TRACING (RE)MEMORY, THINKING THROUGH ECHOES OF COLONIAL SLAVERY IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

Meaning is constructed out of [a] multiplicity of voices and positions. (Boyce Davies 1994: 162)

> When they ask of you tomorrow
> I will tell them that you are alive
> everywhere inside of me
> especially where I love myself
> more than you did
> where I love myself
> almost as much as you did (Mashile 2008: ll. 25–31)

I have a multiple identity. There is no crisis. There is a kind of delight as well as a kind of anguish in jumping from one identity to the next. It's like electrons which have their own energization circles. Sometimes they jump from one to the next and release an enormous amount of energy; then jump back to another circle: little electrons jumping. That is not a crisis. That is a delight and poignancy, and hopefully a release of energy. (Dabydeen in Birbalsing 1997: 195)

This book goes to print on the eve of South Africa's sixteenth democratic anniversary. *What is Slavery to Me*? examines how the South African imagination conceives of, constructs and interprets itself at a time of transition, and how slavery is evoked and remembered as part of negotiating current ways of being. The new dispensation came to symbolise the

promise of freedom and multiple beginnings: individually and collectively, 27 April 1994 was an invitation to envision ourselves differently than we had up until that point.

The three quotations with which I begin this chapter, and book, capture some of the complexities that accompany being invited to imagine ourselves anew. Carole Boyce Davies conceives of meaning as weaving together layers and moving targets at the same time, something she also refers to as 'migratory subjectivities'. Rhyming with Boyce Davies, the extract from Lebogang Mashile shows how a sense of self is shaped from dealing with abstraction and remnants in the psyche which ensure that yesterday lives in tomorrow, whilst the fantasy of the future shapes what is possible today. Finally, David Dabydeen's statement stresses the work inherent in identity: energetic, creative, playful and difficult at the same time.

The three quotations capture what Thembinkosi Goniwe (2008) means when he invites us to think about apartheid and post-apartheid as simultaneously connected and oppositional. Such an approach allows us to see the shifts between apartheid and post-apartheid realities not in terms of rupture – even as we recognise what has changed – but also in terms of association. Put simply, we are both free and *not entirely* free of apartheid. These meanings rub up against each other and inflect our lives in material ways.

This new country, post-apartheid South Africa, is a site of affirmation, where speaking begins and silencing ends. It is also marked by contradictions where the textures of this newness remain contested, questioned and are constantly being refashioned. Contradiction is complexity, creative inflection, play and newness; it is akin to Dabydeen's 'delight and poignancy'.

In the public imagination, this opening up of identifications and imagination on future selves was tied to the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as well as to the rainbow nation metaphor (Gqola 2001a). Dorothy Driver has observed that, 'South

Africa's entry into democracy at the end of the armed struggle against apartheid (this had involved all Southern African countries in one way or another) meant new geopolitical identifications became possible' (2002: 155). Shortly after the advent of the new democracy, the much written about TRC was inaugurated as a forum to decipher the immediate past under apartheid, and to mark the beginning of a process of shaping a new democracy. An explicitly mnemonic exercise, the TRC was a response to the invitation to imagine ourselves anew posed by the first democratic election. As Kader Asmal (1994: 5) reflected about the imperfectly inventive TRC process:

> [n]o international models were relied upon in South Africa, because there were none that could apply. Each mode of negotiations had to be invented at each stage. This took time but towards the end had been pretty well developed. It was a case of learning on the job.

As explicit processing of the apartheid past took shape through the valuation of narrative, we saw the inauguration of what Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee (1998) would later describe as the memory industry in South Africa.

In late apartheid, Njabulo Ndebele (1990a) commented on the challenges facing South Africans as we prepared for a democratic order. He had suggested that these difficulties would pertain specifically to dialogue on relationships with the past, and would engender new valuation and valuable systems, especially in the arena of narrative and the mind's eye. The power differentials which were given structural legitimacy under apartheid would influence the ascendant tendencies of compromise, crises of culture, and emergent responsibilities. In other words, Ndebele pre-empted what Goniwe would observe post-apartheid. Using a series of examples from media coverage that year, Ndebele suggested that in 1990 the tone being set was one predicated on a facile negotiation in the terrain

of economics, where white business would make certain declarations which would then be seen to work as actualisation of equity, resulting in what he called 'epistemological confusion'. Further, the roles of the imagination in the era immediately after apartheid would doubtlessly explore some of the stickier parts of these processes.

WHAT IS SLAVERY TO ME?

This book presents the findings of the first full-length examination of slave memory in South Africa, drawing on the current vibrant discourse on memory started by examinations of the TRC and overall transition in South Africa, most notably Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee's *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (1998). While the bulk of memory studies in South Africa have focused on apartheid – and within that, specifically on the TRC proceedings – and a few have ventured into late colonialism, this study departs significantly from this trend by focusing specifically on slave memory and the uses of evoked slave pasts for post-apartheid negotiations of identity.

Zoë Wicomb (1996, 1998), the celebrated writer and scholar of South African literature and culture, lamented the absence of folk memory of South African slavery even in the Western Cape, where the bulk of the slave population lived between 1658 and 1838, and where the majority of their descendants continue to live. Historian Robert Ross (1983) questioned the same when he noted that the only residue of this era in South African history lies in court records. These court records offer us a mere glimpse of what slave life was like for the enslaved. As I have argued elsewhere (Gqola 2007), thinking about such lives in academic memory studies today requires a multilayered approach to the fragments that survive. It also necessitates tracing some of the inheritances that remain in our societies from theirs, even if such traces reside in 'modes that do not easily give up the stories' (Nzegwu 2000: n.p.), where historical consciousness is masked by later generations as a matter of survival. This

is how it is possible for Wicomb (1996, 1998) to lament the absence of slave memory among ordinary people. At the same time, my initial study (Gqola 2004), which this book extends and revises, as well as Gabeba Baderoon's (2004) doctoral work make the argument that slave memory is evident in various sites in post-apartheid South Africa.

This book is interested in tracing the processes through which South Africa's slave past moves from the obscured to the well recognised. It is important to analyse the specific manifestations of such a consciousness of the past and the uses to which such collective memory is put.

Later in the same year (1998) of Wicomb's lamentation, the South African Cultural Museum, close to Parliament and surrounded by monuments, would attract attention which led to its renaming as the Slave Lodge. The plaque in front of this building which marks the historic location of the slave tree would become more visible. This part of Cape Town would also be the site of Gabeba Abrahams's archaeological dig in April 2000, a collaboration between academics and public institutions which welcomed and, at times, invited the participation of the public. However, as Gabeba Baderoon (2003), Capetonian poet and scholar of Muslim identities, has subsequently observed,[1] while many people knew that they were of slave descent, the particularities of this were unknown, so that it is only 'recently, intersecting with international dynamics about slave histories, reparation, slave routes' that they could surface. It is possible, for example, that only then did many of the artists exhibiting at the renamed museum themselves recognise the significance of their surnames being 'January' or 'Jacobs'.

My book title paraphrases the first line of Countee Cullen's much analysed poem, 'Heritage'. In that poem, Cullen seeks to make sense of the conflicting ways in which Africa has relevance for him as an African American, descended from enslaved Africans. The poem's speaker makes sense of the various ways in which Africa remains both important to his politico-psychic identity and elusive mythologised site. There are many

ways in which the questions posed in my book both link with and diverge from those of Cullen's speaker. Like Cullen's persona, I am interested in how the languaging of historic slavery in at once intimate and overtly political ways functions in the post-apartheid imagination. In other words, I am concerned with the textures of the imaginative project of claiming slave ancestry in an era long after slavery's end.

Unlike Cullen's speaker, I also want to probe the extent to which any memorying of slavery needs to be an engagement with the multiple shifts which accompanied enforced, and self-proclaimed, identities under and following on from conditions of enshacklement. Self-definition, and an ongoing attempt to refashion ways of dealing with the historical consciousness of the past, remains tricky. Where Cullen's speaker is a 'me' clearly descended from slaves, I am also concerned with how claiming slave ancestry matters today for white communities whose identities were predicated on disavowal of such ancestry.

Uncovering memory and history demands a critical attentiveness to the uses of the past to negotiate positions in the present. In this regard it is inseparable from postcolonial debates. The absence of published slave narratives by Dutch and British slaves was seen to confirm the slaves' inadequacy. Further, studies of South African slavery within the discipline of history are as recent as the 1980s (Worden & Crais 1994) and this has contributed to the general disregard demonstrated for that particular moment in history, until recently.

Slavery was practised in the Cape between 1658 and 1838. The Dutch, and later the English, transported slaves from South East Asia, East African islands (such as Mauritius and Madagascar), as well as the East African and southern African hinterland. The descendants of these enslaved people would later officially be classified 'coloured' in apartheid South Africa. For the purposes of this book, slavery, colonialism and apartheid are seen as moments along a continuum, and not as separate, completely distinct, and mutually exclusive periods. However, a continuum suggests

linearity, which is undermined by the working of memory and ideology. In order to capture both the linkages across time suggested by the image of a continuum, as well as to complicate the ways in which these periods are embedded in each other and beyond, other models for thinking about memory are discussed in detail later in this chapter.

I am concerned in this book with expressions of this slave memory as recent phenomena, enabled in part by the onset of democracy, and therefore the end of the repression which started with slavery. Questions are asked about the relationships of entanglement between the forms of memory found and the timing of their public rehearsal. Some of the practices examined pre-date the onset of democracy but undergo some form of alteration during this moment, which I read as significant. It is important that the implications and nuances of these alterations be unpacked.

My analysis draws extensively from postcolonial theories on race, identity, diaspora, subalternity and hybridity. It is indebted to African studies debates, postcolonial theorisation on identity and is grounded in feminist theory. Theoretically, it engages closely with the vast terrain of memory studies which currently traverses academia in interdisciplinary ways. This study, then, is in conversation with various strands of academic research on South African identities: historical research on slavery; sociological and interdisciplinary explorations of racialised identities in South Africa; the processes of memory and narratives of nation; and interdisciplinary research on the clustering of race and gender identities historically.

The debate on the meetings and divergences of history and memory has grown increasingly interdisciplinary,[2] and perhaps it is less urgent to rigidly establish a distinction between history and memory than it is to participate in locating and distinguishing between different sources and modes of historical authority.

The relationship of historiography to memory is one of containment: history is always part of memory whilst history delineates a certain kind of knowledge system within the terrain of memory. Put differently, whereas

memory is a shadow always hovering and governing our relationship to the present and the future, history is the art of recording and analysing this consciousness of the past (Anthony 1999). Memory resists erasure and is important for the symbols through which each community invents itself. It requires a higher, more fraught level of activity to the past than simply identifying and recording it (Poitevin & Bel 1999). The latter is especially true when related to slave and colonial memory, and is best formulated by Toni Morrison's wordplay with activity and reassemblage in her 're-memory' or 'memorying', where events and knowledge are 'memoried', 'memoryed', 'remembered' and 're-memoried'. Morrison's word range implies a much wider field than simply collection, recollection and recalling, and is itself a commentary on the (dis)junctures between memory and history, working as it does not only against forgetting but also what I call 'unremembering'. Whereas both forgetting and unremembering are inscribed by power hierarchies, unremembering is a calculated act of exclusion and erasure. Forgetting, on the other hand, is the phenomenon lamented by Wicomb.

Toni Morrison (1987) evokes 'literary archaeology' as a way of speaking about her work, especially *Beloved*, in her essay 'The Site of Memory'. Morrison explains that this calls for 'imagining the inner life' of a slave and conceptualising 'history-as-life-lived', which is about 'giving blood to the scraps … and a heartbeat' (1987: 112; see also *City Limits* 31 March–7 April 1988: 10–11[3]). This is the work she refers to as 'rememory'. Recognising that history is always fictional, Morrison's rememory is a reminder that it is not over for those 'who are still struggling to write genealogies of their people and to keep a historical consciousness alive' (Chabot Davies 2002: n.p.).

Rememory invites the creative writer or artist to 'journey to a site to see what remains were left behind and to reconstruct the world that these remains imply' in order 'to yield up a kind of a truth' (Morrison 1987: 112). This filling in, recasting, relooking, reformulating (both of memory and history) outside historiography is Toni Morrison's rememory. It is

a necessary project because '[t]he past is only available through textual traces' and these are necessary in order to re-humanise the 'disremembered and unaccounted for' (Chabot Davies 2002: n.p.).

In line with Morrison's theorisation above, much academic writing on memory focuses on precisely its refusal to remain distantly in the past; such scholarship insists instead that memory has an ever-presence which is mutable. The refusal to stay in one place suggests roaming qualities closer to a cyclical model than the linear one conventionally conjured up by continuum. Patricia J. Williams (1991) had conceptualised slave memory as a shadow which hovers above the present and influences it in unpredictable ways (also see Anthony 1999); Nkiru Nzegwu (2000) has theorised memory's mobility since it is always open to relocation across aesthetic and temporal planes; Guy Poitevin and Bernard Bel (1999) write of memory as somewhat cyclical; and Tobias (1999) insists on viewing memory as not only differentiated but also fragmentary.

Even more beneficial to a visual imagination of memory is Dorothy L. Pennington's (1985) conceptualisation of memory as a helix. She noted:

> those whose egos extend into the past for a sense of completion emphasize the importance of the ancestors or those of the past who are believed to give meaning to one's present existence. This view may be likened to a helix in which, while there is a sense of movement, the helix at the same time, turns back upon itself and depends upon the past from which it springs to guide and determine its nature; the past is an *indispensable part of the present which participates in it, enlightens it, and gives it meaning*. (Pennington 1985: 125, emphasis added)

In other words, memory resists the tenet of much academic history that the past is complete and in need of analysis, contextualisation and explanation because 'in order to use the past in their daily lives [people]

must create and recreate open-endedness in their experiences' (Thelen 2002: 5). The South African context has an active tradition of probing the relationships between memory and history, within the academy, the heritage sector and in public discourse.[4]

Studies focusing on texts charged with the project of creatively rendering a slave past that cannot physically be remembered entail an analysis of how memory is negotiated in artistic production and other imaginative spaces, such as that of explicitly recasting identity. Paying particular attention to the language and structure of the texts, these studies examine the stylistic and ideological representation of slave characters and of the institution of slavery itself. Necessary questions about the choice of memories re(-) presented and the manner of this portrayal are foregrounded. Some of the loci for the production of memory in the representations of the slave psyche are probed, where memory is understood as a collective process, paying attention to creative engagements with this space. Furthermore, given the theorisation of multiplicity as complexity within postcolonial discourse, the role of contradiction within this exercise of memory needs unpacking.

The project of memory creates new ways of seeing the past and inhabiting the present. When slavery is 'forgotten' or unremembered, the connections between slavery and current expressions of gendered and raced identities are effaced (Hesse 2002). Slave memory studies 'invite a questioning of the relations between what is forgotten and what is remembered' (Hesse 2002: 164).

Postcolonial memory recognises that slave pasts cannot only be addressed through 'abolitionist, curatorial, or aesthetic memories' (Hesse 2002: 165) since it is not concerned with slavery in the past, but with the ongoing effects and processing of that historical consciousness. It is concerned with how the haunting shadow of the past conceived by Williams, and the helix-shaped memory Pennington writes about, shape today's experiences. Like Hesse, then, '[w]hat I call postcolonial memory takes the form of a critical excavation and inventory of the marginalized,

discounted, unrealized objects of decolonization and the political consequences of these social legacies' (Hesse 2002: 165).

Postcolonial memory as critical activity recognises that imaginative forms partake in a general landscape of cultural production constituted in and through language. It is the nuances of such narratives that I am interested in reading here as slave memory increases in visibility in post-apartheid South Africa. Like the broader field of postcolonial studies, postcolonial memory assumes that all production is permeated by and implicated in relations of power, and investigates the articulations of this power as well as the ways in which it is negotiated through various texts. These critical tools are used to read public cultural, literary, televisual, filmic and visual material against the larger debates they are shaped by, and which they in turn shape.

Postcolonial and revisionist representation engages analytical tools which are attentive to the networks of repressive depiction since they are methodologically disposed to probe the historical and social specificities of oppressive definitional structures. This is because:

> [p]ostcolonial theory has emerged from an interdisciplinary area of study which is concerned with the historical, political, philosophical, social, cultural and aesthetic structures of colonial domination and resistance; it refers to a way of reading, theorising, interpreting and investigating colonial oppression and its legacy that is informed by an oppositional ethical agenda. (Low 1999: 463)

The imperative of postcolonial memory studies is to recognise heterogeneity in the concrete historical subjects who were enslaved, rather than confining them to sameness and anonymity, in keeping with colonial epistemes. It thus becomes possible to resist participation in 'an epistemology … conceived purely in terms of a total polarity of absolutes' (Ndebele 1994: 60; see also Figueroa 1996).

GENDERING POSTCOLONIAL MEMORY

David Dabydeen reminds us that the 'Empire was a pornographic project; it wasn't just economic or sociological or a political project, it was also a project of pornography' (in Dawes 1997: 220). Yvette Abrahams (1997), too, has posited that the 'great long national insult' was a gendered corporeal project. Dabydeen's and Abrahams's cues are of utmost importance because apartheid and slave memory are often considered engagements with race. Although feminist scholarship has challenged this assumption successfully, such scholarship has often been as response to initially muted explorations of how pasts are gendered. Feminist historians of colonial and slave eras in southern Africa continue to challenge the erasure of women slaves, but also how slavery was a gendered project (Y. Abrahams 2000; Bradford 1996; Magubane 2004; van der Spuy 1996).

What might it mean to chart a field from the onset in ways that critically engage with how gender works alongside other axes of power? I am concerned with what new meanings are inevitably covered when we ask questions differently, as are the central tenets of postcolonial (and) feminist scholarship (Gqola 2001b). Elleke Boehmer (1992: 270) has demonstrated how representations of the slave body in colonial slavery:

> offered important self-justifications. For what is body and instinctual is by definition dumb and inarticulate. As it does not itself signify, or signify coherently, it may be freely occupied, scrutinized, analyzed, resignified. This representation carries complete authority; the Other cannot gainsay it. The body of the Other can represent only its own physicality, its own strangeness.

Thus locked into bodily signification, Others were not 'merely emblematic representations of the [Empire's] most cherished ideals but also actively deployed as *somatic* technologies' of patriarchal empire building (Ramaswamy 1998: 19). Using Saul Dubow's (1995) earlier work, Cheryl

Hendricks (2001) has argued that the status of the Khoi as 'the missing link' between animals and people was not a separate project from the one which saw Sarah Bartmann put on display in Europe in the nineteenth century. For Abrahams, the fascination with Khoi women's genitalia, more specifically the fabrication of 'the Hottentot apron', was central to the development of scientific racist discourses. The work of these three scholars further demonstrates the direct links between the Khoi body generally but, more specifically, the Khoi woman's body and the language of scientific racism (Abrahams 1997).

There is a large volume of work which further explores the connections between slave women whose bodies were inscribed in terms of 'miscegenation' and 'racial mixing' and who were represented as deviant, contagious and shameful. Male slave bodies were further rendered in terms of the dangerous, ravenous male phallus when they were of African origin, or as volatile noble savages capable of great violence if they were of Asian origin. Vernie February's (1981) study established the links between the literary stereotypes of coloured characters and the ways in which Khoi and slave bodies were inscribed during British and Dutch colonialism in South Africa. The connections between the bodily branding of these historical subjects and some of the associations of shame for their coloured descendants were later developed by Zoë Wicomb. Wicomb's theories in this regard have been engaged in multiple ways and responded to variously, as will become clear in Chapter 1.

Attitudes to the 'mixed-race' slaves were recorded by historians such as G.M. Theal on the eve of manumission; he argued that these were 'deserving of freedom, but the change was not beneficial to "pure blacks"' (in Saunders 1988: 27). Later, the descendants of these slaves were to be the 'beneficiaries' of Coloured Preferential Employment policies in the western Cape because apartheid positioned them in terms of an in-between identity, a biologically based hybridity which at once made them superior to blacks and inferior to the same because of their 'lack of culture'.

DEPARTURES: IMAGINING SLAVE MEMORY

The excavation of slave memory and spaces seen as the repositories for such memories is part of the general project of memory-making in South Africa. It is implicated in some of the shortcomings of the greater effort even as it forces the analysis of the terrain to engage with the past in more complex ways. This is evident in the various explicit links between public memory rehearsal and the making of nation. Yet the segment which deals with the rendering visible of slavery and colonial history questions some of the tools used to interpret and shape the new nation. It draws attention to the contestation of race, identity and language in the contemporary South African topos by opening up many of the taken-for-granted categories for revision. There have been shifts from initially rare examinations of a past of enslavement as integral to memory in South Africa to a flourishing exploration of this phenomenon in literary texts. Thus, slave rememorying is entering the terrain of nation-building and therefore the consciousness of the larger South African populace.

Laura Chrisman (2000) has noted and demonstrated, with outstanding dexterity, the manner in which, although helpful, many of the core theoretical concepts in postcolonial literary studies are inadequate when reading the nuances pertaining to literary imaginative projects which address colonial south(ern) Africa. For Chrisman, ' "writing back to the centre," "mimicry," or "hybridity" do not adequately account for the formal, linguistic and ideological textures' of some of the literature under study, and this is particularly so when the texts are treated as 'historically specific' (2000: 208).

Language then becomes a challenge in the crafting of memory and the creation of a future, more equitable country at every level beyond the legislative. Neville Alexander further suggests that the only plausible way out is possible when there is an effort to 'invent a new discourse involving a new set of concepts that is more appropriate to the peculiarities of South African history, seen in the context of world history' (2001: 83).

The unpredictability of memory, and the ambiguities of a conceptual vocabulary that functions well elsewhere, are central to the exploration of representations of slave memory. It links with Pennington's helix model in its emphasis on movement and many possible directions. Another similarity pertains to its ability to move in several directions at once, turn upon itself, a living organism influenced by forces in its environs. These forces shape direction, speed of movement, and growth. Pennington offers refreshing perspectives on the dynamic movement within memory politics and the identities which stem from those processes.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

There are growing discussions within South African historical studies on whether the distinctions made by the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) between forms of unfree labour (slavery versus indentured servitude) had any materiality beyond the law books. My approach is informed by the work of historians such as Yvette Abrahams (1997, 2000) who have demonstrated that, legal definitions notwithstanding, the conditions of the Khoisan were very similar to those of legally called slaves. The same applies to definitions of Bartmann as slave rather than as contracted worker. In this book, I read Krotoä and Sarah Bartmann as slaves both because of such scholarship, but also because the bulk of the primary texts under analysis represent them as such.

Secondly, the differences between 'native', 'slave' and 'Khoi' were significant in the past, and these categories only appear similar after the benefit of various political developments, among them the Black Consciousness Movement. Since my concern is with how the past is made sense of in the present, I am less concerned with the detailed nuances of their differences historically, than with the fact that memory uses the lens influenced by a range of political movements and insights. Therefore it is memory that blurs what would have been sometimes stark differences a few centuries ago, because memory operates now and not in the past.

Thirdly, the label 'Cape Malay' is not without problems/limitations when used in the context of the descendants of slaves living in the Western Cape of South Africa. Some of the problems which attach to this terminology are discussed later in this book. I retain its usage here for an assortment of reasons. I find it more useful than 'Muslim' for clarity, given that all large Muslim communities in South Africa are diasporic and participate in diaspora in ways which do not necessarily have to do with the *particular* slave trade I discuss here. I use 'Cape Malay' and 'Capetonian Muslim' interchangeably, after Baderoon's (2004) introduction of the latter into academic discussions of historic formations of such identities. The inaccuracies which remain after my retention of the marker 'Cape Malay' notwithstanding, it is one of the clearest referents available to discuss the section of the population whose artistic and cultural production I am concerned with here.

In a linked manner, I use a capitalised 'Black' to refer to the anti-apartheid definition of Blackness which emerges out of the Black Consciousness Movement. In other words, the capitalised Black refers to those people who would have been classified 'Indian', 'coloured' and 'black' under apartheid. I retain the small caps 'black' to refer to Black people sometimes codified as 'African', racially speaking, in South Africa.

While it has become customary to insist that we need to move beyond race markers in South Africa, I see this project as premature given the continued ways in which race continues to matter in South Africa in social, political and economic ways. Identities marked as race have also taken on added meanings in addition to, and other than, those bestowed through slavocracy, colonialism and apartheid. Part of the anti-racist and postcolonialist critical project needs to take these meanings seriously rather than placing them under erasure and denying the agency with which they were invested with new, conflicting meanings by subjects thus classified, and self-identifying, over 350 years. To identify as Black in its

various gradations, therefore, is always more than simply rehearsing 'an archive of one's victimisation', to borrow Dabydeen's formulation (in Binder 1997: 172).

Chapter 1 enters into this debate by examining the ways in which coloured and Khoi identities, as formulated in recent years, are an engagement with a slave history. The chapter investigates the implications of colonial and slave rememory for racialised identities among the descendants of slaves, in South Africa specifically. I explore how this activity within the 'rememory landscape' works to disrupt some official national and historical narratives. It focuses specifically on debates around coloured identities and Khoi self-identifications. Reading coloured articulations alongside their Khoi counterparts, the chapter analyses the manner in which slave foreparentage is used to fashion a variety of positionings in relation to a history which classified the descendants of slaves 'coloured'. Finally, it suggests ways in which readings of Khoi self-identification and some articulations of coloured identity may be seen as complementary and as partaking in related projects.

The second chapter explores literary representations of slaves and colonised subjects. It examines contemporary imaginative rewritings of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This examination is informed by an engagement with the centrality of southern African women's bodies in the generation of knowledge, scientific racism and sexuality, because indeed '[e]veryone knows it is virtually impossible to talk candidly about race without talking about sex' (West 1993: 120). Focusing specifically on contemporary Black feminist engagements with colonial representations of Black women from southern Africa, it analyses a series of written texts which address themselves to the difficulty of representing Sarah Bartmann. The texts include Dianne Ferrus's poem 'I Have Come to Take You Home', which ultimately convinced the French Parliament to return the remains of Sarah Bartmann to South Africa in 2002; Zoë Wicomb's (2000) refusal to represent Sarah Bartmann in her

David's Story; some of the challenges unpacked by Yvette Abrahams, pre-eminent Khoi historiographer and Sarah Bartmann's biographer; and Gail Smith's writing on the process of fetching Sarah Bartmann's remains from Paris as part of the film crew making a documentary on Bartmann's return (*Mail & Guardian* 12 May 2002[5]).

In Chapter 3, I ask questions about the effects of the claim in the case of Afrikaners to slave foreparentage, since it appears to foreground the re-evaluation and rejection of the claim to racial purity which sustained slavery and apartheid. This chapter analyses such public creative reclamations alongside two television texts which also locate Khoi and/ or slave presences in Afrikaner families. Here I am interested in the effects of such invocation in as much as I analyse the language which emerges to describe, analyse and introduce such activity. I explore some of the ways in which claiming slave foreparents is used in contemporary South Africa; these are then examined in conjunction with the refashioning of some white identities, as well as the celebration of racial purity among communities previously classified coloured. What might the effects of this contested discursive terrain be for how we understand apparent shifts in the relationship of whiteness to purity and of colouredness to miscegenation?

This examination is followed in Chapter 4 by my attempt to take up the challenge thrown up by Zimitri Erasmus (2001a, 2001b, 2001c) and Muhammed Haron (2001) to envision the variety of self-identifications which attach to contemporary coloured assertions of diaspora and claims to Cape Malay identities. I read the various debates about the meanings of the Muslim/Malay diaspora and its relationships to South East Asia alongside an analysis of the meanings of Islam and Malay identities in articles published in *Sechaba*[6] and Rayda Jacobs's novel *The Slave Book* (1998). In this chapter I am also concerned with uncovering the opportunities offered by slave memory to deepen scholarly understandings of diasporas.

In the final chapter, I read scholarship on the meanings of Muslim food in Cape Town alongside exhibitions on memory by the award-winning artist Berni Searle. Analysing these articulations along a continuum is a strategy suggested by Carolyn Cooper (2000) as particularly valuable in making sense of the apparently simple and contradictory diasporic formations which follow from slavery. The juxtaposition of Searle's work and the genre of Malay food permits a fruitful comparison of varied sites of creativity in the service of memory. It also makes sense given the assertion of Cape Malay food as diasporic *artistic* expression, a claim that is part of the ground I analyse in this chapter.

Conceptualisations of memory in terms of Morrison's rememory, and Pennington's helix-like attributes, permit the imagination of this process of representation in terms of the slipperiness with which the lives of the disremembered can be imaginatively rendered. Such frameworks on memory stress the ongoing entanglements: remembering and forgetting always side by side. This is part of the cost of rememorying, because helix-like it changes the present as well as conceptualisation of the past. In addition, any movement of a helix causes structural change, so that it opens up an infinite number of possibilities. In this manner, the helix structure is a precise representation of Morrison's rememory and works in specifically the same way. The relationship between the past and present in/of/with the helix is unstable in exactly the same manner as the archaeological and imaginative work of rememory. Like the perpetual incompleteness of rememory, the helix constantly changes planes, re-interrogates and reshapes itself. Both are in need of re-minding as well as reminding and are generative in different ways. They generate a reading of the shifting instability of the creative representation of slave memory, whilst being involved with linking different lineages in various conglomerations of past, present and future.