the method of a 'postcritical reading', an alternative technique for the interpretation of literary texts Felski proposes that is predominantly based on the works of Bruno Latour, Yves Citton and Marielle Macé. I will make use of such a postcritical reading to analyze movement through space in Brink and Djébar's *œuvres* in the following chapter. I will conclude this chapter by probing the postcritical method's characteristics and by exploring the possible ways in which the notion of space could be approached 'postcritically'.

6.2 Limits of the current rhetoric of critique

6.2.1 Critique is 'superior'

Felski's *The Limits of Critique* does not argue against critique, but rather raises the concern that critique, especially within the field of literary studies, is not seen as one possible path, but rather as the only conceivable and imaginable path. Critical theory is often believed to be the only alternative to aesthetic

³¹⁹ She states: "It points to an overall disposition that can coexist with very different political or philosophical beliefs—or with none. It also has the advantage of being a word in everyday use, connecting styles of academic reading to a broader cultural history of interpretation. While critics often contrast their own heightened vigilance to a mentality of unthinking trust and sheeplike assent, suspicion turns out to be more ordinary than such rhetoric would suggest. We can thus bypass the exceptionalist tendencies of critique, opening up an ampler and more expansive frame of reference" (Felski, 2015: 36-37).

appreciation—a form of sentimentality, quietism, Panglossian optimism, or intellectual fluff (Felski, 2015: 150). By not embracing its practice, it is assumed that you are denying or disavowing critique for, as Felski (2015: 147) observes, “(t)o refuse to be critical is to be uncritical”. To be critical or to apply a hermeneutics of suspicion is not a possibility among other possibilities but believed to be a mandatory injunction at the heart of literary studies: it is regarded as the dominant metalanguage or major paradigm in the academic world (Sedgwick, 2003: 125; Love, 2010: 373; Felski, 2015: 4-5; Billig, 2000: 292)³²⁰.

In questioning the popularity of critique as a mode of thought, Felski (2015) mentions various reasons why it is so hard to think outside of its sphere. Critique is firstly remarkably contagious and charismatic.³²¹ As an overall intellectual mood or ethos, it draws everything into its field of force, “patrolling the boundaries of what counts as serious thought. It is virtually synonymous with intellectual rigor, theoretical sophistication, and intransigent opposition to the status quo” (Felski, 2015: 3, 7). Literary critics are drawn to a spirit of sceptical questioning because it is seen as the “driving force and guiding spirit of modern intellectual history”.³²² Critique is perceived as an intellectual practice. Pondering the difference between critique and criticism, Irandoust (2006: 134) asks whether criticism “is just a matter of fault-finding and putting down” while critique, as an intellectual, academic practice “justifies its judgment by offering rationales and justifications?”. Critique moreover claims to be involved with a type of radical intellectual or political work. The critic sees him/herself not only as an academic whose work “demands an arduous working over of language, a refusal of the facile phrase and ready-made formula,” but also as a heroic who masters the text he/she interprets (Felski, 2015: 2, 34, 131, 137-138; Love, 2010: 381; Best & Marcus, 2009: 14-15). Latour (2005: 57) similarly remarks

³²⁰ Felski (2015: 4-5) refers to “the ubiquitous theory course that often provides a conceptual toolkit for the English major, where ‘introduction to theory’ effectively means ‘introduction to critical theory.’ In short, while critique is not the only language of literary studies, it remains the dominant metalanguage”.

³²¹ Best and Marcus (2009: 1) also signal how scholars trained in symptomatic reading became attached to the power it gave to the act of interpreting and “find it hard to let go of the belief that texts and their readers have an unconscious”.

³²² Felski (2015: 41-42) wonders whether critique’s attracting power can also be a result of modernism: “From the late nineteenth century onward, moreover, a literary suspicion presses increasingly to the fore—one that is shaped by, yet also quite distinct from, philosophical reflection. It is not just that literature engages in acts of critique—voicing caustic commentary on social mores or brooding over the painful and inescapable limits of self-knowledge. In the experimental ferment known as modernism, writers are drawn to formal devices that systematically block readers from taking words at face value. Suspicion is not merely a matter of content or theme, manifest in the jaundiced perspectives of solipsistic narrators or misanthropic characters. Rather, it is also triggered in readers via the properties of the literary medium. Opening a book, they are confronted with an array of perplexing or contradictory signals that require intensive acts of deciphering. Readers are forced to read against the grain of the text, to question motives and cast around for concealed clues. Suspicion and interpretative unease [...] are actively provoked by literary texts rather than being imposed on literary texts”.

that intellectuals “behave as if they were ‘critical’, ‘reflexive’ and ‘distanced’ enquirers meeting a ‘naïve’, ‘uncritical’, and ‘unreflexive’ actor”.³²³

As a form of interpretation, critique is moreover secondary: critique is always “a critique of something” and “owes its existence to a prior presence”. Its method is therefore in a sense dependent or symbiotic for critique is “thinking by responding to the thinking of others” (Felski, 2015: 121). The purpose of critique, according to Irandoust (2006: 140) “is not to merely evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, but to show that a given argumentation is the expression of an implicit viewpoint which is welcome or not”. In building on prior knowledge critique “looks backward, and in doing so it often presumes to understand the past better than it understood itself. Hindsight is translated into insight; from our later vantage point, we feel ourselves primed to see better, deeper, further” (Felski, 2015: 123). Such hindsight often sheds a negative light on the object being reviewed, an argument that will be discussed in the following section.

Felski (2015: 111) additionally posits that the reason for critique’s popularity is that it is not only a hermeneutics of suspicion, but also a hermeneutics of sensation: by inspecting a text’s hidden clues and truths, the critic is offered intellectual but also emotional pleasure. She declares:

Suspicious reading generates a gripping story line in which the experience of suspense is followed by the ultimate pleasures of revelation and explanation [...] the most obvious answer is never the right one, and the counterintuitive explanation is the one most highly rewarded. We write and read suspiciously not only in the hope of acquiring more critical knowledge but because we are addicted to the charge of narrative suspense and revelation. (Felski, 2015: 111)

Critics find real enjoyment in becoming immersed in techniques of deciphering and diagnosing texts. They get pleasure in retrieving obscure and opaque truths and engaging in meticulous interpretation (Felski, 2015: 112-113). In offering a form of critique to the field of critique, Fowler (1985: 9) indicates that many scholars find in criticism their ‘revelation’ or ‘ecstasy’ “because for the first time, with the obtaining of critical distance, [they] could see the features of the text that had hitherto read [them], and [they] were enchanted and liberated by what [they] saw”. The method of suspicious interpretation

³²³ According to Felski (2015: 131) the subject of critique declares to the object of critique: “You do not know that you are ideologically driven, historically determined, or culturally constructed [...] but I do!”.

is thus pleasure driven. Felski (2015: 116) reasons, perhaps idealistically, that suspicious interpretation's superior status could be weakened by its pleasure-driven nature:

Once we acknowledge that suspicious interpretation is not only thought-driven but also pleasure-driven, not just a critique of narrative but also a type of narrative, its exceptional status is diminished. Critique can no longer pride itself on being so very different to the texts that it subjects to scrutiny [...] this diminution may also turn out to be a liberation, freeing us up to try out other styles of criticism, to explore ways of reading less invested in inspection, interrogation, and the pursuit of the guilty.

Critique's dominance is moreover the result of scholarly grounding: Suspicious students are schooled by suspicious teachers.³²⁴ The student learns by imitating and adopting the teacher's techniques of reading and reasoning.³²⁵ The cultural values of the critical society's dominant members are hereby promoted. Scholars trained in critique are not only taught a matter of content ('knowing that') but they are also educated in a matter of style, tone, technique, orientation, and method ('knowing how') (Felski, 2015: 26, 42; Schaeffer & Antonioli, 2013: 271-272). In order to behave as a 'critical', 'reflexive', and 'distanced' enquirer, the literary critic is taught a set of skills, or an attitude that falls under the rubric of critical thinking. He/she is also trained in a certain critical language: the critic learns to refine and sharpen his/her awareness of the limits of language and thought (Roth, 2010: 1; Felski, 2015: 132). This critical language develops into a type of limited narrative script: "suspicion and storytelling are closely aligned; critique weaves dramatic or melodramatic narratives in which everything is connected [...] Rather than being a weightless, disembodied, freewheeling dance of the intellect, critique turns out to be a quite stable repertoire of stories, similes, tropes, verbal gambits, and rhetorical ploys" (Felski, 2015: 7, 89). The critic is not only interpreting a narrative, but also creating an 'interpretation-as-narrative': he/she creates a story line that connects understanding to explaining. Felski (2015: 86-88) likens the critical narrative to a type of detective story: the critical reader as detective is determined to track down or identify the guilty party or criminal by a process of interrogation and cross-examination. Within the critic's detective narrative, Felski (2015: 93-94) insists that the question is less

³²⁴ Williams (2014: 8) indicates that individual as well as social impulses drive critique: "Though you don't have to wear it on your sleeve, I think that criticism comes from a personal root, from something that touches you, or the people around you, which in turn obligates you to say and do something about it. That is, criticism carries an obligation to work against injustice. Still, criticism for me is not generated from a 'position' but comes from the alchemy of training and accident, scholarly grounding and curiosity, political views and individual interests [...] Criticism is one way we have to reflect on how we live, what we have learned from it, and whether we should live differently".

³²⁵ These young academics "have spent their intellectual lives deconstructing, interrogating, and speaking Foucauldian" (Felski, 2015: 148).

‘whodunit’ than how it was done: “The interest of readers is not triggered by any burning curiosity about the identity of the villain—a genre, discursive structure, or social system whose failings are already, for the most part, quite familiar to fellow critics” (Felski, 2015: 93-94). An example of such a narrative can be found in the work of postcolonial critics who are intent “on excavating the anxieties of empire” (Felski, 2015: 99). As the dominant language in academic training, critique infinitely calls for more critique (Felski, 2015: 8, 148-150)³²⁶. The more we query critique, the more we reinforce the method of thinking we are trying to avoid. Critical scholars are continuously “tormented by the fear of not being critical enough” (Felski, 2015: 107, 146)³²⁷.

Despite the important ‘detective’ role of the intellectual heroic in literary analysis, it is important to accentuate that within the critic’s interpretation, his/her narrative remains ‘objective’. The reader’s experience of the text is often diminished. Besides the critic’s distance from the author’s intentions, the critic does not allow him/herself to be absorbed and deeply involved in the text: “Many scholars of literature [...] prefer to keep biographical criticism at arm’s length, insisting that the meanings of a text spill far beyond the aims and intentions of its creator”. This refusal of being absorbed by the text is endorsed by structuralist and poststructuralist theories that stress the formative power of language rather than consciousness. Author-centered criticism is seen as a form of discredited humanism and is therefore repudiated. The reader’s experience is often lessened or rejected (Felski, 2015: 94). Felski aims to rectify this ‘lack’ within the postcritical framework she proposes for literary interpretation (see 6.3.7).

Despite its popularity, critics such as Tim Dean (2002: 21-41) suggests that the hermeneutics of suspicion advocates a misplaced sense of confidence and superiority. The presence of ubiquitous criticality obscures and overrules intellectual and imaginative alternatives to critique. It doesn’t allow the critic to be affected by the otherness and strangeness of a text. Felski also identifies some drawbacks when symptomatic, paranoid, and suspicious critique overshadows other possibilities and limits our interpretation. She highlights four major difficulties: its one-sided view of the work of art, its

³²⁶ Felski (2015: 8) notes: “We are told that critique needs to become more negative (to avoid all risk of co-option) or more positive (so it can be truly dialectical). We are given the blueprint for a future critique that will transcend its current flaws and failings. In short, the disease also turns out to be the only conceivable cure; the insufficiencies of critique demand that it be magnified and multiplied, cranked up a hundredfold, applied with renewed vigour and unflagging zeal. Critique turns out to be, as scholars announce with a hint of satisfaction, an infinite task”.

³²⁷ Felski (2015: 124) takes for example the fields of feminism, postcolonialism or queer theory “where the devastating charge of ‘being insufficiently critical’ can lead to a sense of being excommunicated from the field”.

affective inhibition, its picture of society and its methodological asymmetry (Felski, 2008: 109; 2015: 8, 188-189). Felski (2015: 35) insists that even if critics don't use the term 'paranoia' in a diagnostic but rather a metaphorical sense, the effect of casting a pathological shadow over styles of reading remains. She argues that "we can disagree with aspects of critique without presuming to diagnose it". Dean (2002: 21-23) finds critics' tendencies to approach "aesthetic artefacts as symptoms of the culture in which they were produced" problematic. He states: "Reading one's world in terms of symptoms positions one as a hermeneut with a particular relation to the world—a relation of suspicion and putative mastery [...] [it] situates the critic in a position of hermeneutic mastery over the social and cultural symptoms he or she diagnoses" (Dean, 2002: 23).

The critique of critique is not only limited to the hermeneutics of suspicion, but some scholars also accentuate the limits of the practice of theory. Felski (2015: 18-19) demonstrates how theories allow an "overabundance of vocabularies [...] a cornucopia of methods for connecting literary words to a larger world [...] Each new framework promised, with the roguish gleam of a salesman's wink, to overcome the limits of previous ones: to deliver the definitive theory of the subject or concept of power that would nail things down once and for all". Terry Eagleton (1990: 26-27) exposes how theory itself is symptomatic of nature:

Theory is just a practice forced into a new form of self-reflectiveness on account of certain grievous problems it has encountered. Like small lumps on the neck, it is a symptom that all is not well [...] Theory is just human activity bending back upon itself, constrained into a new kind of self-reflexivity. And in absorbing this self-reflexivity, the activity itself will be transformed, as the production of literature is altered by the existence of literary criticism.

As a mode of self-reflection, theory is a conservative force. It incessantly seeks to supply us with rationales for what we do, and in the process makes us aware of what we do. This, in turn, raises the possibility that we should perhaps change what we are doing. An infinite circle, Eagleton (1990: 28-29) finds it hardly surprising that literary critics anxiously seek solutions for a crisis of identity through new modes of self-reflection. "The true difficulty of theory," according to Eagleton (1990: 35), "springs not from [...] sophistication, but from exactly the opposite—from its demand that we return to childhood by rejecting what seems natural and refusing to be fobbed off with shifty answers from well-meaning elders". Looking at the history of criticism, he indicates that the times when critique becomes major are the times "when it begins to speak of more than itself" (Eagleton, 1990: 83). The enigmatic and

mysterious entity of theory, represents such a potential: “It [...] hasn’t the kind of secure and, perhaps, stale identity of longer established discourses, and can thus be used in a variety of directions for a variety of ends”. In order for theory to reach this potential, Eagleton (1990: 89) holds that it has to find a way of bringing creative and intellectual discourses together.

Crehan (1998: 70) directly questions the stale theoretical practices of a postcolonial reading of texts: “One wonders whether this shift to ‘postcolonial theory’ is a radical break with the past or another strategy of renunciation, one which, at the very moment it appears to yield possession, re-colonizes and re-appropriates”. Citton (2017: 510) similarly emphasizes the need for a shift or radical break within literary interpretation. According to him there are only interpretations of interpretations³²⁸ due to the fact that the critical reader is educated to ‘interpret’ in a certain discourse (Citton, 2017: 509, 510). He argues that we need a breaker (*un casseur*) in order to crack the ‘discourse’ and asks whether one could be a reader and a breaker at the same time (Citton, 2017: 506). After discussing critique’s tendency to be negative, these suggested ‘breaks’ with critical discourse will be investigated in the following section.

6.2.2 Critique is negative

Felski (2015: 127) contends that “to use the language of critique is to make a judgement of a less than favourable kind. Critique is, in one way or another, a negative act”.³²⁹ The tradition of such a negative critical practice is passed on to scholars who are educated in critical thinking: “Even the most chipper and cheerful of graduate students, on entering a field in which critique is held to be the most rigorous method, will eventually master the protocols of professional pessimism” (Felski, 2015: 127-128). Contemporary supporters of critique often minimize critique’s connection with negative judgments and the so-called “juridico-repressive paradigm of punishment”.³³⁰ They insist that critique “is not a

³²⁸ “Il n’y a qu’interprétations d’interprétations parce que nous ne faisons jamais que nous entre-prêter des institutions, des tournures, des sensibilités, des frayages qui nous appartiennent très peu” (Citton, 2017: 510).

³²⁹ Since the 18th century, the word ‘critique’ has been employed as a verb that signifies ‘to review or discuss critically’. Today, the usage of the term is gaining wider currency, partly due to the fact that the once neutral verb, ‘criticize’, now has a negative sense (Irlandoust 2006: 134).

³³⁰ An example of such a defender of critique is Judith Butler (2009: 116) who argues that, instead of regarding it as negative judgement, critique should rather be seen as an “ongoing effort to fathom, collect, and identify that upon which we depend when we claim to know anything at all”. Felski (2015: 130) demonstrates that Butler’s position “is a model of argument cast in the mode of Foucauldian genealogy rather than old-style ideology critique: critique not as a denunciation of error and a

matter of castigation or a categorical thumbs-down; rather, it takes the form of a more judicious and considered assessment". Critique' role is then not considered "to castigate but to complicate, not to engage in ideas' destruction but to expose their cultural construction" (Felski, 2015: 130).

When acquiring knowledge and skills in critical thinking, scholars are at the same time initiated into a certain sensibility: Critique is not only a method of interpretation, but it also creates what Felski (2015: 6, 22) calls a 'critical mood' or attitude that accents and inflects our endeavours.³³¹ By taking Heidegger's definition as a basis,³³² she describes the notion of mood as an unavoidable "atmosphere or climate" that influences how we approach texts, how we position ourselves in relation to the texts we encounter, the questions we ask as well as the arguments we are drawn to (Felski, 2015: 20-21)³³³. She maintains that "critical detachment is not an absence of mood," but rather one manifestation of it: the texts we read are coloured, placed in a given light and endowed with certain qualities. (Felski, 2015: 21). Mood bridges the gap between what we think and what we feel about the texts we approach.

Many scholars believe that the critical mood present in the tradition of critique not only casts a negative shadow on the analysis of texts, but also has a limiting effect (Felski, 2015; Roth, 2010; Pawelski & Moores, 2013; Kompridis, 2013; Dean, 2002; Billig, 2000: 292). Roth (2010: 1) asserts that for many students today, being smart is synonymous to being (negatively) critical. He accentuates that this tendency to be entirely negative in order to "participate fully in the academic tribe," is

hunt for mislaid truths but as an inquiry into the way knowledge is organized that seeks, as far possible, to suspend judgments" (Felski, 2015: 130).

³³¹ Felski (2015: 20) asks: "What do forms of critique have in common? To what extent do they prime us to approach texts in a given state of mind, to adopt a certain attitude toward our object? Let us call this attitude a 'critical mood'".

³³² Heidegger, quoted by Hubert Dreyfus (1991: 171), states: "A mood is in each case already there, like an atmosphere, in which we are steeped".

³³³ Felski (2015: 20) states: "Mood [...] refers to an overall atmosphere or climate that caused the world to come into view in a certain way [...] In contrast to the suddenness and intensity of the passions, they are characterized by a degree of stability: a mood can be pervasive, lingering, slow to change. It 'sets the tone' for our engagement with the world, causing it to appear before us in a given light. Mood, in this sense, is a prerequisite for any form of interaction or engagement; there is, Heidegger insists, no moodless or mood-free apprehension of phenomena".³³⁴ Roth (2010: 1) observes: "A common way to show that one has sharpened one's critical thinking is to display an ability to see through or undermine statements made by (or beliefs held by) others. [...] To be able to show that Hegel's concept of narrative foreclosed the non-European, or that Butler's stance on vulnerability contradicts her conception of performativity, or that a tenured professor has failed to account for his own 'privilege'—these are marks of sophistication, signs of one's ability to participate fully in the academic tribe. But this participation, being entirely negative, is not only seriously unsatisfying; it is ultimately counterproductive [...] In overdeveloping the capacity to show how texts, institutions, or people fail to accomplish what they set out to do, we may be depriving students of the capacity to learn as much as possible from what they study [...] That very skill may diminish their capacity to find or create meaning and direction in the books they read and the world in which they live".

counterproductive: fostering the techniques of critical thinking not only has a diminishing effect on how students interpret texts, but it can also inhibit students' learning experience as a whole (Roth, 2010: 1-2)³³⁴. Other scholars highlight similar limiting consequences of critical thinking: Kompridis (2013: 19) argues that the logical space of critical interpreting is limited for "there are only a finite number of moves that can be made in this space". Felski (2015: 16-17) demonstrates how critical thinking seems to be the only conceivable way of justifying a work of art's merits: "A particular novel or film [...] serves as a meritorious exception to the ideologies that must be ritually condemned. All too often, we see critics tying themselves into knots in order to prove that a text harbours signs of dissonance and dissent". Dean (2002: 23-14) insists that thinking critically about art throughout humanities today, or in his own terms, "thinking about art *symptomatically*" is "the only credible alternative to thinking about art as the creation of transcendent genius". The critical act of symptomatic reading presupposes that the artwork's most significant truths are not immediately apparent and may be veiled, masked, or invisible: "A text is deciphered as a symptom, mirror, index, or antithesis of some larger social structure" (Felski, 2015: 11).

The act of looking, thinking and reading art 'symptomatically' has a very long history. Even though the term 'symptomatic reading' was only coined by French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser in *Reading Capital* (1965), the critics Umberto Eco and Stefan Collini (1992: 31) trace its history back to the Gnostics in the second century CE. In contrast to Greek philosophers who defined reason as "noncontradiction," the Gnostics conceived the notion of truth as a secret and a type of deep, mysterious language inadequate to meaning (Dean, 2002: 29; Best & Marcus, 2009: 4). Eco and Collini (1992: 39-40) associate symptomatic reading with what they call "the hermetic theory of interpretation: the idea that words 'hide the untold' and the secret of meaning is its impossibility". The practice of symptomatic reading became a popular form of critical interpretation during the 1970s and 1980s. In *Reading Capital* Althusser illustrates a practice of symptomatic reading that he found in and

³³⁴ Roth (2010: 1) observes: "A common way to show that one has sharpened one's critical thinking is to display an ability to see through or undermine statements made by (or beliefs held by) others. [...] To be able to show that Hegel's concept of narrative foreclosed the non-European, or that Butler's stance on vulnerability contradicts her conception of performativity, or that a tenured professor has failed to account for his own 'privilege'—these are marks of sophistication, signs of one's ability to participate fully in the academic tribe. But this participation, being entirely negative, is not only seriously unsatisfying; it is ultimately counterproductive [...] In overdeveloping the capacity to show how texts, institutions, or people fail to accomplish what they set out to do, we may be depriving students of the capacity to learn as much as possible from what they study [...] That very skill may diminish their capacity to find or create meaning and direction in the books they read and the world in which they live".

through the work of Marx. Best and Marcus (2009: 5) demonstrate that for Althusser, symptomatic reading renders lacunae perceptible. It moreover “assumes that texts are shaped by questions they do not themselves pose and contain symptoms that help interpreters articulate those questions, which lie outside texts as their absent causes” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 5).³³⁵

While Althusser’s text formulated the notion of symptomatic reading, it was Frederic Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* (1981) that became its epitome and that popularized the method among U.S. literary scholars. In his text, Jameson contends that only readers who are “weak, descriptive, empirical, ideologically complicit” focus on the surface of the text. The ‘strong’ critic to his mind, should rather practice a form of reading that rewrites the narrative “in terms of master codes, disclosing its status as ideology, as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 5). In comparison to Althusser, Jameson also stresses that absence shapes texts, but in contrast to Althusser, Jameson focusses on a single absence: history itself. The manifest meaning of a text according to him hides a repressed, mystified, and latent meaning that should be ‘unmasked’ through interpretation. The role of the critic is therefore seen as the restoration of the history that the text represses (Jameson, 1981: 20, 60; Best & Marcus, 2009: 2-5). Not only should interpretation ‘unmask’ but it should also ‘demystify’ a text in order to bring ideological undertones to the forefront. Dean (2002: 29) posits that due to the endless need to unmask and demystify, cultural criticism has evolved into a type of political work. The act of demystification has been turned into “the quintessential critical gesture when responding to cultural artefacts” for it is often regarded as “the only responsible alternative to either uncritical veneration (of art) or mindless consumption (of mass cultural entertainment)”. In order to be regarded as politically progressive, the critic should always be “about the business of unmasking, attempting to unveil the ideological struggles behind a seemingly innocent or harmonious work of art” (Dean, 2002: 29). The practice of symptomatic reading developed into a specific type of interpretation that “took meaning to be hidden, repressed, deep, and in need of detection and disclosure by an interpreter”.³³⁶

³³⁵ Althusser (1979: 147) is of opinion that innocent reading is not possible and that we should “say what reading we are guilty of”. Felski (2015: 113) deems Althusser as “the quintessential suspicious reader” as he “refuses to exonerate himself from suspicion and shuffles willingly into the ranks of the accused. He is prepared, he says, to take responsibility for his justified crime and to defend his way of reading by proving its necessity”.

³³⁶ Best and Marcus (2009: 3-4) point out that the act of symptomatic reading “often locate outright absences, gaps, and ellipses in texts, and then ask what those absences mean, what forces create them, and how they signify the questions that motivate the text, but that the text itself cannot articulate. Symptomatic reading thus often conflates three pairs of oppositions: present/absent, manifest/latent, and surface/depth”.

Spatial metaphors such as these (“hidden”, “repressed”, “deep”) play a significant role in the practice of symptomatic reading. The critic is regarded as a heroic who wrestles and battles to free hidden and opaque truths in the depths of the text (Best & Marcus, 2009: 14-15; Felski, 2015: 1, 34; Ricœur, 1970: 26). According to Felski (2015: 33) “depth is the only one of the spatial metaphors on which literary critics rely”. In contrast to the significant depth of a text, “the surface is associated with the superficial and deceptive, with what can be perceived without close examination and, implicitly, would turn out to be false upon closer scrutiny” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 4). Within symptomatic readings it is “the invisible levels”, that which, as Jameson posits, is beyond the horizon which is considered of importance: the hidden and invisible levels “that only the critic can make visible within the grain of the text itself” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 7). It is the prevalent notions of these deep, invisible, hidden levels that leads Felski (2015: 56) to call Jameson’s proposed style of reading a “digging down”: “Digging is necessary because a text is composed of strata and its meanings are hidden from sight. Matters of import are shrouded, obscured, and inaccessible to the casual observer; they can only be mined via an exacting technique of close reading”. Jameson (1981: 45) himself asserts that interpretation “always presupposes, if not a conception of the unconscious itself, then at least some mechanism of mystification or repression in terms of which it would make sense to seek a latent meaning behind a manifest one”. Felski (2015: 56-57) deduces from Jameson’s argument that “the act of interpretation is inherently mistrustful, driven by the desire to translate the words on the page into a more comprehensive and clarifying idiom”. For Jameson, this role of a master idiom or code is fulfilled by Marxism. Marxism as code allows the critic “to redefine cultural artefacts as socially symbolic acts in order to restore a buried reality of material conditions” (Felski, 2015: 56-57).

This critical and mistrustful method of symptomatic reading is one of the reasons Felski considers renaming critique to what Ricœur calls a *hermeneutics of suspicion*. Ricœur originally coins the term ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ to describe the interpretive protocols of Freud (and his theory of ideals and illusions), Marx (and his theory of ideology) and Nietzsche (and his genealogy of morals). He hails this triad “as the creators of a new art of interpreting” (Dean, 2002: 31; Felski, 2015: 31; Sedgwick, 1997: 15). Ricœur (1970: 26-27) defines hermeneutics “as the science of exegetical rules and exegesis as the interpretation of a particular text or of a set of signs considered as a text [...] According to the one pole, hermeneutics is understood as the manifestation and restoration of a meaning addressed to me in the manner of a message, a proclamation, or as is sometimes said, a kerygma; according to the

other pole, it is understood as a demystification, as a reduction of illusion”. The stream of hermeneutics that Ricœur places under the heading of suspicion “is not an explication of the object, but a tearing off of masks, an interpretation that reduces disguises” (Ricœur, 1970: 30)³³⁷. He considers Marx, Nietzsche and Freud as the “three masters” of the school of suspicion (Ricœur, 1970: 32-34)³³⁸. Despite their differences, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud are united by “a spirit of ferocious and blistering disenchantment—a desire to puncture illusions, topple idols, and destroy divinities”. The triad’s hermeneutic project ties radical thought to “painstaking acts of interpretation”. Truth is not conveyed in words, but rather “lies beneath, behind, or to the side of these words, encrypted in what cannot be said, in revelatory stutterings and recalcitrant silences”. The social critic’s task is “to reverse the falsifications of everyday thought, to ‘unconceal’ what has been concealed, to bring into daylight what has languished in deep shadow”. Only after considerable effort can meaning be retrieved or “wrested” from the text (Felski, 2015: 31, 32). Dean (2002: 26-27) demonstrates that within literary criticism, the hermeneutic quest for meaning “assumes that true significance remains concealed until it is revealed by an interpretive act; and the notion of symptom embodies this assumption. There can be no symptom without an interpretant. To diagnose something as a symptom is to posit a hidden significance that must be elicited via interpretation” (Dean, 2002: 26-27). The ‘diagnosis’ is spurred by

³³⁷ “The point at issue [in] the school of suspicion,” according to Ricœur (1970: 28) “is better understood if we first contrast what is radically opposed to [it]”. He compares the critical intensity of the triad to the reader who approaches a text in the hope of revelation: Rather than focusing on the text’s poverty, the reader indulges in the richness of the language. Instead of cancelling or subverting the text’s concealed meaning, it “dwells; in its first meaning” (Ricœur, 1970: 31). Felski (2015: 32) claims that “to interpret in this way is to feel oneself addressed by the text as if by a message or a proclamation, to defer to a presence rather than diagnose an absence. The words on the page do not disguise truth but disclose it. Such ‘hermeneutics of restoration’ is infused with moments of wonder, reverence, exaltation, hope, epiphany, or joy. The difference between a hermeneutics of restoration and a hermeneutics of suspicion, we might say, lies in the difference between unveiling and unmasking” (Felski, 2015: 32).

³³⁸ Ricœur (1970: 32-34) explains why he considers the triad the masters of suspicion: “If we go back to the intention they had in common, we find in it the decision to look upon the whole of consciousness primarily as ‘false’ consciousness [...] The philosopher trained in the school of Descartes knows that things are doubtful, that they are not such as they appear; but he does not doubt that consciousness is such as it appears to itself; in consciousness, meaning and consciousness of meaning coincide. Since Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, this too has become doubtful. After the doubt about things, we have started to doubt consciousness. These three masters of suspicion are not to be misunderstood, however, as three masters of scepticism. They are, assuredly, three great ‘destroyers’ [...] All three clear the horizon for a more authentic word, for a new reign of Truth, not only by means of a ‘destructive’ critique, but by the invention of an art of interpreting. Descartes triumphed over the doubt as to things by the evidence of consciousness; they triumph over the doubt as to consciousness by an exegesis of meaning. Beginning with them, understanding is hermeneutics: henceforward, to seek meaning is no longer to spell out consciousness of meaning, but to decipher its expressions [...] What all three attempted, in different ways, was to make their ‘conscious’ methods of deciphering coincide with the ‘unconscious’ work of ciphering which they attributed to the will to power, to social being, to the unconscious psychism [...] the distinguishing characteristics of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche is the general hypothesis concerning both the process of false consciousness and the method of deciphering. The two go together, since the man of suspicion carries out in reverse the work of falsification of the man of guile [...] All three begin with suspicion concerning the illusions of consciousness, and then proceed to employ the stratagem of deciphering”.

the interpreter's suspicious undertone which privileges a sense of paranoia (Dean, 2002: 39; Felski, 2015: 35, 37-38; Sedgwick, 1997: 5, 6). The attraction to practice 'paranoid' interpretation is questioned by various scholars. Dean (2002: 39) argues that the "hermeneutics of suspicion that characterizes interpretive practices running the gamut from psychoanalysis to materialist to historicist criticism promotes a paranoid relation to cultural forms, fueling the impulse to critically master opacity or uncertainty through rigorous interpretation" (Dean, 2002: 39). Felski (2015: 35, 37-38) demonstrates how such a diagnostic style of reading can cast a pathological shadow over interpretation:

We are always 'on the lookout'—scrutinizing, scanning, searching, surveying, observing, gazing, examining. This looking is not a yielding gaze of pleasure, absorption, or entrancement but a sharp-eyed and diligent hunt for information, as we press beyond appearances to ferret out hidden dangers. In other words, we are both wary of something yet also exceptionally attentive to its presence [...] Because we are convinced that things are not as they seem, we are driven to decode and decipher, to push beyond the obvious, to draw out what is unseen or unsaid. Suspicion [...] is thus a fundamentally semiotic sensibility; it pivots on the treatment of phenomena as signs.

Sedgwick (1997: 6) similarly suggests that paranoia coexists with critical practice:

To inspire interest is to be guaranteed a paranoid reading, just as we must inevitably be suspicious of the interpretations we inspire. Paranoia is an inescapable interpretive doubling of presence. It sets a thief (and if necessary, becomes one) to catch a thief; it mobilizes guile against suspicion, suspicion against guile; 'it takes one to know one'.

Sedgwick (1997: 5) moreover stresses the restricting role of suspicion in current critical practices: "In a world where no one need be delusional to find evidence of systematic oppression, to theorize out of anything but a paranoid critical stance has come to seem naive, pious, or complaisant". She insists that instead of viewing paranoid inquiry as entirely coextensive with critical theoretical inquiry, it should rather be regarded as "one kind of cognitive/affective theoretical practice among other, alternative kinds" (Sedgwick, 1997: 5). Although she argues that paranoid reading strategies might offer a unique access to and exposure of knowledge (Sedgwick, 1997: 8-9)³³⁹, she believes that paranoia "represents not only a strong affect theory but a strong negative affect theory" (Sedgwick, 1997: 21). Due to its

³³⁹ Sedgwick (1997: 8-9) demonstrates that paranoid reading strategies "represent a way, among other ways, of seeking, finding, and organizing knowledge. Paranoia knows some things well and other poorly [...] Paranoia is anticipatory [...] reflexive and mimetic [...] a strong theory [...] is a theory of negative affects [that] places its faith in exposure".

anticipatory nature, the first imperative of paranoia is ‘There must be no bad surprises’: to eliminate all elements of surprise the (paranoid) critic can never be paranoid enough (Sedgwick, 1997: 9).

Felski (2015: 7, 53-55, 61, 69-70) distinguishes between different schemas of such paranoid suspicious reading strategies. The first method is associated with a tradition of Freudian and Marxist thought. As mentioned before, reading in this specific schema is perceived as “act of digging down to arrive at a repressed or otherwise obscured reality”. The Freudian and Marxist tradition, as claimed by Felski, “drives the machinery of interpretation-as-excavation”. The critic plays the role of an archaeologist who has to dig deep in order to retrieve hidden or camouflaged truths. Both Freud and Marx differentiate in their different disciplines between surface appearance and concealed reality and the need to bring the repressed or oppressed to the fore. Both hold that a “seemingly serene and unruffled surface screens elemental yet deeply disturbing truths”. Their forms of thought can be regarded as two sides of the same coin: “in both cases, something is being forced down, restrained, and muffled by a controlling force. Within this scheme, what is pushed out of sight is held to be of incomparably greater value, shimmering with a revelatory power; it testifies to a necessity and urgency that cannot be gainsaid” (Felski, 2015: 61).

The second method of paranoid and suspicious reading strategies distinguished by Felski is associated with poststructuralism that accentuates the act of defamiliarizing rather than the act of discovery. The poststructuralist approach creates an alternate idiom where “vertical metaphors yield to horizontal ones”: The text is no longer composed of strata and the critic no longer digs down but draws away in order to scrutinize the text from afar. “Insight, we might say, is achieved by distancing rather than by digging, by the corrosive force of ironic detachment rather than intensive interpretation. The goal is now to ‘denaturalize’ the text, to expose its social construction by expounding on the conditions in which it is embedded”. The critic-as-ironist stands back from the text “in order to defamiliarize it via the knowing equanimity of her gaze” (Felski, 2015: 7). By ‘defamiliarizing’ or ‘denaturalizing’ the text, the critic turns what appears to be nature back into culture. He/she demonstrates that there is nothing self-evident about the text’s form or content: that which seems like an “essential part of the self or the world could always be otherwise” (Felski, 2015: 69-70).

Although the poststructuralist method rejects the notion of ‘hidden truths’ and the naïve pursuit of ‘ultimate meanings’, poststructuralist critique nevertheless engages in what Felski calls “a *second-level hermeneutics*—a method of reading that looks beyond the individual text to decipher larger structures of cultural production”. As long as these practices are considered to draw out counterintuitive and often unflattering insights, the critic is still engaging in interpretation in a paranoid manner. In this way “(h)ermeneutics may be revised or refined, but it is not eradicated”.³⁴⁰

Both Freud and Marx’s as well as the poststructuralist’s schemas “seek to identify and taxonomize misperceptions by subjecting texts to analyses that place them in an unexpected and unflattering light”. Felski (2015: 55) additionally notes that in “priding themselves on their stoicism and lack of susceptibility to a text’s address,” both methods are hesitant for “deep involvement, absorption, or immersion in their object”.

It is this hesitancy for involvement and absorption within the reading practice that I also experienced within my analysis in the previous chapter. It is this need to be immersed within the texts of Djébar and Brink that motivate me to consider alternatives to the hermeneutics of suspicion.

6.3 Alternatives to critique

Despite the arguments made against critique or the hermeneutics of suspicion, scholars don’t hold that the method should necessarily be thrown out. The hermeneutics of suspicion has proven to be invaluable in critical discourse. Rather, due to its limitations, many believe that it needs to be reimagined and revitalized (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 28; Felski, 2015: 10, 119-120).³⁴¹ The

³⁴⁰ Felski (2015: 128) refers to practices where “we are regularly apprised that what looks like difference is yet another form of sameness, that what appears to be subversion is a more discreet form of containment, that any attempt at inclusion spawn yet more exclusions”.

³⁴¹ Some scholars believe that we shouldn’t be too quick in rejecting some of the hermeneutics of suspicion’s practices: “In recent calls for alternatives to critical hermeneutics in literary studies, scholars have tended to focus on the need to suspend routine activities of unveiling and demystification, to train ourselves out of habits of paranoia and suspicion. There is no doubt that literary scholars are well schooled in the hermeneutics of suspicion. What is often forgotten in these discussions, though, is the fact that, for Ricœur, the ‘hermeneutic field’ is ‘internally at variance with itself.’ Interpretation is defined by a tension between demystification and what he calls the ‘restoration of meaning.’ Interpretation as recollection of meaning returns us to the realm of sacred hermeneutics; according to Ricœur, it is this faith in ‘a revelation through the world that animates [his] research’. He identifies this tension in all interpretive practices, even in the writings of the masters of suspicion [...] The ‘depth’ of ‘depth hermeneutics’ should be understood not only as the hidden structures or causes that

hermeneutics of suspicion should be regarded as one possibility among many others, “not the absolute ground of critical being” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 29). There are many different ways of deciphering and analyzing texts. Different hermeneutics exist as well: instead of focussing only on a hermeneutics of suspicion, we can explore a hermeneutics of trust. Instead of a reading that demystifies, we can consider a reading that restores. Interpretation need not be treated as a purely cerebral exercise: “Reading—even academic reading—is a less dry and dispassionate activity that it is often made out to be” (Felski, 2015: 107). Felski reminds us that even though suspicion spurs interpretation, “not all interpretation is suspicious”. The “crisis in literary studies” (Schaeffer & Antonioli, 2013: 268) is however not only limited to literary studies, but to humanities as a whole. According to Liu (2004: 2-3, 7) humanities is in danger within a system which he calls “institutions of postindustrial knowledge work”. He claims that “[w]herever the academy looks in the new millennium, it sees the prospect of a world given over to one knowledge—a single, dominant mode of knowledge associated with the information economy and apparently destined to make all other knowledges, especially all historical knowledges, obsolete”. He speculates that in order for literary criticism to be legitimate, “it must metamorphose not so much into Kafka’s insect as into a different kind of ‘bug’” (Liu, 2004: 7). A metamorphosis is needed within literary critique that will allow it to remain relevant. Even though we have seen in recent decades a shake-up of the canon where we have allowed our perceptions to be altered by the influx of new literary voices and visions, a yet bigger transformation is nevertheless required (Felski, 2015: 17). Rethinking critique not only entails a revision of the canon, but a reassessment of our reading and reasoning practices as well. Felski (2015: 18) asks: “What happens if we think of critique as an affective stance that orients us in certain ways? And as a particular cluster of conventions rather than a synonym for freewheeling dissidence or disembodied scepticism?”. Interpretation doesn’t need “a ‘transcendental subject’ or a stance of heroic mastery”. It could be reimagined as a method of dispossession rather than possession. We can acknowledge a reading that allows us to impose as well as expose ourselves on and to a text. (Felski, 2015: 34, 107). In order to rethink suspicious practices of interpretation, we need to come up with inspiring alternatives, less restrictive modes of argument and new vocabularies (Felski, 2015: 119-120, 150; Kompridis, 2013: 22)³⁴². In order to become receptive to other forms of critical analysis, Roth (2010: 3) posits that

suspicious critics reveal. Depth is also a dimension that critics attempt to produce in their readings, by attributing life, richness, warmth, and voice to texts” (Love, 2010: 388).

³⁴² Kompridis (2013: 22) argues against restrictive vocabularies: “Engagement with literature’s capacity to manifest for others another way, in ways both complex and ambiguous, might shoulder political theorists out of our assumptions about

critique should evolve and transform together with culture: rather than being the critics of normativity, literary critics should perhaps rather see themselves as explorers of the normative. This will allow for a broader connection between the intellectual work within the humanities and public culture. “(I)t would mean,” to quote Roth (2010: 3), “approaching our object of study not with the anticipated goal of exposing weakness or mystification but with the goal of turning ourselves in such a way as to see how what we study might inform our thinking and our lives”. This change of perception requires an ethical approach. Dean (2002: 38-39) argues that the ethics of psychoanalytic criticism would encourage us in adopting a less superior attitude of exposing concealed meaning, motive and weaknesses that supposedly lie behind aesthetic expressions.³⁴³ In the following sections, I will explore alternatives to critique that share, some more than others, such an ethical approach to literary texts.

6.3.1 Critique of the critical

A possible alternative to the hermeneutics of suspicion is a solution proposed by Billig (2000) called the ‘critique of the critical’. Billig (2000: 292) asserts that there is a need for “continual intellectual revolution”. He argues that “a critical journal of language must open itself to new forms of writing and beware of its own linguistic orthodoxies. It needs to encourage young academics, especially those without established positions, to criticize the language and rhetoric of the established critical writers—even to expose the self-interest and political economy of the sign ‘critical’”. Criticizing the language of critique however reminds us of Felski’s (2015: 8) claim that the “disease also turns out to be the only conceivable cure”. Critique becomes critique square.

A similar method is proposed by Liu. He calls it ‘creative destruction’ and describes it as follows: “‘creative destruction’ is ‘innovation’, compelling the ‘systematic abandonment of the established, the

how best to make sense of things political, making us more alert to the inadequacy of our conceptual vocabularies. It might also make us capaciously less confident about the powers of academic forms of argument and practices of justification, and more sensitively attuned to the need for new ways of thinking and reasoning with others, ways that must themselves be newly cultivated. Perhaps literary theorists need to learn this, too, by becoming receptive to other ways of inhabiting literature, other than as Cartesian skeptics obsessed with methods of interrogation. After all, this is but one very restrictive way to live our skepticism, and it is a question for us, whether we might wish to live it differently, less restrictively”.

³⁴³ Dean (2002: 38-39) declares: “To the extent that art entails a practice or experience of defamiliarization in which otherness comes to the fore, it requires an ethical rather than an epistemological approach. From this perspective the ethics of psychoanalytic criticism would consist in refusing the imperative to overcome all enigmaticity through demystification. Such an ethics would encourage us to adopt a less knowingly superior attitude toward it by helping to allay the suspicion that meaning and motive lie concealed behind aesthetic expressions” (Dean, 2002: 38-39).

customary, the familiar, the comfortable” (Liu, 2004: 2). He questions the role of the literary in the sphere of post-industrial knowledge work and asks, “(w)hat do the well-read who once held power in the name of the aesthetic still have to teach the well-informed who now hold power under the cover of cool?” (Liu, 2004: 3)³⁴⁴. He believes that the vital task for both literature and literary study “is to inquire into the aesthetic value—let us simply call it *the literary*”. The literary is however no longer managed by ‘creative literature’, but by information economy, the ‘cool’ institutions of post-industrial knowledge work (Liu, 2004: 2-3, 7-9). He demonstrates that within this age of innovation, the role of art should no longer be creativity, but a special, dark kind of history: “The creative arts as cultural criticism (and vice versa) must be the history not of things created—the great, auratic artefacts treasured by a conservative or curatorial history—but of things destroyed in the name of creation” (Liu, 2004: 8).

Although Liu does not equate his approach to critique so directly as Billig’s ‘critique of the critical’, his method is aligned with practices of a suspicious reading in that it focusses on breaking down and finding fault. His highest ambition for criticism and the creative arts is “that they can in tandem become ‘ethical hackers’ of knowledge work” (Liu, 2004: 7-8). His form of critique encourages a total discard of the established and the familiar: “Strong art will be about the ‘destruction of destruction’ or, put another way, the recognition of the destructiveness in creation” (Liu, 2004: 9). His method of ‘creative destruction’ shifts the focus from ‘making it new’ to ‘breaking it down’: “The stylistic repertory from which the future literary may emerge [...] is not new. But what may be ‘new’ among the writers, artists, programmers, designers, critics, scholars, and others who push workaday cool to an extreme is the rejection of the aesthetic ideology of critical innovation (‘make it new’) in favour of an ideology of cultural destruction” (Liu, 2004: 9). In this sense, the role of art is to his mind, no longer to see what it can create, but rather, to see what it can destroy. Although Liu does not specify what his approach would entail when considered as a form of literary interpretation, I would assume that a reading involving ‘creative destruction’ will require the reader to focus on how a literary text possibly achieves such a form of destruction: how it breaks down what seems familiar, comfortable, and customary.

³⁴⁴ Liu (2004: 3) observes: “What is the future of the literary when the true aestheticism unbound of knowledge work—as seen on innumerable Web pages—is ‘cool’? Cool is the techno-informatic vanishing point of contemporary aesthetics, psychology, morality, politics, spirituality, and everything. No more beauty, sublimity, tragedy, grace, or evil: only cool or not cool [...] what is the relation between the now predominantly academic and other knowledge workers (even ‘creative writers’) who manage literary value in ‘cultural context’ and the broader realm of professional, managerial, and technical knowledge workers who manage information in ‘systems?’” (Liu, 2004: 3).

Not all alternatives to critique have such a ‘destructive’ approach. Recently, several scholars have started examining more affirmative or engaged aesthetic responses as an alternative to the hermeneutics of suspicion (Felski, 2015: 151). The next sections explore such responses.

6.3.2 Reading eudaimonically

Some scholars believe that we are experiencing a ‘eudaimonic turn’ in literary studies: there exists “a disenchantment with disenchantment and a new willingness to embrace such themes as joy, hope, love, optimism, and inspiration” (Felski, 2015: 151-152). Pawelski and Moores (2013: 2) trace the term ‘eudaimonia’ back to the Greeks. They refer to *Nicomachean Ethics* wherein Aristotle “points to [a] nearly universal agreement among scholars and lay persons alike that ‘the good life’ or ‘doing well’ is the same thing as *eudaimonia*. Already hundreds of years old at that point, the term *eudaimonia* signified a condition of human flourishing and carried with it connotations of a blessed life. When the Greeks thought about the kind of life in which things are going well, they agreed this was a life of eudaimonia” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 2). They explain that the ‘eudaimonic turn’ in literary studies signifies an increased focus on the immediate constituents of well-being as well as a rise in investigations that examine aspects that seem to be at the heart of human flourishing.³⁴⁵ These studies are less interested in what can go wrong within human experience, but rather centres its analysis around the reason for the thriving of individuals and communities. Eudaimonic scholars are less concerned with “ideological pronouncements and entrenched positions” and more concerned with “innovative approaches, interdisciplinary collaborations, and empirical investigations” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 3). A eudaimonic reading is placed in contrast to the hermeneutics of suspicion that aims to demystify and uncover obscure ideological or psychological illusions. Pawelski and Moores (2013: 27) posit that in a text where positive configurations of eudaimonia (such as love, joy, or serenity) are present, a suspicious reading will often fall short for suspicion generally “proves incapable of shedding productive light on eudaimonia”.

³⁴⁵ Within a eudaimonic reading, the interpretation is mainly focussed on “well-being, human flourishing, and thriving. This includes things such as joy, love, tranquillity, wisdom, creativity, optimism, inspiration, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, life satisfaction, and play” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 3).

The eudaimonic turn moreover allows literary theorists to explore new themes and fresh approaches to interpretation. In literary studies, the eudaimonic turn has manifested in three interrelated ways: “(1) as a growing dissatisfaction with critique as it is commonly understood; (2) as a search for and embrace of various alternative hermeneutics; and (3) as a direct move toward the investigation of the eudaimonic aspects of human experience”. (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 3, 7, 26). The eudaimonic turn is additionally recognisable within new literary strategies:

There seems to be a tacit understanding and even a desire to retrieve the question of well-being by moving beyond the mere consciousness and condemnation of its absence. The language such mere scholars use surely implies as much. Phrases such as ‘reparative reading,’ ‘deriving sustenance from texts,’ dealing with ‘matters of concern,’ seeing ‘life, richness, and warmth of a text,’ uncovering ‘important and overlooked truths,’ and ‘adopting affective and ethical stances’— all of this clearly suggests a eudaimonic turn is transforming literary discourse. For all of these newer interpretive strategies, the eudaimonic turn is less of a methodological transformation than it is a shift in focus to a neglected topic [...] in the last decade the subject of eudaimonia has begun to move to the forefront of literary discourse. (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 32)

Although eudaimonic scholars consciously embrace humanist principles that many poststructuralist critics find distressing, Pawelski and Moores (2013: 36) insist that it is an embrace “within a context of seeing much value in previous critiques of the power dynamics in all discourses and the ideological nature of textuality”. They maintain that the eudaimonic turn will not necessarily “cheapen aesthetic taste and call for an overly idealized, cloyingly sentimental, positive literature” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 36-37). They conclude that “it has neither done so in the past, nor will it do so in the future” and explain its position as follows:

It will be necessary to re-evaluate texts depicting peak states of being, positive traits, and emotions conducive to well-being, all of which are complex elements in need of a complex theoretical framework [...] The eudaimonic turn is [...] topically concerned with texts depicting suffering, oppression, marginalization, injustice, and even tragedy, the potential result of which is beneficial transformation not in spite of but because of hardship. Nor does it elide truly dark works depicting detrimental suffering, injustice, and/or disease with no accompanying beneficial transformation, for the eudaimonic turn follows a trajectory through tragedy, the aesthetic response to which is (arguably) beneficial for a number of complex reasons. (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 36-37)

Reading eudaimonically, or affirmatively, can therefore not simply be regarded as an un-theoretical, simple-minded reading (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 30). Nor can it be seen as a method that dismisses

the negative completely. The eudaimonic turn rather highlights the fact that “positive states and processes have all too often been ignored in the interest of attempts to repair negative conditions” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 8).

Pawelski and Moores (2013: 27) demonstrate that we are often “stymied when a given author casts human experience in a eudaimonic light. In such circumstances the hermeneutics of suspicion often compels scholars to interpret eudaimonia as psychological disease or bad politics”. They additionally refer to the universal assumption on the one hand within literary studies that a text is not considered ‘literary’ unless it is dark: “If it is sunny or inspiring, according to this canon, it is not complex enough to warrant a serious literary analysis [...] the idea [...] driven to an extreme, reductively overlook(s) complexity” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 37). On the other hand they insist that narratives which are conflict based “does not mean they are ‘negative’ and have nothing to do with well-being” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 41). They describe the ‘positive’ eudaimonic value of reading a ‘conflict-based’ or so-called ‘negative’ narrative: “Not all narratives offer a positive redemption of a given character [...] However horrible it sounds, there might be eudaimonic value in observing human suffering [...] The negative emotions aroused from reading a horrible tragedy or a ‘dark’ poem might serve as a kind of affective exercise in which we experience powerful, negative feelings but in a manageable way” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 43-44). They explain the eudaimonic value of reading for instance a tragic story or despairing poem by likening it to “ingesting an attenuated virus that trains our immune system to fend off similar but stronger infectious agents at a later date. Although the character may suffer immensely or die a horrible death, the responding reader experiences something like PTG and is strengthened by the character’s trauma”. They additionally signal another possibility by accentuating that “some literary forms do not simply steep us in sadness but actually train us in ways to deal with it [...] The negative emotions aroused by tragic and/or ‘negative’ works can also stimulate positive affect”. They demonstrate how in Aristotle’s well-known conception “tragedy results in a purging of the emotions through catharsis”. By expunging undesirable affective states, catharsis can be regarded as having eudaimonic value (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 43-44). They indicate that a reading of tragedy for example can inspire and strengthen one’s virtues and values:

Tragedy, according to Aristotle, not only helps one to overcome negative affect; it also inspires a universally valued character virtue—compassion. Beyond the intuitive understanding that compassion is conducive to the survival of the human species, there is also current neurological research demonstrating the value of responding compassionately to tragedies and other depictions of suffering:

according to neurologists, feeling empathy is one of the most sophisticated functions in the human brain [...] Reading literature that inspires compassion can help the brain become more efficient at one of its most complex processes. It can similarly result in a reassessment or reinforcement of one's values, a decision to undertake a constructive change, a desire to love more honestly and openly, a confrontation with fear, and the like [...] tragedy and suffering can result in eudaimonic outcomes for the reader, such as greater resiliency, affirmation of priorities, and inspiration to act in more beneficial ways—all of which enable him or her to flourish, not in spite of but precisely because of the 'negative' narrative or lyric that seems to offer no positive redemption. (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 43-44)

Pawelski and Moores (2013: 47) additionally suggest that if one of the two poles (an 'inspiring' narrative on the one side or a 'conflict based' narrative on the other) is ignored, the complexities of literary forms are degraded: "A eudaimonic turn that does not account for all forms of literature carries with it the risk of cheapening the complexities of literary forms by forcing them to adhere to simplistic aesthetic standards in the name of a positive value agenda." They therefore maintain that the eudaimonic turn in literary studies "entails not only a reassessment of positive and inspiring literature in its narrative and poetic forms but also conflict based narratives or poems in which a character or speaker experiences a beneficial transformation because of his or her struggle, as well as tragic works offering no positive character transformations but exerting a powerful, beneficial impact on the reader's psyche" (Pawelski & Moores, 2013: 47).

A similar perspective on the affirmative power of the artwork or literary text can be found in the work of Elaine Scarry (1999) who focusses on the role of beauty in art. She argues that "beautiful things assist us in remedying injustice" (Scarry, 1999: 90). She insists that the important role of beauty comes more to the forefront if we consider the relation between the beholder, and more specifically a person who actively seeks beauty out, and the object beheld:

What is it that such a person seeks? What precisely does one hope to bring about in oneself when one opens oneself to, or even actively pursues, beauty? [...] If one pursues goodness, one hopes in doing so to make oneself good. If one pursues justice, one surely hopes to be able one day to count oneself among the just [...] There is [...] a continuity between the thing pursued and the pursuer's own attributes [...] It does not appear to be the case that one who pursues beauty becomes beautiful. (Scarry, 1999: 86-87)

Scarry describes that the relation between beholder and beheld becomes reciprocal. The beholder affirms the aliveness of the beheld and the beheld in turn affirms the aliveness of the beholder: “The thing perceived, the beautiful object, has conferred on it by the beholder a surfeit of aliveness: even if it is inanimate, it comes to be accorded a fragility and consequent level of protection normally reserved for the animate; if inanimate, like a poem, it may, by being memorized or read aloud to others, thereby be lent the aliveness of the person’s own consciousness” (Scarry, 1999: 89). She concludes that the pursuit of beauty allows us to attend to the aliveness or quasi-aliveness (in the case of objects) of others. This relation consequently places requirements on us for protecting the world beheld: “Beauty, is then, a compact, or contract between the beautiful being (a person or thing) and the perceiver. As the beautiful being confers on the perceiver the gift of life, so the perceiver confers on the beautiful being the gift of life. Each ‘welcomes’ the other: each—to return to the word’s original meaning— ‘comes in accordance with [the] other’s will’” (Scarry, 1999: 90). Beauty allows for a “two-part cognitive event that affirms the equality of aliveness”. The relation between beholder and beheld is described as a “reciprocal salute to the continuation of one another’s existence” which introduces “an inclusive affirmation of the ongoingness of existence, and of one’s own responsibility for the continuity of existence” (Scarry, 1999: 92). The beautiful object gives rise to a sense of ethical equality: a symmetry of everyone’s relation to one another. In this way Scarry (1999: 95, 109) contends that beautiful things assist in turning us to justice.

The beautiful object additionally assists the beholder to decentre him/herself in his/her world for when we see something beautiful, “(w)e willingly cede our ground to the thing that stands before us” (Scarry, 1999: 111- 113).³⁴⁶ A focus on the affirmative aspects of art, such as beauty, therefore not only has an influence on how we see the objects and the world around us, but it is also able to change how we perceive ourselves.

³⁴⁶ Scarry (1999: 111-113) describes the process of decentring in the following manner: “At the moment we see something beautiful, we undergo a radical decentring. Beauty, [...] requires us to give up our imaginary position as the centre [...] A transformation then takes place at the very roots of our sensibility, in our immediate reception of sense impressions and psychological impressions [...] It is not that we cease to stand at the centre of the world, for we never stood there. It is that we cease to stand even at the centre of our own world. We willingly cede our ground to the thing that stands before us [...] all the space formerly in the service of protecting, guarding, advancing the self (or its ‘prestige’) is now free to be in the service of something else. It is as though one has ceased to be the hero or heroine in one’s own story and has become what in a folktale is called the ‘lateral figure’ or ‘donor figure’” (Scarry, 1999: 111- 113).

Although such a focus on beauty can easily be accused for being a naïve, humanistic, or romantic approach to literary texts, I am cautious of rejecting it as being ‘unscientific’. To paraphrase Felski (2015: 147), an examination of beauty does not necessarily render the analysis uncritical. Nor does the investigation of aesthetic appreciation, experience or the ethical effect of a literary text necessarily result in an unacademic interpretation. As Felski (2015: 188) states: “a fuller engagement with such experience does not require a surrender of thoughtfulness or intellectual rigor”. I believe that a eudaimonic approach can bring balance and throw fresh light on the traditional practice of critical interpretation within the literature class. With the correct and appropriate structure and approach, a eudaimonic reading, or a reading that focusses on beauty, can be an insightful and valuable scientific method of reading literary texts.

6.3.3 Surface reading

Another possible alternative to the ‘depth’ hermeneutics of suspicion is ‘surface reading’, a method proposed by Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus (2009). Instead of a mode of reading that practices excavation, Best and Marcus attend to surfaces of texts rather than plumb their depths. They insist that modes of reading that turn to the surfaces of texts can possibly be considered popular for we find ourselves “at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, (where) so much seems to be on the surface”. To explain why interpretation could never function on the assumption that the ‘text simply means what it says’, they quote Jameson (1981: 61) who states: “If everything were transparent, then no ideology would be possible, and no domination either”.

Best and Marcus (2009: 2) argue that the once paranoid assumption “that domination can only do its work when veiled [...] now has a nostalgic, even utopian ring to it”. They indicate that in a time where little can be hidden from the internet, the demystifying protocols of deconstruction, ideology critique, and the hermeneutics of suspicion can, to their mind, be found superfluous.³⁴⁷ They describe their generation of critics as “the heirs of Michel Foucault, sceptical about the very possibility of radical freedom and dubious that literature or its criticism can explain our oppression or provide the keys to

³⁴⁷ Best and Marcus (2009: 2) explain that we live in “an era when images of torture at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere were immediately circulated on the internet; the real-time coverage of Hurricane Katrina showed in ways that required little explication the state’s abandonment of its African American citizens; and many people instantly recognized as lies political statements such as ‘mission accomplished’”.

our liberation”. They insist that literary criticism, which is often equated by its scholars to a form of political activism, is insufficient to effect change (Best & Marcus, 2009: 2).

In the method of surface reading Best and Marcus (2009: 9) understand ‘surface’ as “what insists on being looked at rather than what we must train ourselves to see through”. It is moreover described as “what is evident, perceptible, apprehensible in text; what is neither hidden nor hiding; what, in the geometrical sense, has length and breadth but no thickness, and therefore covers no depth”. For them critical activity need not mean “wresting truths from the hidden depths of resisting texts” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 13), nor does it require heaps of theory: “The left-leaning literary critic thus need not add theory to the text or gather texts that exemplify his theories; it is enough simply to register what the text itself is saying” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 8). Surface reading accordingly takes texts ‘at face value’ and attends to what is most obvious about them. They distinguish between the following modes of reading that can be categorized as ‘surface reading’ (Best & Marcus, 2009: 9-13):

- (a) *Surface and materiality* which emerges primarily in the history of the book and cognitive reading.
- (b) *Surface as the intricate verbal structure of literary language*: Such an understanding of surface promotes “close readings that do not seek hidden meanings, but focus on unravelling [...] the ‘linguistic density’ and ‘verbal complexity’ of literary texts”. They indicate that such a “valorisation of surface reading as willed, sustained proximity to the text recalls the aims of New Criticism, which insisted that the key to understanding a text’s meaning lay within the text itself, particularly in its formal properties” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 10).
- (c) *Embrace of the surface as an affective and ethical stance* which entails “accepting texts, deferring to them instead of mastering or using them as objects, and refusing the depth model of truth, which dismisses surfaces as inessential and deceptive” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 10).
- (d) *Attention to surface as a practice of critical description* which “assumes that texts can reveal their own truths because texts mediate themselves; what we think theory brings to texts (form, structure, meaning) is already present in them”. Description according to them, “sees no need to translate the text into a theoretical or historical metalanguage in order to make the text meaningful. The purpose of criticism is thus a relatively modest one: to indicate what the text says about itself”. They insist that “depth is not to be found outside the text or beneath its surface (as its context, horizon, unconsciousness, or history); rather, depth is continuous with surface and is thus an effect of immanence” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 11).

(e) *Surface as the location of patterns that exist within and across texts*, a notion that encompasses narratology, thematic criticism, and discourse analysis. In this type of surface reading, “the critic becomes an anatomist breaking down texts or discourses into their components, or a taxonomist arranging and categorizing texts into larger groups. The anatomist and taxonomist rearrange texts into new forms but nonetheless attend to what is present rather than privilege what is absent” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 11).

(f) *Surface as literal meaning* or what Marcus calls ‘just reading’ “accounts for what is in the text without construing presence as absence or affirmation as negation”. ‘Just reading’ “sees ghosts as presences, not absences, and lets ghost be ghosts, instead of saying what they are ghosts of” (Best & Marcus, 2009: 12-13).

As these modes demonstrate, Best and Marcus call for a literal reading ‘with the grain’ that considers what texts do say, rather than what they hide or can’t say through a form of symptomatic reading (Love, 2010: 383). Many of these modes of ‘surface reading’ will be useful in my investigation of space in Brink and Djubar’s work in the following chapter. By making use of for example a method of ‘just reading’, I will be able to be more concerned with the significant portrayal of spaces in their work, and less concerned with what the spaces represent, or what they are spaces of.

Felski (2015: 54-56) suggests that such a turn to surfaces “promotes a practice of patient description rather than heroic interpretation, a greater critical humility, and a willingness to engage texts as they are”. A work of art need not be treated in a reductive manner by demystifying its political agenda and highlighting its quietism or complacency. She believes that the renewed attentiveness offered by surface reading can constitute a type of freedom, but nevertheless warns that surface reading can also be suspicious. Troubling or muddying a work’s apparent meaning can also lend itself to clear-cut resolutions, historical explanations, or political programs. The symptom that suspicious reading tends to decipher then persists across the surface of the text itself. Surface reading can therefore also be tied to a hypervigilant and mistrustful stance (Felski, 2015: 56, 69).

6.3.4 Reparative reading

In contrast to paranoid reading, Eve Sedgwick proposes ‘reparative reading’,³⁴⁸ a method that “looks to a work of art for solace and replenishment rather than viewing it as something to be interrogated and indicted” (Felski, 2015: 151). Reparative reading allows us to move “from the rather fixated question ‘Is a particular piece of knowledge true’, and ‘how can we know?’ to further questions: What does knowledge do—the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows? How, in short, is knowledge performative, and how best does one move among its causes and affects?” (Sedgwick, 2003: 124).

The paranoid reader alertly approaches the text, ‘the part-object’, vigilant of the dangers and secrets it might hold. The reparative reader on the other hand is sometimes and only briefly able to see, in his or her own way, the text in its entirety. This allows the reparative reader to identify with the text, and to find nourishment and solace within it. Sedgwick (2003: 150) considers the limited vocabulary available to express reparative reading the main reason why scholars easily reject the method: “The vocabulary for articulating any reader’s reparative motive toward a text or a culture has long been so sappy, aestheticizing, defensive, anti-intellectual, or reactionary that it’s no wonder few critics are willing to describe their acquaintance with such motives”. She believes that it is the limitations of existing theoretical vocabularies that are deemed prohibiting and not the reparative reading motive itself.

A reparative reading of space in Brink and Djébar’s work will, to my mind, entail questioning how the investigation of spaces affect me: what do their portrayal of spaces do? How can their representation of spaces be seen as performative? How does it replenish the reader? I aim to explore such reparative questions in the following chapter.

³⁴⁸ Sedgwick’s method of reparative reading is primarily based on the work of Melanie Klein. She refers to Klein’s use of the concept of positions—“the schizoid/paranoid position, the depressive positions”, etc. She finds the movement between the Kleinian positions useful in her discussion of paranoid and reparative critical practices: “The greatest interest of Klein’s concept lies [...] in her seeing the paranoid position always in the oscillatory context of a very different possible one: the depressive position [...] the paranoid position—understandably marked by hatred, envy, and anxiety—is a position of terrible alertness to the dangers posed by the hateful and envious part-objects that one defensively projects into [...] By contrast, the depressive position is an anxiety-mitigating achievement that the infant or adult only sometimes, and often only briefly, succeeds in inhabiting: this is the position from which it is possible in turn to use one’s own resources to assemble or ‘repair’ the murderous part-objects into something like a whole [...] Once assembled to one’s own specifications, the more satisfying object is available both to be identified with and to offer one nourishment and comfort in turn. Among Klein’s names for the reparative process is love” (Sedgwick, 2003: 128).

6.3.5 Actor-Network-Theory

One of the key theories on which Felski (2015) frames her argument, is Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). The ANT approach originated when the need occurred for a new social theory that would accommodate science and technology studies. Latour (2005: 10) refers to a time in which "non-humans [...] presented themselves to social theory in a new way". He develops a 'sociology of associations' that 'traces a network' and which aims to show "what the *real* world is *really* like" (Latour, 2005: 9, 117, 128). ANT can be described as a social theory that claims that everything—humans, things, objects, and ideas—exist within a moving network of assembly or relationship. Everything creates social forces and nothing can exist outside these relationships. ANT defines society as the final result of a process. It is not a reservoir or a capital that automatically offers explanations. Theorists of ANT believe that the notion of 'social' designates "a movement of displacement, a transformation, a translation, an enrollment. [...] [it] is the name of a type of momentary association which is characterized by the way it gathers together into new shapes" (Latour, 2005: 64-65).

Latour (2005: 72) argues that any social science should firstly begin by thoroughly exploring the participants present within the action. These participants include, "for a lack of a better term", *non-humans*.³⁴⁹ ANT's project "is simply to extend the list and modify the shapes and figures of those assembled as participants and to design a way to make them act as a durable whole". A participant within this network is called an actor and it is defined as anything that modifies a state of affairs by making a difference. If the participant has no figuration yet, it is called an actant. To determine whether something is an actor, Latour (2005: 71) suggests that one simply asks: "Does it make a difference in the course of some other agent's [actor's] action or not? Is there some trial that allows someone to detect this difference?" He refers to mundane objects such as kettles, hammers, clothes, lists, bookkeeping who are all, according to his definition, actors or participants in the course of action:

This, of course, does not mean that these participants 'determine' the action, that baskets 'cause' the fetching of provisions or that hammers 'impose' the hitting of the nail [...] Rather, it means that there might exist many metaphysical shades between full causality and sheer inexistence. In addition to 'determining' and

³⁴⁹ Non-humans, according to Latour (2005: 10) cannot simply be the "hapless bearers of symbolic projection".

serving as a ‘backdrop for human action’, things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on. (Latour, 2005: 71-72)

Participants within the network can therefore be defined as that which has an influence, even in a small degree, on the course of an action. ANT claims that social actions are “shifted or delegated to different types of actors which are able to transport the action further through other modes of action, other types of forces altogether”. This does not mean that social actions are overtaken by objects or non-human actors. ANT does not establish symmetry between humans and non-humans: “To be symmetric, for us, simply means not to impose a priori some spurious asymmetry among human intentional action and a material world of causal relations” (Latour, 2005: 70, 72, 76)³⁵⁰. As a practitioner of ANT, one’s task is “to follow the actors themselves”. One should not impose order or teach actors what they are, but rather follow the actors’ innovations in order to explore their collective existence and the new associations that they create (Latour, 2005: 11-12).

Latour takes great interest in literature as a mode of accounting for social life. He believes that literature offers accounts of the world that are faithful, detailed, and complex, and that trace networks (Love, 2010: 378). Latour’s position therefore offers a new perspective on literary texts that accounts for the social constellations in which they are embedded. It allows the critic to do justice to the singularity, the sociability, the distinctiveness as well as the worldliness of literary texts. His theory provides a fresh method for rethinking the fundamentals of analysis (Felski, 2015: 153-154).

Drawing on the insights from ANT, Felski (2015: 154) levers two propositions regarding the interpretation of texts: The first supposition is that history is not a box. Felski (2015: 154) insists that we cannot explain how works of art move across time by employing standard ways of thinking about historical context: “We need models of textual mobility and transhistorical attachment that refuse to be browbeaten by the sacrosanct status of period boundaries”. Despite new movements within the

³⁵⁰ According to Love (2010: 378, 381) ANT’s position on symmetry is accentuated by Latour’s insistence that the social should be kept (2005: 165). She asserts that Latour argues against the ideology of humanism. She emphasizes his “preference for a world in which the human is not primary, and in which sacred human qualities of warmth, intention, depth, and authenticity don’t hold water, marks their difference”. Latour reads closely but not deeply in an attempt to keep the social world. This approach, as claimed by Love (2010: 381), “leaves no room for the ghosts of humanism haunting contemporary practices of textual interpretation. It also leaves little room for the ethical heroism of the critic, who gives up his role of interpreting divine messages to take up a position as a humble analyst and observer”.

literary field such as New Aestheticism, New Formalism, and the return to beauty, none of these methods elucidate how texts resonate across time. Rather than resolving the problem of temporality, these methods simply bracket temporality by focussing on formal devices or the phenomenology of aesthetic experience. Felski claims that “we cannot close our eyes to the historicity of art works, and yet we sorely need alternatives to seeing them as transcendently timeless on the one hand and imprisoned in their moment of origin on the other” (Felski, 2015: 154).

The approach to time and space in postcolonial studies is given as an example of ‘boxing’ time and space. It “troubles our models of time as well as space by messing up the tidiness of periodizing categories, showing how historical schemes often prop up the complacency of a West-centred viewpoint”. Context is seen as a type of historical container where texts are enclosed and held fast. A list of attributes, for example economic structure, political ideology and cultural mentality, is assigned to each period-box and allows the critic to see how they are manifest in a specific work of art. History, in this regard, “consists of a vertical pile of neatly stacked boxes—what we call periods—each of which surrounds, sustains, and subsumes a micro-culture. Understanding a text means clarifying the details of its placement in the box, highlighting the correlations and casualties between text-as-object and context-as-container” (Felski, 2015: 155-156). Context however “does not automatically or inevitably trump text, because the very question of what counts as context and the merits of our explanatory schemes are often anticipated, explored, queried, expanded, or reimagined in the words that we read” (Felski, 2015: 159-160).

Latour (2005: 148) himself declares that “context stinks!”. He posits that there is no historical box and no society, if society is defined as a bounded totality governed by a predetermined set of structures and functions. From an ANT perspective, the social is defined as follows:

[T]he act and the fact of association, the coming together of phenomena to create assemblages, affinities, and networks [...] We are no longer afforded a panoramic vision of the social order: to do actor-network theory is not to soar like an eagle, gazing down critically or dispassionately at the distant multitudes below, but to trudge along like an ANT, marvelling at the intricate ecologies and diverse microorganisms that lie hidden among thick blades of grass. (Felski, 2015: 157-158)

The social cannot be defined as “a hidden entity underlying the realm of appearance”. It is rather “the ongoing connections, disconnections, and reconnections between multiple actors” (Felski, 2015: 157-158). As actors ourselves, we are (humbly) a part of the association that is the social.

Felski’s stance on history and context draws on the work of Jonathan Gil Harris who explores a ‘national sovereignty model of time’ that is prevalent in literary and cultural studies. He defines the model as a practice that separates “time into a linear series of units [...] each of which is partitioned from what precedes and follow it” (Harris, 2009: 2). The practice grants each of these time units a determining authority evocative of a nation-state: “that is firmly policed borders and a shaping constitution”. The result of this national sovereignty model of temporality is that each “historical phenomenon tends to be regarded as a citizen solely of one moment-state. And from the vantage point of the present, the past becomes a foreign country, or rather several foreign countries” (Harris, 2009: 2)³⁵¹. Within this model, assigning texts to a particular period in time is similar to binding a person to the place of their birth. Both nation and period create a natural boundary and crossing borders is considered taboo. Harris (2009: 2) asserts that the literary work can no longer be assumed to be a citizen of only one period-box and one set of social relations. A text’s relation to time is more complex: “an object is never of a singular moment but instead combines ingredients from several times”. Felski describes how “the moment of a text’s birth places obvious limits on theme, form, or genre”. In spite of these constraints, the possibilities of transtemporal connection and comparison are not ruled out: “Texts are objects that do a lot of traveling; moving across time, they run into new semantic networks, new ways of imputing meaning” (Felski, 2015: 160).³⁵² Harris (2009: 3) believes that our actions should be considered polytemporal: time does not only refer to the punctual date of chronology (a specific moment, period or age), but it also refers to an awareness of the relations between past, present, and future. In this light time is not only a historical period but “a conception, or several conceptions, of temporality” (Harris, 2009: 3). He proposes a polychronic and multitemporal account of material culture that rejects

³⁵¹ Harris (2009: 2) argues that “(t)he national sovereignty model of temporality may have done much to puncture an uncritical universalism that naturalizes the assumptions of the present: if we understand early modern subjects to have been constituted differently from their modern counterparts, we can also begin to grasp the contingency of ‘our’ moment. But it is perhaps time to question this notion of time, particularly when it is applied to material culture. How might things chafe against the sovereignty of the moment-state? What do we do with things that cross temporal borders—things that are illegal immigrants, double agents, or holders of multiple passports? How might such border crossings change our understanding of temporality? What, in short, is the time of the thing?”

³⁵² Felski (2015: 161) asserts that “art works may not be timeless, but they are indisputably—in their potential to resonate in different moments—time-full”.

reading matter synchronically, resists a diachronic categorisation of movement and continuously questions agency and temporal relations (Harris, 2009: 24-25).

If I consider these insights from ANT in my study of Brink and Djébar regarding the boxing of time and context, it would imply that I do not necessarily have to focus on the historical or literary historical context in which their specific novels were written. Such an analysis will allow me to be less concerned with the synchronic divisions of their *œuvres*, how for example some of Djébar's later novels share certain norms and conventions of an avant-garde aesthetics or how a certain novel of Brink fits into his phase of *Littérature engagée*, but rather to be more concerned with how their representations of spaces connect, disconnect, and reconnect across time and context.

The second proposition made by Felski (2015: 162) regarding the interpretation of texts from an ANT perspective, is that literary texts can be usefully thought of as nonhuman actors. A theory that most probably influenced Latour's thoughts on agency is anthropologist Alfred Gell's new sociology of art. In a similar fashion to Latour, Gell (1998: 16) defines agency as persons or things "who/which are seen as initiating causal consequences". An agent "is one who 'causes events to happen' in their vicinity [...]" agents initiate 'actions' which are 'caused' by themselves, by their intentions, not by the physical laws of the cosmos. An agent is the source, the origin, of causal events, independently of the state of the physical universe". Gell (1998: 17-18) also insists that in a social relationship, the 'other' does not necessarily have to be a human being: "Social agency can be exercised relative to 'things' and social agency can be exercised by 'things' (and also animals)". He claims that the "way in which social agency can be invested in things, or can emanate from things, are exceedingly diverse". Gell (1998:6, 16, 19, 23) makes use of art-objects as an example of such a social agent: "I view art as a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it". He argues that a type of causality or displaced agency is involved in the case of art-objects where the role of the artwork is to "fascinate, compel, and entrap as well as delight the spectator". In accordance with Latour's ANT, Gell also focusses on the social role of the agent (in this regard, the artwork) within a network and insists that "art objects are the equivalent of persons, or more precisely, social agents" (Gell, 1998: 6-7). He acknowledges that conceiving our relations with non-human objects such as artwork, dolls and motor vehicles has a touch of 'animism' to it (Gell, 1998: 21). De la Fuente (2010: 5-6) however stresses the fact that Gell's theory of art as agency "is not a form of 'material-culture mysticism'. We cannot tell

in advance which objects will exercise agency". He insists that "one of the characteristics of the 'new sociology of art' is a desire to take the aesthetic and affective properties of art-objects seriously without necessarily resorting to an essentialist understanding of art". One of the challenges of the new sociology of art is to determine where the art experience starts and stops or stops and starts: "the sociology of art is much more than the study of things that are socially valued as art [...] If [...] we are prepared to undertake the laborious and painstaking job of following art-objects through society, we have lots of different kinds of aesthetic objects and experiences to study" (De la Fuente, 2010: 8).

Latour similarly claims that literary texts can be acknowledged as social agents or actors. Felski (2015: 154) declares that such an assertion requires a reconsideration of our common assumptions about the nature of agency. She insists that "a text's ability to make a difference [...] derives not from its refusal of the world but from its many ties to the world". The literary text, like all other actors, "is not a solitary self-governing subject who summons up actions and orchestrates events. Rather, actors only become actors via their relations with other phenomena, as mediators and translators linked in extended constellations of cause and effect" (Felski, 2015: 164). It is ANT's viewpoint that "art's distinctive qualities do not rule out social connections but are the very reason that such connections are forged and sustained. There never was an isolated self-contained aesthetic object to begin with" (Felski, 2015: 165).

Regarding literary texts as actors will allow us to consider them as not only objects to be interpreted, but as objects who also "serve as frameworks and guides to interpretation" and that "generate criteria as well be objects of criteria" (Felski, 2015: 168). ANT does not reject interpretation, but rather extends it. Within an ANT approach to interpretation, politics will no longer be seen as a "matter of gesturing toward the hidden forces that explain everything," it is rather "the process of tracing the interconnections, attachments, and conflicts among actors and mediators as they come into view". Texts do not act by themselves, but are assisted by a variety of coactors: the singularity and sociability of works of art are not opposed but interconnected (Felski, 2015: 11)³⁵³. It is this sociability of texts that allows them to influence the world: "Texts cannot influence the world by themselves, but only via the intercession of those who read them, digest them, reflect on them, rail against them, use them as

³⁵³ Felski (2015: 11) points out that "(w)orks of art, by default, are linked to other texts, objects, people, and institutions in relations of dependency, involvement, and interaction".

points of orientation, and pass them on” (Felski, 2015: 170-172, 175). This relation between text as agent and the reader will further be explored in the following section.

6.3.6 Reading as cocreation

ANT assists us in acknowledging that both readers and their texts can be considered social actors. Reading and interpretation, in the light of ANT, become a coproduction (Felski, 2015: 173-174)³⁵⁴. Both text and reader are part of the creative process of reading. Together, they constitute meaning. The notion of ‘affordance’ is a recent popular term within literary studies that assists in explaining how texts and readers co-constitute meanings (Felski, 2015: 164)³⁵⁵.

This idea of coproduction demonstrates commonalities with the field of Reception Theory or the aesthetics of reception. Wolfgang Iser (1972: 279) for example similarly emphasizes that the literary work “is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized [...] The convergence of the text and reader brings the literary work into existence”. He demonstrates how the reading practice can be seen as a dynamic process that is constituted by the interaction between text and reader (Iser, 1972: 281). “The literary text,” according to him (Iser, 1972: 284) “activates our own faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it presents. The product of this creative activity is what we might call the virtual dimension of the text, which endows it with its reality. This virtual dimension is not the text itself, nor is it the imagination of the reader: it is the coming together of text and imagination”. He observes that when we read “We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation” (Iser, 1972: 293). In an interview with Segers, Hans Robert Jauss (1979: 84) also signals the notion of coproduction between reading and interpretation when he indicates that the aesthetics of reception and effect “do not any longer have as their goal the tracing of a text back to its ‘statement,’ to a significance hidden

³⁵⁴ In ANT’s perspective, reading “is a matter of attaching, collating, negotiating, assembling—of forging links between things that were previously unconnected. It is not a question of plumbing depths or tracing surfaces [...] but of creating something new in which the reader’s role is as decisive as that of the text. Interpretation becomes a coproduction between actors that brings new things to light rather than an endless rumination on a text’s hidden meanings or representational failures” (Felski, 2015: 173-174).

³⁵⁵ Coined by the psychologist James J. Gibson ‘affordance’ explains “how animals interact with their environment, [it] offers a helpful way of thinking about the properties of a substance in relation to those who make use of them” (Felski, 2015: 164).

behind it, or to its 'objective meaning.' Rather, they define the meaning of a text as a convergence of the structure of the work and the structure of the interpretation which is ever to be achieved anew". Despite these parallels between the ideas of critics such as Felski, Latour, Macé, and Citton and Reception Theory, very little has been said on the difference between their approaches. Before I continue my discussion on the stance of these aforementioned 'postcritical' theorists, I deem it necessary to first explore the correlation between these two fields.

The difference between Reception Theory and Postcritical theories on coproduction can, to my mind, perhaps best be explained by the change of focus on the role of the reader. Within Reception Theory, the reader is seen as playing the fundamental role of 'filling in the gaps' of the literary text. As Iser (1972: 280) points out: "If the reader were given the whole story, and there were nothing left for him to do, then his imagination would never enter the field [...] A literary text must therefore be conceived in such a way that it will engage the reader's imagination in the task of working things out for himself, for reading is only a pleasure when it is active and creative" (Iser, 1972: 280). The text gives us the opportunity to "bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling in the gaps left by the text itself" (Iser, 1972: 284-285). He notes how "no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the whole picture before his reader's eyes. If he does, he will very quickly lose his reader, for it is only by activating the reader's imagination that the author can hope to involve him and so realize the intentions of his text" (Iser, 1972: 287). He moreover demonstrates that the text offers the experience of a reality which is different from the reader's own: "The impact this reality makes on him will depend largely on the extent to which he himself actively provides the unwritten part of the text, and yet in supplying all the missing links, he must think in terms of experiences different from his own; indeed, it is only by leaving behind the familiar world of his own experience that the reader can truly participate in the adventure the literary text offers him" (Iser, 1972: 287). The written part of the literary text gives us knowledge, "but it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things". He argues that we should not be able to use our imagination without these unwritten parts, the elements of indeterminacy, or the gaps in the text (Iser, 1972: 288). The aesthetic experience to his mind, is dependent on the oscillation between the written and the unwritten, the formulated and the unformulated, or the 'known' and the 'alien'. He states: "In the oscillation between consistency and 'alien associations,' between involvement in and observation of the illusion, the reader is bound to conduct his own balancing operation, and it is this that forms the aesthetic experience offered by the

literary text” (Iser, 1972: 291). Within this oscillation, there is also a movement between the breaking and building of illusions. “In a process of trial and error,” Iser (1972: 293) states, “we organize and reorganize the various data offered us by the text. These are the given factors, the fixed points on which we base our ‘interpretation,’ trying to fit them together in the way we think the author meant to be fitted” (Iser, 1972: 293). Hans Robert Jauss (in Segers, 1979: 85) also suggests that the aesthetic effect relies on the action of the reader: “The first and overarching condition of a text’s aesthetic effect is its reception by understanding in the succession of its verses, its narration, or its dramatic unfolding”. Both Iser and Jauss highlight the importance of the reader’s role in understanding the literary text, making connections within it, and ‘filling in’ the unformulated or unwritten. Although ‘postcritical’ theorists such as Felski, Latour, Macé and Citton also signal the coproduction between text and reader necessary for meaning (as will be subsequently examined within this section of the thesis), they do not focus on the literary text’s supposed ‘gaps’ that need to be filled, or the need to understand how the text unfolds in order to establish a certain aesthetic experience.

A second possible difference between Reception Theory and the postcritical theories discussed in this chapter concerns the conscious involvement of the reader. Iser (1972: 295) notes that the entanglement of the reader to any kind of text is vital, but signals that “in the literary text we have the strange situation that the reader cannot know what his participation actually entails. We know that we share in certain experiences, but we do not know what happens to us in the course of this process” (Iser, 1972: 295). He observes that “Once the reader is entangled, his own preconceptions are continually overtaken, so that the text becomes his ‘present’ whilst his own ideas fade into the ‘past,’ as soon as this happens he is open to the immediate experience of the text, which was impossible so long as his preconceptions were his ‘present’ [...] Through this entanglement the reader is bound to open himself up to the workings of the text, and so leave behind his own preconceptions” (Iser, 1972: 295-296). According to him, the text and reader should no longer be considered as object and subject confronting each other. The reading process rather involves a ‘division’ that takes place within the reader him/herself. He states: “In thinking the thoughts of another, his own individuality temporarily recedes into the background since it is supplanted by these alien thoughts, which now become the theme on which his attention is focused [...] Thus, in reading there are these two levels—the alien ‘me’ and the real, virtual ‘me’—which are never completely cut off from each other” (Iser, 1972: 298). He concludes by demonstrating that the need to decipher a text gives the reader the chance to formulate

their own deciphering ability: “we bring to the fore an element of our being of which we are not directly conscious. The production of the meaning of literary texts [...] does not merely entail the discovery of the unformulated, which can then be taken over by the active imagination of the reader; it also entails the possibility that we may formulate ourselves and so discover what had previously seemed to elude our consciousness. These are the ways in which reading literature gives us the chance to formulate the unformulated” (Iser, 1972: 299). Postcritical theorists to my mind are less interested in the reader’s leaving behind of preconceptions, the receding of his/her individuality or that which seems to elude his/her consciousness. They are, in contrast, concerned with the reader’s conscious involvement with the text: what he/she brings to the text—his/her individuality, idioculture, and preconceptions. I aim to explore their interests regarding the practice of reading within the following sections.

According to Marxist critic Tony Bennett (1985: 7), the practice of reading is organized and animated by what he calls “reading formations” or “discursive and intertextual determinations”. The way readers react to texts “is dictated neither by the internal features of the text nor by the raw social demographics of a reader’s race, gender, or class but rather by the cultural frameworks [they] have absorbed” (Felski, 2015: 166-167). Bennett (1985: 7) contends that reading formations connect “texts and readers in specific relations to one another by constituting readers as reading subjects of particular types and texts as objects-to-be-read in particular ways”. It entails that neither texts nor its readers can exist independently from these reading formations. A reading formation can be seen as an “attempt to think of context as a set of discursive and intertextual determinations, operating on material and institutional supports, that bear in upon a text, not just externally, from the outside in, but internally, shaping it, in the historically concrete form in which it is available as a text-to-be-read, from the inside out” (Bennett, 1985: 7-8). Reading formations can thus be seen to restrict both the reader and the reading practice. Bennett (1985: 9) additionally accentuates the role of genre expectations on reading formations. He insists that genre expectations are largely cultural and therefore also variable. These expectations may nevertheless “predispose the readers to relate themselves to a text in a specific way”. He indicates that “(i)t is not clear how or where intratextual mechanisms of reader positioning might be constituted independently of a set of assumptions concerning the operation of particular genres and, therefore, independently of culturally engendered reader predispositions” (Bennett, 1985: 9).

It is clear from Bennett's argument that readers and texts cannot be regarded as autonomous entities. The reading experience is determined by various factors of which reading formations and reader predispositions are but two examples (Senekal, 1988: 136-149). "No text," as Umberto Eco (1994: 21) argues, "is read independently of the reader's experience of other texts"; or in the words of Attridge (2011: 690), "the novel, as a work of literature, is nothing other than its readings". For this very reason, Felski (2015: 171) warns that literary studies need to stay clear of "vulgar sociology (where a reader is reduced to the sum of her demographical data) as well as of a one-dimensional theory of language (where a reader is a nodal point through which language or discourse flows)". She insists that readers "are not autonomous, self-contained, centres of meaning, but they are also not mere flotsam and jetsam tossed on the tides of social or linguistic forces that they are helpless to affect or comprehend". Felski argues that the reader should not be considered 'untouchable' with regard to exterior influences. Nor should the reader be regarded as a helpless medium that is solely controlled through language or discourse.

It is here that Derek Attridge's coinage 'idioculture' is of valuable insight. Attridge (2011: 682-683) defines 'idioculture' as "the singular, and constantly changing, combination of cultural materials and proclivities that constitute any individual subject, the product of a specific history of exposure to variety of cultural phenomena". He additionally describes it as "the internal, singular manifestation of the broader cultural field, registered as a complex of particular preferences, capabilities, memories, desires, physical habits, and emotional tendencies". He claims that the reading process, similar to the writing process "is just as dependent on the context in which it occurs, a context that [...] can be thought of as the impress of the external culture upon an individual subjectivity—conscious and unconscious". It is this impress that Attridge calls an idioculture (Attridge, 2011: 687). Felski (2015: 172) understands Attridge's notion of idioculture as follows:

We make ourselves out of the models we encounter, we give ourselves a form through the different ways we inhabit other forms. And we bring these differences to the event of reading, even as we are reoriented—sometimes subtly, sometimes significantly—by the sum of what we read. (Felski, 2015: 172)

In accordance with this model that we 'form' and are 'formed by' what we read, French critics Marielle Macé and Yves Citton emphasize the text's entanglement with its readers.³⁵⁶ By focussing on the self-

³⁵⁶ Macé (2011: 20) declares: "Chacun s'expose, se décide, et se façonne ainsi en toute pratique, s'instituant dans sa façon de vivre en avant de soi-même, dans les choses extérieures qui ne lui sont pas propres et qui deviennent pourtant son

evident connections between reading and daily life, they embrace the affective as well as cognitive aspects of the reading practice by “employing the language of enchantment, incandescence, and rapture without embarrassment” (Felski, 2015: 175). For them the text is no longer regarded as a monument to dead thought (*histoire*) or a self-referential web of linguistic signs (*écriture*). The text rather “springs to life via a mundane yet mysterious process in which words are animated by readers and reanimate readers in their turn” (Felski, 2015: 175). Citton (2017: 507) argues that the reader of a literary text can therefore not be seen as a passive receiver or recuperator.³⁵⁷ Macé (2013: 213) makes a similar point when she states that “[l]iterature does not stand on one side, and life on the other, in a brutal, noncommunicating stand-off”. Echoing Macé, Schaeffer and Antonioli (2013: 281) highlight that the effectiveness of a literary work lies “in the changes that they make in and for the lives of readers—for this or that reader in his (or her) individuality”. They maintain that “(r)eadng does not need to be connected a posteriori to life: it is a moment of life, a lived experience as real as any other”. Macé similarly insists that reading “is not simply a matter of deciphering content but involves ‘taking on’ and testing out new perceptual possibilities”. Considering a text as a social artefact “does not mean that its uses can be predicted by consulting the oracle of the critical theory textbook. The act of reading embodies a ‘pas de deux,’ an interplay between text and person that refuses the false choice of autonomous aesthetics or instrumental politics” (Felski, 2015: 176). Comparatively to Macé’s argument, Senekal (1988: 140) contends that reading a literary text can never be a passive, mere receptive act. The reader is actively involved in creating meaning of the text. Despite the author’s ‘intentional view,’ the final conclusions are made through the reader’s inputs. Kompridis (2013: 20-21) perceives this active responsiveness of the reader as a form of agency. He believes that receptivity is a matter of becoming unclosed to a text, “for it is only when we allow entry of (the text) into our being—

intimité; un individu n’est pas seulement son corps et sa portion insubstituable d’espace-temps, il est aussi les images qu’il projette ou qu’il reçoit, les décors qu’il investit ou qu’il rejette, les médiations qu’ils s’approprient et où il s’altère profondément, et par exemple les livres qui le précèdent, dans lesquels il s’invente autant qu’il se reconnaît”.

³⁵⁷ Steiner (1979) similarly claims that the difference between critic and reader lies in this position of ‘passivity’. He develops a critic/reader antithesis in which he argues that “the critic is judge and master of the text”, while “the reader is servant to the text” (Steiner, 1979: 449). The critic objectifies the (critical) distance between him/herself and the text, whereas the reader attempts to eliminate the distance between him/herself and the text. Due to the critic’s position, criticism is by nature “adversative”, “competitive”, even “parasitic” in its relationship to the text (Steiner, 1979: 433, 436, 437, 441). In contrast to the critic, the reader does not reify the text as an object, but rather approaches it as a “real presence” and even a locus of “inspiration” or “revelation”. The reader is ‘read’ by the text in a “dynamic passivity” (Steiner, 1979: 438-439). The distance between reader and text collapses as the reader aims “to enter into the text and to be entered into by the text” (Steiner, 1979: 443).

only when we allow ourselves to be marked, struck, impressed by it—that we are able to then enter into its being”.³⁵⁸

In a similar light to Kompridis and in further accordance with ANT, Macé distinguishes the text and the reader as ‘co-actors’:

Reading appears [...] to be a dynamic of attraction and response: books bring singular configurations, each implying potential ‘paths’ to our attention, our perception, and our capacities for action. The forms they contain are not inert paintings placed before a reader’s eyes [...] but rather traced-out possibilities of existence. The activity of reading makes us feel these forces within ourselves, as possible directions of our mental, social, or practical life, presenting us with opportunities to reappropriate, imitate, or dismantle them. (Macé, 2013: 216)

The text plays the role of an actor which transfers the action further through other types of action and forces as Latour (2005: 70) maintains. It directs the reader to potential paths to follow. Macé (2013: 216) argues that in order to understand this dynamic “we must consider reading as a conduct, a behavior rather than a decoding”. She states that it is a conduct ‘with’ and ‘directed by’ texts. Felski (2015: 84) correspondingly emphasizes the interplay, intertwining and entanglement between text and reader. She points out that a work of art is more than just an object of knowledge; it is also a potential source of knowledge “whose cognitive impact and implications are tied up with its affective reach”. Works of art “are more than the sum of our projections: they can surprise or startle us, nudge us into unexpected moods or states of mind, cause us to do things we had not anticipated”. Reading, she insists, “is neither a matter of digging below resistant ground nor an equanimous tracing out of textual surfaces. Rather, it is a cocreation between actors that leaves neither party unchanged” (Felski, 2015: 84). This type of reading allows readers to “be touched, troubled, perhaps even transformed by the texts they read” (Felski, 2015: 65)³⁵⁹.

³⁵⁸ Kompridis (2013: 20-21) states: “I conceive of receptivity as a form of normative responsiveness that is both spontaneous and reflective, which is to say a form of agency through which we are responsive to something or someone in an attitude of answerability [...] Conceiving of receptivity in this way allows us to think of our epistemic and normative agency, our mindedness, if you like, as involving and requiring exposure to human vulnerability—the vulnerability of a being that can be marked, struck, impressed by experienced reality, by what and whom it encounters in the world. It involves and requires a willingness to risk self-dispossession, and thus it is not so much about becoming open as it is about becoming unclosed to something or someone [...] for it is only when we allow entry of that other into our being—only when we allow ourselves to be marked, struck, impressed by it—that we are able to then enter into its being. That is why I prefer to think of receptivity as an unclosing of oneself. Unlike some abstract, free-floating openness to anyone or anything, unclosing involves a struggle, a struggle with ourselves to open up what is now closed, or what has never been open”.

³⁵⁹ Steiner (1998: 303) also alludes to the idea of reading as cocreation as he points to “the idea that we are ‘shaped’ by what we learn”. He maintains that “(t)he brain is never a passive tympanum. The act of internalization, however

Macé (2013: 217) additionally describes reading as an aesthetic conduct. It is the aesthetic notion of conduct that “enables us to unite a phenomenology of reading experience with a pragmatics of the relationship to the self”. The reading process is seen as an action, a behavior and a dynamic. The reader ‘conducts’ but is also ‘conducted by’ the text he/she reads. Macé moreover defines reading as an opportunity for individuation: “encountering books leads us constantly to recognize ourselves, to ‘refigure’ ourselves, that is, to constitute ourselves as subjects and reappropriate our relationship to ourselves through negotiation with other forms” (Macé, 2013: 218-219). She refuses that affect is disconnected from interpretation and maintains that they are intertwined rather than opposed: affect is part of the process of interpretation and individuation. She insists that “we need to stop opposing empathy and interpretation, suffering and acting, affective experience and hermeneutic distance” and declares that “affective engagement is the very means by which literary works are able to reach, reorient, and even reconfigure their readers” (Macé, 2011: 190-192; Felski, 2015: 177).

This perception of reading as conduct shows similarities to Attridge’s conception of reading as an act and an event: reading a literary work is something that I do and which, in many aspects, I can control,³⁶⁰ but it is also an event and something that affects me (intellectually, emotionally, and sometimes physically) without having any control in the matter.³⁶¹ He proposes that for a reader to become open to whatever the work may offer, involves “an effort to clear the mind of preconceptions, thus to some degree resisting the pressure of context, and, somewhat paradoxically, a willingness to be surprised, and a willingness to treat surprise as a reason for fresh engagement rather than for a mental closing down (Attridge, 2011: 687-688).

Reading should therefore be seen less as an active task of deciphering but rather as a kind of event,³⁶² an act, or in the words of Macé, a conduct: she insists that the reader’s task is not only one of

subconscious or reflexive, presumably triggers an immensely ramified field of associative recognitions, relocations, and serial impulses” (Steiner, 1998: 303).

³⁶⁰ Attridge (2011: 687-688) for instance refers to aspects that can be controlled during the reading process: “the pace, the scrupulousness of attention [...] and the degree of concentration on the words I read”.

³⁶¹ Macé (2011: 243-245) makes a similar statement when signalling that “(u)n sujet [...] est à la fois un corps capable et un corps affecté, une force qui se conduit et qui est conduite”. She insists that a text does something to the reader before the reader can do something with the text: “toute nouvelle œuvre, qui est une singularité invincible, qui me fait quelque chose avant que je ne puisse faire quelque chose d’elle”.

³⁶² Stanley Fish (1980: 43) evokes the notion of reading as an event when he states: “Somehow when we put a book down, we forget that while we were reading it, it was moving (pages turning, lines receding into the past) and forget too that we

deciphering and a filling in of blanks and omissions in the text (Macé, 2011: 30).³⁶³ This perspective separates the act of reading from everyday reality for it only takes interest in reading's effects on existence at a subsequent point in time: after the book is closed, a return to the everyday follows. She suggests that it would be better to measure "reading's effect on forms of ordinary life" and to observe "how it finds its place at the centre of individual approaches to being and doing" (Macé, 2013: 224).³⁶⁴ Reading can therefore be seen as a type of conduct, an aesthetic practice and a process of individuation.³⁶⁵ Every reader, with his or her own profile and aptitudes, engages in a ceaseless exchange with the text. The main value of such a reading, or aesthetic conduct, according to Macé (2011: 14, 35; 2013: 220, 226, 227) is the possibility it offers.³⁶⁶

were moving with it". He emphasizes the important awareness of 'moving' during the reading process: "The concept is simply the rigorous and disinterested asking of the question, what does this word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, chapter, novel, play, poem, do? And the execution involves an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time [...] The basis of the method is a consideration of the temporal flow of the reading experience, and it is assumed that the reader responds in terms of that flow and not to the whole utterance. That is, in an utterance of any length, there is a point at which the reader has taken in only the first word, and then the second, and then the third, and so on, and the report of what happens to the reader is always a report of what has happened to that point" (Fish, 1980: 26-27).

³⁶³ Macé (2011: 15) declares: "Toute configuration littéraire indique ainsi quelque chose comme une piste à suivre, un *phrasé* dans l'existant. Pour saisir cette dynamique, il faut considérer la lecture comme une conduite, un comportement plutôt qu'un déchiffrement. Une conduite 'dans' les livres: question d'attention, de perception et d'expérience, cheminement mental, physique et affectif à l'intérieur d'une forme de langage. Mais aussi une conduite 'avec' les livres, et même une conduite 'par' les livres, dans une vie guidée par eux: question d'interprétation, d'usage, d'application de la lecture aux formes individuelles. La notion esthétique de 'conduite' permet justement de tenir ensemble une phénoménologie de l'expérience lectrice qui a un avenir dans la grammaire de l'existence. Considérons donc la lecture comme un exemple de conduite esthétique intégrée, qui se déploie sur un arc existentiel complet [...] Loin des modèles sémiotiques ou narratologiques (qui ont tendance à décrire l'activité de lecture comme une opération close sur elle-même, aussi valorisée qu'elle est séparée, et qui peinent donc à faire entrer *ensuite* la lecture dans la vie), l'expérience littéraire s'aligne ainsi sur les autres arts et sur tous les moments pratiques dont elle est concrètement solidaire dans nos vies".

³⁶⁴ Macé observes: "c'est dans la vie ordinaire que les œuvres d'art se tiennent, qu'elles déposent leurs traces et exercent durablement leur force" (Macé, 2011: 9). She reiterates that the practice of reading should not be regarded as a separate activity, but rather as a conduct that gives form to our existence: "La lecture n'est pas une activité séparée, qui serait uniquement en concurrence avec la vie; c'est l'une de ces conduites par lesquelles, quotidiennement, nous donnons une forme, une saveur et même un style à notre existence" (Macé, 2011: 10).

³⁶⁵ Macé (2011: 18) refers to reading as a practice of individuation: "On peut en effet regarder la lecture comme une pratique d'individuation, un moment décisif dans l'élaboration de la 'grammaire du rapport à soi'. La lecture est d'abord une 'occasion' d'individuation: devant les livres nous sommes conduits en permanence à nous reconnaître, à nous 'reconfigurer' [...] La lecture est aussi une 'allégorie' de l'individuation, une figuration particulièrement fine des ambivalences de la constitution d'un 'soi' dans un espace démocratique, où chacun doit s'éprouver face aux fausses permanences ou aux identités mal faites".

³⁶⁶ She states: "La lecture apparaît bien comme un phénomène d'attraction et de réplique: les livres offrent à notre perception, à notre attention et à nos capacités d'action des configurations singulières qui sont autant de 'pistes' à suivre. Les formes qu'ils recèlent ne sont pas inertes, ce ne sont pas des tableaux placés sous les yeux des lecteurs [...] mais des possibilités d'existence orientés" (Macé, 2011: 14). Roth (2010: 2) demonstrates a particular interest in the 'possibility' advocated by Macé. He highlights the importance of empathy and comprehension within critical thinking. He states: "As humanities teachers [...] we must find ways for our students to open themselves to the emotional and cognitive power of history and literature that might initially rub them the wrong way, or just seem foreign. Critical thinking is sterile without the capacity for empathy and comprehension that stretches the self [...] One of the crucial tasks of the humanities should be to help students cultivate the willingness and ability to learn from material they might otherwise reject or ignore [...]"

Citton (2017: 508, 519) believes that literary interpretation, the notion of ‘interpretive closure’ (*clôture interprétative*) is dependent on the interplay and interlacing between ‘actants’ ‘enclosed’ together. It allows a double and simultaneous movement of practicing distance (*j’interprète autrui*) and a commitment to our convictions (*j’actualise*).³⁶⁷ He advocates ‘une lecture actualisante’—a reading that actualizes, that brings up to date and that brings to life. Citton (2017) argues that interpretation should not be a matter of exhumation, but rather of reinvention and insists that our focus on context should not outweigh the possibility of transtemporal resonances. Felski (2015: 178) indicates that Citton, in accordance to Macé, also defends an affective hermeneutics:

Citton insists that reading is never just a matter of cognitive or analytical decoding. Emotional cues prompt inferences or judgements by conveying vital information about character and episode, style and world view; the affective and analytical aspects of meaning are closely intertwined [...] It is the axiom of hermeneutics that we cannot help projecting our preexisting beliefs into the literary work, which are modified in the light of the words we encounter. This hermeneutic circle, however, includes not just beliefs but also moods, perceptions, sensibilities, attunements: not only do we bring feelings to a text, but we may in turn be brought to feel differently by a text. (Felski, 2015: 178)

Despite his insistence on the importance of the affective experience, Citton does not believe that critical analysis should be thrown overboard. The knowledge and analytical skills necessary to explicate a text’s pertinent features are thus still required. Citton requests a better balance between method and inspiration. This balance will prevent the language of criticism from lapsing into subjective effusion or an idiosyncratic flurry of private associations and at the same time vitalize the dryness of our intellectual vocabularies. His concern is “neither ‘the text itself’ nor the lives of the readers but the question of where and how the two connect” (Felski, 2015: 178-179).

Creating a humanistic culture that values the desire to learn from unexpected and uncomfortable sources as much as it values the critical faculties would be an important contribution to our academic and civic life”. Felski (2015: 12) echoes a similar idea when referring to the possibilities that are created by receptivity: “Reining in critique is not a matter of trying to impose a single mood upon the critic but of striving for a greater receptivity to the multifarious and many-shaded moods of texts”.

³⁶⁷ “Le geste littéraire [...] consiste à faire jouer ensemble ce qui se trouve ainsi enfermé ensemble, selon les inter-actions des con-notations et selon l’entrecroisement des sensibilités et des inter-lecteurs. L’interprétation littéraire nous invite donc à trouver une force créatrice propre à cette condition de l’enfermement-ensemble: c’est parce qu’il y a de l’hétérogène clôturé dans un espace limité qu’on peut en tirer du sens, dès lors qu’on y projette un principe de clôture interprétative” (Citton, 2017: 508).

Drawing primarily on the works of Latour, Macé, and Citton, Felski finally proposes her own alternative to the hermeneutics of suspicion that she calls ‘a postcritical reading’. The characteristics of the aforementioned reading will be explored in the next section.

6.3.7 Postcritical reading

Instead of taking up arms with commonly heard phrases in the recent reappraisal of critique such as ‘new formalism’, a ‘new aestheticism,’ or a ‘new ethics’, Felski joins a growing groundswell of voices, including scholars in feminist and queer studies, ANT, object-oriented ontology, post-historicist criticism, affective hermeneutics, and influential strands of political theory to sketch out an alternative path for literary and cultural studies (Felski, 2015: 8, 11, 182-183). Most supporters of these theories share similar ideas concerning the sociability of a text. According to Felski (2015: 12) they regard “reading as a coproduction between actors rather than an unravelling of manifest meaning, a form of making rather than unmaking”. These ideas lead her to create a notion of ‘postcritical reading’ “that can better do justice to the transtemporal liveliness of texts and the coconstitution of texts and readers—without opposing thought to emotion or divorcing intellectual rigor from affective attachment” (Felski, 2015: 154). Following Citton (2010: 133), Felski aims to be part of “the emergence of another regime of interpretation: one that is willing to recognize the potential of literature and art to create new imaginaries rather than just to denounce mystifying illusions”. It is a regime where “the language of attachment, passion, and inspiration is no longer taboo” (Felski, 2015: 187).

An advantage of the term ‘postcritical’ accentuated by Felski (2015: 173) is its relation to prior thought: “the postcritical, to underscore the obvious, is not to be confused with the uncritical”. She considers the vagueness of the term to also be its singular strength, for it allows to serve as “a placeholder for emerging ideas and barely glimpsed possibilities”. She explains her model of interpretation as follows:

Rather than looking behind the text—for its hidden causes, determining conditions, and noxious motives—we might place ourselves in front of the text, reflecting on what it unfurls, calls forth, makes possible. This is not idealism, aestheticism, or magical thinking but recognition [...] of the text’s status as coactor: as something that makes a difference, that helps makes things happen. (Felski, 2015: 12)

A postcritical reading declines various practices of the hermeneutics of suspicion.³⁶⁸ Felski (2015: 17) argues that in the current rhetoric of critique there seems to be a too great a focus on the significance of art by exploring its ‘de’ prefix: “its power to demystify, destabilize, denaturalize”. This emphasis dims the possibilities of the ‘re’ prefix: “its ability to recontextualize, reconfigure, or recharge perception”.³⁶⁹ She stresses that “(w)orks of art do not only subvert but also convert; they do not only inform but also transform,—a transformation that is not just a matter of intellectual readjustment but one of affective realignment as well (a shift of mood, a sharpened sensation, an unexpected surge of affinity or disorientation)”. Rather than engaging in critique of critique, postcritical reading is interested in exploring alternate ways of reading and thinking. It appreciates artworks not only for their “power to estrange and disorient” but also for their “ability to recontextualize what we know and to reorient and refresh perception”. It aims “to strengthen rather than diminish its object—less in a spirit of reverence than in one of generosity and unabashed curiosity” (Felski, 2015: 182). Postcritical reading moreover focusses on the experience of the literary text that does not only convey information, but also produces a transformation. It opts “for a language of addition rather than subtraction, translation rather than separation, connection rather than isolation, composition rather than critique. Accounting for the social meanings of art becomes a matter of multiplying actors and adding mediators rather than pruning them away” (Felski, 2015: 179, 182).

By rethinking critique, a postcritical approach to interpretation also has to rethink the familiar ideas of context. It acknowledges that texts don’t remain locked up in boxes, but that they rather “barge energetically across space and time, hooking up with other coactors in ways that are both predictable and puzzling”. It is through making attachments and forging alliances that they are able to make a difference. A postcritical approach is less concerned with a text’s otherness, autonomy, nontransferability, and more concerned with its portability, mobility, and translatability. Rather than asking ‘What does this text undermine?’, a postcritical reading inquires ‘What does this text create,

³⁶⁸ Felski (2015: 173) insists that a postcritical reading refuses to “subject a text to interrogation; diagnose its hidden anxieties; demote recognition to yet another form of misrecognition; lament our incarceration in the prison-house of language; demonstrate that resistance is just another form of containment; read a text as a metacommentary on the undecidability of meaning; score points by showing that its categories are socially constructed; brood over the gap that separates word from world”.

³⁶⁹ Macé (2011: 237) also accentuates the importance of ‘re’ terms (“rephraser, rejouer, redonner un corps”) that are present within the event that is reading.

build, make possible?’ (Felski, 2015: 152, 182). Felski (2015: 182-183) describes the aim of postcritical reading as follows:

Reading is now conceived as an act of composition—of creative remaking—that binds text and reader in ongoing struggles, translations, and negotiations. The literary text is not a museum piece immured behind glass but a spirited and energetic participant in an exchange—one that may know as much as, or a great deal more than, the critic. This text impinges and bears on the reader across time and space; as a mood changer, a reconfigurer of perception, a plenitude of stylistic possibilities, an aid to thought.

The aim of this thesis is to explore such a receptive, aesthetic, and interactive postcritical reading. Felski (2015: 180-181) lists various introductory questions to assist the postcritical reader:

How do works of art move us, and why? Are certain features of texts more likely to trigger empathy or recognition, absorption or disorientation? What does it mean to talk about identifying with a character? [...] To what extent do our attachments work with or against our political or analytical perspectives toward texts? How do specifics of style, emplotment, viewpoint or *mis-en-scène* steer audiences toward particular reactions or moods? And how are our affective responses shaped by external factors ranging from idiosyncrasies of individual history to structures of expectation and preevaluation that shape collective practices of reading?

Due to her experience of teaching the method of postcritical reading, Felski proposes to first provide students “a basic fluency in familiar theoretical idioms”. After this theoretical background, she turns their attention to topics that are usually less popular within the literary field: “empathy and sympathy, recognition and identification, enchantment and absorption, shock and the sublime, the pleasures of fandom and connoisseurship as they shape how and why people read. These experiences are chosen for their everyday entailment as well as their continuing, if often subterranean, presence in academic criticism”. She proposes to her students that these “are not ideological symptoms to be seen through but complex phenomena that we have hardly begun to look at”. Felski believes that a postcritical course offers students the possibility to think carefully about their attachments, but it also creates a space for cultivating their detachment. The postcritical demonstrates that “thoughtful reflection is not limited to the practice of critique”; it allows its practitioners to “move beyond the stultifying division between naïve, emotional reading and rigorous, critical reading” (Felski, 2015: 180).

In the following chapter, I will make use of such a postcritical reading in the analysis of Djébar and Brink’ texts. For the purpose of this study, which focusses specifically on the role of space within Djébar

and Brink's *œuvres*, I will demonstrate in the final section of this chapter how space can be approached through a postcritical reading. I will also refer to understandings of space within humanistic geography to strengthen my argument.

6.4 Space in the postcritical

In setting out her framework, Felski (2015: 154) stresses the idea of “coactors” and the notion of the “coconstitution of texts and readers” within a postcritical reading. When attempting to explore the notion of space from a postcritical perspective, as the following chapter aims to do, it is to my mind firstly necessary to qualify the space portrayed within the text, and not only the text itself, as a type of actor or agent. Such a qualification can be found in the work of Russel West-Pavlov (2010). In accordance with arguments made by ANT, West-Pavlov (2010: 5) accentuates that non-human actors are not merely passive objects, but that they have an agency that should be recognized. He conceives space as such an object: “Space [...] would not merely be a pre-existing scenario for events, it would gain an element of agency rarely ascribed to the natural world” (West-Pavlov, 2010: 5, 8). His study explores the complex and dynamic model of space as a product of spatial actors' practices as well as the corresponding model of the agency of space itself—space as a “network of dynamic, constantly changing, multivectorial relationships” (West-Pavlov, 2010: 7-8). It is this agency of space within Brink and Djebbar's novels that I wish to explore in the following chapter.

Felski (2015: 154) moreover insists that a postcritical reading should not oppose thought to emotion or separate intellectual rigor from affective attachment. To establish the affective attachment space has to offer from a postcritical perspective, I will briefly turn my attention to humanistic geography wherein space is regarded as a form of human experience.

Humanistic geography has as its centre the human experience, awareness, and knowledge. Yi-Fu Tuan, regarded as one of the most important originators of humanistic geography, insists that the importance within this field is to understand the meaning of humanism and of the humanistic perspective. He states: “Historical usage [...] allows us to define humanism as an expansive view of what the human person is and can do” (Tuan, 1976: 266). Some scholars are reluctant to give priority to the contributions of humanistic geography due to many of its practitioners' hesitation to make more direct

use of theory. Gregory (1994: 78) observes that “(r)unning through some of its more programmatic statements in the 1970s and 1980s was a sense that ‘theory’ was constraining rather than enabling [...] and that a properly humanistic geography ought to be able to find common ground between its writers and its subjects through a more or less direct appeal to ‘experience’”. He reasons that “humanistic geography invoked ‘experience’ expressly to keep objectivism at bay”. Gregory finds humanistic geography’s reluctance to theory problematic. “Theory,” he remarks, “is surely also a profoundly human capability”. He describes Yi-Fu Tuan’s humanistic geography as “a moral-aesthetic discourse; it is contemplative, at once reflective and speculative, and yet—despite the model of the ideal conversation—at best studiously indifferent to the wider conversations that might be made possible through the theoretical”. He insists that humanistic geography’s so-called ‘lack’ of theory places it in an impossible position within humanities (Gregory, 1994: 78-83).

It is precisely this reluctance to critical theory that gives humanistic geography an almost ‘postcritical’ perspective. Gregory (1994: 84) refers to the more patrician forms of humanistic geography that had no need for theory: “it was necessary and even vulgar in its intervention between ‘experience’ and ‘appreciation’”. Tuan (1976: 266) himself insists that humanistic geography breaks away from the typical scientific attitude: “Humanistic geography contributes to science by drawing attention to facts hitherto beyond the scientific purview. It differs from historical geography in emphasizing that people create their own historical myths” (Tuan, 1976: 266)³⁷⁰. Humanistic geography explores how “people are able to hold territory as a concept, envisage its shape in the mind’s eye, including those parts they cannot currently perceive” (Tuan, 1976: 269). Contrary to a poststructuralist treatment of space that regards it “as little more than simulacra, disconnected from any link with the material earth and actual social practice” (Cosgrove, 2008: 35), humanistic geography is interested in the possibilities that space offers. It examines people’s physical and emotional connection to space and environment (Tuan, 1976: 272-273)³⁷¹. Tuan (1976: 269) alludes to humanistic geography’s affective approach when he asks:

³⁷⁰ Tuan (1976: 266-267) describes humanistic geography’s aim as follows: “Humanistic geography [...] belongs with the humanities and the social sciences to the extent that they all share the hope of providing an accurate picture of the human world [...] Humanistic geography achieves an understanding of the human world by studying people’s relations with nature, their geographical behavior as well as their feelings and ideas in regard to space and place [...] [it] specifically tries to understand how geographical activities and phenomena reveal the quality of human awareness”.

³⁷¹ Tuan (1976: 272-273) states: “A person is his biology, his environment, his past, accidental influences, how he sees the world, and how he deliberately prepares a public image. The identity of a place is its physical character, its history, and how people make use of their past to foster regional consciousness [...] The vivid depiction of a region is perhaps humanistic geography’s highest achievement”.

“What is the role of emotion and thought in the attachment to place?” The way our experience, thoughts, and emotions influence how we regard a certain space is the work of the humanist geographer.³⁷² This affective approach of humanistic geography to concepts of space makes it an attractive framework to use within a postcritical reading. It doesn’t focus on critical theory, but rather on the human experience of space.

By borrowing insights on space from humanist geography, I can turn my attention to concepts such as empathy,³⁷³ sympathy, recognition and identification, topics that are all suggested by Felski (2015: 180-181), but with special emphasis on space.³⁷⁴ Instead of asking ‘What does it mean to talk about identifying with a character?’, I can ask ‘What does it mean to talk about identifying with a space?’. The notion of identification within literary interpretation is a vast field.³⁷⁵ Burger (2018: 70) demonstrates

³⁷² Tuan (1976: 269) explains: “Human places vary greatly in size. An armchair by the fireside is a place, but so is the nation-state. Small places can be known through direct experience, including the intimate senses of smell and touch. A large region such as the nation-state is beyond most people’s direct experience, but it can be transformed into place—a focus of passionate loyalty—through the symbolic means of art, education, and politics. How mere space becomes an intensely human place is a task for the humanist geographer; it appeals to such distinctively humanistic interest as the nature of experience, the quality of the emotional bond to physical objects, and the role of concepts and symbols in the creation of place identity”.

³⁷³ Macé (2011: 59) indicates that empathy can be experienced not only for characters, but also for “des figures, des postures, des rapports spatiaux ou des dimensions tactiles”.

³⁷⁴ Critics such as Cresswell (2004) and Mundell (2018) signal the role of the reader within the literary ‘sense of place’. Cresswell (2004: 7-8) refers to successful novels and films that are able to evoke a sense of place—a feeling that the reader/viewer knows what it is like to “be there”. Mundell (2018: 3) highlights the important function of the reader (and his/her interpretation) with regards to the notion of ‘sense of place’: “If ‘sense of place’ is an emotional attachment to place, and its associated values, meanings and symbols, I propose that ‘literary sense of place’ denotes how ‘sense of place’ manifests on the page. Literary sense of place can then be said to have three components: a generative act (the work of making a literary text), a product (the text itself), and an interpretative act (the reader’s engagement with it)” (Mundell, 2018: 3)

³⁷⁵ Smith (1995: 1-2) argues that our (emotional) experience or enjoyment of an artwork (be it a literary text or a film) is directly influenced by our “propensity to respond emotionally to fictional characters”. He declares that “most frequently, we talk of this type of experience in terms of ‘identification’—‘I could really identify with x,’ we might say; or, alternatively, ‘the film left me cold—I mean, I couldn’t identify with any of the characters.’ The word itself is ultimately less important than the model of experience to which it points”. He additionally comments that our emotional engagement with an artwork “is not a process in which we vicariously experience emotions of characters in any simple sense, nor one in which we are ‘possessed’ wholly by a single character. It is, rather, a complex, heterogeneous set of interacting responses—automatic, cognitive, affective—to what we know to be fictional entities” (Smith, 1995: 230). He reiterates the task of literature to help students learn from unfamiliar sources. He refers to Iris Murdoch that argues that “literature is essentially ‘anti-egoistic’—that it offers the reader an opportunity to experience imaginatively situations, value-systems, and persons radically different from those with which they are familiar [...] The ‘anti-egoism’ argument stresses the fact that character engagement encourages the reader to confront unfamiliar experiences, fostering our ‘imaginative mobility’” (Smith, 1995: 235). This ‘imaginative mobility’ “is not achieved through a wholesale identification; of spectator with character, but through a process whereby centrally imagining ‘other’ perspectives is imbricated with imagining situations as if we (rather than the characters) occupied a position within them, and where both are held within a structure of acentral imagining. Character engagement need not, according to this view, accommodate us to timeless human predicaments or anaesthetize our will to act on social problems, as Brecht argues; rather, it may enable us to apprehend experiences other than our own, and—possibly—use this new knowledge to act in the world in a more informed way” (Smith, 1995: 235-236).

that it is only when we experience the narrative world from the perspective of the characters, only when we identify with their sensory and emotional experiences, that the story space becomes a ‘reality’. This ‘identification’ allows the reader to step, albeit only fleetingly, into someone else’s experience of the world. As Orhan Pamuk (2010: 76) observes:

The most distinctive aspect of the art of the novel is that it shows the world the way the protagonists perceive it, with all of their senses. And since the broad landscape we view from afar is described through their eyes and through their senses, we put ourselves in their place, are deeply moved, and migrate from one figure’s perspective to another to comprehend the general landscape as a feeling experienced from within. (Pamuk, 2010: 76)

Burger (2018: 73) moreover refers to the work of Kendall Walton who insists that taking part in a text’s imaginary world entails imagining yourself in that world. Your involvement in that world should be imagined: You have to imagine yourself as participant within the story world, and not merely as a passive observer. Walton (2015: 273) states:

Participation involves imagining about ourselves as well as about the characters and the situation of the fiction—but not just imagining *that* such and such is true of ourselves. We imagine *doing* things, *experiencing* things, feeling in certain ways. We bring much of our actual selves, our real-life beliefs and attitudes and personalities to our imaginative experiences, and we stand to learn in the process.

These arguments all suggest that the spaces, landscapes, and situations portrayed within the texts can possibly be part of the reader’s identification with characters: for to identify with a character, I have to imagine myself in his/her world.³⁷⁶

The idea of the imagination and space, or imagined spaces, allows me to again consider the work of Bachelard who states: “Mankind’s nest, like his world, is never finished. And imagination helps us to continue it” (Bachelard, 2014: 124). He continuously stresses that once imagination is involved, no space will remain unchanged:

Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination. Particularly, it nearly always exercises an attraction. For it concentrates being within limits that protect. In the realm of images, the play between the exterior and intimacy is not a balanced one. (Bachelard, 2014: 19)

³⁷⁶ Macé (2011: 50) however posits that identification with a character is different to that of a place for it offers distinct experiences: “le paysage est ‘à demi devant’, pas tout à fait intériorisé, on s’y projette sans s’y perdre”.

Bachelard argues that once imagination is involved, space has been given meaning. Once 'imagined', a space can no longer be considered 'neutral'. Through the imagination, a space is then turned into a place. He insists that the relation between the surveyor and the place is also in constant oscillation: imagination is responsible for the continual movement between intimacy ('the self' of the surveyor), and the exterior (the space observed).

The link drawn between imagination and space allows for a deeper exploration of space in literature. Bachelard (2014: 226) insists that "poems are human realities; it is not enough to resort to 'impressions' in order to explain them. They must be lived in their poetic immensity". One can make a similar argument to all literary representations of space. Mere 'impressions' of spaces in literature will not be sufficient to understand them. The reader is encouraged to live within the 'poetic immensity' of the space represented.

It is through these ideas set out above that I am able to paraphrase the introductory postcritical questions set out by Felski (2015: 180-181): How does space (or this portrayal of space) affect or move me, and why? Why do certain spatial features trigger empathy or recognition? How do my thoughts, experience and emotions influence my conception of space? Why and how do I identify with certain spaces within the novels? How do certain portrayals of spaces steer me toward particular reactions or moods? It is questions like these that will guide my analysis in the following chapter.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the characteristics and limits of the current rhetoric of critique or hermeneutics of suspicion: I investigated how critique is believed to be superior and negative. After exploring various alternatives to the hermeneutics of suspicion, the advantages of a 'postcritical reading' as an alternative to current interpretation methods were highlighted. I additionally determined the possibility of exploring space from a postcritical framework. This postcritical framework will serve as a basis for the analysis of space in Brink and Djébar's texts in the following chapter.

Chapter seven: A postcritical reading of space in the works of Brink and Djébar

7.1 A postcritical stance

This chapter aims to give a postcritical reading on space in the chosen works of Brink and Djébar. An employment of a postcritical framework, as set out in the previous chapter, requires me to rethink various practices of the critical approach that steered my investigation in Chapter five. Amongst others, it necessitates no longer treating the texts symptomatically as artworks whose most significant truths should be deciphered and unveiled; it demands a reassessment of my suspicious orientation towards the texts; it entails a revitalization of my ‘critical’ and ‘distant’ positioning towards the novels; and it involves a reimagining of the notion of context with regards to literary interpretation. Taking a ‘postcritical stance’ encourages me to refuse critically and dispassionately gazing down like a soaring eagle at the distant crowds (or texts) below, but rather to march along like an ant who acknowledges how I am intricately involved within the ecology that is my reading practice (Felski, 2015: 157-158).

My critical analysis in Chapter five demonstrated a clear division between the representation of space in Brink and Djébar’s work, where the analysis of Djébar’s texts followed that of Brink. In this postcritical reading of space in the authors’ work, however, I do not intend to put such a great emphasis on the distinction between their *œuvres*, but rather to see the corpus of both Brink and Djébar’s work as a whole. I aim to offer an integrated investigation of the authors’ *œuvres* by approaching the novels from a greater ‘distance’.³⁷⁷ This ‘distant’ positioning will allow me to identify commonalities amongst

³⁷⁷ This ‘distance’ should not be confused with the critical tradition of ‘distancing’ in which the individual’s role is often minimized (Felski, 2015: 94).

the different chosen texts. This method in as sense reminds of Franco Moretti's Distant Reading for it enables me to examine "units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems" (Moretti, 2000: 57). Although it may be considered a possible 'distant' reading, I do however still aim to give an analysis in which I am deeply involved, absorbed, and immersed in the chosen texts, as Felski's postcritical method (2015: 55) suggests. This involvement requires me to acknowledge both the text, and more specifically the representations of space within the texts, and myself as co-actors within this interpretation. The possibility of regarding space as an agent or co-actor has been substantiated toward the end of the previous chapter. My agency as co-actor will be established through my active responsiveness for, as Kompridis (2013: 20-21) and Attridge (2011: 687-688) signal, receptivity involves becoming unclosed or open to a text: it is only when I allow myself to be marked, surprised, struck and impressed by the texts that I am able to enter into their being. My active receptivity to the text moreover entails the impress, or in Attridge's (2011: 682-683) terms, the idioculture, that I bring to the event of reading. The recognition of my agency and idioculture will therefore be the first objective in this chapter.

After establishing my context within the reading event, I will turn my attention to, to paraphrase Felski (2015: 152, 182), what the representation of space creates, builds, and makes possible in the authors' work. This will lead me to explore how Brink and Djébar's representation of spaces steer me toward particular reactions or moods: how and why do certain spaces, or the representation thereof, trigger my empathy, sympathy, recognition, absorption, disorientation, recognition or identification? It is important to note that when I speak about an identification with spaces I do not necessarily imply, as Cresswell (2004: 7-8) suggests, that I see myself in the characters' specific place—a feeling that I know what it is like to "be there". To paraphrase Burger (2018: 73-74), when I for example read that Elisabeth and Adam walk in the wilderness in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, I imagine that they walk in the wilderness. I don't necessarily imagine that I am walking in the wilderness. Nor do I imagine that I am either Adam or Elisabeth. But I imagine that they are walking in the wilderness, and the moment when I imagine that they are walking in the wilderness, something within my personality is awakened: It stirs an emotion within me. I have therefore simulated the situation in my imagination, and reacted upon it. I don't only imagine a world as a result of the information given from the text, but I also react to my personal imagination of that world. That is why the fictional world touches me. It is this effect that I aim to examine in this chapter.

I will conclude the chapter by signalling the differences between a critical and postcritical reading of space in Brink and Djébar's work. The possible advantages of a postcritical perspective will be highlighted.

7.2 A Kombi and a book: acknowledging my idioculture

To recall Attridge's words, an idioculture can be defined as "the singular, and constantly changing, combination of cultural materials and proclivities that constitute any individual subject, the product of a specific history of exposure to variety of cultural phenomena". It is moreover seen as "the internal, singular manifestation of the broader cultural field, registered as a complex of particular preferences, capabilities, memories, desires, physical habits, and emotional tendencies" (Attridge, 2011: 682-683). He suggests that the context in which the reading practice takes place is just as important as the context in which the text was made (Attridge, 2011: 687). If I consider the context that I bring to my reading of Brink and Djébar's work on space, I have to acknowledge that it encompasses a period that stretches far beyond this current thesis or even my higher education as a whole.

My encounter with Djébar and Brink's spaces can perhaps be traced back to my childhood. For as long as I can remember, my family has had the tradition of driving from Gauteng to the Western Cape over the December holidays. In our old Volkswagen Kombi, we would slowly make our way through the interior parts of the country. Similar to the theatre group's Kombi in *Kennis van die Aand*, ours also endlessly broke down. It was tradition. It would not have been the same if we had been able to effortlessly reach the coast. Sans aircon, we would frequently stop to buy ice blocks and time how long the scorching African sun would take to melt it away whilst we rub them all over our bodies. My father would stop the oncoming traffic to help a tortoise cross the road, marvel at the changing landscape, and teach us about rock formations whilst my mother would pick out a tumbleweed that we would use as a Christmas tree that year. By the time we traversed the mountainous terrain of the Little Karoo, they would insist that we pull over and search for hidden streams and pools to bask in. With a warm mountain wind gushing at our sides, you were lucky if you would still be slightly wet by the time we reached the Kombi again.

My mother recalls a specific episode on one of these journeys: from the rear-view mirror, she watched how I, as a fourteen-year-old girl, was reading a book. Furious about the way the male character treated the female protagonist, I would throw the book to the other side of the Kombi, only to pick it up later again, to, despondently, continue my reading practice. Despite the aggravation it aroused in me, I could not stop reading the story of the cloistered woman. To this day, I can still bring to mind the dark room, its windows covered in black plastic, in which the beaten woman was shut. It is therefore perhaps during this reading event, whilst slowly trekking through the familiar *binneland* of my country, that the possible story worlds of Brink and Djébar collided within me. It is this context, this parcel of my idioculture that I am conscious of, that I actively bring to my postcritical approach to space in their *œuvres*.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will focus on the effect the representation of spaces in Brink and Djébar's work has on me. The sections that stirred me most are often parts of the narratives which, as I was reading them, enticed me to lift my head from the book in search of someone I could share the citation or description with. The portrayals of spaces would tempt me to say "Listen to this...", just as I would have said "Look there!" to one of my fellow passengers in the Kombi. For the purpose of this study, I have categorised my interpretation of space in the authors' work into two sections that especially stimulated my recognition: spaces created through and in languages and stories; and the notion of movement in and through spaces. An exploration of how each of these categories influence my reading practice follows.

7.3 Telling spaces

My attraction to the notion of language in Djébar and Brink's work has perhaps already been signalled with the choice of the employed languages in this thesis: English, French, and Afrikaans. I can identify with Djébar's perception of a home language as a form of mother's milk (NP, 341), for I have always considered Afrikaans to be a type of hearty and comforting home for my thoughts and spirit. To be true to my experience, the English language I employ, to echo Brink (in Kossew, 1996a: 7), "must bear the weight of my Afrikaans, of my Afrikaansness".³⁷⁸ English can perhaps be regarded as my South

³⁷⁸ Brink declares: "I write in English, but I can never be an English writer [...] The English I use must bear the weight of my Afrikaans, of my Afrikaansness, because only in that way can I be true to my experiences of the world as it takes shape, and assumes or produces meaning, in the act of verbalization" (Kossew, 1996a: 7).

African passport: as a language that has been familiar to me since pre-school, it allows me a connection not only with my fellow South African citizens, but also with the people of the world. My relationship with French started in 2005. In adhering in a sense to the analogy proposed by Djébar, I can say that I do not necessarily cohabit with a stepmother tongue, or a “*language marâtre*” (AF, 298) like her narrator, but rather perhaps with a sixteen-year-old French girl. It is a language that, keeping with the clichéd stereotype of teenagers, is hormonal, difficult, and often selfish. These languages are all part of who I am. They are territorial about the spaces they occupy within me and are moreover reluctant to the possibility of translation. Echoing Djébar, I am also familiar with the difficulty of writing in the language of a former colonizer (AF, 224), for my triad of languages were all deeply involved in various oppressions on the African continent.

My interest in the portrayal of languages in the authors’ texts, as cited in the introduction of the previous chapter, is therefore perhaps apparent. Despite the authors’ marvellous depictions of the beauty that is language, it is the spatial representation of languages that I however find particularly gripping. I will subsequently give my impressions of languages’ spatial depictions throughout the texts. I will emphasize the novels’ insistence that spaces are comprised of sounds and that they are created through telling stories. I will moreover explore the significance of the spatial depiction of absences, silences, holes, and deserts.

Sounds and words are portrayed as having spatial qualities. They are considered to be rocks (OW, 142); entities that enclose around you (OS, 94); or elements that grow or perish in nature (Philida, 125). A language system is seen as an architectural structure (AF, 260-261). Some languages represent dark cemeteries (AF, 256); or spaces equated to the night (Vaste, 4); or even rockslides (OS, 97) where others embody peaceful echoing chambers to rest or sleep in (NP, 320, 365). This spatial element of words and languages allow characters to find a type of refuge ‘within’ it. When Hajila is raped, she tries to focus on the openness of the outside world. When her husband forces himself into her, she is able to imagine this liberating space by silently refusing: “*Quand le phallus de l’homme te déchire, épée rapide, tu hurles dans le silence, dans ton silence: ‘non!’ ... non!*” (OS, 83). Zoulikha is similarly capable of envisaging a haven-like space through uttering words or names during her torture:

je déroulai, en lent chapelet, chacun de vos prénoms [...] ton doux nom en dernier,
modulé sans cesse tandis que mon vagin électroifié vrillait entièrement comme un

puits sans fond... Dans cet antre autrefois de jouissance, ton prénom, tel un fil de soie pour s'enrouler infiniment jusqu'au fond de moi, pour m'assourdir et m'adoucir... [...] et l'arabe ancestral me revenait, eau de tendresse dans cette traversée. (SS, 221)

Notwithstanding the horror of their situations, the idea that they are able to imaginatively break away and bring another space to mind through the use of language, casts a hopeful light on the scenes.

The novels moreover suggest that characters are built from languages: it is languages, with their spatial sounds and words, that give them form. They are able to consume a language-space: the narrator in *Nulle part* for example indicates that it was her literature teacher who was “la première à m'avoir donné à boire le tout premier vers français” (NP, 116). The language is then turned into a river running through and bursting within them (Vaste, 26; AF, 13, 163; SS, 64). It forms the strata of their bodies and being. Both Josef in *Kennis van die Aand* and the narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia*, dramatically portray how, in a time of distress, they vomit the language space that is filled within them. When Josef's mother nears her death, he exclaims: “Ek het op 'n bondeltjie bly sit en gehuil en die geluid soos 'n lewendige, bloeiende ding uit my voel uitdrup. Dit was of iets heeltemal meegee in my. Ek het hande- viervoet begin rondkruip en elke liederlike woord wat ek geken het, uit my uitgekots tot ek leeg en bewend en gesuiwer op die klipharde grond bly lê het” (Kennis, 122). When walking alone in Paris, the narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* similarly experiences how her voice suddenly explodes: “Libère en flux toutes les scories du passé [...] Comme un magma, un tourteau sonore, un poussier m'encombre d'abord le palais, puis s'écoule en fleuve rêche, hors de ma bouche et, pour ainsi dire, me devance” (AF, 164). She delineates how she struggles to throw up the sounds she carries within her: “son de barbare, son de sauvage, résidu macabre d'un autre siècle!” (AF, 164). These poignant descriptions leave me shivering.

The idea of expressing language as a form of spatial residue can additionally be linked to the notion that worlds are created through telling stories: words ejected, whether it be 'vomited' or simply articulated, are associated to seedlings. Spaces are brought into existence through the act of telling. The narrator in *Nulle part* for example signals how her first attempt at writing created a “simple jeu d'hirondelles dans l'espace” (NP, 437). When Mina tells a story in *La Femme sans sépulture*, the auditor of the story has the feeling of entering into an imagined room (SS, 101). Philida similarly alludes to the imagined space of comfort and communion in which the listeners of stories become embedded: “En in

al die stories wat daar vertel is en waarna hulle saam sit en luister het, is daar iets soos 'n groot, goeie, stewige hand wat hulle almal saam vashou. Sonder dat iemand ooit benoud of bang of bekommerd hoef te voel oor wat anderkant daardie hand skuil" (Philida, 190). In accordance with the river image signalled earlier, Philida associates Labyn's voice during these story sessions to water: "hoe dit ontstuimig raak soos die see as daar 'n storm opkom en die branders woes raak [...] En daarna kom dit soos 'n vloedwater en 'n donderstorm wat oor haar breek" (Philida, 195). The creation of spaces through stories is epitomized in *Inteendeel*. Rosette recalls how the universe came into existence: "In die begin was daar net 'n Storieverteller gewees, en sy was 'n vrou [...] Soos die tyd verbyloop, het die vrou al hoe meer stories vertel om haar allenigheid vol te maak, en met dié het sy 'n hele wêreld van stories begin maak. 'n Wêreld met vlaktes en berge en riviere en droë plekke, en bosse en vetplante en gras, en voëls en diere" (Inteendeel, 153-154). The idea is reiterated when Estienne goes on his last journey to find Rosette. His travel companion, Khoib, realizes that Rosette must be a great storyteller, for he can see the result of her stories in their surrounding environment. He observes: "Omdat ons begin nader kom [...] Mens kan al haar stories begin sien [...] Sien jy nie?' vra hy met 'n weidse gebaar wat 'n breë moot van die landskap bestryk, van horison tot horison. 'Die rotse, die grond, daardie berge, alles wat jy kan sien, is die stories wat sy vertel het, dis hoekom hulle hier is'" (Inteendeel, 287). Estienne recognizes her stories in the contours of the landscape: the environment is her visible language. He follows her stories as he follows her way through landscapes. She tells the environment into existence (Inteendeel, 287-288). The river motif is again apparent, as Estienne observes: "Waar jy sit, breek daar 'n fontein uit die grond—ek kan dit in jou stem hoor murmel—en vloei daarvandaan uit buitentoe, teen die helling af, in 'n veelvingerige stroom oor die vlaktes van die dor land" (Inteendeel, 294). Estienne is able to acknowledge that through stories, the world is told into being (Inteendeel, 290). He realizes that telling stories, or telling spaces, is all he can do: "al wat oorbly, is om my die werklikheid te verbeel, om te verbeter op dit wat na die waarheid lyk, om die flikkerende betekenis daarvan te versin. Jy sal wel weet, Rosette, jy wat storieverteller is, dat die waarheid omring lê deur die leuen, en net bereik kan word deur die avontuur van jou pogings om dit te vertel" (Inteendeel, 166). If I look at Estienne's declaration from a critical perspective, or in Felski's terms, if I deconstruct, interrogate, and speak Foucauldian (Felski, 2015: 148); the idea of the unreachable reality comes to the forefront: The reality can only be imagined, and Estienne can only attempt to tell or represent it. This notion of unreachable spaces or realities is, as already established in Chapter five, present in most of the chosen novels. The idea of the unreachable can moreover be linked to the idea of insufficiency:

a notion that is often portrayed in the chosen texts through concepts such as holes, absences, silences, and deserts. From a critical perspective, I am motivated to focus on how the language the narrators have at their disposal, falls short to represent their realities. Echoing in a sense Estienne, the narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* demonstrates that her use of French words “ne se chargent pas de réalité charnelle” (AF, 261). For this reason, she maintains that the vocabulary she disposes of, becomes absences: “tout vocabulaire me devient absence” (AF, 261). She even points to Eugène Fromentin’s work, “Chronique de l’Absent”, to again emphasize the idea of inadequacy: “il trouve, dans le Sahel de mon enfance, un jardin où tout, précisément, parle d’absence” (AF, 311). Her deficit language, or lack of an ‘appropriate’ language in which her reality can be wholly representable, leaves her feeling ‘trapped’ in a “désert de l’expression” (AF, 88, 283). The inadequacy of words and languages to represent spaces is raised in the other novels as well. Josef observes in *Kennis van die Aand*: “Die einde is nou baie naby, alles lê so oop, en woorde is te dun om die gate toe te maak” (Kennis, 367). When Philida travels into the Other Side, she also depicts how words fall short: “Eers is dit asof al die dinge se name begin deurskynend raak en dan verdwyn. En dan raak die dinge self weg” (Philida, 177).

If I however overlook the critical tendency to focus on the notion of insufficiency and allow myself to be absorbed by the singularity of these texts, I see the idea of holes, absences, silences, and deserts in a different light. If I for instance read Estienne’s depiction of the windless night, “Deur die nag het die wind gaan lê; dit was die soort volslae stilte wat mens net op die diepsee hoor, middernag, wanneer die see in sy slaap sug” (Inteendeel, 64), I am stirred by the sheer beauty of the portrayal of silence: the image of a type of silence that is at home in the personified deep-sea. The rhythm of the sentence and the alliteration of the ‘s’ sound in the last phrase magnificently echo silence’s movement. This change of perspective allows me to focus less on the supposed emptiness, bareness, and inadequacy of these spatial entities (‘a lack of’), and more on the possibility their ‘openness’ has to offer (‘a space for’). As the narrator in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* observes: “Die stilte praat met sy ontelbare geluide” (OW, 89). The potential of absences and holes is accentuated in *Philida* as well. After the death of Ouma Nella, Philida notes:

En skielik is dit net ’n leegte wat agterbly. ’n Leegte omring deur wind, ’n troostelose wind wat voel of hy van alkante af kom en nie begin of end het nie. Maar op ’n snaakse manier bring die wind vir Philida troos ook [...] Binne-in die leegte van die wind bly sy sit, tot lank nadat die boodskapper al weer vort is [...] En dis ’n leegte wat stadigaan vol stories loop, al die stories en stories wat Ouma Nella oor soveel jare vir haar vertel het. (Philida, 266)

The focus on the potential of absences brings comfort for perhaps both character and reader. It can moreover be considered exciting to focus on the imaginative possibilities that can originate from open spaces. I am for instance reminded of one of the final sections in *Inteendeel*, when Estienne believes he is closing in on Rosette: “Die aarde om my sug en roer. Nuwe heuwels word voor my oë teen die lug uitgestoot [...] Ek weet jy moet nou baie naby wees, en dat dit die oorsprong van jou stories is: ’n holte hoog teen ’n kaal helling, ’n vlak grot, soos ’n naeltjie” (*Inteendeel*, 291-292). Estienne considers Rosette to be in a cave but this hole in the mountain should however not be seen as a cavity or an absence (*Inteendeel*, 193-194), but as a source: like the navel, it springs forth life. The narrator in *Nulle part* similarly focusses on the source that is absence or silence as she observes as an endnote that “Tout entreprise d’écriture s’étire en silence” (NP, 452). Writing is drawn out from silence. Silence is the source and the possibility of writing. When insisting on the possibility and the potential of silence, I do not ignore the limited representation of languages, and the impossibility of a ‘true’ and absolute representation. I acknowledge together with the narrator in *Nulle part* that we have but mere silences to represent reality: “un livre, un parmi des milliers, des millions que le temps réduira ensuite en poussière ou à une architecture arachnéenne faite de multiples silences” (NP, 451). These silences are however not limiting, but full of potential. From a less critical perspective, I am able to pay more attention to the narrator’s assertion that these silences should be regarded as a “symphonie d’un rêve évanoui, mais obsédant” (NP, 451; my emphasis). Within this frame of reference, my inclination to look at silences as ‘spaces for’, I am endlessly drawn to the remarkable declaration made by the narrator in *L’Amour, la fantasia*: “Mais je n’aspire qu’à une écriture de transhumance, tandis que, voyageuse, je remplis mes outres d’un silence inépuisable” (AF, 93). Silences should not be regarded as insufficient spaces or the embodiment of our inability to represent a true reality. They are proper spaces that, due to their potential, should be sought. As we travel through spaces, we should strive, together with *L’Amour, la fantasia*’s narrator, to fill our wineskins with inexhaustible silences. She gives a possible reason for her aspiration:

Ma fiction est cette autobiographie qui s’esquisse, alourdie par l’héritage qui m’encombre. Vais-je succomber?... Mais la légende tribale zigzague dans les béances et c’est dans le silence des mots d’amour, jamais proférés, de la langue maternelle non écrite, transportée comme un bavardage d’une mime inconnue et hagarde, c’est dans cette nuit-là que l’imagination, mendicante des rues, s’accroupit... (AF, 304)

Silences, absences, holes, and deserts are home for the imagination. And it is through imagination that stories, or spaces, are told.

7.4 Movement through space

In Chapter five I primarily focused on different spatial representations and the effect thereof on the characters in Brink and Djébar's chosen novels. It is however characters' movement in and through spaces that I find particularly captivating in the narratives. In the following sections, I will demonstrate how the notion of movement in the texts drives my reading practice by focusing on the following parallels: movement as journeys, movement as life and death, movement as freedom and movement as continuity.

a. Movement as journeys

Journeys are central to many of the stories' plots: whether it be more literal expeditions like those undertaken in *'n Oomblik in die wind*; *Inteendeel*, *Duiwelskloof*, and *Philida*; or more figurative journeys like the narrator in *Nulle part*'s exploration of her past and present self. As the motto of the aforementioned novel confirms: "De loin je suis venue et je dois aller loin...". My receptivity to the portrayals of journeys has already been suggested by the anecdote mentioned earlier in this chapter. For this reason, I can strongly identify with Adam and Elisabeth's depiction of the passing landscape when they experience the last stretch of their journey on a wagon: "Onwerklik. Asof dit nie hulle is wat voortbeweeg nie, maar die aarde wat, vanself, stadig by hulle verbyskuif, terugskuif, verlede word; die toekoms vee soos wind—maar dit is windloos—teen hul gesigte [...] Onwerklik: terug. Hier golf die bulte, donker van renosterbosse, oop voor ons. Teen môre sal dit al aan die horison behoort" (OW, 190-191). The poetic way in which Estienne's departure from Europe is depicted in *Inteendeel*, also awakens a familiar sensation within me: "ek het op die dek gestaan en kyk hoe die ou Europa hom aan my onttrek—moesaam, soos wat mens 'n spinnerak van jou vingers probeer verwyder" (Inteendeel, 49). It is however the description of more figurative journeys, and perhaps more unfamiliar expeditions through spaces that especially capture my attention. Josef for example observes: "Die waarheid is tog

'n landskap waardeur jy in die donker reis, nie 'n versameling feite wat vertel kan word nie" (Kennis, 37). In *Duiwelskloof*, Flip refers to the conversations he had with Ouma Liesbet as a 'journey': "Ek het al die gruis van ons paar gesprekke deur die sif van my gedagtes gewerk, maar g'n diamant het agtergebly nie [...] Ek het opgestaan en in die donker heen en weer begin loop om my gedagtes om te woel. *Tree vir tree* terug in ons gesprek in" (Duiwelskloof, 254; my emphasis). When Adam and Elisabeth finally reach the beach in the Cape in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Adam observes: "Noudat ons doodstil hier lê, is ons meer op reis as ooit tevore" (OW, 198). These delineations of the figurative spaces through which characters 'travel' by standing still are bemusing. It encourages me to consider other more figurative actions, and not just travelling in the traditional sense, as ways of moving through spaces.

b. Movement as life

Movement through spaces is portrayed as an essential part of life. In *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth equates movement to breathing: "Beweging: die primitiewe eenvoud van die see, brander ná brander, gety op gety, gerusstellend soos asemhaling; of boomtoppe in die wind. Oor die nat sand skuifel skulpe terug na die waterkant; op die klippe glijp en roer dassies; die meeuë dryf verby op die wind" (OW, 85). To live means to move along, or as she says to Adam: "Ons lewe en ons gaan verder" (OW, 143). In *Inteendeel*, Estienne similarly likens movement to the necessity of air. To recall his words: "Wat ek wou hê—*moes* hê, soos wat mens water en kos en lug moet hê—was 'n horison, oopte, koers, rigting, helderheid, lig" (Inteendeel, 20).

As an essential part of life, movement therefore plays a significant role in characters' identities.³⁷⁹

Archival records demonstrate the import of Elisabeth's journey in her life:

In die Kaapse Argief is daar onder die naam Elisabeth Jacobs, 'n handgeskrewe Memorie [...]—waarin sy [...] 'n kort samevatting van haar lewe opgeteken het. Met 'n beheerstheid en nugterheid wat in haar omstandighede merkwaardig

³⁷⁹ Movement is portrayed as a significant part of characters' personalities. On occasions, the movement of characters' voices are also pointed out: In *Duiwelskloof* for example, Flip refers to Soon Heilig's voice during his sermon: "Soon Heilig se stem beweeg teen jakobslere op en af, hemel toe en terug, dan reguit ter helle waar dit ekstasies vertoef" (Duiwelskloof, 75). In *Philida*, Frans' mother's cry is depicted as follows: "Haar huil begin uit haar bors uitbreek boontoe soos 'n groot voël [...] en dit fladder hemelwaarts, dwarsdeur die rietplafon en die grasdak, dwarsdeur alles wat deur mensehande gebou is, en eers baie later kom dit flapflap en tuimeltuimel en bollemakiesie-bollemakiese terug en foeter in 'n warreling van bloed en spoeg en snot en vere op die grond neer" (Philida, 215).

voorkom [...] vertel sy ook in breë trekke van haar binnelandse reis [...] En eers met die slotsin word mens met iets soos verbystering geslaan wanneer sy, ná soveel feitelikheid, skryf: *Dit sal niemand van ons kan afneem nie, nie eens onself nie.* (OW, 9-10)

Her travels into the interior parts of the country became an essential part of who she is. Her sense of self is equated to the spaces through which she travels. The identities of other characters are also determined by their travels. They are perhaps not voyagers in a traditional sense, but the novels continually suggest that it is their movement through space that defines them. The identity of most of Djébar's narrators is for instance repeatedly characterized by their education—an education that is paralleled to movement: “Fille arabe allant pour la première fois à l'école [...] le premier jour où une fillette 'sort' pour apprendre l'alphabet” (AF, 11). She characterizes her childhood as “mobile” (NP, 16; OS, 180; Vaste, 197). Djébar's characters' walking habits serve to define them: they are for instance depicted as “une femme qui sort” (OS, 63), “l'odalisque [...] en fuite” (OS, 212), or “fugitive et ne le sachant pas” (Vaste, 121-122). In *Ombre Sultane*, Hajila's roaming practices in the taboo outside world gives her a sense of purpose and identity. As Sokołowicz (2021: 349) points out: “C'est en marchant, en mouvement, qu'elle semble retrouver une paix relative. La marche, et parfois l'errance, devient la métaphore de la recherche de soi”. It is through wandering through spaces that Hajila acknowledges her story: “Chaque jour donc, tu t'échappes [...] Le soir, les jambes lourdes, le cœur submergé par la rumeur extérieure, tu te dis que tu as une histoire” (OS, 60). Her story *is* her vagabonding. It is for this reason, this essentiality of movement, that she prefers to have an abortion for it allows her to keep on walking outside without being noticed (OS, 104). Echoing Elisabeth, the experience of her travels is the only thing that no one, not even her husband, can take away from her: “Le soleil te regarde [...] l'homme ne peut rien! Surtout pas te dépouiller des frémissements du dehors, des moissons de ton errance” (OS, 120). Hajila's mobility is a choice: she realizes that movement through spaces is cardinal for her sense of self. Other characters also relate how movement is born from a conscious will or drive. The narrator in 'n *Oomblik in die Wind* signals how it is Adam and Elisabeth's will that opens up the world before them. I read with awe: “Hulle staan saam en kyk na die eindelose ooprol van die vlakke onder die maan. Baie ver hoor hulle jakkalse te kere gaan, 'n hiëna roep. Wat agter is, maak nie saak nie, dis verby. Hierdie ruimte lê voor: al sy moontlikhede is toekomstig, op die rand van die werklikheid. Hulle hoef maar net te sê: Ek wil. Want dis wil wat dit oopmaak; dis wil wat dit laat gebeur” (OW, 134). Other characters are less conscious of how movement through space becomes an integral part of them. After searching for his daughter for years, Josef depicts how his ancestor, Dlamini/Daniël simply kept

on moving: “hy het aangehou trek, uit pure gewoonte, omdat hy nie meer kon ophou nie. Waar sal ons vannag slaap, hier of daar? Maak nie saak nie, maak nie saak nie, die nag is oral eners” (Kennis, 55). Dlamini/Daniël’s trekking became a habit he could not live without. Moving was part of who he was. Characters’ moving nature is directly signalled in *Nulle part* wherein the narrator stresses her female protagonists’ tendency to ‘run away’ from her (NP, 402, 403). She ‘watches’ as they pull away from her writing hand:

Alors, chacune de tes fictions s’est mise à pencher, à tanguer de droite et de gauche, et chaque fois, inopinément, tel ou tel personnage de femme sortie de ta main finissait—vers la fin du récit, de la nouvelle ou du roman—par t’échapper, par dévier de la trajectoire prévue à l’horizon, soudain, tu la voyais courir, quelquefois sans but, à l’aveugle, riant mais désespérée, en pleine foule mais seule, ivre à la fois de solitude et d’une violence mortifère, mais parfois joyeuse... (NP, 438)

The ubiquitous moving nature of the authors’ characters motivates me to consider the spaces through which they move as equally important to their stories. I take a similar stance to the one taken here by the narrator in *Nulle part* and watch how the characters ‘run’ or move before me. I follow their narratives by tracking their spaces. In a sense I can say that I perceive their stories as a motion picture of spaces rolling before me.

A feeling of discomfort brews for instance within me as I watch the inhabitants of the valley’s frenzied movement when communion approaches. The scene unfolds before me as Flip relates:

Van Vrydag af het die opgewondenheid al dik begin loop, ’n soort koors onder lede [...] Die sigbaarste teken van iets in die lug was dat daar meer malles op straat was. Ek sê ‘malles’, maar dis sommer ’n versamelwoord vir al die verskynsels wat daar soos masels uitgebreek het uit die donkerder skuilplekke van die huise waarin hulle gewoonlik uit die oog gehou is: die vertraagdes en gebreklikes en swaksinniges, die waterhoofde [...] party min of meer te voet, ander gestoot op houtkarretjies en-kruywaens. Daar was maar altyd ’n paar van hulle in die nedersetting [...] maar van die Vrydagoggend af het dit geil begin toegaan, soos miere wat skielik befok raak voor ’n storm. Daar was iets onrusbarends in, soos ’n stal van geheime sondes sommerso kaalkont op straat. (Duiwelskloof, 63-64)

A common movement through space to which I am also spectator, is the act of dancing. It is a movement that is repeatedly portrayed as an articulation of characters’ emotions. When Flip encounters the girls dancing and running in the copse, he notices that their movement is however not an expression of excitement, but rather of fear:

'n Merry-go-round van opgeskote girtjies wat kaalgat tussen die bome dans. Dans is ook skaars die woord: hulle het eenvoudig rond en bont gehol, tussen die bome deur en in die oopte in, dan weer weg, kruis en dwars, met swaaiende arms en uitgelate bokkespronge. Dit was soos 'n fokken swerm nagvoëls wat blindelings rondfladder en kort-kort in die struik beland of teen mekaar vasvlieg. Maar dit was skaars uitgelate: daar was 'n soort gedempte paniek in die spul [...] 'n soort massaflagellasië [...] in hulle hande het die kinders 'n verskeidenheid slaangoed gehad [...] en daarmee het hulle mekaar in die hardloop gestreep. Nie vir die sports nie [...] wat vir my op 'n afstand na 'n soort chant geklink het, was eintlik 'n half histeriese huilery. Wat die psalmis 'n weeklag sou genoem het. (Duiwelskloof, 66-67)

While the girls' hysterical dancing motions are disturbing, other dance scenes within the chosen novels evoke different emotions within me. I recognize the sense of spatial empowerment the grandmother achieves in her rhythmic trans-like dance in *L'Amour, la fantasia*: "quand elle dansait, elle redevenait reine de la ville" (AF, 207-208). Having been a dancer for most of my life, I can associate with the liberating feeling the narrators in *Nulle part* and *Vaste est la prison* experience: it is a movement that permits you to feel "far away" and to forget your surrounding world or onlookers (NP, 217-218; *Vaste*, 38). As the narrator in *Nulle part* so finely sets forth: "J'aime danser pour me sentir loin d'ici, me cacher de ces dames, qu'elles me croient une flamme, alors que, les yeux fermés, c'est vers la pénombre, vers le noir, toujours, vers l'ailleurs, que mes pas légers me portent..." (NP, 218). Inasmuch as it portrays pure joy and liberation, dancing can also express the deepest sadness. Josef depicts how the intoxicated and depressed Simon started dancing in his apartment:

[H]y het eenvoudig orent gekom van die bed af en in die middel van die vloer kom staan en daar begin beweeg, al in die rondte, al op die een plek, soos 'n waterplant wat vasgerank sit aan 'n bodem en swaai met die gekarring van die gety [...] dit was nie bevryding nie, maar pyn, die kaalste, mees ontblote, mees onmenslike pyn wat ek ooit met twee oë aangekyk het. [...] Sy oë was bot toe, sy gesig vertrek van onmoontlike konsentrasie, asof sy hele gesig, sy hele liggaam agter sy oë aan binnetoe wou inbeweeg, ín in 'n swart kern van vlamme doodstil pyn in; en onder sy toegeperste ooglede deur het die trane uitgeglip en afgeloop oor sy wange soos hy dans, afgeloop op sy kraag, onder sy toegeperste ooglede in. Hy het geen geluid gemaak nie [...] terwyl hy op die één plek dans, inkrimp tot byna op die vloer, en uitrek, soos 'n swart kersvlam wat krimp en rek en amper uitbrand, en die trane het doodstil afgeloop oor sy wange [...] en hy sit sy hand op my skouer neer; en met skel jovialiteit sê hy: 'Moenie huil nie. Mōre gaan ons huis toe, man. Mōre gaan ons huis toe [...] Ek weet my huis is te ver. Ek gaan net terug Highbury Hill toe. (Kenni, 183-184)

Where the image of a dancing flame in *Nulle part* evokes freedom, the similar image here is heartrending. Simon's dancing is an embodiment of his painful longing for his home and country. This gut-wrenching depiction reminds me of the homesickness I experienced during a study period abroad: it is a longing for a space that leaves me paralyzed.

Movement through and in space is represented as an essential part of life: it often forms the basis for characters' identities and for how they express themselves. The notion of standing still in space is however equally significant. Adam reflects on inevitable endings of movement: "So tydloos kan mens voortstroom deur die dae, jou soos wier oorgee aan 'n gety: maar eendag spoel jy uit" (OW, 104). Elisabeth also ponders the cease of motion: "Sy het net gaan lê en besluit dat sy nou nie weer gaan opstaan nie. Dit was nie die moeite werd nie. Mens dink jy kan aanhou, maar eendag móét jy ophou. Haar eendag was vandag" (OW, 155). These 'endings' which they encounter are however only pauses. When, further along their journey, they spend some time in a dilapidated house, they consider that they have reached another type of 'end': "Maar dit bring nie veel nuwe moed nie, hoogstens gelatenheid. Daar is 'n ewigheid agter hulle en 'n ewigheid voor; hulle is moeg [...] En terwyl hulle sit, weet albei [...] dat nog 'n einde bereik is. Dié diep, onderaardse ding wat hulle dryf, het hulle nog altyd in sy greep" (OW, 151). The end is not a termination to their movement: they realize that an eternity lies behind but also before them. Elisabeth depicts such moments of pauses in life:

Die pyn: dis soos 'n lug waar 'n voël deur vlieg. En net af en toe—'n oomblik in die wind—kan hy gaan sit en rus op 'n tak of 'n klip wat brand: nooit lank nie. Jy is by my, ek raak aan jou [...] Net 'n oomblik. Nooit meer as 'n oomblik nie. Miskien kan ons nie meer as 'n oomblik op 'n slag verduur nie. Ek onthou. Ek sal probeer verder gaan. Hierdie vreeslike ruimte om ons skep die stilte waarin ek jou, soms, mag herken en deur jou herken mag word. (OW, 157)

Elisabeth describes how life allows you pauses, or 'endings' of certain phases, before you set out on another movement through space. These moments of rest, repose or reflection are of short duration. You have but, echoing the novel's title, "an instant in the wind" before the journey continues. *Nulle part's* narrator similarly accentuates the idea of a mere moment: "la vie que vous osez ou croyez ressusciter, vous, l'espace d'une seconde" (NP, 451; my emphasis). Elisabeth again points to these significant moments that allow them to carry on: "In die berg, die aand, het ek gedink: hoe verskriklik dit ook al is, in die gewelddadige dood van die bobbejaan is daar iets moois [...] Omdat mens in sulke oomblikke weet dat jy lewe. Ontsettend op sigself, maar onontbeerlik: die skaars oomblikke wat ons

aan die gang hou” (OW, 164). These moments might be short, horrible, or absolute, but Elisabeth insists that it is all they have:

Die oomblik wat so volkome was, tot barstens toe gevul met lewe, lyk nou onwerklik ver [...] Is dit dan altyd net die oomblik? wonder sy [...] Die oomblik waarvan jy so gretig en vol oortuiging dink: dit vergoed vir ’n leeftyd van ontbering. En nou? Nou’s dit net donker in die bergwêreld, die oomblik is verby; en die bietjie herinnering wat oorbly, is onbetroubaar en yl. Die oomblik self was in homself beslote. Al wat ons het, is dat dit—miskien—so was. En môre? (OW, 181-182)

We have but fleeting moments of pauses. Even though the recollection of these instances is uncertain, I am captivated by how Elisabeth insists that these still moments in space and the experience thereof remain whole and absolute: “Die oomblik self was in homself beslote”. Through these pauses, the journey through space can be pursued.

The above interpretation proposes that most characters in the chosen texts perceive movement through space as an indispensable part of life. Yet one cannot say that Brink and Djébar’s characters equate movement to living, for as the novels frequently point out, movement is part of death, and the dead as well.

c. Movement as death

In almost all the chosen novels³⁸⁰, the dead is depicted as moving along the living. The deceased traverse the spaces of ‘living’ characters not only in an attempt to haunt³⁸¹, but also to protect³⁸², to serve as witnesses³⁸³, and to accompany the living in their doings.³⁸⁴ As a new mother, I am particularly troubled with the depiction of the ghost of the baby, the child that Philida was forced to kill: “Die heel ergste is natuurlik die babakind wat nagdeur bly huil [...] Al kruip jy hoe diep in die bultak in, huil bly hy huil. En dié ene ken ek van naby. Dis my eie KleinFrans se spook. Hy’s klein en hy’s dun en jy kyk

³⁸⁰ ‘n *Oomblik in die Wind* is the only exception. Diala (2005: 25-26) however points out that the memories of the novel’s protagonists “are full of tombs and cluttered with ghosts of the dead”.

³⁸¹ Examples of the dead’s haunting practices are numerous: OS, 19; Vaste, 168, 251; Inteendeel, 270; Duiwelskloof, 173, 308, 252; Philida, 94, 140.

³⁸² Many characters point to the comfort the moving dead offers them: NP, 50, 270, 440; OS, 37; SS, 17, 52-53; Vaste, 212; Kennis, 278; Philida, 38, 68-69.

³⁸³ Ghosts are portrayed as bystanders who testify against unjust acts of the past: AF, 28; Vaste, 209, 253, 258-259; SS, 93; Duiwelskloof, 102.

³⁸⁴ The dead are considered companions: Inteendeel, 90-91, 215, 297; Duiwelskloof, 77, 98, 180, 186, 335; Philida, 246.

maklik dwarsdeur hom, maar hy's daar" (Philida, 39-40). The portrayal of the baby's continual crying and the impossibility to soothe him has a nauseating effect on me.

Although the common portrayal of the dead moving amongst the living provokes interest, I find the novels' general depiction of death itself as a type of movement enthralling. When Elisabeth has a miscarriage in *'n Oomblik in die Wind* she experiences a type of movement within her. I am immersed whilst reading how her body's painful motions are spatially depicted:

Soos die afgelope dae, het sy weer pyn gehad, 'n bestendige metgesel: maar niks hewigs nie. Ná die afklim het dit meer gedefinieer geraak, afsonderlike pyne soos die bome en klippe in die landskap [...] Sy het haar buik vasgehou en begin vrywe. Dit was of 'n vreemde rukbeweging weer diep in haar begin, ondergronds, soos trillinge van 'n aardkok [...] Byna biologies het sy geweet dat haar liggam dié keer probeer ontslae raak van 'n stuk van haarself; van haar kind. (OW, 46)

In many of the novels, the act of committing suicide is represented as a form of movement as well. Speaking about ending their lives, Jessica tells Josef: "Jy het gesê jy sal saamgaan". Josef responds: "Ek het nie geweet dit is so naby nie [...] Ek het gedink ons sou dit bly afweer, elke dag nog 'n bietjie verder [...] Nou wil ek nie meer dink nie. Ek wil net saam met jou gaan" (Kennis, 386). After the ox drowns in *'n Oomblik in die Wind*, Elisabeth finds the moving waters alluring and considers to let herself wash away as well: "Sy staan en staar na die water. Met bese bekoring gryp dit haar aan. Om ook maar in te spring en in die bruin kolke weg te raak, om nie meer te hoef te baklei en te worstel met alles wat onbegryplik is nie [...] net klaar te kry, net weg te spoel, in die see sonder einde in" (OW, 75). In *Inteendeel*, Héloïse considers how she can stop her father from sending her away. She tells Estienne: "Daar is net een manier [...] Ons moet wegloop. Ver. Verskriklik ver". When he proposes: "Na die Cabo de Bonne-Espérance! [...] Niks kan verder wees nie," she claims that even Cabo is not far enough (Inteendeel, 107). When she takes him to the church's tower, Estienne describes her comportment:

Sy was onnatuurlik kalm. Om 'n onverklaarbare rede was ek doodbang. Miskien het ek toe al, sonder om dit regtig te weet, agtergekom wat voorlê. Heel bo op die toring het sy oor die muurtjie geleun en beduie na die golwende groen, groen landskap met donker vingers en kolle bos in die voue. 'Sien jy? [...] Dis waar ons gaan. Niemand sal ons ooit kry nie' [...] Sy het vining oorgeleun en my vlugtig, lomp, op die mond gesoen [...] En gesê: 'Kom, Estienne. Kom saam'. En my aan die hand gegryp. En gespring [...] Sy is alleen op daardie laaste reis. (Inteendeel, 107-108)

Even though my stomach sinks as I imagine her stepping over the threshold, I am deeply touched by the poetry of it all. The deferment of what Estienne expects creates a form of tension: a tension that encompasses a sense of hope (that what he expects does not happen) and at the same time a sense of fear (that his expectation is realized). Whilst reading the depiction of the “golwende, groen, groen landskap”, its alliteration and repetition, I am in a sense transported to the serene dark green European landscape described. The laconic “Sy is alleen op daardie laaste reis” conveys much emotion. It is almost calming to see how Héloïse experiences the ultimate escape. Echoing Héloïse, some of the other novels also equate death to a type of flight or takeoff (OS, 173). In both *L’Amour, la fantasia* and *Nulle part*, the suicide attempt of the narrator is delineated as a hastening toward the horizon that represents an infinite space “jusqu’au bout” (NP, 393, 410, 437; AF, 161-163). She describes how she wishes to dissolve into Algiers’ bay (NP, 406), “la baie immense pour linceul, ô gloire et mort bienheureuse!” (NP, 410). It feels as though I’m running with her, as the tempo of my reading also picks up:

M’en aller au plus loin, courir au plus vite, me précipiter, me projeter là-bas, éperdue, au point exact où se noie l’horizon! Ne m’arrêter que là où la mer m’attend... m’attend... [...] Courir, partir au plus loin, là où je ne pourrai plus que m’arrêter. Courir jusqu’à la mer qui m’attend [...] Descendre indéfiniment. Légère je suis; hantée, je deviens [...] Espace immense, ciel et mer bientôt confondus [...] Azur et nadir confondus. Devenir un point dans l’espace! Courir! (NP, 393-394)

Her attempt to throw herself under the tram, “pour y dormir” (NP, 396), however fails. When her fiancé reminds her that suicide is interdicted in Islam, she reasons: “Le suicide, certes, mais l’envol, mais la course jusqu’à la mer immense...” (NP, 411). She insists that hers was not a suicide attempt, but rather a passionate flight or soaring towards the horizon in search of freedom.

d. Movement as freedom

Movement is additionally assimilated to freedom. After his escape from Robben Island, Adam describes the movement of his raft’s oars as the most beautiful sound—that of liberation (OW, 192). He recalls: “Toe ek op die vlotjie van die eiland af terugkom die nag: die geluid van die spane in die water. Dis nie die geraas van die branders of die uitmekaar breek van die hout wat ek eerste onthou nie, maar daardie geluid van spane in donker water in die donker, die eerste intiemste geluid van vry-word” (OW, 161). Mobility is equated to liberation: to be free means to be able to stroll and wander and to come and go

as you please (AF, 35, 253; OS, 20, 54; Vaste, 8, 162, 219, 205-206; Inteendeel, 133; OW, 28, 55, 183). In accordance with the image of flight used by the narrator in *Nulle part*, many characters equate liberty to the free flight of birds (Inteendeel, 242, 248, 250, 252, 264; Duiwelskloof, 197). Many even try to escape their situations by ‘flying’ away (Inteendeel, 174-175, 279-281). I find Lukas Hemelvaart’s iconic tale of escape most inspiring:

Hy’t mos sy lewe lank hier probeer uitkom [...] So’t hy toe die gedagte gekry om te leer vlieg. Eers het hy vir hom vlerke gemaak, allerhande soorte [...] ’n Ruk het hy hom oorgegee aan die drank. Hy’t begin reken as hy net genoeg kan drink, dan sal die vlieg vanself kom [...] En toe, na hy van die drank genees is, het hy vir hom ’n waentjie gemaak. Sy hemelwaentjie [...] En toe dit klaar is, maak hy ’n tamaai groot hok en hy stuur die kinders uit om al die voëls in die Duiwelskloof te loop vang [...] En toe hy nou die laaste voël in die hok bymekaar het, toe span hy hulle voor sy hemelwaentjie in en daar trek hulle met hom, bo-oor die berge skoon weg. Niemand het hom ooit weer gesien nie. (Duiwelskloof, 112)

The eminent theme of freedom, and its connection to movement through space, is explored throughout Brink and Djébar’s oeuvres. The idea is continuously stressed that this movement that is or that leads to freedom, is an action (AF, 24; Philida, 284). In *Inteendeel*, Estienne is adamant in removing the shackles, a “sign of slavery”, from Rosette’s ankles, for he wants her to be free. To Estienne’s surprise, Rosette responds by insisting that she is free: “Met ’n wringende, ingewikkelde gebaar [...] het jy die boonste gedeelte van jou klere van jou skouers afgeskud; dit het oopgeval tot by jou heupe. Jy het ’n vinger op jou naeltjie gedruk. ‘Dit is die teken van my Vryheid,’ het jy gesê. ‘Toe hulle my van my ma losgesny het, was ek vry’” (Inteendeel, 66). Rosette suggests that by being human, she is free. She has been free since she was removed from her mother’s womb. Her freedom started from that initial act or movement: the cut of the umbilical.

The notion of movement as freedom is additionally portrayed through the act of protest in the novels—an act that is frequently spatially depicted. In *L’Amour, la fantasia*, the letters secretly written by the cloistered girls for instance represent a hidden revolt that infiltrates the house (AF, 21-22). Albeit a different form of rebellion, Josef also describes the march to Sharpeville as a wave in motion: “al die duisende marsjerendes met die stilte van ’n brander, al die duisende, met die geluid van ’n brander” (Kennis, 150). To protest means to march: it is an action, a movement. Whilst discussing the notion of resistance with Jerry, Josef says: “Jy weet ook wat my manier van baklei is. Om te sorg dat daar morele basisse is waarvandaan ander soldate kan uittrek”. Jerry responds: “Dink jy nog altyd ’n revolusie is

moreel?! 'n Basis is 'n versoeking, jy val te maklik soontoe terug. Wat ons nodig het, is 'n leër s'nder basis. Soos 'n man sonder boude: sit kan hy nie, daarom moet hy aanhou beweeg" (Kennis, 376). Philida also signals how resistance entails movement through space. At the offices of the Slave Protector, she is certain that there is no turning back: "Maar ek het nou die hele pad tot hier geloop [...] en nou is ek hier en omdraai is daar nie meer nie, dis net reguit aan al is dit tot in die hel" (Philida, 11). A revolution requires constant movement, "al is dit tot in die hel".

Due to my background, I am again most allured by the movement that characters experience through language, stories, and their imagination. Many characters within the chosen novels point to the mobile nature of narratives. Their recognition of stories' mobility leads to a layered movement through spaces. Whilst I move through or 'read' their spaces, the characters themselves move along in the stories they hear. Philida for instance tells of Ouma Nella who "het stories vir alles en baie van hulle kom van ver af" (Philida, 22). She points out how stories travel: "Ouma Nella praat van die wind wat stories vertel, wat storiemoed aandra van baie ver plekke af, die wind wat bly waai as mens doodgaan en wat jou voetspore met hom saamvat, sodat almal kan dink ons lewe nog, want ons bly vassit aan ons voetspore" (Philida, 64). The migratory character of stories and words are raised in other novels as well: at times portrayed as swallows (AF, 92) or turtledoves (AF, 303), the capacity of words to travel is illuminated throughout *L'Amour, la fantasia* (AF, 109). Reflecting on the origin of the Berber language, the narrator in *Vaste est la prison* reminisces about its moving nature: "Carthage n'est plus là [...] mais sa langue court toujours sur les lèvres [...] elle court; elle ne se fixe pas: la langue punique danse, et frémit, et s'entend, cinq ou six siècles encore [...] libéré et mouvant (Vaste, 110). Josef also refers to how Dilpert exposed him to new and mystical landscapes through a moving language: "Geduldig het hy my ingewy in die wêreld van nuwe woorde [...] Hul blote geluid het my al bekoor [...] Hulle was towerwoorde [...] wat vensters laat oopskuif het oor nuwe landskappe" (Kennis, 133-134). It is intriguing to note how Josef perceives the words as windows that *open up*; for it suggests that language also brings forth a type of movement. This freedom offered by language is suggested in *Philida* as well when Labyn tells her: "As Al-lah praat, is dit asof sy woorde vlerke in jou kop maak en dan begin jy vlieg" (Philida, 187).

Not only oral language, but the written word too allows characters a movement through spaces. As any book lover can attest, they emphasize how stories can transport you into another world (Vaste,

47; NP, 361; Kennis, 111), how books are seen as a refuge (Vaste, 57) and a means to escape the pressure of the present world (Vaste, 216; Inteendeel, 229; Duiwelskloof, 117). I am myself nostalgically transported to my English literature class in an all-girls school when I read the narrator in *Nulle part's* observation:

Comment raconter cette adolescence où, de dix à dix-sept ans, le monde intérieur s'élargit soudain grâce aux livres, à l'imagination devenue souple, fluide, un ciel immense, découverte, découverte, lectures sans fin, chaque livre à la fois un être (l'auteur), un monde (toujours ailleurs), l'effervescence intérieure traversée de longues coulées calmes où lire c'est s'engloutir, s'aventurer à l'infini, s'énivrer, l'horizon qui se déchire, recule, même à l'intérieur de la salle d'études d'un internat de jeunes filles. (NP, 115)

The act of writing is equally liberating. As the narrator in *L'Amour, la fantasia* enticingly demonstrates, writing too can be regarded as a type of movement in space:

Quand la main écrit, lente posture du bras, précautionneuse pliure du flanc en avant ou sur le côté, le corps accroupi se balance comme dans un acte d'amour. Pour lire, le regard prend son temps, aime caresser les courbes, au moment où l'inscription lève en nous le rythme de la scansion: comme si l'écriture marquait le début et le terme d'une possession [...] Elle souligne par sa seule présence où commencer et où se perdre; elle propose, par le chant qui y couve, aire pour la danse et silice pour l'ascèse, je parle de l'écriture arabe dont je m'absente, comme d'un grand amour. (AF, 255-256)

Through the dance or movement that is writing, characters find a sense of liberation (AF, 67, 86; Inteendeel, 13). Their words, stories, or in Josef's case, sonnets are able to escape, even when they themselves cannot (Kosew, 1996a: 83). The ability of words to take flight is powerfully depicted in *L'Amour, la fantasia*:

Voilez le corps de la fille nubile. Rendez-la invisible. Transformez-la en être plus aveugle que l'aveugle, tuez en elle tout souvenir du dehors. Si elle sait écrire? Le geôlier d'un corps sans mots—et les mots sont mobiles—peut finir, lui, par dormir tranquille: il lui suffira de supprimer les fenêtres, de cadenasser l'unique portail, d'élever jusqu'au ciel un mur orbe. Si la jeune fille écrit? Sa voix, en dépit du silence, circule. Un papier. Un chiffon froissé [...] L'écrit s'envolera par le patio, sera lancé d'une terrasse. Azur soudain trop vaste. Tout est à recommencer. (AF, 11-12)

Where reading is seen as a liberating withdrawal from reality, writing can be considered an empowering entry into a new reality. Philida suggests how learning to write Frans' name allows her to have a hold on him:

Kan jy my leer om Frans Brink se naam te skrywe? [...] Ek moet leer, anders gaan hy by my bly spook [...] met dié letters op 'n lei of 'n stuk papier, soos die laaste blaai in die Bybel, kan jy sê, het sy nou 'n soort houvas op Frans begin kry. Sy skryf sy naam—en dan hét sy hom [...] In haar vuis het sy hom en dit is waar hy hoort. Dit is wat skryf met 'n mens doen, vertel Labyn vir haar. (*Philida*, 188-189)

When writing his name, she feels that she is in a sense able to control him. It also allows her to be free from him.

Even if the act of reading and writing is only imaginary, as in the case of Estienne (*Inteendeel*, 166, 177, 282) it nevertheless remains liberating. In this last imaginary journey, Estienne depicts how he himself has become a product of his imagination:

Ek het self die produk van my verbeelding geword. As ek my oë toemaak om te skryf, en al skrywende opnuut deur dié land van ruimtes en mirakels na jou reis, word ek as't ware deur iemand anders se pen op my reis ingeskryf. Dit is nogal gerusstellend om te voel dat my eie storie my nou bepaal, soos wat ek dit vroeër versin het. Elke lewe in 'n geskrif. Net jammer die meeste van ons skryf so sleg. Stadig, stadig gaan dit voort, as daar ooit voortgang is. Mens sien soveel meer, en soveel meer intens, wanneer jy op dié manier reis, sonder die gerief van perd of wa. Deel van die landskap, met elke tree dieper daarin betrek. (*Inteendeel*, 282)

The fictional journey into the country is a liberating journey into himself—his own story. The more he becomes part of his story, the more Estienne assimilates himself to the landscape. The more I read Estienne's story, the more I wish to become part of the landscape like he does. His imagination allows him a knowledge of the space he never had before. He accentuates how he is free of the limiting language of others he was obliged to use during his first expedition. He is free to find Rosette, "die jy wat nou vir goed skuilhou in die leë holte van die land" (*Inteendeel*, 193-194). If I consider Estienne's purpose for his expedition from a critical perspective like that of Meintjes (2013: 67), I am bound to see it like he does as an attempt at "circumscribing, possessing" Rosette. If I however follow my own inclination and allow myself to be marveled by Estienne's change in perspective to the land and women, I can appreciate his imagined 'freedom' of language. After having acknowledged the effect of colonial domination, Estienne wishes to be free from its connotations. He aims to no longer have his writings be subject to colonial frameworks. 'Free' from the colonizer's language allows him to write not in an attempt to dominate, but rather to apologize and confess. 'Free' from the restrictions of another's language moreover means he is liberated from any 'conventional' structure: he need not tell his story

in a chronological manner. He is also free to search and to describe Rosette's presence, or her absence, in the way he chooses. He depicts his free movement in and through language:

Vandag, daarenteen, kan my gedagtes vryelik en ongehinderd vloei; ek hoef nie te sukkel om betekenis te torring uit 'n werkwoord, 'n voornaamwoord, 'n Latynse frase nie, geen meervoudsvorme kniehalter my nie. Ek en jy, albei vantevore geknel in die boeie van 'n taal waarin ons moesaam teenoor mekaar moes stamel, kan nou praat sonder die geringste struikelblok. Ek skryf nie; jy kan nie lees nie; die vloei is volmaak—so vry soos die kurwes en sinne van 'n voël se vlug teen die perkament van lug. (Inteendeel, 124-125)

It is a freedom of language, a freedom of movement in space, that leaves me mesmerized and yearning.

Movement through space is equated to freedom. It is essential for characters' literal and imaginary attempts to escape their present realities and additionally of cardinal importance in their resistance. These movements, be it in flights, reading, writing or even in the imagination, are however not isolated occasions: they are constantly repeated. In the next section, I will focus on the ceaseless nature of movement found in the novels.

e. Movement as continuity

The significance of movement through space comes to the forefront in each of the chosen novels. What I however find especially engrossing, is the common insistence on the continuous nature of this movement. After reflecting on her suicide attempt, or her flight towards the horizon, the narrator in *Nulle part* declares that it seems as though she never stopped running towards Algiers' sky: "Il me semble à présent que je cours encore..." (NP, 394). She asserts that her desire to take flight has never left her. She continues searching for "l'élargissement de l'horizon" (NP, 422). Her movement is compared to that of the ocean: "Une houle demeure en moi, obsédante, faisant corps avec moi tout au long du voyage" (NP, 432). I linger as I turn the page for the swell she feels within her, also builds up in me.

The texts predominantly demonstrate the characters' need to persevere and endure within their movements in space. In his cell, Josef imagines how Dilpert would come and visit him: "Dilpert kom soms kuier, ons voer lang gesprekke [...] As ek net kan aanhou. Ons sal nog die trommel oopkry. As

mens net kan weet. Om aan die gang te bly, net om uit te hou” (Kennis, 275). He accentuates how it is his persistence that is of importance. When Jessica asks him “Dink jy ons sal ooit, eendag, uitkom in ’n wêreld van vrede, ’n wêreld s nder geweld, ’n wêreld van waardigheid?”, Josef replies “Nee, want ek glo nie in utopie  nie. Heeltemal goed of mooi k n die wêreld tog nooit word nie. Maar hy kan darem altyd ’n bietjie beter gemaak word as wat hy is. En as ek nie help om daardie moontlikheidjie oop te hou nie, dan bly alles net by bloed” (Kennis, 298). The tiring effect of endlessly carrying on is striking in *’n Oomblik in die Wind*. I can feel Elisabeth’s desperate exhaustion as she utters: “So ’n lang reis wat vir jou en my nog voorl . O God, o God” (OW, 79). Perseverance is central to their journey: “Ons sal aanhou, ons sal uithou. Ons sal die anderkant bereik. S  loop die lyne oor jou hand: daar is altyd hoop” (OW, 146). Endurance is regarded as their condition: “Hulle hou maar aan, deur die koue nagte en die vlamme dae [...] Ons moet net nie gaan l  nie. Om aan te hou; om te verduur. Dit is ons kondisie. Nie die oomblikke van ekstase nie, maar die nederige voortgaan wat sulke oomblikke verduurbaar maak (OW, 164). Even when it seems they have reached a final limit, they seem to be able to continue: “elke keer ’n uiterste; elke keer ’n kan-nie-meer-nie, en dan t g weer respyt, ’n bietjie aanhou, ’n inskuifel in die niet in” (OW, 166). In *Inteendeel*, Estienne is frequently motivated to follow through with his plans and dreams. Jeanne tells him: “Jy moet aanhou [...] Dit sal dwaas wees om nou op te hou. Bly droom. Wees geduldig. Wees ongeduldig. Hou aan” (Inteendeel, 39). Philida’s walk to freedom is depicted as endless as well: “Dan loop jy weer aan. Altyd aner en aner. Tot jy naand wragtig nie meer kan nie en sommer loop l  waar jy jou l  kom kry” (Philida, 37). On their way to the Gariep, Philida states: “Ons moet net uithou en aanhou [...] Dis so donnerse lang pad [...] Aan en aan trek ons [...] Ons hou uit. Ons hou aan. Dit is plek-plek self ’n woestyn waardeur ons trek, soos Moses s’n of nog erger, ’n woestyn met baie name en hulle loop almal aanmekaar. Maar met of sonder naam,  rens moet hy end kry.  rens kry alles end” (Philida, 302-303).

Characters’ progress, albeit slow and little, is foregrounded. The notion of endless progress and advancement is central in Djébar’s work. “[L]’ ternit  de ce paysage me sourit presque,” the narrator in *Vaste est la prison* announces. (Vaste, 50). When running down the street whilst sobbing the loss of her grandmother, the narrator in *L’Amour, la fantasia* expresses that she has been thrown into a “[p]ropulsion interminable” (AF, 271-272). The narrator in *Nulle part* signals that this interminable movement embodies her literary muse: “une Sainte-Fiction de progr s, toujours-en-progr s, en incertitudes, en mouvement autonome...” (NP, 451).

It is again the idea of progress, and not the destination, that is signalled in Brink's oeuvre. In *Kennis van die Aand*, Josef walks into the 'forbidden' farmhouse as a child at night. He enounces: "Voetjie vir voetjie het ek gevorder [...] Ek het niks gesoek nie, ek wou nêrens uitkom nie, ek het net al dieper ingedring" (Kennis, 35). When Josef decides to part ways with Beverley, it is again the idea of a passage or an advancement that is suggested in his motivation: "Wat ek gekies het, was onsekerheid en onvervuldheid, wisselvalligheid, verandering; wat ek gekies het, was moontlikheid bo sekerheid, hoop bo vervulling, en swerf bo enige kans van aankoms by 'n bestemming" (Kennis, 172). Josef additionally likens his progress to the notion of being 'on his way'. On his way to prison, Josef observes: "Ek was nog nie dood nie. Ek was in 'n vangwa op pad Kaap toe. Op pad [...] Ek is nog hier, ek hou nog. Sónder stok of staf ter vertroosting in die donker vallei, hou ek nog" (Kennis, 263). Being 'on his way' means he is surviving. He is still on a passage, in the present continuous, and has not reached an end yet. The idea of continuous progress again comes to the forefront in a conversation Josef has with Jessica about who you are. He asks her: "Weet mens dit ooit? 'Is' jy ooit iemand? Is jy nie maar altyd op pad nie?", Jessica replies: "Miskien. Maar dan moet ek—hoe moet ek sê?—*byhou* met my op pad wees. My oë moet oop wees, ek moet weet wat gebeur" (Kennis, 284). Adam and Elisabeth also reflect on being 'on their way'. When Elisabeth develops a bad cough, the narration notes: "en tog is hulle op pad, die verblyf is net tydelik [...] Hulle is op pad. Hulle leef in aanraking met verlede en toekoms, en probeer dit nie meer ontken nie" (OW, 122). It is again their progress that is of importance: "Maar hulle het aan die gang gebly, en dit was die belangrikste. Daar was selfs iets opgetoë in hul trek, 'n snaakse irrasionele blydskap: kyk, ons kry swaar, maar ons laat ons nie onderkry nie; ons kom deur" (OW, 126). My experience as trail runner and hiker renders the description of their process very familiar:

Daar was iets prils, liggaamliks omtrent die ervaring van net maar aan te stap en aan te stap oor die lang vlakke tussen die reekse berge: 'n bewustheid van ledemate—van voete wat strek en trap, kuitspiere, bobene, die klein spiertjies in die lieste; van arms wat beweeg, 'n rug wat rem teen die pakkaas op die skouers—en óm hulle die geweld en stilte van die ruimte, boggels van heuwels gebleik in die son, gras, verskrompelde bosse, troppies geharde bome, uitspanse. Onmeetbare vordering, maar elke dag, elke staanplekkie, tog 'n bietjie nader—aan iets. (OW, 126)

Estienne also illuminates the slow and unmeasurable progress of his journey: "En al die tyd vorder ek langzaam, langzaam, op die golwe van jou storie: altyd stroomop, nader en nader aan die oorsprong, jy. Party dae lê ek myle af. Op ander dae [...] vorder ons skaars 'n paar voet, *voire* 'n paar duim. Maar

elke duim daarvan, verseker ek jou, verdien ek in vreugde en ontbering, in vullis en vermoëienis, ekstase” (Inteendeel, 290). Philida also asserts that the destination is of little importance, as she too experiences the beauty of progress on their journey to the Gariep:

Maar ons is nie haastig nie. Ons weet waarnatoe ons op pad is en ons weet ons gaan daar kom, al vat dit lewenslank [...] Heeltyd, treetjie vir treetjie, trek ons deur die land. Maar af en toe gebeur ’n aardige ding, veral wanneer ons die slag by iemand op ’n wa sit: dan voel dit asof dit ons is wat op een plek bly trap en die veld wat verbykom, agteruit, soos ’n tamaai bol wol wat stadigaan afgerol word en wat heeltyd solank hy rol, nuwe kleure en patrone maak, van liggeel en bruin en effens groen, dan ligblou, diepblou, donkerblou tot pers, heeltyd, om nooit te vergeet nie, so mooi dat jy eintlik daarna verlang voor dit nog verby is. (Philida, 297)

Her focus on the progress and movement of her physical expedition makes her attentive to her own figurative journey. She depicts how she in a sense shares in the Gariep river’s everflowing progress:

En hier is ek, kan jy sê, binne-in hom. Maar jy kan ook sê: Met elke tree kom ek nader. Miskien kom ons nooit met onse seer voete daar uit nie. Maar met elke tree kom ons tog nader. [...] Ons kom nader. Ek kan nie eens meer sê aan wat nie, maar ek weet ons kom nader. Al kom ons nêrens *uit* nie, kom ons heeltyd nader. (Philida, 310)

My sensitivity to language illuminates the use of comparative adjectives (“ons kom *nader*”) within the descriptions of character’s advancement. As he watches how Jessica runs away in his dream, Josef observes: “Die lang konvooi begin weer wegry oor die sand, wegry oor die sand, wegter en wegter” (Kennis, 12). Dilpert’s conviction that you can never reach your limits raises the idea of continuity as well. Evoking his words, Josef experiences how he is still able to go “further”: “Nou was ek moeg. Nou was ek alleen. Ek het gedink: Ek kan nie verder nie. En toe het ek gedink: Nee, ek kan verder. Dilpert het gesê: Mens kan altyd, jy bereik nooit jou grens nie” (Kennis, 256). I believe that for Adam in *’n Oomblik in die Wind*, freedom similarly lies within a never-ending comparative ‘state’. He ponders the idea of freedom: “dié nag het ek al geweet: soontoe lê die Vryheid. Al soontoe-er. Maar presies waar begin dit dan, anderkant watter berg, oorkant watter rivier? Waar hou die suide op met trek aan ’n mens, soos ’n gety, ingesuijg soos deur wind: diékant toe, mens toe, kindwees toe?” (OW, 16). Within his quest for freedom, Adam realizes that it remains unreachable. Freedom will forever be ‘further’ or ‘more’ in a certain direction. It is a continuous passage in which you are constantly drawn. The notion of continuation in the comparative forms part of their journey: “Nou moet hulle verder, môre. Daar is in elke verdergaan iets van die eerste keer” (OW, 26). When they come across signs that point to the presence of other people, Adam suggests that they move *deeper* within the forest. The use of

comparative adjectives is again significant: “Sy wil sê: Ja. Verder. Inner. Laat ons uitkom by die pit, deur al die groen jaarringe, laat ons in die hart van die raaisel staan, deurstraal van die lig wat hier gloei. Laat ons iets vind. Laat ons self net nader kom aan iets, net voel dis binne bereik, dit kán aangeraak word” (OW, 102). After discovering an elephant carcass, the anguish of moving ever deeper within the forest is accentuated:

Daar is ang in hul voortgan. Die bos het die luminositeit van die eerste keer, maar in sy lig is hy onbegrypliker, ongrypbaarder, as in somberder donkerte; die oopte van sy geheim is verbysterend. Hulle weet nie eens waarna hulle werklik soek nie—maar dit maak dit onstellender. Hoe sou hulle dan weet wanneer hulle gevind het? Wat is ‘vind’ hier, op dié bloedspoor? Groter vernieling, of groter stilte? Inner in die bos in, dring hulle. Maar hy is eindeloos, rigtingloos. Hoe weet mens as jy in sy inte is? (OW, 101)

The employment of comparative adjectives moreover stresses the fact that they have, similarly to Josef in *Kennis van die Aand*, not reached an end yet. Even though their final destination might be “closer,” they nevertheless have to continue “further”: “Sy dink; die siel het ver gereis, en is moeg, en wil rus [...] Dit is nog nie die einde nie. Daar lê berge voor: hulle moet daar oor. Hulle moet verder. Die Kaap kom nou nader; maar hulle is nog nie daar nie [...] Hulle is nie eens bly daaroor nie. Hulle ry maar net aan. Geledig, ánderkant ontgoëling, deur ’n landskap van gestroopte pyn” (OW, 180). It is the prospects of what lies further that keeps them going (OW, 144). For Adam and Elisabeth, like many other characters within the chosen Brink and Djebbar corpus (OS, 50; NP, 441; Vaste, 260) traveling ‘further’ means traveling towards the horizon:

Om so kaartloos deur die wêreld te trek, horison toe: jy weet eintlik nie eens in watter rigting jy trek nie, dis net agter die son se ondergaan aan [...] Maar kom jy ooit daar uit?—jy kan nie eens jou vordering bereken nie [...] Al waarvan jy kan aflei dat jy verder gaan, is dat jou bene moeër word, moeiliker om te versit [...] Dis asof jy jou greep verloor. Asof jy vanself aanhou, net aanhou, teen jou eie honger en dors in, teen jouself in, teen jou bitter wil in: dit sal soveel makliker wees om net te gaan lê en nie weer op te staan nie. (OW, 153)

The horizon is similarly portrayed as threatening in *Ombre Sultane*: “Sur la ligne d’horizon noyée, l’œil de l’aurore darde sur nous sa menace” (OS, 11). Its continual deferment is moreover described as murderous: “Voortdurende uitstel, voortdurende beweging. Geen hoop nie, geen leniging nie, net die moontlikheid om voetjie vir voetjie oor die harde aarde aan te skuifel horison toe: nooit heeltemal daar uit te kom nie, maar ook nooit heeltemal te bly staan nie. En die verste wat ons kan uitreik, die meeste waarop ons kan hoop, is om te wonder of die horison wat ons sien werklik die einde is” (OW, 154-155).

The horizon continues to be their focus as it challenges them further. The narration points out how “mens se oë raak seer van die uitdaging van die horison, jy leer nederiger loop” (OW, 157); and how they would watch the horizon with burning eyes in search of some sort of sign (OW, 172). At a point they feel as though the horizon has won and has taken over their journey. I am captivated by the delineation: “Die horison het oorgeneem. Wat oorbly, is net die loop self: pure, doellose beweging: die swaai van maer bene, die effense roei van dun arms, die neersit van seer voete toegedraai in velle, asemhaling, sweetpatrone oor vel waar die vuilheid vasgekors sit en die kruppel hond op hul hakke [...] Toenemende lusteloosheid. En ’n soort verwondering oor stilte en ruimte” (OW, 163). The destination or goal is no longer important. What matters is their movement through space. It is not a movement towards a specific place or an escape from something. It is just that: movement. And in the acknowledgement of pure movement, and not the goal of movement, they are able to marvel at the silence and space that surround and fill them. Elisabeth affirms: “In die stil voortknaag van die alledaagse pyn ontdek ek dit ook: die wanhopige weet dat ek lewe. Ek is op pad. Net dit. Die horison bly onbereikbaar, dis gegewe. Maar ek is op pad. En sonder dié wanhoop sou ek nie kon aanhou nie. Daarsonder sou ek nie eens weet dat ek is nie” (OW, 164).

The idea of continuously moving forward is also implied in *Inteendeel*. Estienne reiterates how he is adamant in forever going further: “Verder, altyd verder” (Inteendeel, 201). The idea is again repeated in the last paragraph of the novel: “Laat ons maar suutjies verder gaan, want vanjaar is daar nie voëls in verlede jaar se neste nie” (Inteendeel, 301). Estienne finds peace in his continuous movement without a destination. He equates his freedom to a never-ending movement of ‘becoming’: “Ek kan lees, eet, skyt, pis, sing. Soos ek gaan, kan ek kyk, ruik, voel, luister, proe. Ek word beluister, beruik, bevoel, bekyk, beproe. Miskien is ek vry. Estienne Barbier: wat ek ook al bestem is om te wees, is ek vinning aan die word” (Inteendeel, 282). Similar notions of ‘becoming’ are raised in Djébar’s work as well: her narrators frequently signal the notion of being spatially situated at a type of start or beginning (NP, 438). “Je me sens bien seule,” the narrator in *L’Amour, la fantasia* declares, “je me perçois complète, intacte, comment dire, ‘au commencement’, mais de quoi, au moins de cette pérégrination” (AF, 164). This ‘commencement’ inspires freedom and movement, or as Isma so eloquently observes: “Bruit d’ailes là-haut dans le pigeonier, la liberté commence; plus exactement, elle s’appête à commencer” (OS, 213).

The image of infinite movement is also suggested by notions of circles in the texts. At a time when Elisabeth wishes to give up, she remembers that she was the one who insisted on returning to the Cape in order to “come full circle”. She observes:

Die stilte is oorverdoewend in my. Dit was vóór ons hier; dit sal bly. Ja, ek onthou alles. In my niks is alles saamgedring: dis ek wat weet, dis ek wat hoor: sonder my sal die land nie eens weet van homself nie [...] Ek het tog self gesê: die sirkel moet voltooi word. In my is alles sinvol of vergeefs. Ek kan besluit. Dié vryheid gee jy my. Jy wil hê ek moet die pyn deurgrond, nie daaraan te gronde gaan nie. (OW, 157)

The notion of coming full circle is often raised in *Duiwelskloof* as well. The circle motif is accentuated through similar situations and repeating scenarios throughout the novel (*Duiwelskloof*, 11, 35, 38, 40, 92, 363). It appears that Flip finds himself in a type of spiraling maze he cannot master. The image of a loop again comes to mind when Flip reflects on the probability of everything he has seen in the valley: “Alles so onwaarskynlik soos die geraamte van ’n walvis in die berge. En tog was ek daar, ek het dit self gesien, ek het ’n stukkie been tussen my vingers verskilfer. Beteken *dit* iets? Of is ek besig om in my eie storie in te groei soos ’n toonnael?” (*Duiwelskloof*, 362). Flip suggests that he is ‘looping’ back into the story; he is becoming part of it as he starts to believe the improbabilities. This circular image of movement within one’s story is also raised in *Kennis van die Aand*: “vroeër, op die plaas en in die Kaap en oorsee, het my lewe vorentoe geloop, ’n min of meer reguit lyn soos enige kroniek: maar nou, vandat ek terug is, begin ek terugspiraal verby al my vorige momente, nou begin ek teer op my mites” (*Kennis*, 218). Circular or never-ending movements is also suggested by references made to chameleons in some of the novels. Piet-Snot hands Flip a chameleon for luck and observes his slow movement: “Teen wil en dank het ek die groen dingetjie in my hand geneem. [...] Na ’n oomblik het hy teen my hempsmou begin opkruip, voetjie vir voetjie, asof hy oor elke treetjie eers wik en weeg” (*Duiwelskloof*, 79). Flip recalls the Khoikhoi legend of how chameleons mistakenly brought the message of death, and not of never-ending life, into the world (*Duiwelskloof*, 110). The chameleon’s news of the circle of life³⁸⁵ is mentioned in *Philida* too: “Wat lewe, gaan dood, en lewe dan weer van nuuts af, en niks is ooit klaar en verby nie [...] Dis wat die trapsoetjies vir die mense moet loop sê. ’n Boodskap van hoop wat nooit ophou nie [...] die trapsoetjies se loop en loop en loop sonder om moeg of haastig te

³⁸⁵ Adam also alludes to the circle of life when he observes a new branch growing out from a dead tree trunk in the forest: “Dan sit hulle maar weer saamgebondel en wag. Hy bekyk die stam waarop hulle sit: seker honderd, honderd-en-vyftig voet lank [...] Duknat het dit verrot: ’n voosheid wat in die pit van die swaar hout opgekruip en dit uitgehol het. Maar waar dit uit die wortelstomp losgeruk het, groei daar al weer ’n hoë jong boom met ’n armdikte stam—’n eie soort ewigheid. Sy ouma Seli sou daarvan gehou het” (OW, 111).

word” (Philida, 267-268). The circular notion of their message of infinity and the calmness of their comportment and movement remind of a Buddhist form of meditation in which focus is placed on balance, acceptance, harmony, and peace.

This continual progress, carrying on, moving ever further towards the horizon, and following a spiral course all emphasize the idea of infinite movement. I find Philida’s perception of how her journey will continue ad infinitum especially consuming. In a similar fashion to Elisabeth in *’n Oomblik in die wind*, she stresses how, in your infinite movement, you are forever part of the land:

Maar hier waar ons nou loop, is nie ’n plek op ’n kaart nie. Dis net sand en pure klip, en dit brand jou voete gaar. Dis asof hierdie hele land aan mens se voetsole vassit. Dit sal saam met ons gaan waar ons ook al loop. Ons sal nooit weer daarvan loskom nie. Dalk wil ons ook nie. (*Philida*, 306)

The need to endlessly carry on is eminent in most of the novels, but I find the incentive for movement accentuated by Adam and Elisabeth in *’n Oomblik in die Wind* to be most significant. The narrator remarks: “Maar mens moet die nag kan inloop. Nie ’n kwessie van verbeelding nie, maar van geloof” (OW, 82). It is a question of faith, and not imagination, that drives them forward. It is faith that serves as impetus for each step forward: “Daar is in elke verder-gaan iets van die eerste keer: ’n kwessie van geloof” (OW, 117). The opposition between imagination and faith is again reiterated in the last paragraph of the novel: “Kom, sou hy dink, aangeraak deur die wilde wind. Die land wat in ons gebeur het, dít sal niemand van ons kan afneem nie, nie eens onself nie. Maar God, daar’s nog so ’n lang reis om af te lê. Nie ’n kwessie van verbeelding nie, maar van geloof” (OW, 199). The repetition, “Nie ’n kwessie van verbeelding nie, maar van geloof”, is noteworthy. What is the distinction between imagination and faith? Both rely on the evocation of images or notions that stretch beyond our current reality. Yet why are they so adamant in counting on the one and not the other? Can faith perhaps be regarded as something part of a higher order? An ‘other side’ that, albeit invisible and beyond reach, seems more certain? Faith relates to a bigger entity whereas imagination is dependent on your own words, thoughts, and limitations? Can it therefore be assumed that it is faith that motivates their movement for, to paraphrase Estienne’s words, faith lies beyond that which can be named (Inteendeel, 103)? I believe that the information given by the author after the representation of archival records offers a possible answer for the postcritical reader:

Wie is hulle? [...] Maar dit gaan nie om geskiedenis nie. Dit gaan om daardie handjievool reëls wat by die feite verbypraat. Dié woorde: *Dit sal niemand van ons*

kan afneem nie. Of dié: So 'n lang ontdekkingsreis, o God. Dáárom moet mens die windsels afstroop. Nie maar om dit oor te vertel of te herskep nie; maar om dit oop te maak en van nuuts af te laat gebeur. Om deur die land te reis soos dit sou kon gewees het: terug: terug na die hoë berg bokant die klein dorp van duisend huisies teen die see, in die wind. Terug deur die woeste en leë land—wie is ek? Wie is jy? —sonder om te weet wat jy gaan kry, as al die instrumente verwoes is deur die wind, as al die joernale vergaan het in die wind: terug. Dis nie 'n kwessie van verbeelding nie, maar van geloof. (OW, 11-12)

The protagonists of the texts, be it Adam or Elisabeth, Josef, Flip, Estienne or Philida, or any of the narrators in Djébar's work, all find themselves in a continuing movement through space. What propels them forward differs: it might be a quest for freedom, reason, adventure, a need to escape, a belief (faith) and not only an imagination that something better exists on the horizon, or it might simply be a movement without purpose or destination: mere, but absolute movement through space. As a reader of this movement, I also have role to play. Their stories, and the spaces through which they travel, should not, as the text here suggests, be merely imagined: it should be believed. It is not a question of imagination, of bringing to mind, imagining, telling and recreating. It is rather a matter of faith: the spaces should be regarded as a certainty that opens up to create anew. The reader is encouraged to undergo a lived experience of these spaces.

7.5 An impress of spaces

This postcritical reading allowed me to consider both myself and the representation of spaces in the chosen novels as co-actors within my reading practice. I was able to examine how my own background, my idioculture or impress, steered my interpretation of spaces. I also investigated the effect the depiction of spaces had on me: what the spaces in the novels call forth, render possible and unfurl.

The greatest difference between my critical postcolonial reading and the current postcritical reading can perhaps be pinpointed to the idea of open possibility: where my postcolonial reading encouraged me to limit and in a sense to fix my attention on certain 'problematic' representations of space, my postcritical reading offered me freedom. I was able to stand back from the texts to purely, but not necessarily facilely, determine how and why the representations of space influence me and my reading. This change in perspective with regards to space in the novels allowed me to focus less on the negative lack that spaces possibly signal (inadequacies, silences, gaps, and deserts), and more on the possibility

offered by these 'lacks' or openings. My postcritical approach also guided me in changing the critical way I would have regarded characters' movement through space: their movement is not only significant for being a flight to, escape from, or longing for a specific place. It should be appreciated for what it is: pure continuous movement. Full stop. It is this realization that allows me to be struck, moved, impressed, and imprinted by the representations of space in the novels, for I immerse myself within them: I feel that I am taking part, or at least continuing, the characters' endless journeys. It is this postcritical awareness that permits me to stand next to the narrator in *Nulle part* and express: "Enfin le silence. Enfin toi seule et ta mémoire ouverte. Et tu te purifies par des mots de poussière et de braises. Tatouée, tu marches sans savoir où, l'horizon droit devant. C'est cela, jusqu'à l'horizon!" (NP, 441). It is this perspective that allows me to discover, together with Philida, how spaces forever cling and stick to my feet (Philida, 308). And just like Philida, I realize that I don't want to get rid of it.

Chapter eight: Immersed in spaces: A conclusion

This thesis set out to examine and compare the role of space in the works of African literary duo, Assia Djebar and André Brink. Despite the various similarities found in the *œuvres* of these two writers, little research exists that compares their work. The existing research on the individual *œuvres* of Djebar and Brink is limited to analyzing space from a ‘critical’ tradition of postcolonialism, deconstruction, post-structuralism, and feminism. These literary criticisms explored in Chapter two can often be characterized as ‘applications’ of theories to the authors’ novels. The existing ‘critical’ responses to my mind fall short in determining the role of space in their work for the analyses are often restricted by theoretical frameworks that steer the critic’s interpretation into a type of suspicious reading practice. The lack of a comparative investigation as well as the abundant ‘critical’ applications to space in their work validates the intention of this thesis. By comparing the representation and the production of spaces in their texts, I believe to have been able to contribute to the body of critical work on their *œuvres*. By moreover comparing a ‘critical’ postcolonial approach to a ‘postcritical’ reading of space in their work, I have sought to explore the current theoretical debate concerning the popular rhetoric of critique.

In the study, I firstly aimed to theoretically define space from a narratological perspective. In Chapter three I demonstrated that space is not merely presented as the background of a story, but that it is regarded as an active participant within the fabula. In Chapter four, the notion of space was considered from a ‘critical’ postcolonial perspective. I pointed to various definitions and approaches on space, place, and landscape to explore its role in postcolonial theory. I established that the notion of space is often intertwined with concepts such as identity, language, power, and gender. This ‘critical’ framework was used to guide my postcolonial reading practice of the representation of space in Djebar and Brink’s chosen novels in Chapter five.

After investigating the association between space and characters’ identities in Chapter five, I demonstrated the similar portrayal of spatial boundaries, the possession of space as well as the notion of isolation within the chosen novels. I indicated that both Djebar and Brink’s texts emphasize the

symbiotic relationship that exists between characters' identities and their surrounding environments: the importance of a deep connection (or on occasions a significant lack of a connection) with a specific place is highlighted to form a 'sense of place'. Their novels moreover commonly depict characters' desire to cross borders, barriers, and thresholds into an often unreachable 'Other Side'. In my examination of the representation of the possession of spaces within the novels, I signaled how the violence associated with the process of colonization is often accentuated. Where Brink's work proposes the difficulty in naming, mapping, mastering, and controlling the feminized African land, Djébar's novels however frequently emphasize the colonizer's success in conquering or violating the country. Finally, the investigation of spatial isolations within the authors' novels presented confinements as both a form of imprisonment and empowerment. The study demonstrated that it is often character's sense of exclusion that rouses them to action and that propels them forward on their quests in search of liberating spaces.

Reflecting on my postcolonial reading of Brink and Djébar's work, I realized that the 'critical' theories and concepts I employed to help structure my argument, limited my perspective by often focusing my attention on the 'inadequacy' of spaces. The work of theorists such as Levinas, Kristeva, Bhabha, Derrida, and Glissant all encouraged me to centre my analysis on the unreachable, forever relational, rhizomatic, 'in-between' space in which characters often find themselves. The conclusion of my postcolonial reading in a way inevitably pointed to spaces that cannot be represented, grasped, or accessed. 'Ultimate' spaces in which characters can be 'wholly' included and experience a sense of 'absolute' freedom or identification are continually deferred. By focussing on what spaces cannot do, or which spaces cannot be reached, I was left, like many of Brink and Djébar's characters, in an 'in-between' space.

The acknowledgement of the limiting 'critical' postcolonial framework led me to explore a 'postcritical' framework in Chapter six. I presented the current rhetoric of critique's qualities and limits and demonstrated various critiques on the hermeneutics of suspicion. After having explored different alternatives to critique, I emphasized the advantages of a 'postcritical reading' as an alternative interpretation method that is predominantly based on the works of Felski, Latour, Citton, and Macé.

This postcritical framework served as a basis for the analysis of space in Brink and Djébar's texts in Chapter seven. By adopting a 'postcritical stance,' I was motivated to rethink various practices of the critical approach that steered my investigation in Chapter five and to acknowledge my active participation within my reading practice. I sought to offer an analysis in which I acknowledged my deep involvement, absorption, and immersion within the chosen texts' representation of spaces. This required me to define and confirm both the representation of spaces within the texts and myself as co-actors within this interpretation. After having established my idioculture within the reading event, I investigated, as Felski (2015: 152, 182) proposes, what the representation of space creates, builds, and makes possible in the authors' work. I aimed to examine how Brink and Djébar's representation of spaces steers me toward particular reactions or moods. I was able to consider the effect their depiction of spaces had on me. The change from a critical postcolonial point of view to a postcritical perspective allowed me to be less concerned with the 'inadequacies' and problematic representation of spaces, and to rather be marked and impressed with the possibility offered by these representations. It motivated me to not focus on space as it relates to something else (a lack of identity, an exclusion, a flight to, or escape from), but to appreciate the effect the representation of space has on me, be it empathy, sympathy, recognition, absorption, disorientation, recognition, or identification. The postcritical stance allowed me to be immersed by the texts. I could shamelessly become absorbed within the characters movement through spaces and felt myself moving with them.

This study demonstrated not only the need for comparative studies of African literatures, but also the value of approaching literary texts from a postcritical framework. I have been immersed in the spaces offered in Brink and Djébar's work, but there are many spaces that are left underexplored. These spaces motivate me to say, to borrow Adam's words from *'n Oomblik in die wind*: "Kom [...] Die land wat in ons gebeur het, dít sal niemand van ons kan afneem nie, nie eens onself nie. Maar God, daar's nog so 'n lang reis om af te lê. Nie 'n kwessie van verbeelding nie, maar van geloof" (OW, 199).

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