

# The envisioning of spatio temporal element english literature essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



It is one of the area in which the change in perception felt in André Brink's post-apartheid novels that is worth exploring. The fascination with land and the theme of space in general has always inscribed South African narratives. It is, then an area of interest to investigate the ways in which the envisioning of space has followed this redirection of narratives towards a post modernist stance. When it comes to the topic of space, it has become common to consider the contribution of Paul Virilio in his perception of space in relation to change. He asserts that: A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions or political apparatuses. A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language, and on space. In *Other Lives*, the theme of space is featured in two ways. There is first the issue of space and its implications on the individual. Space becomes a definer of identity. In this respect, space is visualized in terms of its affects/effects on the individual. Space is no longer a well-shaped entity; it is rather marked with evasiveness and boundary-free. In line with this assumption comes Sadeq Rahimi's article "Identities without a Reference: Towards a Theory of Posthuman Identity" in which he puts forward the idea of the shrinking time and he links it to the identity construction. He defines the postmodern identity as ineluctably marked with temporal locatedness and virtual geography or even virtual space. However, in this novel, we witness the absence of a defined space. As a matter of fact, David finds difficulty in having his own space. Hard though he tries to own one, the reality of his situation prevents him from doing so. Maybe it is due

to the fact that David, a white South African man, is torn between two factors. From an ethnic perspective, he cannot be considered as a postcolonial subject considering his skin color. But at the same time, he is a postcolonial subject since South Africa was a British colony. This is one of the reasons that add to the frustrations felt by South Africans along with their traumatic past caused by years of racial separatism. On the other hand, the theme of space is inscribed in *Other Lives* as part of a "new" paradigm in the new "rainbow nation". In fact, the element of space is foregrounded in this novel in the way it is visualized in the dichotomy of urban/ ghetto. This dichotomy is meant to expose the morality of dispossession and forceful removals of the black population groups. The transition that can be felt in this paradigm is that South Africa has always been depicted otherwise. In other words, the South African landscape was essentially portrayed as a barren land and peopled by bush men contrasted with white settlements or farms tamed by white settlers. *Other Lives* still holds to a dichotomy to a different one. There is no place for the old dichotomy but rather a new paradigm that describes South Africa as an urban place which perfect scenery is marred by ghettos. In the consideration of the notion of space with reference to *Other Lives*, it would be interesting to draw on Paul Virilio's articulation on the issue of space for it may be pertinent to the outlook of the spatial analysis of the novel. In his conception of space, the construction of the city or the birth of a city, a political territory, brings about an artificial activity or an artificial construction of the space. He contends that the act of creating a space is antagonistic to the individual. In other words, the creation of a space must be carried through at the expense of the individuals. In

Other Lives, the modern and technology-oriented city of the Cape erection was detrimental to the black community that used to occupy the space. The project of the post-apartheid South Africa is to build a new nation where "apartness" gives room for "togetherness". This enterprise has a dark side though. At one moment in the novel, Steve tells how in order to safeguard the interests of developers and his own as well, he had to push away graves of slaves: Towards the end of our excavations on the site, for the massive foundations, we unearthed some old unmarked graves. (...) there was only one solution: all evidence of the graves had to disappear. Literally overnight. (...) the few bags of human bones that had been found were re-interred in a hastily dug grave right on the boundary of the property. (...) it was concluded that the human remains of several skeletons from unmarked graves may have been those of slaves once attached to the refreshment post once known as Papenboom (...)" (Other Lives. 102-103) This episode is analogous to the current practices that push early established settlements to the periphery in order to erect new and urbanized cities. The ghetto includes the pariah of the new South Africa whose presence is aberrant and irksome to the new bourgeois of the society. The choice of words and adjectives with which the narrator describes the people who surround his new building best evinces this "ghettoization" of the black community. Their presence seems to be undesirable and the white community feels "driven to despair by their presence". (101) The concept of space in the postmodern thought is sometimes tantamount to that of time. It is interesting to dwell on the intersection of both notions in Other Lives so much so there are different instances where the effect of this intersection is a highly determinant of the

evolution of the characters. The idea of the intersection between space and time joins Sadeq Rahimi's concept of acceleration. Now, we speak of space of time or we count distance using time referents." Remote from the world, we huddle in our small pool of light in the dark. Less than two hours from Cape Town, yet light-years removed." (Other Lives, 218)The issue of identity is tightly linked to locality and spatial reference. Identity can be defined in connection and identification with a space. The problem that arises with the post modern condition is that the impact of modernity and modernization on space has now become more and more pronounced and fast. The environmental changes are characterized by speed. By extrapolation, identity is affected. Rahimi affirms that acceleration is inimical of the question of identity. In other words, identity is inseparable with the presence of a spatial reference to establish itself; however, the modern conceptualization of space which is identified by its accelerating potential inevitably affects identity construction. This act prevents identity from creating the balance it is made of, and, eventually, becomes either inexistent, or indeterminate. It is no wonder then, in a post modern setting that Other Lives depicts to find such characters as David Leroux whose identity is ambiguous and schizophrenic at times. His identity is related to the speed with which the city of the Cape has changed. In this section, it is important to analyze the nexus between the shape of a given space and the human psyche. In psychological terms, the symbolism of a house..... As a matter of fact, buildings are the projection of the human psyche into the outer environment. The house as it looks externally comes to represent the persona as that aspect of ourselves that

we display to the world. Choosing a small cottage to indulge in his hobby is reflexive of the image of himself that David desires to give to the world. " But I needed a space, whether physical or emotional, that would be mine only, that was inaccessible to the rest of the world. Perhaps it was simply the consequence of growing up in such a big family." (Other Lives, 13)The question of space in Other Lives can be disclosed from a different vantage point. Indeed, the relation between the space and the psyche of the human being is highly represented in the novel. By examining the way the implementation of closed spaces in the description of the setting in the three novellas one can come to the conclusion that not only human beings shape the space in which they evolve, but space itself shapes and mirrors the characters in this novel. This assumption refers us back to Henri Lefevre's understanding of the space.

### **Architecture and visual arts:**

A standard way of thinking about post modernism has it that architecture comes down as the first manifestation of this trend. As a matter of fact, in 1970, Andreas Huyssen purports in his article " Mapping the Postmodern"[1]that postmodernism gained preponderance mainly within the domain of architecture. It's articulation in literature was, according to him, less discernible during this particular period. But, before approaching the manifestations of post modernism in architecture and visual arts in Other Lives it will be requisite to understand how architecture, and to a lesser extent, visual arts commensurate with post modernism. The postmodernist architecture highlights the act of effortless eclecticism. In other words, they bear landmarks of other works without denying the fact of borrowing.

**Aesthetic amnesia or amnesis: " the application of amnesia as a poetic metaphor; therefore " a conception of reality encompassed within the allusions of such metaphor"[2]**

Delusions of grandeur typify the postmodern architecture in the sense that they are the embodiment of this delusion of grandeur in *Other Lives* is vested in the work of Steve. At several moments in the novel, Claremont Heights is referred to as " an enormous building" (22) but when it comes to the interior, nothing seems to be working. Behind its substantial size, though, it is inscribed by dysfunctional (*Other Lives*, 24) where everything is " out of order"..... With postmodern architecture, there is a return of " wit, ornament and reference to architecture of the past". The preponderance of references to architecture is highly noticeable in the novel so much so two of the major characters, Steve and Lydia, are architects. They are portrayed as two of the most influential architects that have changed the landscape of Cape Town. " The apartment building in Claremont looms ahead in the early dusk. I have never noticed before, but today I am struck by how much it resembles Brueghel's Tower of Babel- although there is nothing dilapidated about this one." (*Other Lives*, 22) Styles of past and present collide in postmodern aesthetic. This measure emerges as contrast to the functionalist and formalized shapes and spaces of earlier trends. The Claremont Heights, by extrapolation postmodernism in *Other Lives*, present no exception for they stand for this collision between different styles: It is majestic, it is awe-inspiring, it is magnanimous, it is outrageous, it is fun. (...) the Tower of Babel, as some envious slanderers will have it, or Fort Knox, or Gormenghast, or a cousin to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, or a

resurrection of a Mayan temple, or Angkor Wat, or a film set from Raiders of the Lost Art or Star Wars. My inspiration has been Escher, more than anyone else. It makes my spirit soar every time I come here. I feel like a child who has finished his first own Lego castle. (Other Lives, 101) This quotation does not only point to the post modern architecture proclivity towards eclecticism but also to another post modern practice which consists in the mixing of codes. What is meant here is that this mode tends to challenge modernist dogma by blurring the boundaries between high and low art. Here, the Mayan temple and the tower of Babel, that both are the epitome of great civilizations, are put on the same scale with an artificial film. The comparison of Claremont Heights with a Lego castle appertains to this mixing of codes. Post modern architecture displays a pungent sense of nostalgia as well. This is all the more true about other forms of art. Indeed, as it is best epitomized in the novel, art nouveau comes to .....

**Jenks holds that the syncretic approach to architecture and by extrapolation to culture is schizophrenic. This schizophrenia is characteristic to postmodernism.**

**The effect of late capitalism on space:**

At the dawn of democratic capitalism or what is referred to as the non-racial South Africa the ..... The evidence that South Africa has become a new capitalist society is apparent.

.....  
Jameson identifies postmodern space as: " There has been a mutation in the object unaccompanied as yet by any equivalent mutation in the subject. We do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace

(38) He goes further: This latest mutation in space — postmodern hyperspace — has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world (44)." In making this comment, Jameson argues that the outcome of capital accumulation is manifest in a world that the individual is somehow unable to locate himself within. Besides, the individual finds himself unable to control this space. Steve and Carla, for instance, humorously discuss this issue by pointing to their inability to fit into the new "rainbow nation" as they converse: "My poor deprived husband. I suppose you were never really meant for Africa, were you? (...) we'll always be misfits, my darling. The little lost white tribe of Africa." (Other Lives, 75)The question then becomes related to how we, as a species and as a society, must "mutate" in order to keep pace with this new postmodern space. I am particularly interested in his notion of "postmodern space" which has direct implications on the way we behave as individuals. There are two ways to consider the notion of space in the post modern thought. First, are people present or moving through space? Second, do people behave like architects in the way they define themselves as responsible for the definition of and the management of space. These questions are pertinent to the novel in the way that both stances can be depicted.

**I think that this mutation has been underway for some time now and while it is not yet complete, it is evident in the differences between the way that the older generations interact with the world in comparison to how the younger generations interact with the world. The mutation is related to, I believe, two primary components. First, there is the technological aspect. We have invented a variety of means through which space can be consumed in new, faster, and more comprehensive ways. Developments in transportation technologies have transformed the ways in which space is consumed, essentially through speed. The elevator or the lift allows the transcendence of the horizontal event, allowing a theoretically infinite expansion upwards of slightly varying realities.**

The depiction of the new South Africa has changed in the sense that it is no longer the barren land but a space that is pervaded by mass urbanization.

The following lines attest to the mutation that South Africa has been through: The enormous apartment building in Claremont looms ahead in the early dusk. I have never noticed it before, but today I am struck by how much it resembles Brueghel's Tower of Babel - although there is nothing dilapidated about this one. It is vast and solid, arrogantly modern, rising in layer, with yawning glass-and-chrome entrances on all four corners. As there are rows of cars queuing up to enter, I find a parking spot outside in a small side street, about a block away. (Other Lives, 22)The novel revisits history or the western historiography which establishes South Africa as a barren land before the coming of the Europeans. In the novel, this episode in the South African history is told as follows: I think of prehistoric times Nina has told me

about, when small communities of Khoi and San were living in this valley, always on the move, always coming back. Peaceful, yet with enough internecine violence to keep these valleys and mountains steeped in uneasy tension. Much later, the first nomadic white farmers arrived in this valley of Roodezandt, the Land of Waveren, with their memories of Europe and an ever more distant world they so urgently tried to transport with them, and experienced the inevitable clash with the otherness of Africa." (218-219)

### **Reality deconstructed:**

It is possible to speak of a post modernist project when it comes to the idea of deconstruction of grand narratives. Even though postmodernism does not endorse any political orientations, it is, nonetheless, akin on deconstructing the meta narratives established by the modernist dispensation. Desecrating grand narratives is celebrated by post modernists. One of the postulations of post modernism retrieves the idea of the real or reality as just a metanarrative in order to question and deconstruct it. Baudrillard's perspective on the matter is highly pertinent to this issue. As a matter of fact, he contends that the postmodern age is the locus and the producer of what he calls the hyperreal. The hyperreal, according to Baudrillard, is " that which is always already reproduced" (338). The hyperreal is a product of the media, in the sense that in the hyperreal world the media constitutes our reality and manufacture it with a capitalist logic. It is interesting to consider the hyperreal post structurally in the sense that its effect on language is concerned. Indeed, a critic contends:[i]n the world of the hyperreal, events and language lose fixed meanings and we can no longer say with confidence

what they mean because the meanings are generated as competing truth claims which, political in themselves, allow no access to the real[3]. Seeing its post modern vein, *Other Lives* presents the reader with various instances of this questioning of the real. Indeed, Brink manages to play with the notion of the real and reality through the use of different strategies. What seems to be real or unreal at first glance. As the novel progresses, the reader's expectations are shattered by a refutation of previously established truths. Brink has used the hallucinatory device of magic realism to try to capture, metaphorically, the sweep and chaos of contemporary reality. The life of David Le Roux is a typical example of this play with the idea of real and reality. As a matter of fact, the first novella tells the story of David who experiences a fantastic change in his life as he discovers that he shares his life with another family other than his with his wife Lydia: Just as I am about to unlock the blue door it swings open, and a slim young woman comes out onto the narrow stoep. She is dark of complexion ...All I know is that I have never seen her in my life before. Behind her, two small children ...both as dark and black-eyed as their mother, come running to me with shouts of glee. 'Daddy! Daddy!'(Other Lives, 17)However, in "Apassionata", the reader's conception of reality is blurred. The illusion of plausibility is debunked as Derek Hugo, the narrator of the third novella, describes his friend David to Nina Rousseau as: A very ordinary, decent kind of guy, on the surface. But you can tell there are hidden depths to him. Some years ago, married a coloured woman. A photographer. At the time, it was already legal, of course; still, it took guts to challenge the old white establishment. And they have the two most exquisite kids.(Other Lives, 212)The reader seems to

be lost whether to believe the first or the second version of the story. What seems to be real turns out to be fictional. Whether David is convinced of his being married to Lydia and conceives of his relationship with Sarah as a dream, Derek asserts the opposite. In a post modern condition, meaning is disseminated. So, the very conception of real and reality is accordingly impossible. In *Other Lives*, the characters tell their stories and convince themselves of their likelihood. Even though the three novellas are interwoven, there are disparities in the events. So, each narrator tries to convince the reader of his version of the story by convincing themselves first for they seem to lose control over their realities. By drawing on a quote of Milan Kundera, the first novella tries to provide a proof for the likelihood of the upcoming events: "Es muss sein! ... Es könnte auch anders sein"[4]. The epigraph to the novella "The Blue Door" can be translated into "it must be! It could not be otherwise." As if nothing had happened. (For one wild moment I think: perhaps nothing had happened. Perhaps it has all been part of the madness of this day.)" (*Other Lives*, 126) The confusion and rupture in the narrative structure are typical of the disruptive quality of post modern works. These features that inscribe the post modern mode are conspicuous in *Other Lives*. The story line of the novel is defined by its lack of linearity which leaves the reader alienated and confused. Deconstructing reality is achieved in *Other Lives* through two different strategies. First, the fluctuation between two different modes of representation (even though dispensing with representation is one of the post modernism premises) presents another example of the disruptive effect of post modernism in this novel. Second,

wavering between the real and the fantastical alienates the reader and prevents him from constructing a well-defined story line.

### **Narration style:**

The style of narration is a parameter that can be determinant of the mode of representation to which a novel adheres. *Other Lives*' narrative situation can be identified as a case of ' simultaneous present tense narration'[5].

Contrarily to a retrospective narration which relies on the ' live now and tell later' principle, the simultaneous present tense narration is a narrative in which the speaker tells the events as they take place. Some critics add that the narrating ' I' is also the experiencing ' I'. This aspect of the novel gives the sense of immediacy to the narrative since the narrator is giving an account of the events as they are lived. The reader is brought closer to the events of the story. This excerpt from the novel is illustrative of the above assumptions: Avoiding the kitchen, I hurry to the side door on the right to move directly into the wide garage, open the driver's door of the bright red Porsche, and slide in. as the muted, reassuring growl of the engine envelops me, I press the button to turn the revolving floor so that the car now faces the tilt-u door, which is raised at the same time, and drive out.(*Other Lives*, 91)In this passage, the narrator describes the situation as it occurs to him. He does not use the conventional tense for narration, that is the simple past, but the present tense. This choice of using the present tense in order to report the events is repeated throughout the novel. Brink's use of this type of narration does not present a conventional way of narrating a story.

Indeed, it is argued that in real life, one is bent on telling the events of things

that happened in the past using the past tense. Del Conte adds that this narrative form " does not have a clear, real world analogue." (Del Conte, 429) Thus, the divide between experiencing and narrating is blurred. This is one of the strategies that Brink deploys in his novel in order to undermine the idea of real and reality.

### **Real time vs. fantastic time:**

As mentioned in an earlier section, *Other Lives* complies with the tenets of postmodernism through its embrace of magical realism. However, this novel also presents some of the realistic mode standards. One should note here that, this section deals with the chronotope of the postmodern novel in which non-linear time and temporal displacement problematise the reality by questioning scientific laws that govern the time perspective of the modern world, and by questioning social and cultural constructions of time in post-apartheid South African society. The author problematizes the linear time perspective by using two historically discontinuous time frames. This paper will show how the novel successfully challenges modern assumptions about linear time, because at the ending the readers have to accept that the boundary between past and present are sometimes erased and that the two main characters may have been one identity, partly in the reality and partly in the fantasy realm.

**In Other Lives, there are no rational explanations for the time slips that occur between past and present and, to a lesser extent, between the three novellas. The novel is a problematisation of that rational thinking that seeks causality and linearity.' Non-linear time is incorporated in the fabric of the real not distanced from it, so the reader has to accept this concept of time in order to understand the novel:**

'In the chronotopes of postmodern novels, non-linear time and temporal displacement are often integral to the thematic structure and content of the novel: they are not just stylistic elements . . . they are designed to problematise scientific, social and cultural constructions of time, constructions that are associated with western concepts of reality.'[6]One of the instances that accounts for this problematisation of the linearity of time is the episode of the elevator in " the blue door" where the protagonist, David LeRoux, is caught up in the time warp. It is disquieting for both the narrator and the reader. This phantasmagoric scene is unnerving and mars the flow of the story. .... In this excerpt, the flow of time plays an important role. In fact, time seems to be flexible. It is elasticized or shrunk depending on the context. Brink presents David in two separate narrative spaces: the real world, and a dream world. The reader is transposed illogically from the perceptible to the imaginary, and what emerges at the end is the effort of the character to apprehend his identity. The transposition of past to the present time is one of the features of magical realism. The movement backward and forward in time alienates the reader and prevent him from setting a framework for the story. This strategy

estranges the reader from reality. In the novel, moments of reality, or what the narrators purport to be real, are interrupted by events from the past that are injected haphazardly into the flow of the story. In a self-reflexive gesture, the text refers to itself as in how it wavers between the real and the fantastic by a meticulous choice of examples. Indeed, as David recalls his first meeting with Lydia, the story is disrupted by the invocation of Embeth: " for me, it was a return to normality- no, not normality, but the mere possibility of a normality interrupted by Embeth." (Other Lives, 64) this quotation is provided by the writer as a justification for an earlier moment in the novel where he transposes the past with the present, the real with the unreal.

## **The re-articulation of the issue of the Other:**

### **1. Race and Gender paradigm exploded:**

In the abstract of her article " Reading Sex and Violence in André Brink's Rumors of Rain and A Dry White Season" Alice Brittan argues that the apartheid narratives by Brink are repository for articulating the injustices and violence inflicted on the black men and women's bodies in what came in the form of torture. She contends that Brink application of pornographic description to women's bodies and his " mak[ing] the sexuality of the female body abundantly available to the reader (as well as to the men of the novels, and a host of voyeurs) precisely because he cannot take the risk of turning the obscenity of torture into an object of aesthetic pleasure." (55) So, Brink's resolution to this bold choice of abusing the image of the female body was meant for the sake of representing a larger issue of the apartheid state which consisted in the violence used on the black people. In looking back at

the possible developments in South African literature since the transition, however, it is likely to point to the fact that this strategy of representing something by portraying another issue in a narrative has turned to be obsolete. This can be credited for two major reasons: the first one being the downfall of the apartheid regime with all its abominable practices. The second reason has to do with the rising incredulity towards representation. All dichotomies seem to be emptied of their meaning. The movement of transition is conspicuous in *Other Lives* in the way the characterization of women is configured. In earlier narratives, women used to be represented in a certain way that would reinforce the dichotomy of male/female whereby women were seen as a subaltern to their counterparts. However, with the dismantling of apartheid followed a conviction of dispensing with the old paradigms. In addition, the postmodern dispensation ushered in the idea of blurring distinctions. The male/female paradigm presents an interesting terrain for exploring the different ways in which the change in the South African narrative scene has taken place. The late entry of black women as actual actors and not merely shadows of men attest to the historical deprivation of social justice that marked apartheid novels. The characterization of women in post-apartheid narratives displays discrepancies with that of the previous period. It is in this area that the change in sensibility in the South African fiction is perceptible. It is argued, though, that André Brink's new interest in the representation of the female voice coincides less with the downfall of racism than with current trend in global gender politics and the privileging of previously marginalized subjectivities. The emergence of gender discourse may have propelled the

writer to re-establish the position of women in the new South African narrative scene. In *Other Lives*, women are characterized in such a way that they seem in total charge of their lives. With some exceptions, there is no distinction between a white and a coloured woman. And even though the three novellas are told by male characters, the female actors seem to take the lead especially when it comes to their bodies and sexualities. "

*Apassionata*", for instance, portrays a soprano, Nina Rousseau, who has become the fantasy of her pianist, who is none other than Derek, the narrator. .... The paradigm male/female is subverted in a different way in *Other Lives*. The fact is that in earlier novels by South African writers in general, and Brink especially portrayed women as frail and dependent on their male counterparts. This was not certainly blatant. Nevertheless, the act of claiming women's voice and standing up for their agency testifies to the fact that women in the time of racial separateness used to be considered differently than in the post apartheid South African novel. In the novel, ..... Women's sexualities and bodies were depicted as the property of men and women had no control over them. However, what is noticed in *Other Lives* is quite the opposite. Women are no longer afraid or ashamed of being exposed. They do it either consciously or with total consent. They use their bodies either to fulfill their sexual lust or to have control over their male partners. It was common in earlier novels to portray the body of a woman as a fetish when it comes to art. this tendency is reversed in this novel for ..... On the other hand, men are depicted in the opposite way. As a matter of fact, the male characters of *Other Lives* are put in the shoes of women in the way they deal with their

bodies and their sexuality. They express their uneasiness to the fact of being exposed. Nakedness is no longer a problem for women but for men. Having sexual intercourse is no longer a matter of obligation women are gently asked if they want to indulge in such an act or not. As a case in point, David asks Sarah if she is eager to have sex with him: " shall we try?' I ask quietly. If we examine the case of David and Steve we can see how this discomfort is depicted. David for example puts the fact of the invasion of his space by his wife Lydia on the same scale as being stripped naked in public. He talks about an episode of his childhood with a tone of bitterness. Steve cannot feel the threat of being black but instead highlights his nakedness and the strange feeling that accompanies this occurrence as he introspectively says: " this is my house , my bathroom, my bedroom; (...) I am naked. I am black. Where can I hide? (...) but I am black and naked." (Other Lives, 86)In the realist dispensation, Brink makes the body of the woman available to the reader as a way to compensate for the absence of the male black body and the torturous practices inflicted on their bodies. Brink substitutes the representation of the other by the representation of the body of the sexual other. As she sleeps, David describes Sarah's body with an eye for detail and specificity that borders upon a pornographic fascination. One of the themes in which Brink's literary sensibilities have also changed is the theme of representing the female body. To put it differently, the representation of the female sexuality has also manifested a movement of transition in the novels of André Brink. It is argued that in his apartheid narratives Brink proposes an overt description of the female body to the readers. His pornographic depiction makes the female sexuality profusely available to the readers.

Alice Brittan argues that Brink equates the text with the female body that attracts the reader to it. This is, actually, meant to provoke the reader in order to raise his political awareness to what really happened during apartheid. Another way to deconstruct the old paradigm is by emptying the dichotomy based on race. " Theoretically, my new appearance could even be an advantage. This is the new South Africa. Colour is (once again) important, even in an altered paradigm." (Other Lives, 88)

## **2. Voicing the silenced in Other Lives:**

One of the practices of postmodernism is to bring the marginal into the centre. Postmodern is about the other, and othering. It deconstructs any traditional hierarchy established by the western logocentric thinking. This, however, is not meant as a political gesture that seeks to give agency and voice to the erstwhile marginalized individuals because, as it has earlier been noted, postmodernism is politically ambivalent. Brink has taken on himself the mission of voicing the silenced other not as a way to give them back their agency but following the postmodern mantra of bringing the marginal to the center in a deconstructive manner. Actually, he is in line with this motto as he contends: " Silence is not to be thought of as an opponent or an adversary; it is not simply the ' other' of language." Therefore, he talks about silence(s) in his post-apartheid novels because he sees it as an " other", and since the other is situated at the margins accordingly talking about silence and the other end up to be talking about the same thing. Brink has recourse to detailed description of the female body but not only for there are instances when he gives an account of the minute detail of the male

body too. For example: Then I lower my eyes to the stomach, the dense patch of coarse pubic hair, the penis resting on the testicles gathered tightly in the scrotum. This holds a special fascination, as in the early days of my adolescence. The shape and size appear reassuringly unchanged, but the colour is drastically different from the way I remember it. (...) I push the foreskin back to examine the glans, a virulent purple. The scrotum, contracting and extending as always, but very black. (Other Lives, 87) This passage delineates the male gaze towards the male gaze. From this point, it can be seen that there is a change in paradigm whereby the female body is no longer exposed to the male gaze, but also the male body. In the previous section, it has been assumed that the apartheid novels were replete of pornographic depictions of women. This was by no means fortuitous. André Brink compares the text of his novels with the female body that attracts the male reader and awakens his political awareness. By extrapolation, the post-apartheid novels, that are assumed to adhere to a post modern stand point, do not endorse any political orientation. In other words, post modern narratives do not seek to awaken the political awareness of a male reader and direct his attention to the injustices that belie the apartheid practices. Consequently, the equation is reversed: instead of portraying female sexuality and making it available to a male reader, Brink provides male sexuality to a female reader. This is evinced in the detailed description of the male sexual organ. On a different note, the novel represents an attempt to insert a female voice into a male narrative. To put it differently, Brink's narrators are all males. However, it can be implied that his writing is all the more feminine even though it features male protagonists. Feminist critics

have it that " to advocate a woman's language and a means of expression that would be specifically feminine seems to us equally illusory"[7]. Basically, what is meant by this testimony is the refutation that there might a feminine writing and a masculine writing. At the same time, this assumption points to the fact that a male voice cannot be representative of a female experience. Nevertheless, Kristeva claims that ..... The title of the novel is evocative of this gesture of voicing the other. other lives is a novel about the other in the characters' identities.