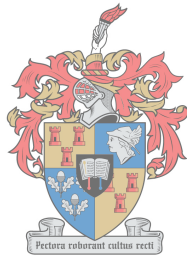


The Ghost of Memory: Literary Representations of Slavery in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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Declaration

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mum, who sacrificed all she had to educate me, to 'Rasto' Wekesa and Brian Muuo, who have pledged to do better than me, and to my children and mentees, who will do exploits, because of the reality that this dissertation begun just as a dream.

Abstract

This study examines how authors of slave/slave-owner ancestry have constructed slave memory in selected contemporary literary texts on slavery at the Cape. The texts I study include Rayda Jacobs's *The Slave Book* (1998), Therese Benadé's *Kites of Good Fortune* (2004), Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* (2006) and André Brink's *Philida* (2012). All four novels are published in the post-apartheid moment, over a century after the practice of Cape slavery ended. In their examination, I explore the lasting social and psychic effects of traumatic and repressed slave histories in the ghostly presence of a slave past in the post-apartheid present by framing my literary analysis with the concepts of cultural haunting, collective memory and re-memory. My conceptualisation of haunting is centred on the idea of slavery as a ghost that haunts the present moment. The study argues that the publication of stories regarding slave pasts at this point in time indicates a haunting that is embedded in oppressive slave histories and that contemporary writers are bringing to the surface through their works. As such, the concept of haunting is embedded in this study's three main areas of interest: firstly, the revisiting of slave memory in the post-apartheid moment; secondly, the authors' need to revisit their ancestors' pasts because they are themselves of slave or slave-owner ancestry; and thirdly, that some of the legacies of slavery resonate with subjectivities in present day South Africa. The chapters therefore examine the representation embedded in the neo-slave narratives by asking two questions: How do they engage with the idea of representing 'self' in the sense that, in writing about these slaves, the authors are also writing about their own history and ancestors? And how do they represent the 'other' when they write about dead and silenced slaves? My first chapter focusses on *Unconfessed* to foreground the trauma of slavery by developing on concepts of silence and silencing, narrative structure and fragmentation and narrative as an appropriated court room. My discussion depicts an intergenerational trajectory in traumatic slave pasts as elucidated in the violence on slave mothers, which rendered motherhood impossible in the practice that children born to slave women inherited their maternal slave status. The second chapter on *Philida* problematises representation in its reading of the legacy of centuries-old policing of intimacy, white privilege and authorship. In the third chapter, I investigate the narrative of black-on-black violence formulated in inventions of blackness and racial purity in *The Slave Book*. My fourth chapter introduces the concept of "first person autobiographical narrative voice" as a way to read the neo-slave narratives using the case of *Kites of Good Fortune*. The chapter shows that racial cultural identities remain a complex issue for descendants of manumitted slaves. In conclusion, I draw a connection between the

representation of slavery in the novels and the post-apartheid present of their publication. I do this in order to suggest that slave histories have not been sufficiently engaged with in ways which function to minimise individual and collective trauma and as such they emerge as ‘ghosts that have refused to be laid to rest’.

Opsomming

In hierdie tesis word die herskepping van slaweherinneringe in gekose kontemporêre letterkundige tekste ontleed. Die tekste wat ek bestudeer sluit Rayda Jacobs se *The Slave Book* (1998), Therese Benadé se *Kites of Good Fortune* (2004), Yvette Christiansë se *Unconfessed* (2006) en André Brink se *Philida* (2012) in. Al vier romans is gepubliseer in die post-apartheid tydsgewrig, meer as ‘n eeu nadat die praktyk van slawerny aan die Kaap beëindig is. Deur hierdie werke te ontleed, ondersoek ek die voortdurende sosiale en psigiese gevolge van traumatise en onderdrukte slawegeskiedenis deur die raamwerk van kulturele byblywing, asook gemeenskaplike herinnerings sowel as herhalende herinnering. My konseptualisering van byblywing sentreer om die idee van slawerny as ‘n ‘spook’ wat kwellend inwerk op die hede. Daarvolgens word geargumenteer dat die publisering van verhale aangaande die slawe-verlede in die huidige moment ‘n kwellende byblywing aandui wat ingebed is in slawegeskiedenis van onderdrukking wat deur kontemporêre skrywers teruggebring word na die oppervlak. As sulks word die konsep van kwellende byblywing ingebed in hierdie studie se hoof-onderwerpe: eerstens, die herbesoek aan slaweherinnerings in die post-apartheid oomblik, tweedens, die skrywers se behoefte om hul eie voorouers se werklike slawe-verlede te herbesoek en derdens die premis dat sommige van die slawerny-erfenisse aanklank vind by die belange van ‘n huidige Suid-Afrika. Die hoofstukke bestudeer dus die voorstellings van slawerny wat in die narratiewe ingebou is deur twee vrae te vra, Hoe skakel hierdie verhale met die verbeelding van die ‘self’ in die sin dat, deur oor hierdie slawe te skryf, die outeurs ook oor hul eie voorouers en geskiedenis skryf? En hoe beeld hulle “die ander” uit wanneer hulle oor gestorwe en stilgemaakte slawe skryf? My eerste hoofstuk fokus op *Unconfessed* en bring die sielkundige trauma van slawerny na die voorgrond deur die bespreking van die onmoontlikheid van slawe-moederskap as voortspruitend uit inter-geslagtelike slawerny, asook die feit dat kinders van slawe-moeders by wyse van hul geboorte slaafstatus geërf het. In die tweede hoofstuk problematiseer my analise van *Philida* die voorstelling van slawe deur aan te dui hoedat wit rasbevoordeling tot uiting kom by wyse van skrywerskap en die optekening van geskiedenis, terwyl in my derde hoofstuk ek die verhaal van swart-op-swart geweldpleging en rasse-identiteitskategorieë in *The Slave Book* analiseer. My vierde hoofstuk gebruik *Kites of Good Fortune* om aan te toon dat rasse-identiteitskategorieë ‘n komplekse saak bly insoverre dit die afstammeling van slawe betref. Ter afsluiting dui ek ‘n verband aan tussen die voorstelling van slawe en slawerny in die vier romans en die post-apartheid hede van hul publisering. Ek doen dit ten einde voor te stel dat daar huidiglik nog onvoldoende aandag aan

slawegeskiedenis gegee is, hoewel groter aandag hieraan tot vermindering van individuele en kollektiewe trauma kan lei; dus verskyn hierdie geskiedenis as ‘spoke wat weier om tot rus te kom.’

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A Haunted Cape: Re-memory and the Archive of Cape Slavery

Indeed memory or “rememory” is the gift that the living give, constantly, daily to the dead. Memory is the gift of a survivor and, as a gift, it is the medium of obligation ... [to] those who have gone before and those who come after. (Christiansë, *Toni Morrison: An Ethical Poetics* 21)

I can see the people from those old graves rise up... all the dead who can never lie still in their graves, but who go on living invisible among us, people who were born here and who died here and who will never leave us in peace. I don't want to know about them but I cannot shake them off to pretend they're not there. They throng around me and whisper to me and press against me until I cannot breathe. (Brink, *Philida* 90)

This study engages with selected contemporary literary texts from post-apartheid South Africa to explore how authors of slave or slave-owner ancestry have constructed slave memory. It offers literary analyses on how the novels represent slave memory as a way of engaging with colonial history and examines the ghostly presence of a slave past in the post-apartheid present. To understand how the writers have creatively imagined histories of slavery, I explore the lasting social and psychic effects of these traumatic and repressed slave histories by framing my literary analysis with the concepts of cultural haunting, collective memory and re-memory. The selection of my primary texts includes novels that were published between 1998 and 2012. These are Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* (2006), André Brink's *Philida* (2012), Rayda Jacobs's *The Slave Book* (1998) and Therese Benadé's *Kites of Good Fortune* (2004) as main texts, with Daniel Sleight's *Islands* (2002) and Russel Brownlee's *Garden of the Plagues* (2005) as supporting texts.¹ The publication of these novels on slavery in the post-apartheid moment and the identity of the authors as inheritors of slave memory attracted my interest in light of their positioning of cultural identities in a post-apartheid space and time. As noted by David Johnson, “since 1994 there have been more literary texts on Cape slavery than ever before”

¹ The other post-apartheid novels that partially imagine slavery is Botlhale Tema's *The People of Welgeval* (2005) and *The Spiral House* by Claire Robertson (2013). Maxine Case's *Softness of the Lime* published in 2017 at the time of the conclusion of my research is also another neo-slave narrative imagined by an author of slave ancestry.

(510)².

The novels invite analysis with regards to how they point to silences in the representation of slave memory and embodiments of past historical memory. As noted by James McCorkle, the “new slave narrative[s], within a South African national narrative, reclaims a suppressed history ..., establishing that the shadow of apartheid has as its source the slave economy” (18). The following questions intrigued me when I read them: What does it mean for the slave memory of mid-17th to early 19th century to be revisited in the post-apartheid moment of the early 21st century? What does this interest in the largely invisible memory of slavery mean in relation to the society from which these authors stem? How do the authors represent the repressed slave history given that they have a slave/slave-owner ancestry? These neo-slave narratives refuse to be read just as fiction, but attract a wider attention to their biographical tendencies as I will discuss in Chapter Three and Five. The texts foreground the complexities of the representation of the ‘self’ and ‘other’, and thereby contest and unsettle identities. These novels engage with the particularities of slave descendants, which Gabeba Baderoon, South African literary critic and scholar of Muslim identities and slavery at the Cape, rightly observes in her study on the invisibility of Muslim identities at the Cape, that “while many people knew they were of slave descent, the particularities of this were unknown” (Cited in Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 5). The study argues that the publication of stories regarding slave pasts in a post-apartheid moment embodies a haunting that is embedded in oppressive slave histories and that contemporary writers are surfacing through their works. I argue that the works by the writers I discuss here offer a way for readers in the post-apartheid context to deal with the traumatic history of slavery in South Africa. The novels equally present an unsettledness regarding traumatic violent pasts. For instance, in the course of writing this dissertation, there were engagements with such violent pasts as is the case with the 2015/16/17 “Rhodes Must Fall” and “Open Stellenbosch” student movements, the dramatization of Eva Krotoä in the August 2017 movie *Eva Krotoä*, the publication of Maxine Case’s 2017 Novel, *Softness of the Lime* and Nadia Davids July 2017 public performance of her unpublished play, *What Remains*.

² Other novels on slavery at the Cape before 1994 include V. M. Fitzroy’s *When the Slave Bell Told* (1970), André Brink’s *A Chain of Voices* (1982) Wilma Stockenström *The Expedition to the Baobab Tree* (1983) and Mohammed Cassiems D’Arcy’s *The Golden Kris: Saga of Dein, Slave at the Cape* (1988).

This research is situated in my interest in memory and decolonisation in the post-apartheid period. The call for decolonisation partly addresses the exclusionary nature of colonial history which relegated some histories as outside of official history. These repressed histories have provoked interest over the last twenty years in different shapes and forms, both in academic research and in social imaginaries. The 1996 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) hearings, particularly, opened up a space for the exploration of this traumatic past. While the commission only heard testimonies and considered events going back to the 1960s, it can be understood as making it possible for repressed histories to surface and be heard, and this includes the history of slavery. South African literary critic, Pumla Dineo Gqola, notes that the revisiting of repressed histories was enabled by the work of the TRC that saw large numbers of people giving witness regarding historical injustices (*What is Slavery to Me?*2). Writing on "the slave narratives that emerge during the period of transition when South Africa began to fully exercise its democratic vision", McCorkle similarly states that these narratives extend the process of truth-telling, iterating the necessity of representation (18). McCorkle's argument suggests that processes like the TRC, seen afterwards as official recording of history, have enabled and fostered the kind of research and publications that engage with the legacy of slavery. Additionally, "South African creative writers have since taken up the challenge to provide an alternate account of the nation's memory and history, one that is as far removed from the reconciliatory role of the TRC as from earlier models of protest and anti-apartheid resistance" (Goyal, "The Pull of the Ancestors" 150). Part of this research directly feeds into literary works that imagine slave histories as a way of engaging with marginalisation in the past, right up to and including the present. Thus, slavery can be read as one of the foundational histories of South Africa's culture and identity. Additionally, the publication of literary texts on slavery in America, particularly Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1997), had an effect on some South Africa writers and raised interest in slave memory at the Cape. For example, Christiansë's *Unconfessed* follows a similar story line of a slave mother who kills her child, and the haunting re-appearance of the ghost of that dead child.

While this research focuses on Indian Ocean Studies and postcolonial scholarship on slavery, echoing the publication of these novels, it draws from the cultures of the Black Atlantic in certain ways, but explores a new trajectory for the Indian Ocean. It engages with legacies of slavery in the concepts of the hybrid cultures of Cultural Studies scholar Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, afrocentric concepts of the return to Africa such as those of Marcus Garvey and

the biographical concept of the first person slave narratives and the neo-slave narrative. I also think through the ghostly continuities of slavery in Morrison's concept of re-memory, and the contributions of scholars like Saidiya Hartman and Ian Baucom, who "refuse a clear demarcation between past, present, and future" (Goyal, "Introduction" viii). With these concepts in mind, my scholarly interest are South-South movements, to examine and chart new ways that can engage with repressed slave histories and the cultural contestations embodied in its invisibilities and silences.

A number of researches have examined Cape slavery. As I will discuss further in this introduction, most of these ground work study that has highlighted the silences about Cape slavery has been done by historians. Similarly, literary scholars have also followed this interest and examined these silences highlighted by historians, analysing works of art that imagine slavery at the Cape. My study furthers this existing research by examining the texts I study to show that the novels, in their post-apartheid publication, suggest that slave histories have not been sufficiently engaged with. Chapter Two's discussion on Christiansë's *Unconfessed* focusses on the prevalence of psychological trauma of slavery embodied situated intergenerationally. The novel illustrates that silences on slavery in the Cape colonial archive are still present in the post-apartheid moment. My discussion in Chapter Three on Brink's *Philida* centres on manifestations of the subjective recording of history in the post-apartheid moment, showing how white privilege manifests in relation to authorship and the recording of history. In Chapter Four, I investigate the narrative of black-on-black violence and Jacobs's use of representation to unsettle identity categories in *The Slave Book*. Chapter Five's examination of Benadé's *Kites of Good Fortune* observes that racial cultural identities remain a complex issue as far as the descendants of freed slaves are concerned.

This introductory chapter explains the silences in the archive and shows how these neo-slave narratives borrow from history to imagine the voices that were repressed and the stories that would otherwise have remained untold. The novels I study bear similarities in that the authors all face the lack of self-representation of slaves in the archive. Though positioned in various ways in relation to the archive, the authors therefore engage with its silences. Three of the novels I study – Christiansë's *Unconfessed*, Brink's *Philida* and Benadé's *Kites of Good Fortune* – imagine fictional characters who were historical slaves. Such imagination "allow[s]

readers to hear the experiences” and voices of these silenced slaves (Murray 455). Similarly, these three authors also have direct slave ancestry: Christiansē’s grandmother was a descendant of a freed slave who was born in St. Helena and Brink’s direct ancestors owned the slave woman that he imagines in his novel, while the historical figure that Benadé narrates is part of her own direct family tree. In the same manner, Jacobs shares the heritage of the Muslim slaves at the Cape whose culture Baderoon has elaborated as one of the invisibilities of slavery at Cape (*Regarding Muslims* 3, 7). The authors’ relationship to slave ancestry affects how they tell their stories and speaks to ideas of transgenerational trauma and guilt.

I use the term “the ghost of memory” in the title of my dissertation to imply the relationship between representation and haunting. I argue that the authors’ engagement with the past of slavery is metaphorical of haunting in as far as their slave ancestry is concerned. Particularly, their novels imagine issues that manifest as haunting in the post-apartheid moment. The novels narrate and engage with the trauma of slavery, constructions and contestations of racial identities; black subjectivities as well as white patriarchy and privilege. Using comparative literature scholar, Ross Chambers’s, ideas of cultural haunting and collective memory, I explain that the authors also signify a haunted collective consciousness. The power of memory to influence the present is reiterated by South African literary critic and writer Njabulo Ndebele who argues that “narratives of memory, in which real events are recalled, stand to guarantee us occasions for some serious moments of reflection” (20). Memory work in this study involves interrogating the representation of suppressed slave memories. This kind of representation “unsettles the representation of slaves as a single undifferentiated mass by naming individual slaves and exploring their various experiences” (Gqola, “Slaves Don’t Have Opinions” 47). As I will show, the imaginaries of the novels that this dissertation discusses provide precisely such a counter history.

‘Cabo de Tormentoso’: Situating Slavery at the Cape

Part of the reason for the silences on slavery at the Cape and in the post-apartheid space has been attributed to assumptions that slavery did not exist at the Cape. The texts I study however illuminate the presence and prevalence of slavery at the Cape. They retrieve a repressed history and allow me to explore the Atlantic and Indian Ocean trajectories. The history of Cape slavery

foregrounds historian Robert Ross's term 'Cape of Torments' which also provides the title of his seminal work and describes the terror of slavery at the Cape where more than people were enslaved from the 1650s to beyond 1838³. The title is derived from the Portuguese term *Cabo de Tormentoso*, which was used to describe the stormy nature of the sea (Samuelson, "Rendering the Cape" 524). The phrase acts as a metaphor for the slavery that historian Robert Shell argues is "as old as the Cape" itself (6). Ross's argument resonates with South African historian Nigel Worden's account in which he records that the Cape was a slave society from the time of Jan van Riebeeck's arrival in 1652, recruiting slaves under the VOC slave system⁴ ("Indian Ocean Slavery" 29). This means that slavery was part of many Dutch Cape households from the outset of occupation (Shell 6).

Much research has been carried out on the establishment of the Cape colony by historians such as Nigel Worden, Robert Ross, Robert Shell, Gwyn Campbell, Kerry Ward, Pamila Gupta and Das Gupta. According to these historians, the Cape was established as a provision fort on the Sea route to Asia by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC also VOC). The function of the Cape as a "refreshment station to service the sea route to Asia", resulted in its naming as the Cape of Good Hope (Samuelson, "Rendering the Cape" 527). The two titles that describe the Cape are invoked by South African literary scholar Meg Samuelson who posits that the port was "invested with a duality" in its naming: "Cabo de Bonne Esperanze or the 'Cape of Good Hope' by King João II of Portugal" and *Cabo de Tormentoso* or 'Cape of Storms', occasionally translated as 'Cape of Torments' ("Rendering the Cape" 524). This paradoxical naming situates the Cape as a place of both hope and difficulty, and seems to construct its existence around these subjective descriptors. I take up this discussion at length in Chapter Five where I focus on the categorisation and dual naming of the Cape to discuss the complexities of cultural identities of freed slaves at the Cape.

While it is useful to keep the Atlantic model in mind – 're-memory' is a concept arising directly out of its legacy – this study attends to some of the differences between Atlantic and Indian Ocean slavery. Gwyn Campbell, economic historian of the Indian Ocean, observes that "the

³ Nigel Worden and Pieter. C. Emmer have also recorded a similar timeframe for slavery at the Cape: 1596/1658–1807 Worden ("Indian Ocean Slavery" 29) and Emmer (728).

⁴ Shell records that "the crews of the Dutch East India Company took possession of the Cape peninsula by 1652" (xxv).

history and structure of slavery and the slave trade differed sharply” (“Slavery and the Trans-Indian Ocean” 286). As such, this study draws attention to the Indian Ocean because of the nature of these differences. For example, slavery at the Cape was practised by a range of different colonial masters: first “the Portuguese, then the Dutch, then the British”⁵ (Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* 8). This influenced the demographics of the slave population over time (Olaussen, “Approaching Asia” 33), and even determined the treatment of slaves by various colonial masters⁶. The other unique dimension of Cape slavery is the geographical location of the Cape Colony as a shipping port between Europe and Asia that was also open to the Atlantic world. This nature of their ‘oceanic crossing’ therefore resulted in the varied backgrounds of the slaves at the Cape. In this regard, Worden points out that the composition of those who were enslaved in South Africa, particularly during the Dutch colonial period, was drawn from a far wider geography than that of the Atlantic slave trade. Slaves at the Cape were shipped from South and East Asia, from places such as Bengal, Malabar, Ceylon, and Indonesia, Mozambique⁷, Madagascar, Mauritius as well as the Cape itself⁸ (Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* 8; Shell xxv; Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery* 13).

My analysis of the texts I study elaborates this nature of Indian Ocean slavery as the meeting point of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and the particularities of South-South movements. The varied roots and routes of the slaves across the Indian Ocean are imagined in the novels under consideration. For example, in *Unconfessed*, the main character is captured in Mozambique, in *Philida* the reader encounters slaves from Macassar, in *Kites of Good Fortune* the main slave character comes from Bengal and in *The Slave Book* the origin of the slaves include Java and Malabar. The diverse regional and continental origins of slaves situate my thesis more in the expansive cultural exchanges of Indian Ocean slavery. In “Approaching Asia”, literary scholar Maria Olaussen discusses the cultural origins that result from the Indian Ocean slave trade. I will discuss the nature of these cultural oceanic connections in Chapter Five with a particular focus on how identities and the contestation of identities becomes a central issue in the aftermath of slave emancipation and freedom. As I also foreground in Chapter Two, the novels

⁵ The Dutch exploited an existing slave trade established by the Portuguese (Worden, *Slavery in Dutch* 8).

⁶ British takeover in 1795 saw a marked increase of Cape-born slaves in the early nineteenth century (Olaussen, “Approaching Asia” 33).

⁷ In the late 18th and 19th centuries, the main increase in imported slaves came from Mozambique (Worden, “Indian Ocean Slavery” 29, 37).

⁸ There were also slaves from West Africa since the VOC forbade the enslavement of indigenous people (Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* 7).

portray histories of forceful removal and uprooting from one part of the Indian Ocean to another.

Indian Ocean slavery was characteristic of far more slaveholders per capita in colonial South Africa than in the United States (Dooling 115). The Indian Ocean trade contrasted with Trans-Atlantic slavery in that it “involved pre-dominantly household slaves rather than plantation workers” and as such slaves were mostly “female, not male” (Campbell cited in Hofmeyr 11; Miller 18). However, the Dutch farmers in need of cheap and free labour for the rising plantation economies also used slaves to maintain their farms (Hofmeyr 10). The other feature of Cape slavery is that “[w]hereas Atlantic slavery is described in the spiritual autobiographies and polemics of ex-slaves like Olaudah Equiano, Frederick Douglass, Quobna Ottobah Cugoana, and Mary Prince, Cape slavery is only rarely described in the words of the slaves themselves (Johnson 504). Johnson remarks that the Cape has only a couple of surviving examples of letters written by slaves and that the official records give limited information about slaves, focussing instead on information about slave owners (504).

The other factor that relates to the activities of slavery at the Cape is in reference to slave abolition and freedom. There was little effective abolitionist activity that occurred at the Cape itself, although English abolitionists did direct their attention to the colony (Christiansē, “Heartsore” 2). Islam did play a central role in empowering slaves at the Cape and providing avenues to, as well as pockets of freedom. As has been discussed by South African scholars Worden, Baderoon, Samuelson and Gqola, Islam was the religion of subversion and slave freedom at the Cape.⁹ The Muslim Imam Sheikh Yusuf, who was exiled to the Cape from Macassar, mobilised slaves and offered Islam as a solace to the oppression of slavery. His impact and presence is mentioned in the different narratives that I analyse. Though Islam as the religion of slave freedom is not unique to Cape Slavery, the presence of Islam at the Cape was distinct because it enabled the restoration of an important aspect of home culture, especially for slaves of Asian origin.

⁹ Worden has discussed how Islam offered “a degree of independent slave culture” (*Slavery in Dutch South Africa* 4) for slaves at the Cape. Also see Gqola’s *What is Slavery to Me? Postcolonial Slave Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (153-160), Baderoon’s *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid* and Samuelson’s “Making Home on the Indian Ocean Rim: Relocations in South African Literatures. (Osinubi)

The marginal presence of an abolitionist movement at the Cape is attributed to the fact that most slaves were illiterate. This also played a central role in the lack of first person slave narratives at the Cape. According to Christiansē, “[o]ne of the reasons for the lack is that the colonial office controlled the printing press till the late 1830s, to the extent that that there was no chance for slaves to develop a literary voice” (“Heartsore” 2). Consequently, the discursive space in which slaves would speak for themselves and of their conditions in a public arena was extremely limited (Christiansē, “Heartsore” 2). The lack of first person slave narratives results in the absence of accounts of personal experiences of slavery. This study recognises that the authors seek to address this gap by constructing their novels as the narratives that slaves never lived to tell. The imagination of such subjectivity is crucial because it retrieves repressed histories.

Despite the contrast between the slave systems in the United States and at the Cape, Indian Ocean slave trade has sometimes been theorised via the models advanced in the study of Atlantic slavery (Kerry & Worden 201). As many historians have pointed out, slavery at the Cape was not necessarily connected to the Atlantic trading system but formed an integral part of the slave trading network of the Dutch East Indies (Olaussen, “Approaching Asia” 33). Historians and literary critics have argued that this universalisation of the transatlantic model was part of the reason for the silences on slavery at the Cape. Particularly, Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Gaurav Desai caution against the universalised Afro-Atlantic model in the study of the Indian Ocean (Zeleza 3-4). Because of this dominance, there is a need to analyse the representation of slavery at the Cape in its own right (Worden & Ward 201). While I sometimes draw on relevant research that discusses Atlantic slavery, I remain mindful of this challenge. By focusing on slavery at the Cape, this study therefore situates itself in these debates in Indian Ocean studies.

My interest in the invisibility of Indian Ocean slavery contributes to postcolonial research on slavery in the Africa continent. These studies, such as those of Simon Gikandi¹⁰, Taiwo

¹⁰ Gikandi and the special issue he edits in *Research in African Literatures Journal* (1996) responds to Gilroy’s text *The Back Atlantic*.

Osinubi¹¹ and Yogita Goyal are a part of the reading of “Africa in the Black Atlantic” and engage with the argument that Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* “replicated the problematic exclusion of Africa from discussions of modernity” (Goyal, “Introduction” v). I also observe that this study would have as a twin, the emergent literature and scholarship on recent modern day slavery in Eastern Africa. Such novels and autobiographies on modern day slavery emerge in a space of historical silences on slavery. As articulated by the Kenyan politician, Joe Khamisi, himself of slave ancestry, in his debut book, *The Wretched Africans: A Study of Rabai and Freetown Slave Settlements* (2016), there still remains colonial historical injunctions that silence slave history in Kenya. Such scholarship documents the marginality of the African Indian Ocean, and the silences and invisibility on slave history across the Indian Ocean.

The marginality of slavery in Indian Ocean studies, despite the “explicit role of the memory of African slave ancestry in shaping identity and social statuses in not only the Indian Ocean Islands”- Malagasy and Mauritius, but also, Southern Africa and Eastern Africa is what I seek to address in this study (Adejunmobi 1451). The focus on the Indian Ocean engages with what it would mean to study the Cape as a meeting point of the two Oceans, and projects the African Indian Ocean as a space that can open new ways to understand ruptured identities and cultural contestations in the post-apartheid moment. The study of slavery at the Cape as imagined in the post-apartheid texts I study enable a reading of the past and present together, pointing to continuities of enslavement, colonialism, apartheid and post-apartheid, and more practical questions of the afterlives of slavery, reparation and justice. As such, my choice of primary texts is informed by this discussion and seeks to contribute to existing enquiries about the ongoing ontological questions with regards to repressed histories of Indian Ocean slavery.

Even though there is evidence of a history of slavery at the Cape, such history has been described by historians as repressed and silent. Ward and Worden argue that there was a suppression of a slave past in South Africa which can be viewed as amnesia about slavery (201). As is elaborated by Baderoon, one aspect of this silence is that “views of slaves are almost irretrievably absent in the historical record” (Baderoon in Olausson, “Africa’s Indian Ocean” 124). Recent evidence of the histories of slavery, such as the discovery of the bones of

¹¹ Osinubi in “Provincializing Slavery: Atlantic Economies in Flora Nwapa’s *Efuru*” (2014).

up to 3000 people believed to have been slaves at Prestwich Place, in Green Point, Cape Town in 2003,¹² point to the invisible presence of the history of slavery at the Cape. This discovery confirmed that Cape Town “was built over the graves of slave ancestors, and its continued construction represented an architecture of erasure, a concrete covering over of the material traces of memory” (Grunebaum 213 in Johnson 513).¹³ Nadia Davids unpublished play, *What Remains*, performed at the University of Cape Town on 12th July 2017, is a recent dramatization and engagement with this invisible history of this past of slavery in the Cape. For the playwright Davids, talking about the distant past, says that the past is when people in the present cannot claim to understand because everyone who can remember is dead¹⁴. Such research corroborates Worden’s suggestion that the legacy of the Indian Ocean roots of Cape slavery is still highly visible in the linguistic, religious and cultural characteristics of the Cape today (“Indian Ocean Slavery” 29). In the same vein, South African novelist and literary critic André Brink talks about the kind of “specific silence that is imposed by certain historical injunctions” (“Interrogating Silence” 14). Such silence exists despite evidence that slave labour was a key input in the culture and economy of South Africa (Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* 7).

The repression of slave history in the Cape corroborates Indian Ocean World historian Markus P.M. Vink’s observation that “the Indian Ocean remains much less studied since its “establishments in the 1950s and 1960s” (41). This is in the face of the towering studies of the Black Atlantics such as those of Stuart Hall and Houston Baker, as well as Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic*¹⁵. Additionally, even when the Global South is studied, it tends to fall in the “usual axes of postcolonial studies” and not particularly the Indian Ocean as an area of study (Kruger 114). However, African literature scholar Isabel Hofmeyr’s much referenced work,

¹²For more research on Prestwich Place, see Nick Shepherd's “Archaeology dreaming: post-apartheid urban imaginaries and the bones of the Prestwich Street dead” (2007), Jonker, Julian David, “Excavating the Legal Subject: The Unnamed Dead of Prestwich Place, Cape Town” (2005) and Christian Ersten’s “Problematizing the Heritage Management of Prestwich Street” (2006). The following websites also provide more detail: <https://johannesburgreviewofbooks.com/2017/07/03/it-began-with-a-burial-site-nadia-davids-on-her-new-work-what-remains-a-play-about-slavery-and-the-haunted-city/> and http://www.archivalplatform.org/blog/entry/prestwich_place/.

¹³ The play *Cargo* dramatises this discovery. The final section of the play/movie *Cargo* (2007) enacts the discovery of these slave skeletons (Johnson 513).

¹⁴ Words from her unpublished play during the performance at University of Cape Town.

¹⁵ As discussed by Lauren Kruger, the Black Atlantic largely focus on North Atlantic traffic between the black diasporas of the United States and Britain or, in routes that take in the Caribbean Basin and West Africa but not the continent south of the equator (114). Kerry Ward takes note of a “more established Atlantic World within academic discourses than the emerging conceptions regarding Indian Ocean World” (144).

“The Black Atlantic Meets the Indian Ocean: Forging New Paradigms of Transnationalism for the Global South - Literary and Cultural Perspectives” responds to the lacuna, advising a systematic engagement with transnationalism in the Indian Ocean. Hofmeyr suggests that South Africa be examined by its position, between the two oceans, within the three intersecting frameworks: The Black Atlantic, Indian Ocean and Africa itself (4). The basis here would be to think of “transnationalism within the south itself, ... of non-western sources of globalisation, or processes of transnationalism that happen without reference to Europe” (Hofmeyr 3). In the scope of the diverse scholarship of the Black Atlantic, Pacific and Mediterranean counterparts (Vink 41), and elsewhere the prominence of Caribbean slavery,¹⁶ “the relevant question is not so much how the slave trade is remembered, [in the Indian Ocean] but how it was and continues to be forgotten” (Larson cited in Adejunmobi 1257). Even with this focus on the Indian Ocean in a position of the Global South, there still appears a marginality of the African Indian Ocean, which this dissertation addresses.

One of the reasons for the silence on slave history is that “early colonial South African historians ignored the institution of slavery and wished to emphasise and celebrate the freedom of the first ‘freeburghers’” (Shell 4). This sort of biased South African history emphasises the danger of the one-sided and unitary story of slavery recorded by white colonial historians. As such, the subjectivity of colonial history results from the fact that the “[r]ecording [of] history [was] predominantly the preserve of the conqueror” and it provides one of the most fertile silences to be revisited by South African writers (Gqola, “Slaves Don’t Have Opinions” 45). This is true not because no voices have traversed it before, but because of the “dominant discourse of white [colonial] historiography” (Brink, “Interrogating Silence” 22). In contrast, the novels under consideration interact with colonial historiography to offer critical conceptual perspectives of the history of slavery and they bring to light the fact that the history of slavery in South Africa has not yet been adequately dealt with.

Other reasons for these historical silences on slavery have been suggested. For example, Khamisi, observes that information about slavery is scattered because “African slaves were considered sub-human and not allowed to talk about their experiences” (Mwaniga np). The

¹⁶ Another example associated with coastal and Island based communities (Adejunmobi 1247)

silences on slavery at the Cape also reflect in the overriding absence of slave sites and slave descendants who may not always know their ancestors' stories (Ward and Worden 201). As Gqola observes, “[f]ourteen years ago most people could walk past the place that marks the spot where the slave tree once stood and not notice it” (*What is Slavery to Me?* 203). South African academic Zoë Wicomb has also identified the silences to be related to feelings of shame regarding histories of slavery and Khamisi highlights the “forget-and-move-on attitude” (“Shame and Identity” 147; Mwaniga np). Part of the silence on slavery is related to the loss of identity in slave descendants “distancing themselves from their slave past in order to claim a more privileged position in the colony than indigenous Africans who were being increasingly marginalized” (Ward and Worden 205). For example, many South Africans prefer a Khoi ancestry over slave roots (Ward, and Worden 209). Baderoon writes that even when people know that they are of slave descent, the particularities of such ancestry often remain unknown (in Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 5).

I foreground the subjective nature of colonial history because the novels I study emerge from and tackle suppressed slave history, historiography and the Cape colonial archive to construct the untold stories of slavery. As Johnson has noted, the records of the Court of Justice are the richest source for accessing slave experiences at the Cape (504). He explains that in the last thirty years, historians and creative writers alike have drawn extensively on this archive in order to reconstruct the cultural and social worlds of Cape slaves (504). True to his claim, Christiansë, Brink, Jacobs and Benadé’s novels use the Cape colonial archive to imagine different historical times, ranging from the late 1700s to beyond the 1834 official abolition of the slave trade¹⁷ to foreground the lives of individual historical slaves. These novels are not only a sort of historical memorial, but also go further to demand attention because of their characteristically haunting nature. Such imagination provides a richer ground for interacting with and interrogating the silences of the Cape colonial archive. *Unconfessed* in particular, imagines the silence of the Cape Town Archive in the story of a slave woman who was incarcerated on Robben Island for the murder of her son. In the research she conducted about slave experiences at the Cape with the aim of writing a novel on slavery, Christiansë explains the silence she encountered in the archive (Christiansë, ““Heartsore”” np). Apart from discussing the silence of the archive as imagined in *Unconfessed* in Chapter Two, I also

¹⁷ Slavery at the Cape was abolished in 1834 under British rule but extended to the four year apprenticeship that lasted up to 1838.

examine silences in the narrative voice of the other novels as a metaphor for the silence of the Cape archive and that of colonial history. As a way of examining the silences of the narrative voice, Chapter Three discusses authorial intrusion as another way of silencing the voice of the slave woman in Brink's *Philida*, Chapter Four interprets the silence of one of the characters in Jacobs's *The Slave Book* and Chapter Five looks at the silences of the autobiographically inflated narrative voice in Benadé's *Kites of Good Fortune*. Examining the silences of the narrative voice is useful because it also interprets the various subjectivities in the representation.

Another way to understand the subjectivity and silence that the novels engage with is to consider the limitations of the Cape colonial archive. The archive is already a filter of sorts: "partial and incomplete, marking privilege, exclusion and inclusion, providing a record and simultaneously determining what is included in such a record" (Treanor 289-290 in Stevens, Duncan and Sonn 28, 29). The subjectivities of the archive inscribe it as a power structure that needs decolonisation. South African literary critic David Attwell proposes that "the post-apartheid situation requires a fresh approach to the cultural archive" (5). Because the narratives I discuss represent the dead, they counter the description of the archive as a "grave that buries the memories of the dead" (Walters 121). Political scientist and public intellectual Achille Mbembe argues for the possibility of giving voice to the dead whose presence still exists as 'remains' in the archive ("The Power of the Archive" 22). In line with his argument, the narratives make use of these 'remains' in gathering the pieces and allowing the dead to inhabit the literary space of the living. This study therefore aligns with the recent interest in the interrogation of the colonial archive in South Africa in order to generate alternative meanings characterised by "collecting narratives and memories of apartheid in an attempt to effectively 'fill the gaps' left by other, more formalised archives such as the TRC" (Ratele and Laubscher 111). The elements of the archive that the novels imagine include the official colonial and the unofficial or 'informal' archive consisting of historiography, slave records, court records, historical documents and family archives such as journals and letters. This study analyses how, in doing this, the novels represent the subjectivities of the archive, ascribing agency to the dead who never spoke for themselves and who are, according to Psychologist Leswin Laubscher, "neither present nor absent ... neither visible nor invisible" (47).

The novels' representation of the dead invokes the idea of representing the 'other', and so this study also interrogates the subjectivities that re-appear in representation. However, the novels are unique in that they simultaneously represent the 'self' and the 'other'. As stated above, the aspect of the 'other' emerges from the fact that they write about dead and silenced slaves, while 'self' outlines the fact that in writing about these slaves, they are also writing about their own history and ancestors. Consequently, my discussion in the following chapters is founded on examining this dynamic of representation of 'self' and 'other'. In Chapter Two, I show the complexities of representing the 'other' in line with Christiansë's argument that the trauma of the slave woman she imagines was too difficult to tell. Here, the poetic narrative form she adopts establishes an aesthetic distance that refuses to claim that she could voice the intense trauma of the sexual exploitation of slave women at the Cape. Chapter Three engages the complexities that emerge with Brink's representation of Philida. His representation evidences the 'self' in representing himself as a descendant of Philida's slave owners, while the 'other' embodies alterity through his representation of Philida from a privileged authorial position. In Chapter Four, *The Slave Book* is analysed as embodying 'self' in Jacobs's construction of her identity as 'coloured'.¹⁸ I also interrogate *Kites of Good Fortune* in Chapter Five as representing 'self', by reason of the author's imagining her direct ancestry by using the family archive and stories to imagine the life of her great grandmother.

As I have foregrounded so far, research on the silences on slave memory has for the most part been generated by historians. Even for these historians, the research is as recent as the 1980s (*What is Slavery to Me?* 6). However, South African literary scholars have lately been interested in interrogating art and social narratives as a way of responding to the silences on slavery at the Cape.¹⁹ Among these writing are two seminal texts: Pumla Dineo Gqola's *What is Slavery to me? Postcolonial/ Slave Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2010) and Gabeba Baderoon's *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid* (2014). Baderoon studies the invisibility of the trauma of slavery among Muslim cultures and underscores the invisibility of slavery at the Cape as based on the aestheticised view of the founding institution in colonial South Africa (*Regarding Muslims* 1, 3). She observes that such sanitised historical

¹⁸ Coloured is a racial category that was used by the apartheid state to describe people of mixed race, many of whom are descended from slaves, in South Africa.

¹⁹ Social narratives include the narrated lives of Eva Krotoä and Sarah Bartmann, narratives of the TRC and Cape Malay Muslim food cultures and identities, among others.

accounts created “a normative and generalized history in which white subjectivity is central and the violence of slavery impossible to recall” (*Regarding Muslims* 3). Baderoon’s study examines traces of slavery in various texts ranging from linguistic, historical, visual art and fiction such as Christiansē’s *Unconfessed* and Jacobs’s *The Slave Book* as a way of revisiting the silences of these slave memories. Gqola, on the other hand, identifies a more general suppression of black Khoi identities in the lives of Sarah Bartmann and Eva Krotōā in order to look at “how slavery is evoked and remembered as part of negotiating current ways of being” in South Africa, at a time of transition (*What is Slavery to Me?* 1). Gqola shows how the memory of slavery is repressed in various spaces, suggesting that “thinking about such lives in academic memory studies today requires a multi-layered approach to the fragments that survive” (*What is Slavery to Me?* 4). These seminal works offer ground-breaking literary criticism on the silences surrounding the legacy of slavery and open up conversations about these suppressed histories. Both Baderoon and Gqola’s recalling and conceptualisation of the memory of slavery in South Africa provide a base for further scholarly engagement on the silence of slave memory in the post-apartheid moment. Their works have generated new interest in slave history at the Cape and call for more engagement with slave histories to show that there is still a need for more research.

Other literary critics such as Meg Samuelson, Maria Olausson, Zoë Wicomb, André Brink, Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee have also responded to oppressive history and memory in post-apartheid South Africa. As I will show in the following section, Baderoon’s argument that “[l]iterary studies can contribute significantly ... to current conversations on slavery and offer a capacity to read absence”, filling in “the enormous gaps in documentary sources concerning slavery”, (Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims* 22) is evident in the texts that I read here. In a similar line of thought, Gurinder Bhambra argues that literary criticism “bear[s] witness to different pasts to initiate new dialogues about that past, bringing into being new histories and from those new histories, new presents and new futures” (117). The above mentioned literary criticism displays that there is still need for more research that revisits the memory of slavery in South Africa. I therefore situate this dissertation as part of such an ongoing discussion seeing that my literary analysis aims to extend the enquiry further by interrogating how the absences and silences of slavery at the Cape have been represented in the selected texts. As such, I offer a full-length study of a significant sample of texts on Cape slavery by authors of slave/slave owner ancestry and contribute to the growing engagement with repressed slave histories. Since

these neo-slave narratives concern themselves with the absences of slavery in the historical record, they provide an alternative history and rich ground for interacting with slave silences at the Cape.

The Role of Literature in addressing the Silence of the Archive

The novels I study in this dissertation show the power of literary narratives in interrogating history, imagining the violence of slavery and conveying instances of haunting. Their engagement with questions of racial identities provides a useful critique to the divisions of race that are still rife in the post-apartheid era. They also offer a counter-narrative to historical accounts that are dominated by colonial perspectives. When writing about the need for literature to raise awareness in this unique way, Christiansē terms what literature does as “bring[ing] to fore a voice for which there is no discursive place in any formal history” (“Selections from *Castaway*” 303). Consequently, the authors “engage memory to supplement dominant interpretations of history” as is suggested by Gqola (“*Slaves Don’t Have Opinions*” 45). This is because the texts are “located in the space where history and literature as well as fact and fiction intersect” and “in the process” they “reveal alternatives for representing history” (Murray 456). The power of these narratives to reimagine the archive with the purpose of emerging with new possibilities therefore becomes useful to this study.

Historian Hayden White explains that, due to its imaginative and creative nature, narrative is a representation of human experiences. He reminds us that “[n]arrative might be well considered a solution to a problem of general human concern” (1). A number of other scholars have also provided a case for the literary representation of historiography and history. Rosemary Jolly and Derek Attridge specifically “call for literature to represent the victimization of the oppressed in realist form” as one of the strategies of opposing injustices (2). Similarly, Brink has advocated for fiction’s exploration of “the silences of the past in order to discover or invent the voices subsumed in them” (“*Stories of History*” 38). According to Olausen, the author’s imagining from the colonial archive therefore positions him/her as a descendant and an inheritor of the legacy of slavery, both literally and in the figurative sense (“*Approaching Asia*” 31). Her injunction that creative writers can assume the role of inheritors and descendants of the memory of slavery speaks to one of the constantly revisited questions of this study: Who speaks on whose behalf?

The literary representation of slavery foregrounds the challenges of historiography, providing an alternative archive through which the stories of slave subjectivity can be heard. This study contemplates how the texts considered here have the ability to unearth repressed slave memory and highlight the need for post-apartheid South Africa to address them. Acclaimed literary critic Simon Gikandi explains that literature has the capability to affect social life. He states that “[t]exts that threaten to resuscitate historical ghosts and decauterize old wounds will create new paths into the imagination” (17). Wendy Walters has similarly elaborated that “it is in the literary texts that social and legal entities can be remade and reimagined” (13). While literature has the capacity to assist us in reimagining the social world, it is important to recognise that the remaking of the world through literature can only be effected through actions that take place beyond the text. The novels “imaginatively represent the subjective view-point and experiences of slaves [which the] official records contained in historiography and the archive often exclude” (Geustyn ii). The narratives help imagine individual subjectivities as opposed to collective stories that were generalised by the colonial gaze. The narratives I study are useful because they imagine the silences of history by creating fictional characters out of those that history has silenced. Such imagining enables readers to envision what life would have been like for those silenced historical characters. In this way, the texts offer new ways of engaging with the painful histories and memory of slavery. Literary critic Jan Furman has suggested that “[t]he reader should not merely know about the horror of slavery but feel what it was like” (77). My readings of the novels under consideration in the chapters that follow will consequently show how they bring to the reader the experiences of slavery through the mental images of violence on slave as bodies. In addition, I show how literature is also useful to imagine the whole range of experiences that defines the humanity of these characters. While not negating the violence, the novels salvage from that violent archive of slavery other ways of being.

These texts therefore represent, recall and immortalise the past in their ability to open up ways of interacting with what has been previously repressed. The neo-slave narratives make visible the invisible bodies of the enslaved and propose how this invisibility haunts the present (McCorkle 19). In order to interrogate how they represent the subjectivities they imagine, my analysis looks at narrative voice, plot, structure and the relationship between the textual and the contextual. As I will discuss next, representation embodies the work of ‘re-memory’ in

these texts as they grapple with colonial dominated history in order to articulate the trauma of slavery, the complexities of representation and, at times, re-iterate similar colonial histories.

The Work of Re-memory and Haunting

As discussed so far, the novels draw from the Cape colonial archive and historiography to tell histories of slavery that would have otherwise never have been told. In this way, they employ renowned African-American literary critic and novelist Toni Morrison's concept of 're-memory'. The term 're-memory' emerges from her method of sourcing from the archive to write the haunting novel *Beloved*. *Beloved* is imagined from the true story of the African American slave Margaret Garner whose story on media inspired Morrison to research and construct what her life would have been like. Morrison explains re-memory "as a literary archaeology [that] 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" – as was the case with Morrison's engagement with Garner's story ("The Site of Memory" 92). In essence, the genre classification of the neo-slave narrative, the fictional imagination of slave experiences, form the gaps of history and speaks to this concept of re-memory. I draw on Morrison's concept as a useful tool to understand the basis of the literary representation of the absences and silences of slave histories in South Africa. In line with Morrison's definition, Gqola refers to this re-memory as consisting of the filling in, recasting, re-looking and reformulating of both memory and history (*What is Slavery to Me?* 8). Re-memory in this study steps right into the midst of writing genealogies of the writers' own ancestry. The neo-slave narratives that I examine draw from official archives such as court records in the case of *Unconfessed*, family archives in *Philida* and *Kites of Good Fortune*, historiography in both *Kites of Good Fortune* and *The Slave Book*. These narratives exemplify Morrison's concept of re-memory in the sense that they allow the subjectivity of the enslaved to return because the reader is made to revisit the place where subjection occurred "whether we want [to] or not" (*Beloved* 14). Re-memory therefore immortalises the past in the writing that creates accessibility to the subjects of history and is useful to help see which pasts have been remembered and how.

For Morrison, re-memory focuses on an individual "picture" and has to do with "reimagining

one's heritage" (Rody 101). This certainly is the case with the South African neo-slave narratives I analyse. Researcher on post-apartheid South Africa, Kerry Bystrom, has identified the emergence of family stories in the public sphere in post-apartheid South Africa (1). The narratives I study present parallels and overlaps between the domestic/family story and the nation/state history, and bring to fore narratives of control in colonization, slavery and apartheid as still prevalent in the post-apartheid moment. As noted by Bystrom, such family stories "present us with a diverse and often compelling set of options for working through the past and making demands on the future"(xii).

Through their focus on "the dead [ancestors] who can no longer speak for themselves" but whose subjectivities still lie in the layers of history, these narratives show how re-memory relates to representation of self and the other, the individual and the collective (Laubscher 55). Bystrom discusses that memory itself in both its individual and collective versions is closely related with identity (4). As such, re-memory "opens up a discursive and physical space" in these narratives (McCorkle 25). Part of the discursive space includes the complexities of representation because representation also embodies what the authors choose to see and represent. Caroline Rody observes that authors create the characters they want to mourn and exercise the authorial desire to write with authority about their ancestors (102). The novels equally exist in the space where "[r]ewriting family histories became a wide spread and repeated narrative project as South Africa's democratic transition began in 1994" (Bystrom 23). There therefore exists the challenge of retelling the past without flattening or romanticising it (Woods 11). For this reason, representation emerges with political baggage and involves the contestations of identities, a discussion dwell on in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

The publication of these narratives on slavery in the post-apartheid moment foregrounds pasts that have not been dealt with, or those that unsettle the authors themselves. My focus on memory and re-memory allows me to examine the ways in which apartheid, and post-apartheid racism relies on forms of violence inherited from slavery and colonialism. My analysis of the novels depicts some of the discourses of race that still exist in the post-apartheid moment. Indeed, as argued by Goyal, "the work of the writer as a literary archeologist inevitably confronts the demands of the present and future, thus producing a difficult set of paradoxes where memory is haunted by forgetting, the real by the uncanny, and the material by the

spectral” (“The Pull of the Ancestors” 156). I trace re-memory as adjacent to ghosts, and employ sociologists’s Avery Gordon’s argument that haunting is about putting life back in where only a vague memory or a bare trace was visible to those who bothered to look (22). Re-memory’s pre-concept of paying homage to the dead consequently draws my attention in this dissertation to the representation of traumatic slave pasts of the dead. Similarly, I use the concept of haunting to imply that the publication of the novels on slavery in the post-apartheid era that is a manifestation of repressed memory of enslavement at the Cape. In this sense, my analysis of the narratives as a product of a haunted society responds to one of my central research questions: Why is the representation of slave memory from the mid-17th to early 19th century prevalent in the post-apartheid moment in the early 21st century?

In an attempt to answer this question, I argue that the authors, in representing the dead, are haunted by the memory of their dead ancestors. My perspective of the texts as genealogical helps me to think about traumatic memory as a collective history. “Thinking genealogically about trauma is an essential means of opening it towards possible, alternative futures” (Rothberg xi). Re-memory as recast in *Beloved*, therefore reiterates the neo-slave narrative, characterised in novels that “recount a history that has been erased, forgotten, or distorted to reveal the foundational impact of slavery on the nation” (Goyal, “The Pull of the Ancestors” 159). Such novels carry an archeological role, digging the remains to see what it might mean for the present, show how “the past of slavery lingers on in the present” and are “crucial for thinking about the relation between past and present” (Goyal, “The Pull of the Ancestors” 159, 160).

Accordingly, I examine the authors’ engagement with the past of slavery as haunting, using Chambers’s concept of being haunted by the ghost that cannot be laid to rest (95). According to Chambers, personal haunting could be the effect of long seated historical trauma that has not been responded to (95). He suggests that the presence of a haunted individual points back to the dead, who haunt the living because they are not at peace because of injustices that were directed at them by the living (95). Chambers furthermore points out that these “ghosts haunt personal memories, making the haunting difficult to deny” (96). His own analysis focusses on Benjamin Wilkomirski who impersonates a Holocaust survivor in writing *Fragments: Memoirs of a Wartime Childhood* (1995). He shows that this case can be interpreted as a personal

delusion emerging from repression within the larger society; evidence of a culture that is haunted by a collective memory (92). The context for Chambers' discussion and the controversy surrounding the authorship of the text he analyses is different from that of the novels I read here, yet is useful to understand these authors as channelling the repressed histories of slavery within the larger society they come from. In this sense, haunting serves as a productive lens through which to interrogate the embodiments of slave subjectivities that the authors narrate.

My approach to the concept of haunting is informed by the neo-slave narratives as representations of repressed slave memory and as re-memory of selected information from the Cape colonial archive. Morrison's argument that art is "a haunting of history" (50) captures the central conceptualisation of the relation between history, memory and haunting that I employ in this dissertation. Even though the authors do not confess to any personal trauma, the work of re-memory they engage with and their representation of their slave pasts manifest haunting. Christiansë, born of slave ancestry, has explained how she set out to look for slave histories at the Cape, finally landing on the story of her main character in archival documents. Brink, for his part, explains that it was drawn to his attention that his ancestors had kept slaves. Intrigued by this realisation, he set out to write the story of Philida, one of the slaves that his forebearers kept. It is the same unsettledness with history that prompts Benadé to rewrite her history by giving voice to her great grandparent, the slave Angela of Bengal. Likewise, Jacobs – who was defined under apartheid as 'coloured' – imagines the histories of miscegenation in slave institutions at the Cape through her text. These authors can therefore be argued to be haunted by the histories of slavery, albeit from different points of departure. In addition to personal haunting, my argument here is that each novel's imagination engages with various constructions that haunt the post-apartheid era. As has been noted by Samuelson, these authors, "[h]aunted by the past, revisit it repeatedly not to unravel its meaning but to reveal its entwining with the present" ("Yvette Christiansë's *Oceanic Genealogies*" 28). As such, the texts foreground the various issues that haunt the post-apartheid nation.

The position of the authors as haunted represent the self but also show the collective memory of the society they stem from. In addition to the singular haunting of the authors by a past of slavery, their slave ancestry projects possibilities of transgenerational slave trauma. In this way,

the conceptualisation of haunting helps me to analyse the texts not only as individual haunting, but also to argue that these neo-slave narratives “demand recognition and help redefine collective understanding” (Lara 1) in their representation of the various aspects of slave histories that haunt the post-apartheid moment. In her research on South Africa’s slave past, Gqola invokes the uses to which collective memory is put, and the importance to analyse the specific manifestations of such consciousness of the past (*What is Slavery to Me?* 5). Indeed, as argued by Gordon, haunting is neither pre-modern superstition nor individual psychosis, to study social life, one must confront the ghostly aspects of it (7). As argued by the French Caribbean literary scholar Catherine Reinhardt, collective memory serves as a bridge between the store of recollection that provides a framework for the past and for the conditions in which society finds itself in the present (9).

Haunting allows me to discuss the subjectivities with regard to slave history. “Haunting describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething, a taken-for-granted reality” (Gordon 8). The haunting of individual authors, when using the German scholars Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka’s concept of cultural memory, shows that they represent a collective memory that is haunted by a past of slavery²⁰. Analysing the Holocaust, Assmann and Czaplicka argue that cultural memory contains a store of fateful past events and functions by re-enacting itself in the experiences of individuals (130). Their arguments concur with Chambers’s explanation that a culture can be haunted by a collective memory if there are some living members of that culture who may have directly perpetrated or suffered painful events (92). Equally, oppressive historical events have the capacity to haunt an individual (93). Though the authors in my study have not necessarily experienced or perpetrated the trauma of slavery, their engagement with the slave trauma of their own ancestors and those of members of their society, defines how I relate their experiences with cultural and collective memory. As is noted by critic Kathleen Brogan, who writes on cultural haunting in American Literature, these stories of haunting are not an end in themselves, but represent a larger community from which the stories stem (152). Cultural and collective memory exemplify the connection I make between representation and haunting. The “interweaving of individual memory with collective memory” denotes a haunting that could be experienced at both individual and community level

²⁰ French sociologist and founder of collective memory studies, Maurice Halbwachs details in *The Study of Collective Memory* the movement between group memory and individual memory (cited in Zerubavel 72).

(Coullie 2; Chambers 95).

With regard to Chambers's ideas, a haunted society is one in which individuals show personal disturbances that cannot be simply seen as personal but as a part of a cultural symptom of collective memory (95-6). He argues that cultural haunting could also be a part of a disturbed past, one that constantly questions the person's existence and identity, intruding into their psyche before being woven closely into their people's history (Chambers 95-6). Using this understanding of a person's psyche, I analyse Brink, Christiansë, Jacobs and Benadé as authors who suffer from a traumatic past of slavery as a result of their ancestry. In line with Chamber's formulation, the appearance of the novels in the post-apartheid moment depicts a society that has ignored the collective experiences of the violence of slavery at the Cape as a way of dealing with its trauma. And yet that trauma remains to trouble the present, resulting in the writing and publication of novels which engage with the past that affects identities and relationships in the contemporary post-apartheid nation.

It is useful at this point to conceptualise what it means to represent a traumatic past. This study sees re-memory as a "wreckage of history [that is] recycled as troubling recurrence in the present" (Samuelson, "Lose Your Mother" 38). As such, haunting, in these works of re-memory, shows that the authors carry the burden of representing slaves who were never heard and did not have the opportunity to speak for themselves. Their work therefore represents the dead, as Christiansë, in the epigraph to this introduction, has aptly underscores. In this sense, the importance of re-memory lies in its capacity to enable the living to make meaning of the trauma that the dead experienced. Narrative therefore becomes part of an excavation of the past that continues into the present moment (McCorkle 25). Brogan observes that writing on haunting is a way for authors to come to terms with their lost cultural identities (151). The narratives I study, with their focus on repressed slave memories, offer us powerful interpretations of the individual's identity and how it is inextricably woven into the recuperation of a people's history (150).

In several places in this dissertation I engage with the trope of the ghost. My interest in this trope was provoked by the ghost characters imagined in Christiansë's *Unconfessed* and Brink's

Philida. The appearance of the ghost character in literature is not new and has been extensively discussed in relation to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*²¹ (1603), Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1850)²² and Morrison's *Beloved* (1997). These ghost stories have been understood in their relationship to haunting. In the traditional African space, the world of the "living dead" is defined as comprising of spirits and ghosts and was part of the life of the living in most traditional societies²³ (Mbiti 71). That easy relationship which existed between the living and the dead has been evidenced in the commonality of ghost stories (Brink, "Interrogating Silence" 26). The ghosts would appear as friendly ghosts or on the other hand to reprimand the living and demand justice. One of the common ways to deal with ghosts in traditional African societies was to exorcise them. Exorcising ghosts demanded, and involved ways of appeasing the spirit of the disgruntled dead. The traditional African understanding of ghosts is useful to interrogate why ghosts invade the world of the living. I follow this line of thought in Chapter Two to engage with the possibility of friendly ghosts.

This analysis of the presence of ghosts in oral and written literature offers ways to understand the nature of ghosts in the novels I study: "The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life" (Gordon 9). The novels' method of invoking ghosts is a way of bringing to the present the consciousness of the dead and haunting opens a window for the "investigation of exclusion and invisibilities" (Gordon 11). These "[s]tories of cultural haunting share the plot device and master metaphor of the ghost as go-between, an enigmatic transitional figure moving between past and present, ... one culture and another" (Brogan 152). Similarly, their depictions of ghosts mark an attempt to recover and make social use of a poorly documented and partially erased cultural history (Brogan 150). To borrow Brogan's idea regarding the relation of ghost characters to cultural history, the presence of ghosts, particularly in these accounts about traumatic slave pasts, points to the repressed cultural history of South Africa. As such, these authors can be described as an example of what Laubscher terms "the archive scholar" who solicits and records the stories of the dead, a position that is tantamount to keeping company with ghosts (47). The use of ghost characters in the novels introduces the idea that

²¹ Cathy Caruth, Sigmund Freud and Jacques Derrida have discussed the role of the ghost in *Hamlet*.

²² Ghost stories at this time were related to Gothic fiction that "hardly seems celebratory or nationalistic, yet typically identifi[ed] the terrors it evokes with the past and with foreign places"(Brantlinger 14)

²³ There is a range of narratives and oral tales that circulate around the role, function and nature of ghosts in African societies.

the dead impose their presence on the living through haunting. Gordon aptly points out that “[t]o impute a kind of objectivity to ghosts implies that, from certain standpoints, the dialectics of visibility and invisibility involve a constant negotiation between what can be seen and what is in the shadows” (17). Both Chambers and Jacques Derrida use the term “untimely” to mean that ghosts intercept the present at will and trouble the living regardless of whether the living believe in their existence or not (Chambers 96). Derrida proposes the term hauntology to define the ghost as invisible and defying semantics much like ontology, psychoanalysis and philosophy because of its non-existence in the flesh and blood (6). As Derrida points out, traditional scholars do not believe in ghosts: they maintain an ontological perspective, drawing a sharp distinction between the living and the non-living, being and non-being, the past and the present (Derrida cited in Craps 468). Hauntology therefore allows “the scholar of the future” to think of the possibility of the ghost (25). Stef Craps and Laubscher have proposed Derrida’s hauntology as a way of making meaning of repressed pasts. Gordon’s idea of haunting corroborates that “[t]he ghost or the apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way” (8).

British Caribbean author Fred D’Aguiar’s unique concept of ghosts as having to be fed offers another way of understanding haunting. In *Feeding the Ghosts*, published in 1997, he imagines the jettisoning of 132 slaves who were aboard the slave ship *Zong* in 1781. He constructs the creative imagination of the text, through the main character Mintah, the only survivor of the 132 who immortalises the jettisoned²⁴ through 131 wooden carvings, as the act of “feeding the ghosts”. D’Aguiar’s re-memory is useful to help us ask the question: What does it mean to feed the ghosts as a way of addressing haunting? Craps suggests that “instead of clearing away the dead, [D’Aguiar’s narrative] permit[s] the traumatic history to live on as a haunting, troubling, foreign element within the present” (230). The author ‘feeds the ghosts’ through the re-memory of the slaves who were drowned in the sea. With this working definition of ghosts, it is therefore useful to interrogate why ghosts invade the world of the living.

For this reason, the second epigraph with which I opened this chapter draws attention to the

²⁴ Mintah, as a survivor of the jettisoning, carves these images to tell the story of the sunken bodies and make possible the commemoration of the violence perpetrated on them.

role of ghosts. On the one side, as the quote illustrates, the ghosts seek vengeance for the injustices to which they were subjected. Their insistence exists regardless of the attention the living pay them. As such, the quote presents to us the concept of cohabiting with ghosts and highlights that some ghosts impose themselves on the living because of injustices that have not been addressed. Chambers uses the phrase “to lay the ghost to rest” to indicate legal and political attempts to rid the present of some of the ghosts of the past (95). On the other side, Derrida’s hauntology proposes learning to live with ghosts (xviii). Craps argues in line with Derrida’s reflection, and in conjunction with D’Aguiar’s that ghosts are fed for peaceful co-existence. As explained by Craps, Derrida suggests being “aware of and attentive to those already dead or not yet born” (467). Derrida means that ghosts do not have a determinate ontological status but belong to a liminal hauntological domain which allows for an ongoing politics of memory and a concern for justice (Derrida cited in Craps 467). Laubscher has suggested that the return of the dead alludes to their unfinished business, that their affairs are not complete or in order and that something needs to be righted in the land of the living before they can settle in the land of the dead (47). For Chambers,

[g]hosts are not easily laid [to rest] ... [because] their presence signifies the sense the living have of an injustice that has gone unrepaired. It always seems easier to lay the ghost than to repair the injustice ... because ghosts ultimately refuse to lie down and be still, for the very reason that the consciousness of injustice, otherwise known as a sense of guilt, inhabits the living, not the dead. (95-6)

This generational scope of haunting as it is implied by Chambers implicates past atrocities which have not been met by justice. Similarly, working with haunting implies “conjur[ing] up the appearances of something that [is] absent,” it allows me to conceptualise what is marginal, what is excluded, and what is not immediately noticeable (Gordon 24-25). The appearance of the ghost in the novels therefore “[makes] it even more difficult for the reader and the scholar” to make conclusive decisions of how it should be addressed (Derrida 11). As such these ghosts haunt subsequent generations, seeking the justice they deserve. In my readings of contemporary novels that engage with the history of slavery, justice, as far as ghosts and haunting are concerned, becomes key. The appearance of ghosts in relation to unresolved injustices suggests the need to attend to the past in order to deal with a haunted present or future (Laubscher 47). And yet, as the following chapters will show, haunting, as constructed in the narratives of slavery analysed here, defies closure.

CHAPTER TWO

Impossible Motherhood: Trauma and (Un)confession in Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed*

When they told me my new-born babe was a girl, my heart was heavier than it had ever been before. Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. (Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* 66)

What is motherhood in the life of a slave? (Samuelson, "Yvette Christiansë's Oceanic Genealogies" 34)

I saw them and their generations chained to each other in a line that went right up into that land, over mountains, through rivers. I felt my body as if it was giving birth to generations already dead. (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 312)

Infanticide was so common in the Cape that it was not unusual to see the corpses of drowned infants lying on the beach. (Christiansë, "Heartsore" 6)

This chapter is foundational in the overall scope of the dissertation in that it aims to foreground the nature of slavery at the Cape Colony. I analyse the brutality and trauma of slavery through the lens of the black slave mother as narrated Yvette Christiansë's second fictional publication²⁵ and debut elliptical novel *Unconfessed* (2007), which intricately weaves the tragic story of Sila, a historical slave woman at the Cape whose information Christiansë researched in the Cape Town archive. As the focus of this first analytical chapter, Christiansë's *Unconfessed* allows me to examine motherhood as an existential horror in slavery. I employ *Unconfessed* to elaborate the violence in slave motherhood by illustrating how the novel theorises trauma as gendered. Therefore, the image of the female slave woman as well as female slave sexuality and slave maternity are pronounced in this initial chapter of analysis. The examination of slave motherhood is useful in understanding the representation of Cape slavery in the novel because it evokes intergenerational slavery in the formulation of "giving birth to generations already dead" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 312). The quotations that open this chapter serve to provide a backdrop to how the female slave body in slavocracy was appropriated for sexual slavery and as 'breeders' of generations of slave children. Motherhood, in its projection of 'enslaved' future generations, also speaks to the larger focus of this

²⁵ Christiansë has three published creative works: the novel *Unconfessed* (2007), and two poetry collections: *Castaway* (1999) and *Imprenehora* (2009). These collections also focus on slavery at the Cape, emphasising its connections to regions linked to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

dissertation: the idea of haunting. I structure the chapter into two broad sections. First, I introduce how the maternal is affected, shaped and distorted by slavery. In this section, I start by explaining how slavery at the Cape Colony was dominated by violence on slave mothers, followed by a discussion of how the novel imagines the trauma that these women had to live with. The second section discusses the *contextual* silences of slavery in the Cape Archive, while at the same time showing how the *textual* silences imagine this contextual silence. The contextual entails the historical silences on Cape slavery in the archive, while the textual indicates how the author has creatively imagined those silences. Here, the novelist shows how the representation allows in certain ways for the dead to speak. Though much research has been done to analyse slavery in narratives on African American slavery – its inhumanity, brutality and aftermath – such research reads either fictional narratives or first person slave narratives on slavery²⁶. However, *Unconfessed* is unique in its imagining of a historical slave woman. In a place like the Cape where there were no first-hand accounts of slaves as I elaborated in Chapter One, such imagination holds potential for illuminating the trauma of slave women at the Cape.

Christiansē is a South African scholar and creative writer resident in the U.S.A who grew up in apartheid South Africa. Her interest in this work of re-memory might have emerged from her roots, since her grandmother was a descendant of a freed slave born in St. Helena, as is narrated in her poetry collection, *Castaway*²⁷. Christiansē imagines Sila's story based on accounts of a historical woman by the same name, whose information she sourced from the Cape Town archive. In "Heartsore: The Melancholy Archive of Cape Colony Slavery," Christiansē relates how her research, with the view to writing a novel on slavery, had by chance led her to a letter that inquired about the whereabouts of the slave woman Sila van den Kaap, incarcerated with a death sentence. Intrigued, Christiansē searched for the records of this

²⁶ The horrors here could be similar to those narrated by Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (1769), Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845), Henry Bibb's *Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1849) and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself* (1861).

²⁷ St. Helena acted as a prison in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. See <http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/15564/10/Yvette-Christiansē>. Gabeba Baderoon has elaborated how Christiansē's *Imprendehora* imagines the Island and as the place where Christiansē family originates (*Regarding Muslims* 69/70).

particular slave woman in the Cape Town Archive in order to imagine the fictitious Sila (Christiansë as cited in Smiley).

The novel opens in a dingy prison cell in Cape Town where Sila van den Kaap, slave to the burgher Jacobus Stephanus Van der Wat of Plettenberg Bay, has been incarcerated for the murder of her nine year old son Baro, and awaits the final verdict of the law. Chronologically, Sila had been captured in Mozambique as a young girl and sold as a slave at the Cape to her first slave mistress Hendrina Jansen, who is fondly referred to as “Oumiesies” by her slaves (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 165). After Hendrina’s death – in spite of the fact that her will grants Sila freedom – Sila is inherited as a slave by Jansen’s elder son, Theron, with the help of his lawyer. In a cunning twist of events, Theron rents Sila out to work at the shop of trader Carl Hancke, so that she can pay for her freedom which will cost 1000 Rix dollars. But a scuffle of ownership ensues and Hancke and Theron both claim ownership of Sila, who has by this time given birth to three children: Carolina, Camies, and Baro. It emerges that Theron had sold Sila off to Hancke instead, but wanted to increase her price after she gives birth to three more ‘slaves’. Sila does not attain her freedom within the convoluted colonial legal system that sees the Orphan Chamber²⁸ support Theron. She is finally sold to Van der Wat, whom she describes as the most cruel slave master she has ever had. Van der Wat beats and rapes Sila, even while she is pregnant. At the climax of the novel, Van der Wat beats Sila’s nine year old son, Baro, breaking his arm. Sila describes this beating as the worst one she has seen. In her words: “Baro is given the beating of a grown up man” and “[h]is arm had to be pushed back together where the bone had broken” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 312). Baro sustains several other injuries on his stomach and legs. With the arm getting worse, he falls into a delirium the following day. Baro’s tragic state prompts Sila to kill by slashing his throat with a kitchen knife, in order to obviate possible future brutality and suffering. At this stage, her other two children, Carolina and Camies, have already been sold. By imagining Sila as a tormented mother addressing the ghost of her dead son Baro, Christiansë portrays the haunting nature of slavery.

Sila articulates her emotional distress in the case before the landdrost where it is demanded that she plead guilty of the murder. She is silent throughout the interrogation, and refuses to plead

²⁸ The Orphan Chamber was an institution of the Cape Colonial administration that oversaw all estate matters, including the disposal of the slaves of deceased slave owners. See Yvette Christiansë, “Heartsore” 3.

guilty or answer the questions that are directed to her. She is sentenced to death by strangulation, and kept in prison awaiting the execution, where she is constantly raped by guards and visitors to the prison. She consequently conceives a boy child who later dies in the prison, but manages to avert the death sentence by invoking the law which does not allow for the hanging of a pregnant woman. Instead, she is sentenced to a fourteen-year prison sentence on Robben Island. It is in this geographical location on Robben Island, where the ghost of her dead son, Baro, appears to her. While the narrative is related by an omniscient narrator at the opening and closure, it shifts to Sila's first person narrative voice and mutates to flashback, stream of consciousness and monologue addressed at the ghost to whom she recounts the story of her slavery. It is through her talking to Baro's ghost that the reader learns of Sila's life as a slave, bought and brought from Mozambique as a young girl to the Cape, and how she is sold from one master to the other, made a mother in the process and deprived of the right to be with her children.

Motherhood and Cape Slavery

The fourth quotation that opens this chapter declares that: “[i]nfanticide was so common in the Cape that it was not unusual to see the corpses of drowned infants lying on the beach” (Christiansë, “‘Heartsore’” 6). It is the statement of a traveller who made a complaint to the Cape colonial administration about the deaths of slave children at the Cape coast. Metaphorically, the Cape proves not only a Cape of torments for the sailor, but for the slave mothers who were not allowed to keep their children. Raising a similar concern about slave women killing their own children, the then British secretary of state expressed his perturbation about the matter when he wrote to Governor Somerset (Christiansë, “‘Heartsore’” 6). Notably, infanticide in the Cape colony was rampant. Christiansë notes that at least three other instances of slave women slaying children came to the law's attention between 1819 and 1823 (“‘Heartsore’” 6). In November 1821, four women were charged with the murder of newborn infants in the small district community of Graaff Reinet, in the Karoo, east of Cape Town (Christiansë, “‘Heartsore’” 7). Among these were the cases of Rosalyn, Philida and Mina, who were sentenced to death. Unfortunately, the courts did not consider the emotional violence that was inflicted on mothers by their slave masters, which contributed to the killing of their children. It is in this sense that I use the phrase “Impossible Motherhood” in my title to imply the horrors that prevented slave women from fulfilling their desired role as mothers.

Infanticide and the slaying of children by their mothers drew my attention to the gendered, maternal nature of Cape slavery. Gqola explains that “[f]eminist [scholars] of colonial and slave eras in southern Africa [such as Yvette Abrahams, Helen Bradford and Zine Magubane]²⁹ continue to challenge the erasure of women slaves, but also how slavery was gendered as a project” (12). Writing on *Unconfessed*, literary critic Meg Samuelson highlights this fact by arguing that the novel brings into provocative focus the figure of the mother (““Lose Your Mother, Kill Your Child”” 38). The relation between slave women, their children and the owners who in many cases had also fathered these children, was deeply influenced by what Sharifa Ahjum terms “the selective law of uterine descent for slaves” (83). As elaborated by critic Maria Olausson who has also commented on *Unconfessed*, uterine descent relates to the fact that children born to slave women were also enslaved and legally belonged to the owner of their enslaved mother. Similarly, the historian Joseph C. Miller observes that Indian Ocean slavery consisted primarily of female slaves and was determined by assimilation, freedom, and dependency through this question of motherhood (18). Elsewhere, on Cape slavery, Olausson notes that slave women were sexually vulnerable in relation to their owners and this was closely linked to their childbearing capacity (“Approaching Asia” 41). Sexual exploitation is the case for Sila, who is abused by her masters Theron and Van der Wat, resulting to birth of her three children.

I address the gap in studies on women slavery across Indian Ocean Africa in general, and particularly in literary representations that have not focused on slave women’s subjectivities and more specifically, on motherhood in slavery. In “Re-modelling Slavery as if Women Mattered,” Claire Robertson and Marsha Robinson observe that most of the world’s slaves were women, who ironically have been absent and invisible in much scholarly discourses on slavery. In spite of the fact that women comprised a substantial populace of slaves, little close attention has been paid to slave women’s subjectivities. Robertson and Robinson therefore assert that “[s]cholars of slavery across several continents have noted this absence and have

²⁹ Yvette Abrahams “The Great Long National Insult: ‘Science’, Sexuality and the Khoisan in the 18th and Early 19th Century” (1997), Helen Bradford in “Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, 1806-1870.” (1996) and Zine Magubane, “Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Poststructuralism, Race, and the Curious Theoretical Odyssey of the ‘Hottentot Venus’” (2001).

urged systematic inclusion” (253). Miller agrees that the focus on women in slave studies is long overdue (284). He, however, notes that in recent years,³⁰ such studies have gained interest in the Americas and Ancient Mediterranean but that little is known or the subject is entirely misapprehended in other parts of the world (284). Cheryl Hendricks’s assertion that “in studies of the history of the Cape a gendered analysis has sprung forth but this is still largely limited to a few feminist historians” reiterates the need for research on female slavery (31). As if in response to these calls, Samuelson argues that women were part of the nationalist project in South Africa yet they have been “written out of” authorship and citizenship and still continue to face violence and repression (*Remembering the Nation* 4, 53). She stresses the need to evoke a feminist discourse that cuts across national boundaries (*Remembering the Nation* 4,11). My focus on impossible motherhood is central in contributing to the larger discussion of enslaved women in general and the subjectivity of slave women in particular. Scholar of Muslim identities and slavery at the Cape Gabeba Baderoon notes, “[g]ender and sexuality were ... crucial factors in South African slavery” (*Regarding Muslims* 84). Such centrality calls for subsequent inclusion in research across the region. My analysis in this chapter responds to this gap in the study of slavery by giving attention to the female slave protagonist that *Unconfessed* imagines. The novel reveals the sexual violation to which enslaved women were subjected (Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims* 96).

As I started out in Chapter One, slavery in South Africa comprised predominantly of enslaved women who were recruited for domestic chores. I discussed that the Indian Ocean slave trade comprised largely of female household slaves. Economic historian Gwyn Campbell furthermore states that the “[m]ajority of slaves traded in the IOW³¹ were female, notably girls and young women, [who] were valued particularly for their sexual attractiveness and reproductive capacity” and were more highly prized than their male counterparts (“Introduction: Slavery” xii). As proposed by Miller, women were “relatively manageable” compared to their male counterparts and they also came in handy in performing household chores (307, 308). The dominance of women slaves could explain why motherhood becomes a pressing issue in the presentation of slavery in *Unconfessed*. Arguably, women were more malleable to be subjected to the hegemonic patriarchy of the slave master. Women faced

³⁰ The book in which this chapter by Miller is written – *Women and Slavery: The Modern Atlantic*, Volume Two was published in 2008.

³¹ Initials for Indian Ocean World as used by Gwyn Campbell.

distinct and unique challenges as a result of their social vulnerability to sexual objectification as far as slavocracy was concerned. There is a connection between the vulnerability of women and the effects this vulnerability has on enslaved women. Their sexual vulnerability resulted in unwanted pregnancies and consequent subjectivity as slave mothers. Samuelson observes that a mother is already in a subject position into which the diversity of women is written (*Remembering the Nation* 159). Using this claim, I argue that the slave mother then occupies multiple liminal positions. She is a subject at three levels: as a slave, as a woman and as a mother. The psychological disturbance of a mother that causes Sila to kill her son in a bid to avert the brutality of slavery exemplifies these subjective positions. Consequently, this chapter is concerned with the trauma that slave mothers encounter in witnessing the suffering of their children who are subject to the brutality of slavery at a very early age. I discuss this in the following section.

Conceptualising and Contextualising Trauma, Ghosts, and the World of the ‘Living Dead’

Psychoanalytic theory has traditionally been used to examine the presence of authors’ unconscious and inner lives in their creative works.³² I however employ selected tenets of psychoanalysis to shed light on the inner life of the slave mother, Sila, in order to make sense of individual, intergenerational and collective trauma. Sila’s narrative shows how the concepts of psychoanalysis, memory and literary narrative project trauma as a central focus in the memory of slavery. This analysis finds Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic study on trauma as well as Cathy Caruth’s reading of Freud central to understanding the oppression of slavery in the Cape as imagined in *Unconfessed*. In Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and in psychoanalysis in general, trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind (Freud cited in Caruth 3). Michelle Balaev postulates that Caruth’s formulations of trauma and memory – informed primarily by Freud – have become an important source for the theorisation of literary trauma studies and as a source to support the notion of trans-historical trauma (151). Making use of Caruth’s elaborations on Freud, I identify trauma in the narrative as manifested in layers. The first layer is “the wound experienced too unexpectedly

³² Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan have studied creative writers like Dostoyevsky and Kafka as exhibiting psychotic neurosis in their work. Freud famously used the Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* to show the centrality of sexuality and the Oedipus Complex in characters such as Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (Kurzweil and Phillips 20).

to be fully known and therefore not available to consciousness” (Caruth 4). This wound in *Unconfessed* is Sila’s witnessing of Baro’s beating by Van der Wat as illustrated:

They said he was a bad child. They sent him – Van der Wat and his wife – to do the work of a man. They beat him as they beat me. And I was a grown woman and he a child. ... His arm had to be pushed back together where the bone had broken.”
(Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 312)

The second layer of trauma is “a double wound”, meaning that the wound is only recognised when it occurs a second time (Caruth 3, 4). Baro’s beating, Sila’s lack of agency and Baro’s continued physical pain, as well as the possible recurrence of the beating can be understood as the second layer.

Discussing Freud’s conceptualisation of trauma, Caruth elaborates on the romantic epic of *Gerusalemme Liberata* to describe trauma as a “wound that cries out” (4). I exemplify this “crying out” as the third layer. In this epic, the hero, Tancred, unknowingly kills his love Clorinda in a fight because she is disguised in the armour of an enemy knight. Later on, after the burial, Tancred goes to a strange magic forest, where in a turn of events, he slashes at a tall tree with his sword. It turns out that he has wounded the soul of his beloved a second time. The voice of Clorinda then calls out complaining of the second wounding from her beloved (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 16). For Sila, the act of slashing Baro’s throat is not a brave act. Her faltering and hopelessness is self-evident in the archive: “she cut her child's throat, but on seeing the blood was [struck] with terror, ... and then ran to the house of the Field Cornet of the ward and reported the occurrence to them” (CJ49/25:458-459 cited in Christiansē, (“Heartsore” 11). Notably, the atrocity of and willingness to commit the killing is retracted from Sila’s act of killing. Christiansē posits that “the meditative grief of the mother is what gives to the tableau its poignancy” (“Heartsore” 11). The third layer then, the voice that calls back in shock and pain, is Sila’s experience of living with the burden of Baro’s voice that ‘cries back’ in the form of a constantly appearing ghost. In this sense, the fourth layer becomes having to live with the burden of the other, which in Freud’s example can be described as the crying wound that “represents the other within the self that retains the memory of the ‘unwitting’ traumatic events of one’s past” (Caruth 8). This dimension of Sila’s trauma, the split between self and other, is the burden in living with her own trauma and Baro’s. Sila’s experience explains that “trauma is not a category that encompasses death directly, but rather draws our

attention to the survival of subjects in and beyond sites of violence and in proximity to death” (Rothberg, “Preface” xiv). The re-appearance of Baro’s ghost is characteristic of the uncanny repetition of trauma as I will discuss in a later section on the metaphorical categories and the appearance of the uncanny. The presence of the ghost points back to my theorisation in Chapter One about cohabiting with the ghost. These layers of trauma are useful in exploring Sila’s trauma as portrayed in the narrative.

The novel expresses the psychoanalytic in Sila’s cohabiting with Baro’s ghost and having to bear witness to it. This imagination expresses the trauma that the slave mothers who killed their children at the Cape had to live with. Living with the ghost then manifests as “listening to a voice that the individual cannot fully know” (9). I therefore identify the language of trauma in my discussion of *Unconfessed* in two aspects. The first is listening to a voice that the individual cannot fully know. The second is the silence in the mute repetition of that voice. The identity of Sila as a witness, as well as the author consequently becomes associated with hauntedness. In his analysis of memory of Apartheid experiences, psychologist Leswin Laubscher suggests that “to bear witness is to be marked, and to bear the mark of having seen and having borne witness” (54). Caruth observes that “this listening to the address of another, an address that remains enigmatic yet demands a listening and a response, is at the centre of trauma” (9). The language of trauma and the silence of its mute repetition of suffering becomes central in such psychoanalytic interpretation. As narrated in the novel, Sila does not experience psychological absolution because of the uncanny repetition of the ghost’s appearance. Her healing is also curtailed by the fact that her other remaining children are still enslaved. Because she does not know where they are, she lives with the fear that her other children suffer in the same way that Baro suffered. Her trauma is also intensified by the fact that she is separated from them as a result of her continued incarceration at Robben Island. Sexual exploitation and rape in prison produces repetitive instances of possible trauma, because it results in the birth of Meisie, who is taken away from her. Consequently, for Sila, trauma becomes synonymous with re-living the past, an example of what Caruth describes as an “oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival” (7). Using Caruth’s concept, the repetition of Sila’s trauma shapes her life (8).

One of the ways in which the language of trauma finds expression in the neo-slave narrative is in the dreams that haunt Sila. Sila's dreams about her childhood and her children embody the paradoxical relationship between trauma and memory. Toni Morrison has argued that in traumatic circumstances, the oppressed find themselves in positions where they remember or forget certain instances (5). These dreams are twofold: of her ancestry and her descent. As such, they represent what historian and cultural sociologist Orlando Patterson terms the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations, both of which manifest in memory and forgetting (7). Concerning ancestry, the dreams centre on the theme of her childhood, foregrounding her repressed past. The omniscient narrator says: "She dreamed of her mother and father. They walked without faces, without hands. Yet she heard them calling her, and she, walking, longed for news of them and of her own village, which she barely remembered" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 28). The evidence of her past memory in the dream about losing her parents resonates with Freud's explanation of dreams as "bring[ing] to memory the psychical traumas of childhood" and "conjur[ing] up what has been forgotten and repressed" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 6, *Dream Psychology* 26). Freud also observes that "dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 7). Here, the situation of the accident is not only Baro's death, but before that also Sila's sale into slavery as a young girl. Accordingly, I interpret these dreams as psychic disturbances emanating from Sila's past: her "middle passage" from Mozambique to the Cape and the consequent violent 'natal alienation' that haunts her present.

In his seminal text, *Slavery and Social Death*, Patterson uses the term "natal alienation" to refer to the encompassing "forced alienation" from roots and ancestry that accompanies slavery (7). Sila's loss of the memories of home are illustrated in the novel as blurred images of her physical home as just trees, "ovals of blankness" instead of the faces of her parents and reference to a "voice she could imagine as her mother's" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 28). Such obliterated memory of the past serves as evidence of the natal alienation Patterson attributes to the Middle Passage. He defines the slave as a socially dead person whose situation cannot allow him or her to integrate the experience of their ancestors into their present, and consequently they cannot "anchor their present in any conscious community of memory" (5). Slavery operated through the violent removals and forceful alienation of people from their homes, in many cases, while they were still young. In Achille Mbembe's formulation, the state of the slave:

results from a triple loss; loss of a “home,” loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political status. This triple loss is identical with absolute domination, natal alienation, and social death (expulsion from humanity altogether). (“Necropolitics” 21)

Sila’s longing and her desire to connect with a home is narrated as traumatic and haunting, illustrated in the repetitive dreams about her mother and father who walk without faces and hands, and call her (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 28). The state of Sila’s social death can be used to extrapolate the state of her psychological death. With regard to the mother killing her son under the given circumstances of slave brutality, physical death seems to follow from psychological death. The narrative’s absence of Sila’s memories of childhood serves as a metaphor for the forgotten pasts of slavery in the present. Such forgetting takes place despite the fact that – as noted by Nigel Worden – the institution of slavery shaped the colonial, and later, the apartheid history of South Africa (4). Her dreams’ ability to propel her past into the present evokes the contextual haunting of a repressed past of slavery into the present of the post-apartheid moment, the present of the publication and reception of the novel.

Far from romanticising dreams as memory, the extra dynamic of dreams in the novel is their “relation to traumatic neurosis” (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 7). In this conceptualisation, the dreams foreground the bondage of slavery, the sale of children from their mothers and the uncertainty of consequent slave generations, as illustrated in the following dream:

These nights there is no rest. I was walking in the town with my children. A big fog was creeping up from the Roggebaai. My children were holding on to my skirts and we were coming out of a big house. Behind us the house was filled with animals. There were monkeys in a cage that covered a whole tree. The cage was a net ... All [the animals] were caught in the cages. I saw men with sticks, poking into the cages. They were laughing and on their belts they wore bags swollen with coins ... my eyes were closed and the fog was in my ears and my children were gone. (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 208)

Illustrating the experience of trauma as listening to a language that one cannot fully know, the dreams have taught her a “language [she] never learnt” (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 208). If the dream is a psychical phenomenon as argued by Freud, Sila’s dreams evidence the trauma of her children entrapped in slavery. Noted by Patterson, “not only were [slaves] natively alienated

from their ancestors and often from their community of origin, but also from their descendants” (331). A couple of Sila’s dreams indicate the trauma of her fixation on the whereabouts of her children. Sila tells Lys, a fellow woman prisoner, about one of these dreams:

Lys, I had a dream that will not let me be. We are all getting onto a ship, me, my children ... Then the ship was moving and my insides were empty with fear. My children. Some were on land, some on the ship, and those on the ship had disappeared. I could feel them moving about, close to me, but could not see them. It was as if one of those big fogs had arrived and settled around my eyes ... My children were still half on the ground and half with me. (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 206)

In yet another dream, Christiansē narrates: “This time she was her own mother, running to gather her children and find a place to hide” (*Unconfessed* 28). Her children were hidden in various places, sometimes in the ground, sometimes flying up into the trees.

As such, Sila’s psychological disturbances stem from her own helplessness in rescuing her children from slavery. This emotional disturbance is illustrated in her feeling: “my children waiting for me at Roggebaai. But my heart has a back door and there I see Carolina, Camies, Pieter, and now Debora, all disappearing from me” (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 331). In portraying the selling of children into slavery and the violent separation of children from their slave mothers, *Unconfessed* illustrates the bleak future of the slave mother’s children and descendants. The terror of separation is narrated through the theme of loss in Sila’s dreams, marked by the metaphors of ‘big fogs settled around her eyes’, ‘some on the ship others somewhere in the land’ and ‘half on the ground and half with me’. The theme of loss speaks to the loss of her children to servitude that is aptly captured by the ship as a metaphor for the Middle Passage. Sila’s dreams therefore lament the loss of her children to the inhumanity of slavery as a means of labour production. The other dynamic of this loss of her children is Sila’s inability to prevent the sale of her children. As noted by Freud, dreams that are of traumatic experiences constantly force themselves upon the patient and show that the patient is fixated within their trauma (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 7). Sila’s dreams are filled with the foreboding vulnerability of her children being sold as slaves, aggravated by her incarceration as a prisoner on Robben Island. Her state denotes the emotional violence that slave mothers existed in. In another of these dreams, Sila narrates:

I think of Carolina. I want to know how she is. I dreamed that she had a child. If she has a child, who is the father of that child, and is he good to her? I want to know if she is afraid, sad. Do they beat her? (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 206-207)

These traumatic manifestations reflect her lived reality in that her son Pieter is still with Van der Wat (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 24), while later on Robben Island, her youngest daughter, Meisie, is taken by the minister's wife when Sila is away working: "I left her in the hut and when I came back she was gone" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 206).

Hence these dreams foreground the production of slaves through maternity. Philosopher Michel Foucault's formulation on bio-power, namely that the slave master controls the population of his slaves for his own capitalistic gain,³³ is manifest here in the deliberate increase of population for economic gain. Samuelson observes: "Sila has been purchased as a "childbearing" woman to "increase [her owner's] stock" (26). This is one of the meanings of motherhood she has to negotiate. The increase of population is further explained by Patterson when he points out that slavery had the "inheritability" status, pointing to the fact that the children of slave mothers automatically acquired their maternal slave status (9). "Young girls," the narrator of *Unconfessed* accordingly observes, "would grow into women and bear more children" (Christiansë 29). For Samuelson, Sila "was made slave, made Sila van Mozbieker and later, through treachery that replicates her initial enslavement and denies her and her children their freedom, made Sila van den Kaap: one who would make other – her children – slaves" ("Yvette Christiansë's Oceanic Genealogies" 33). The relationship of slave descent to maternity is illustrated as Sila laments the painful separation of mother and child, because "she had not been allowed to be the mother of her children" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 10, 20).

The narrative therefore constructs Sila as a 'breeder', illustrated by Sila's acknowledgement that she feels like she is "giving birth to generations already dead" because all her children would be sold as slaves (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 312). Sila says: "I fear that no matter how far I travel ... my children will end up like me" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 343). This way, the novel focuses on the bleakness of the future represented by Sila's concern for her children.

³³ Paula Allman discusses how capitalism uses commodification for the means of profit making for institutions. Foucault also theorizes the concept of bio-power and its relation to the development of capitalism. In this he talks about the control of population for economic and political control (*The History of Sexuality*:140-141).

Olaussen observes that the focus of *Unconfessed* rests on future generations, in the connection that Christiansë establishes between Sila's story and the fate of future generations (129). The dreams which repetitively tell of the loss of her children to slavery and the impossibility of recovering them, accentuates the bleak future of slave descendants. Though not a replica of the form of slave-breeding in African-American experiences,³⁴ the express translation of a slave child into a slave in *Unconfessed* is similar to the mode of slave 'production' and increase. As analysed by Baderoon, the novel reveals the sexual abuse of women slaves, and the birth of Sila's children as a result of rape by her owners, and by prison guards and men who pay for sex with imprisoned female slaves (*Regarding Muslims* 95). The eventuality of having her children sold to slavery, as is the case with Camies, Pieter, Carolina and Meisie, constantly threatens her motherhood. This is evident when her slave mistress, Martha, proposes to sell Baro in order to buy a horse and in another case, opts to sell Sila's other children in order to fund her granddaughter's wedding (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 273, 266). Similar images of slave maternity are illustrated in the experiences of fellow slave women, Alima and Ma, who are both forced into sexual slavery in order to give birth to children who are sold (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 110, 119, 16).

Given the inevitability of children born into slavery, I argue that slave infanticide becomes a form of counter practice to intergenerational slavery. In the novel, this counter act is represented by Sila and the slave woman, Hester, both of whom kill their children to avert the vicious cycle of slavery. In this regard, the recurrence of the dreams invite further interrogation of "dreams as foretelling the future" (Freud, *Dream Psychology* 9). Analysing Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother, Kill Your Child*, Samuelson notes that images of slave mothers stage a return to the condition of slavery because their children would still be slaves (41). The slave mothers act of killing of their children acts as agency that averts the inheritance of slave status. Intergenerational slavery resonates with the idea of haunting as it projects itself from the standpoint of slavery as impacting on subsequent generations. The intergenerational trope of slavery has also been discussed in studies of African American narratives as traumatising across generations. An example of such a narrative is Gayl Jones's *Corregidora*, which embodies the intergenerational experiences of sexual slavery up to the third generation. Such

³⁴ Strong slaves were picked and forced to have sex with other selected slaves, for the purpose of reproducing children who were strong enough to do manual jobs. Gregory Smithers, an American historian, elaborates on the histories in narratives of slave breeding in the African American context (Bakhtin).

literary narratives corroborate research in psychology that has identified that “trauma can be transmitted inter-generationally” (Danieli 296). Incidentally, *Unconfessed* traverses four generations: that of Sila as first generation, her children as second generation, her children’s children as third generation, and of generations to come. Intergenerational slavery is one of the ways to understand the concept of haunting in this dissertation.

Metaphorical Categories: The Appearance of the Uncanny

The nightmarish nature of her dreams when she claims that “[t]hese nights there is no rest” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 208) resonates with Freud’s argument that traumatic dreams “arise in obedience to the compulsion to repeat” (*Dream Psychology* 26). In the novel, such a compulsion to repeat is metaphorically embedded in the narrative through the repetitive, cyclic structure that the author adopts. In his reading of trauma in African literature, literary critic Ato Quayson identifies what he terms “metaphorical categories” within the literary domain as an aspect of the psychological (“Symbolization Compulsion: Testing a Psychoanalytical” 760). These metaphorical categories include the dramatic fragment and repetition – concepts that I employ in my analysis of *Unconfessed* in order to understand how the narrative voice is used to imagine the slave mother’s trauma. According to Quayson, repetition is reflected in the movement of the narrative’s plot (“Symbolization Compulsion: Testing a Psychoanalytical” 760).

In *Unconfessed*, repetition is illustrated in the repetitive and cyclic narrative structure and in the fragmented nature of the plot. The tale is narrated in a cyclic and layered narrative that allows Sila to re-tell parts of her story, later retelling them in more detail in order to join together the individual pieces. Olausson observes that “[t]he narrative structure of *Unconfessed* moves in circles” and that Sila’s “memories are represented in cycling movements which draw closer and closer towards the end of the novel” (125, 129). Instances of such repetitive narration is evident in Sila’s narration of Hester’s story, as I will discuss later, and how she killed Baro. (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 19, 313, 327). In both instances, Sila tells bits and pieces only to repeat the same story in a slightly different way later on. As such, Sila tells her story disjointedly, sometimes even re-telling it to a new person. Initially, she addresses Baro’s ghost, then Lys and then Johannes, a former fellow slave who belonged to Oumiesies. This narrative

style formulates Sila's voice as one that is difficult to articulate, especially when we consider the violent story it narrates. The nature of the narration fits Njabulo Ndebele's explanation that "particularly for the writer, the ugly reality of oppression became impossible to articulate" (22). The cyclical narration embedded in the poetic narration therefore signals the author's difficulty in capturing the magnitude of Sila's pain. Theorist on African and cultural history, Kwame Anthony Appiah, suggests that the postcolonial narratives of memory and trauma "are often stories of broken languages, broken memories and broken identities" (Appiah cited in Woods 10). The narrative voice formulating Sila's story is one that is impossible to retell and at the same time engages the reader's emotions.

Apart from the repetitive voice, repetition in the plot of the narrative is also illustrated in the fragmented narration. For example, on page 13, Sila explains how Baro was sent to fetch the horses by Van der Wat: "[g]et that child to fetch the horses", she only continues later on with this scene on page 312 when she explains how Baro was beaten for attempting to mount the horses. Here, the very nature of trauma renders causality and linearity impossible (Murray 449). Fragmented narration conveys the mother's trauma to the reader, but most importantly, it reflects the nature of trauma as rapture. The author appropriates the fragmentation of the few available 'traces' of archival 'remains' of the black female slave, the historical Sila. As I will expound in the next section, the text expresses the fragmented nature of information in the archive. These fragments are, for example, noted by Christiansë in "Heart sore" as the variations of names under which the historical Sila was registered in the archive: Sila, Siela, Silla, Silia, Drucella, Drusilla, and Drusiela appearing in various court records (2). Such variations are evident for example in the will of Hendrina Jansen. They imply Sila's position as an object in the archive and the strife of ownership by various slave masters. Fragmentation in the novel is furthermore embedded in the flashback mode of narration adopted to imagine Sila's story. Here, Sila recalls her past to tell her story to Lys, Baro's ghost and Johannes through a stream of consciousness narrative. The memory of trauma comes back in fragments, in disconnected images rather than in a coherent narrative of the past (Morgenstern's "Mother's" cited in Wyatt 145). Explaining this fragmentation in literary texts, Kathleen Brogan postulates that one of the characteristics of stories in haunted literature is its fragmentation, thus "characters struggle to piece these fragments into a coherent narrative" (159). Fragmentation and latency in the narrative further appears in the structure of the

narrative in the typographical spaces on the page that make the writing appear as poetic instead of conventional prose. Baderon notes that *Unconfessed*

employs poetic language to invoke trauma while avoiding realistic descriptions of the violating acts, and also to allow the protagonist to communicate with people whom it is literary impossible for her to reach, such as those who have died or even been sold to owners in distant parts of the country. (*Regarding Muslims* 94)

To literary and cultural theorists, “trauma defies verbalization and narration . . . trauma registers as gaps in the narrative structures” (Rippl, Gabriele, Schweighauser, Philip 9). The disjointed, fragmented structure that characterises a story that is too heart-rending to tell in one go is evident in Sila’s narration but also in the author’s point of re-memory in representing her story.

Repetitive and cyclic retelling, the poetic nature of the tale and Sila’s multiple address illustrate the haunting mood and the tone of the narrative. Overall, fragmentation in the narrative is constructed not only through the narrative voice but also by what prompts this voice, namely the presence of the ghost. Derrida underwrites the relation of the ghost to repetition when he asserts that as a “question of repetition, [the] spectre is always a revenant [whose] comings and goings [are unprecedented] because it begins by coming back” (11). The repetitive appearance of Baro’s ghost is normalised in the plot of the novel, and its presence becomes a central axis on which the narrative rotates. Freud’s uncanny is helpful to examine the function of the ghost’s recurrence. Reading Freud, Quayson extrapolates the uncanny as “the unsettling recognition of the strange within something that is normally perceived as ordinary” (“Symbolisation Compulsions: Freud, African Literature” 195). In the case of *Unconfessed*, the strange appearance of the ghost is finally settled as quotidian – that which Sila has to live with daily. The uncanny has also been related to repetition and repressed memory. The repetition appears when Sila speaks to the ghost of Baro, as illustrated: “This place is filled with sadness. I thought we – you, your sisters and brothers, and I – had known sad people” and “[I]et me look at you, boy!” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 46). Baro’s ghost, which Sila addresses throughout the better part of the narration, and the single incident of his murder influences the structure of the whole novel.

Baro's ghost evokes what I discussed in Chapter One as the relationship between the living and the dead in traditional African societies. I noted that it was normal in traditional African societies for the living to receive supernatural communication from ghosts and spirits because they believed in the world of the 'living dead'. The world of the 'living dead' comprised of those who had died recently. If perceived as the 'living dead', Baro's ghost plays different roles in the plot of the novel. There is the lack of development in the plot, while simultaneously accompanying the mother through her trauma. As I related earlier, whenever the ghost of Baro is present, the narrative does not advance in a linear way, but rather evokes a flashback into the past, illustrated in Sila's perpetual repetition of the story of her slavery under Van der Wat and Theron, and the events surrounding Baro's death. In this sense, the ghost therefore provokes the living to recall their past. The ghost revives Sila's silenced memory, suggesting that the dead can force their presence on the living. Laubscher posits that "the ghost and the dead do not belong to the order of knowledge, a position that opens up the possibility of what is new and not yet heard" (49). In this case, the order of the 'living dead' emphasises the remembering that is facilitated by the dead who revive their presence in the present in ways that the living cannot ignore. Brogan's exemplification makes sense in this way, when she states that hauntedness reflects a continuity with the past over which the living have no control (155). This nature of the ghost could be seen as a form of demand for redress and reparation.

Baro's ghost therefore fulfils two similar but distinct functions. The ghost haunts Sila, but at the same time confronts her trauma, enabling her to tell her story as if to a counselling psychologist for therapeutic ends. If we go back to Laubscher's possibilities of the return of the ghost who comes to grant a second chance to the living, the idea of 'good' ghosts is viable (48). In the novel, the ghost is illustrated as accompanying Sila, acting as one Sila can talk to. Sila addressing it says:

Ag, my boy, keep out of the light so that I can see you. Draw back the curtain, Baro. It hangs its shadow and this hut is deep within the valley of secrets. Call my name, hold ... They say there is a coach that takes passengers as far as Rondebosch these days. Have you seen it?" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 76)

Elsewhere, Sila tells the ghost: "Sing for me, Baro. Do you remember any songs?" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 78). In addition to its role as a confidant, Baro's ghost acts as a good ghost because

it enables Sila to confront a traumatic past that she has to live with. This is illustrated in a further monologue to the ghost of Baro:

I have spent today remembering things I have never wanted to remember. Your visits bring me joy, but they also make what should be still shadows crawl. Now that you are back, my son, everything else comes back- the first day we arrived at van der Wat's farm and, before that, all the years I thought I was working my freedom price off at Hancke's. (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 108)

The “structural openness or address directed towards the living by the voices of the past” explains how the future must be addressed: with an understanding of the past (Davis 13). The idea of a ghost that is welcome becomes relevant in Christiansë's imagination here, and the prospects that this invitation can project on the future.

It was a belief among traditional African communities that the offended and aggrieved dead return to torment the living, whereas the peaceful dead rest in peace and can appear to the living in good dreams. In the case of the grieved dead, Chambers' theorisation of haunting gives an analysis of communities that are constantly revisited by the ghosts of trauma (95). In *Unconfessed*, the ghost is a “belated repetition of the violent history of black infant deaths, during slavery” (Bhabha 11). In contrast, the easy relationship between the ‘living dead’ and the living in traditional African society guides my analysis of Baro's ghost as a ‘good ghost’, one that does not torment. The usefulness of the ghost is illustrated in Sila's excitement at being visited by Baro's ghost whom she meets at one side of the Island:

Baro? Baro! Hai, boy? My boy. Is this you? Can it be you? My Boy! This is a good day. Stand over here. Let me see you. My boy. My lovely boy. I knew you would not forget your mother. (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 42)

Sila articulates her relief and joy during this encounter, which she perceives as a proof that Baro is not discontented by her act of killing him. The friendly nature of the ghost is expressed in the narration that he is fine (his wounds are healed) and that he did not forget about his mother. Unlike in Morrison's *Beloved*, where the ghost of Beloved torments her mother by selfishly seeking the attention that she lacked from her mother while alive, Sila finds emotional release during the encounter. The chance to confide in the ghost of the son she killed, a ghost that does not condemn her, holds a purgative effect. Sila mourns the death of her dead boy,

addressing him in a rhetoric that imaginatively reveals a memory that would have been otherwise omitted. Therefore, not only does the ghost symbolise torture, but it also represents the recalling of otherwise repressed slave memories. In such a case, the return of the ghost is a good thing that makes the reader alert to memory, vividly reminding the reader of the haunting effect of slavery.

In the context of *Unconfessed*, the spirit world could be collapsed into the category of ghosts, which “demand an address and response from the living” (Laubscher 46). Here, I employ the notion of the ‘living dead’ to mean on the one hand, the dead who have not received justice and therefore appear as ghosts to invade the world of the living. On the other hand, the living dead implies generations of children born from slave mothers. These children are ‘socially dead’ in their inevitable and inherited status as slaves. I therefore think through the notion of the living dead as a metaphor for Baro’s ghost, and Sila’s generations of the children who still suffer in slavery. Baro’s ghost represents the dead whose injustice has not been met, therefore are not satisfied with the living. As previously discussed in Chapter One, the living are forced to bear with the invasion of the voice of the dead and exist with them. Laubscher underscores that the demand for address stems from the ethical obligation to respond to the dead and the injustices they suffered. Laubscher gives two possibilities for the return of the ghost: the ghost may return either to obtain a second chance for itself or to grant a second chance to the living (47). There are therefore two possibilities for response: First, “[e]xpelling” or exorcising the ghost and second, “inviting it, speaking to it, of it and even for it” (Laubscher 48). The narrative seems to do the latter. It invites the ghost, lives with it and speaks to it, as illustrated in Sila’s speech: “Listen! Help me, boy. You know how hard it is for me to hear. I see their mouths move at me, but hear nothing. Pedder is writing. Go listen to the scratching of his nib. He must find a way to tell the superintendent of police what has happened” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 86). According to Laubscher, “the survivor (in this case Sila), surviving the other’s death, continues to be determined by his or her relationship with the dead” (51). He furthermore suggests that “[t]o speak to the dead, consequently, is also to speak to the self, to the responsibility of the self, given as it is by the other” (Laubscher 51). If we conceptualise the idea of offering testimony as discussed by Laubscher, the witness is a haunted subject, haunted by the event s/he has witnessed. If the legal term of witness is mapped onto the narrative, then Sila is the witness at the narrative level and Christiansë a witness of the archive. In this case,

at the narrative level Sila's retelling of her experiences to Baro's ghost is simultaneous to Christiansë's re-memory.

Laubscher's statement that there is "no real exchange with the dead, as the ghost takes over the living, who become a mouth piece and means for the spectral parasite" is best comprehended as a haunting (50). Brogan argues that the ghost allows characters to externalise their haunted beings and more conclusively, depicts how this haunting manifests in present societies (150). The narrative is forthright in its platform "to speak always of the specter, to speak to the specter, to speak with it, therefore especially to make or to let a spirit speak", what Derrida terms as "what seems almost impossible" (11). The ghost first appears to Sila, then to the author who re-memories the ghost, and finally to the reader and the researcher who finds it most difficult to comprehend. Sila's lament illustrates this torment:

I am a woman surrounded by spirits. These spirits are questions. These tormenting spirits are the questions we cannot answer. The dead hear these questions and send them back to us in anger. (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 207)

The critical question is that which Sila asks: "Why would the dead be angry with us?" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 207). Being haunted by spirits, as is illustrated in Sila's words, foregrounds what might be the source of the haunting: the dead who are not at peace with the living. The author's insinuation that the dead are angry with the living implies that spirits of dead slaves haunt the present because of the injustice of the oppression they experienced while living. Contextually, if Sila is one of these dead who was denied the chance to speak back to the living, Christiansë's re-memory underwrites Sila's haunting in the present. Therefore, the imminent threat with these spirits of the dead is the loss of dialogue with the living. The loss of such dialogue can be seen as another cause of trauma and haunting in the novel.

Silence as the Language of the Cape Colonial Archive: Sila's (Un)confession

The questions that this chapter has raised so far are: What does the choice of narrative voice – the cyclic, repetitive and poetic – mean in relation to focalisation? What does the emerging twin matrix of trauma and language tell us about memory, slave subjectivity and slave representation? The psychoanalytic understanding of trauma in the narrative has raised concerns of listening to a voice that one cannot fully know – the language of the ghost and that

of the dead. The lack of response to this voice, a voice that cannot be comprehended by the haunted, also points to silence as a composite of trauma. Here, the narrative voice suggests a breakdown of linguistic articulation through its repetitive, poetic and cyclic telling, foregrounding the relationship between trauma and language. The argument here is that “trauma mocks language and confronts it with its insufficiency” (Gilmore 6). If trauma manifests in the plot of the narrative as fragmentation, then silence becomes a constituent part of that trauma. Consequently, in this section, I evoke the loss of linguistic articulation as a component of trauma in order to unpack silence as a language of trauma. First, I map out silence contextually, in the Cape Colonial Archive, and second, textually, in the various layers of silences in *Unconfessed*. In this section, I therefore analyse the role of silence in the colonial archive as well as Sila’s narration.

To begin with, Sila’s narrative – as I mentioned earlier – is imagined from the story of a historical woman by the same name, about whom the author sources information in the Cape Town Archive. The scarcity of information about Sila embodies various silences on slave narratives in the Cape Colonial Archive. In ““Heartsore,”” Christiansē relays how she searched for the records of the slave woman Sila van den Kaap in the Cape Town Archive to create the fictitious Sila. In the Cape Archive, Sila’s diverse appearances all mark the subjectivity of her femaleness, motherhood and slave positions. Citing the Cape court record CJ 817, Christiansē writes that Sila appears in Hendrina Jansen’s will as contested by Theron and Hancke in 1817 and again later, on December 24th 1822, when she is recorded to have cut the throat of her nine-year-old son (““Heartsore”” 5). Here, the records report that she walked from Van der Wat’s farm, where she was enslaved, to the neighbouring farm where she gave herself up to the district’s Field Cornet or local military officer. The next entry is about Sila’s injuries as examined by the District Surgeon (CJ 817:244). He records that Sila complained to him that Van der Wat flogged her with the leather straps used for yoking oxen (CJ 817:245). She appears again when reference is made to her death sentence in 1823, and once more in the sentencing document in which the court records her account of the murder as follows:

... she thereupon rubbed the child with fat which she had scraped from her bread for the purpose, [and] while she was so employed the child fell asleep, [and she] through heartsore and grief, cut the child's throat with a knife which she had with her. (CJ 817:242 cited in Christiansē, ““Heartsore”” 5)

Three years later, in 1826, her name appears in a series of letters between the secretary of state in London and various officials in the colonial government in Cape Town. Sila is “discovered” to be still alive because she had been pregnant when sentenced to death in March 1823 (Christiansë, “‘Heartsore’” 6). Within all these entries, the archive silences Sila by assuming an overall position that speaks for her, and on her behalf.

Christiansë re-memories Sila’s narrative from these records, where Sila’s story exists as mere ‘traces’ in the entry details that relegated her to the position of a slave and murderess. Consequently Sila’s story is, as noted by Baderoon, “based on a real woman whose life Christiansë researched for twenty years in the Cape archives because of her conviction for the murder of her child” (*Regarding Muslims* 94). In Christiansë’s re-memory, the Cape Town Archive embodies a colonial court archive that suppressed and silenced the memory of not only Sila, but scores of other slaves whose stories still lie there. In “‘Heartsore’” Christiansë notes that the archive houses the records of colonial bureaucracy (1). She makes the following remarks in an interview about her experience with the court archive in her search for Sila’s story: “Everywhere I went, I found silence. So I began to pay attention to the silence, because I thought that the silence in some ways stencilled out the conditions in which [slave women] lived” (Christiansë in Smiley). Christiansë further asserts that

of [Sila’s] life, we know almost nothing. In the archive, she survives only in the fragmented records and palpable silences of criminal proceedings, recognized under various related names, including, most frequently, Sila van de Kaap. (Christiansë, “‘Heartsore’” 1)

As I discussed in Chapter One, Nigel Worden and Kerry Ward’s observations on the silences of slave memory at the Cape resonate with the archive’s silences as illustrated by Sila’s story. Evidently, Christiansë focalises the silences of the archive to imagine Sila’s story, therefore giving voice to Sila, who had not been given the chance to voice her own story. In this regard, Olausen points out that Christiansë does this voicing by sourcing the idea for Sila’s story from the court record of the Cape Town colonial archive, where it since has been forgotten (124). The imagination and publication of the traces of the lived experience of the historical Sila (1817-1827) in a present post-apartheid moment in 2006 (a century later), pronounces the silence in both the archive and Sila’s story. Re-memory, in this case, directs Sila to tell her story into the future, the time of the reading of this novel, a time of generations to come, and

gives the reader access to revisit and mourn slave trauma. Re-memory in this narrative therefore provides room for conversations on how silence is a catalyst for the forgetting of slave memory. In this re-memory, the contextual silence of the historical Sila in the Cape Colonial Archive is evoked in the imagined textual silence of the fictional Sila.

Intertextuality becomes a useful tool to interpret the silences in the archive as well as the silences in the narrative. My discussion therefore analyses the silence of the slave mother both in the archive and in the narrative. As is explained in “‘Heartsore,’” contextually, in the Cape Town archive, the court mutes Sila’s voice by reporting what happens to her, instead of recording her verbatim. In the narrative, the legal system is not privy to the details of Sila’s killing of Baro, which is why the court demands her to plead guilty in the court case that sentences her as a murderess. The complexity of this silence in the neo-slave narrative is that the court case is told in a flashback, characterised by Sila reporting to Baro about these events. The limitation in the presentation of the Cape memory of slavery in the colonial archive court records was that the slave is often repressed, and often represented in terms of a confession to a crime, and the records of the words of the slaves presented only indirectly (Ross cited in Olausson 127,128). The narrative enacts the silence of the archive in which Sila is a subject entry and not a human being who can speak for herself. The archive entry of Sila’s only words which state that “‘through heartsore and grief [she] cut the child's throat,” amidst several other entries that speak about her, embodies the silences and silencing that the colonial archive hold with regards to the slave experience that was never voiced by slaves (Christiansē, “‘Heartsore,’” 5). Sila’s subjection and silencing is marked here by the nature of the entry as reported speech, written in the third person, embodying the replacement of the first person verbatim of what would have been her actual voice. Similar to Baderoon’s study on the invisibility of the trauma of slavery among Muslim cultures, Sila’s trauma is made invisible in this court recording. The textual silence intersects with the contextual, the text acting as metaphor for the archival texts that the author re-memories. Textually, silence in the novel is illustrated as the absence of linguistic articulation by the slave mother. As is foregrounded by Christiansē in “‘Heartsore,’” Sila only becomes a subject of legal action when she has killed her son, yet in earlier cases about her, as discussed earlier, no one is prosecuted for the injustices that were committed upon her body and slave subjectivity (5).

Sila's silences and her silencing echo the evidence of the silences and silencing in the archive. The slave violence in the slave institution silenced slaves, resulting to the silence observed in the limited archive material about their oppression. Such silence favoured the slave institution, ensuring scarcity of information on the trade in slaves at the Cape Colony. Historian Pieter C. Emmer remarks, for example, that "most Dutchmen are not even aware that the Netherlands ever took part in the slave trade" (ix). Brink, commenting on the silence of slave memory at the Cape, argues that "[t]he experience of apartheid has demonstrated that different kinds or levels of silence exist ("Interrogating Silence" 14). By connecting the textual (imagined) and the contextual (the archive), *Unconfessed* invokes these silences of the memory of slavery at the Cape and in the post-apartheid nation, and relates the silence to collective and individual memory. Here, silencing at the individual level foregrounds forgetting at the collective level. The historical and the fictional draw parallels of what I explain as Sila's silence and silencing. Sila's failure to confess to the court indicates the silence in her historical confession. Mbembe's assertion on the importance of stories in retelling the archive resonates with Christiansë's 'digging' in the archive to re-memory silences on female slave subjectivity ("The Power of the Archive" 21). The silencing and silences of the slave mother are appropriated to illustrate the lack of understanding in the archive of the context and the nature of the murder that she had committed. The absence of Sila's witness calls for the examination of the slave mother's silence with regard to the nature of the murder that she committed.

Christiansë's re-memory is similar to Morrison's re-memory in *Beloved* in that she "introduces [the figure of the ghost] into the novel [as the] one who had the right to the answer" that the judge demanded (Furman 68). In other words, Baro is the one against whom the crime had been committed. The novel can be seen as appropriating a witness/confession mode that is presented to the dead son's ghost, to Lys, and to other characters in the novel. Here, Sila gives explanations for her being "heartsore and [in] grief" that the space of the court did not allow for. I argue that Christiansë's re-memory and the structure of the narrative mimics a court case in which she offers a new account to the reader by "entering the colonial archive in search of traces of the voices it suppressed, tried and sentenced, and producing new sentences from them" (Samuelson, "Yvette Christiansë's Oceanic Genealogies" 6). Therefore, silence in this narrative is a metaphor. Olausen describes the novel's title as a double inscription that gestures toward Sila's refusal to confess to the judge and the minister's wife as well as a confession directed beyond the authorities that demand it (127). On the one hand, the author

metaphorically and paradoxically employs the Christian practice of confession, to describe Sila's refusal to confess the sin of 'murder' to God as provoked by the minister's wife. On the other hand, the semantics of the word runs on in different metaphors in the narrative, playing around with the flashback to Sila's refusal to confess during the court hearing, her confession to Baro, against whom the crime had been committed, and finally to "the genealogy of slavery which is to follow from her womb, and of which she deems herself guilty of reproducing" (Geustyn 83).

It is useful then to look at Sila's narration as the belated testimony that she did not make during the court case. The novel becomes the extended courtroom where Sila actually gets to bear witness. The author extends the historical court case to a fictional one, where the reader is by default meant to be the judge and make the ruling based on the new evidence provided by Sila. To get to the reader, the narrative structure presents Sila as addressing different characters in the novel, each of whom only get pieces of information about her enslavement and trauma. In this way, the judge and her slave master hear the least, while Baro's ghost hears the most. The narrator is silent towards other characters in the novel and the narrative structure ends up disclosing more to the reader than to the individual characters to whom Sila speaks. Ultimately, in this kind of fragmented narration, it is only the reader who joins the dots of the narrative to make a complete whole. As such, the narrative structure of the novel can be seen to offer exceptional yet indirect exchanges between the narrator and the reader.

Another way through which the reader 'hears' Sila's witness is through her stream of consciousness, a narrative style that accesses her thoughts. For example Sila thinks to herself, "[b]etter with me in the water than back with Van der Wat" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 47). According to Lawrence E. Bowling, stream of consciousness is a "narrative method by which the author attempts to give a direct quotation of the mind – not merely of the language area but of the whole consciousness" (345). The idea of stream of consciousness, as alluded to here, means narrations "nearest to the 'unconscious'" (Bowling 337), and speaks back to the concept of trauma that I discussed in the previous section. For Bowling, stream of consciousness refers to "the level where the mind drops below the level of language usage" (337). He further elaborates that this "non-language zone" is a space where the mind has not translated the unconscious into ordinary speech (337). As noted by literary critic Pierre Macherey, the

absence of words is relegated to the unconscious (85). Consequently, this sense of the unconscious as embodied in the stream of consciousness, points to psychic events – trauma, dreams and their inter-relation to verbal silence.

Sila's narration of Hester's story stands out as one of the utterances that she uses for the 'new testimony' discussed above. According to the archive, Hester is a slave woman aged about twenty-six, who put stones in her own pockets as well as those of her three children in an attempt to drown them all. She is 'rescued' from drowning and instead executed for the murder of the two children who do drown (Christiansë "“Heartsore”" 6). In the novel, Sila relates Hester's story as follows: "I have come to pick up Hester and her babies. She walked into the water with her children so that they would escape this country. But cruelty of cruelties, she and one child were pulled free of the water. They punished her, as they wanted to punish me" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 84). Hester's story serves as an alternative witness to explain the gendered nature of the white hegemonic violence of Cape slavery. It particularly serves to press upon the reader the extent of the brutality that Sila had to endure, just in case the reader downplayed the violence that leads to her decision to kill Baro. The brutality around Hester's execution makes a case for Sila that even if Baro was alive, he was fated to die violently. For Hester, her sentence to death by strangulation is swift, with no chance for appeal even though her actions were motivated by violence (Christiansë, "“Heartsore”" 6). Sila's and Hester's cases illustrate the power dynamics that dictated that the master was in charge of the slave woman's life. Foucault's conceptualisation on power is useful in understanding Sila's and Hester's similar convictions. Foucault identifies the right to decide life and death as a characteristic privilege of sovereign power (135). Among other forms of exercising power, the slave master – according to Foucault – had power over the lives of his slaves (135). The two slave mothers are sentenced to death not because they killed their children, but because they reduced the master's slave stock. As explained earlier, the killing of Baro, who was registered as Van der Wat's slave, would reduce his labour force. Evidently, here the court rules murder out of the concern for the slave master's power, as opposed to justice for a dead boy. Hester's punishment by strangulation is meant to serve as a strong warning to all other slave mothers. The shifting definitions of murder depending on who has committed the crime – as elaborated in the case of Hester and Sila's killing of their children – underscores the differences in naming and construction of hegemonies for purposes of control. Patterson points out that the slave lived in

a world of “the living dead” (8). This is a world where a slave’s life was constantly at the mercy of a slave master.

Christiansë observes in an interview that “slaves were just always already criminalised, and whatever was said by them was redacted by the transcribers of the court” (cited in Smiley). The judges were not concerned with justice for the murdered slave child, but rather angry at the slave mother’s appropriation of power as she took charge of her children’s lives, which belong to the master. The master’s sovereign power over the life and death of his slaves had ultimately been intercepted. This is depicted in Sila’s explanation to Baro: “Those days after I sent you away were hard. They beat me. They said, evil woman, bad woman, cruel woman, animal. Van der Wat was so upset when he learnt how I had tricked him” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 155). The irony of Sila’s sentence by the legal institution is that, given the brutality of Baro’s beating, he could have just as easily been killed by Van der Wat. However, if the crime had been committed by der Wat, it would have been excused for various reasons, while Sila’s killing of Baro is judged as murder. The paradox of this legal position is explained in Christiansë’s “Heartsore” as follows:

[D]espite a legacy within the Roman-Dutch legal code that recognized slaves as *personae de jure*, they were regarded as non-persons *de facto*. Neither the law nor the courts viewed slaves as having equal rights with their masters. More importantly, the record makes clear that they were never treated as the responsible authors of meaningful statements. Every gesture they made was re-read but not heard by power.
(9)

The novel, narrated by Sila, utilises a narrative strategy which restores her voice, through rememory, doing the opposite of silencing. The conceptualisation of the novel as an appropriated court room offers alternative testimonies to the reader. It provides a new judicial space where Sila is allowed to speak and underscores the violence in Sila’s original court case and death penalty which embodies the hegemonic structures that silenced the slave mother’s voice. As a way of making sense of the meanings of silence in Sila’s case, I next examine these hegemonic structures and how they relate to the silencing of the slave.

The noun ‘silence’ invokes the absence of semantic expression and lack of communication. Contrary to such a definition, Sila’s focalises her trauma. Macherey reminds us that “silence reveals speech”, and advises that literary criticism should investigate silence as that which does the speaking (85, 86). The absence of linguistic expression, as I will elaborate here, is rooted in the hegemonies of slave brutality and oppression that control Sila’s voice. As a result, silence is constructed in this narrative by the “forces that occasion characters to choose silence where actual words are expected” (Kaigai 111). Brink’s interrogation on silence is also useful at this point. He elaborates: “If a word involves a grappling with silence, the word uttered in the kind of repressive context exemplified by apartheid evokes an awareness of particular territories forbidden to language (“Interrogating Silence” 14). These territories, as I explained in the earlier section on trauma, are walled in by the character’s traumatic experiences, but on a more foundational level, are also embedded in the brutal power structure of slavocracy.

The narrative illustrates Sila’s silence as surrounded by these oppressive power structures in her speech to Baro’s ghost when she says: “I did not tell them” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 243). Sila voices her silence to the court by giving Baro the following details regarding his killing:

I could not say that the hand that stole the knife shook, or that I had lifted my dear boy onto my lap and held him, and had stroked him and known that he was already beyond all of them, even me. (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 242)

It is useful to uncover the various layers of the nature of the maternal silence by interrogating the speech of this silence. In their use of brutality, the power structures restrict expression by slaves. For Sila, her response is a result of the trauma she has had to witness in the abuse of her children. In slavery therefore, “the language of home [is one of] interruption, of stuttering, of lacunae, and of sound without meaning” (Christiansë, *Toni Morrison* 22). The refusal to give details concerning the killing in the court room describes the silence in this confession. The confession to Baro voices the silence in the Cape colonial archive, exposing in detail vivid mental pictures such as “[her] strok[ing] [her] boy’s throat” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 242). The archive is not privy to these details, neither is the trauma that Sila underwent in killing her son known to the judges.

The novel's opening setting of Sila in a prison cell as a sex slave prostituted by the warders flags the metaphor of slavery as physical, psychological and emotional imprisonment. Her physical, psychological and emotional imprisonment is linked to her status as a woman and a mother. The narrative tells readers about the children born of Sila's sexual slavery in prison: two unnamed children who die in prison, Catherina and Meisie, who is taken from Sila. Van der Wat registers Catherina, who is born while Sila is incarcerated at Robben Island, as his slave. The genesis of Sila's silence at the court can be traced back to the lived realities of the ruthlessness of slavery. In addition, there is the brutality illustrated in the violent beatings that result in Sila's loss of hearing in one ear. Therefore, the master's language of enslavement can be described as silencing and 'hushing up'; as meant to instil the fear and helplessness that consequently constructs silences at different levels. Silencing in the narrative therefore echoes Cape historian Robert Ross's argument that slave owners at the Cape feared slave resistance and thus made use of the judicial systems to punish slaves (2). As illustrated in Hester and Sila's case, slavery constructed subjective spaces of fear, hopelessness and helplessness that in turn prevented slaves from any form of rebellious acts.

The court case is narrated as embodying the suppressive hegemony that determines Sila's silence. In the court case, Jephtha, a fellow slave on Van der Wat's farm, offers false witness that accuses Sila of being a drunk, thus warranting her beatings. Jephtha's witness is corrupted by hegemonies that manipulate his false witness in exchange for his return to Van der Wat's farm after Jephtha had revolted. The Field Cornet also negates Sila's account of Baro's beating and the doctor who had treated the brutal wounds inflicted on Sila by Van der Wat declines to give his testimony. The corrupt legal structures surrounding slavery are further illustrated in the altering of Hendrina Jansen's will which made provision for Sila's manumission. These hegemonic slave structures inhabit the existential spaces of the slave mother and underscore Sila's refusal to confess to her accusers based on her understanding of the unjust and brutal legal institution that silences her even before she has given her defence.

The word "heart sore" that the historical Sila used in her witness is formulated in various forms to describe the fictional Sila's trauma in the novel. Christiansë translates the Dutch court entry *hartzeer* as "heart sore and grief" but asserts that the word might also have been rendered as "heartache and despair" ("Heart sore" 10). In a court in the district of George, the phrase is

written as “grief and affliction” (CJ 626:465 cited in Christiansë, ““Heartsore”” 10). However, the word “heartsore” captures the mood of the narrative and Sila’s feeling, which is expressed vividly as “a worm that has been eating too long at her heart” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 288-289). The word “heartsore” in her witness also foregrounds the traumatic trajectory associated with her utterance when we read the following: “I told myself, Sila, you must let them know what it means to be Sila registered to Van der Wat. But my throat was too tight to fit words” (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 242). The permutations of the phrase allude to the emotional load that underlines the double subjectivity of women slaves. The bitterness associated with the word describes the emotional trauma of slave mothers who had to deal with the brutality of bearing children who would be forever entrapped in slavery.

Christiansë aptly captures this argument when she suggests that, “the word appears to register what was considered the language of a female slave – emotional, irrational, and on the edge of unpredictability” (““Heartsore”” 11). She further writes that the slave woman “may speak but only as a slave woman is expected to speak, and in a manner that makes her speech evidence of her confinement to that status (Christiansë, ““Heartsore”” 11). Maria Geustyn, in her analysis of Sila’s subjectivity, notes how Sila was first silenced as a woman (62). Post-colonial critic Homi Bhabha also notes the affective dimension that is associated with *Beloved*, a similar narrative that “revives the past of slavery and its murderous rituals of possession and self-possession” (5). Jan Furman explains the novel’s relation to slave maternity when he refers to the motivation for infanticide in Morrison’s work as the concept of love and safety. He elaborates that, in reference to Margaret Garners’ murder of her child, the question of “why did she go and do that for?” is a feeble one asked only by the slave master and the schoolteacher who cannot fathom the psychology of the slave mother (Furman 69; Morrison, *Beloved* 150).

Sila’s metaphorical reference to infanticide as the “sleep that saved him” becomes foregrounded in relation to her maternal role. The perception of Sila as a messianic figure that saves her child from pain of slavery is reiterated in the novel by the presence of fellow slaves who do not ask this question, because they understand the state of the slave and the decisions she had to face. Geustyn proposes that Sila is cast as the “tragic heroine” to the reader who is confronted by Sila’s witness and “compelled to look at ... the institution which provoked her actions, and the fate Sila was forced to accept” (70). Sila’s predicament can be understood in

line with the murder in Morrison's *Beloved*. In fact, *Unconfessed* also bears another similarity to *Beloved* in that the child who was killed, returns as a ghost. In the interview that led Morrison to the re-memory of *Beloved*, Margret Garner's mother-in-law makes the following comment concerning her daughter-in-law's killing of her own daughter: "I watched her and I neither encouraged her nor discouraged her" (Christiansë, *Toni Morrison* 68). Such illustrations of the failure to condemn slave infanticide depict an understanding of the trauma of slavery and motherhood.

The theorisation of trauma, as articulated in my earlier discussion on Sila's trauma, is intertwined with the self. Leigh Gilmore explains trauma as embedded in the self and as connected with the difficulty in articulating that self (6). The questions here are: What is to be made of such testimonies, where silence is vocalised more than speech? Silence, in this case, is associated with painful traumatic memory, the telling of which proves overwhelming. Sila's failure to express herself verbally to the court, but her later decision to express her traumatised self to Baro is overtly mentioned in the narrative: "They press me. I keep my mouth tight. I have pressed where a mother should not have pressed. I have pressed as a mother should not. And what flows cannot be stopped" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 243). This suggests that women are silenced most effectively by their association with maternity (Walker 1). Such implied the access of mothers' emotions in relation to what affected their children. Ndebele reminds us that "the silencing of voices through various forms of brutality, torture, and humiliation induced anger and bitterness" (22). Sila's expression of heartsore as "a worm eating too long at her heart" underscores the "unspeakability" of slave trauma that is, according to South African researcher, Nthabiseng Motsemme, also echoed in analyses of "slave narratives written by black women such as Toni Morrison, Barbara Christian, Hazel Carby, Bell Hooks, Alice Walker and several others" ("The Mute always Speak" 915). "Unspeakability' is part of a struggle and a longing to speak fully about the experience of violence against the human flesh, and the near impossibility of doing so" (Bakare-Yusuf cited in Motsemme, "The Mute always Speak" 915). Sila's silence is therefore "a moment of complete breakdown of language where the role of language to capture and make sense of experience fails" (Rosh White cited in Motsemme, "The Mute always Speak" 916).

For this reason, it is useful to make sense of how and what Sila's silence speaks. For Christiansē, the language of silence is "attributed to the thwarted hope [and] bitter disappointment" of her predicament and is influenced by the unjust system that she knows she will have to deal with ("Heartsore" 6). In this way, "[s]ilence becomes part of a range of languages of pain and grief" (Motsemme "The Mute always Speak" 910). Motsemme's explanation of silence is poignant here because she considers "the meanings of silence in violent times" and the "ways women used silence to formulate new meanings and enact agency" ("The Mute always Speak" 914). Writing about TRC witnesses, Motsemme observes that "women's articulation of their languages of 'pain and grief' [is] through the language of silence" as evidences of fragmentation and agency ("The Mute always Speak" 910). She draws attention to the reality that "women's narratives provide us with an opportunity to deepen our understandings of meanings of pain, suffering, resistance and loss" ("The Mute always Speak" 910). Silence as agency in *Unconfessed* is summarised in Olausen description of novel's title as a double inscription of refusal and confession. Here, as noted by Motsemme, silence refuses to be the binary of speech ("The Meanings in Silence" 4). The title in this sense embeds both speech and silence. The first side of this double inscription is the refusal to confess to the authorities in what I refer to as silence and (un)confession in this chapter, and is embodied in the hegemonic structure of slavery. The second side is embodied in the agency of the slave mother as when Sila responds to the demand that she speak with the counter question: "To say what?" (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 243). This displays the act of rebellion evident in her refusal to respond to the language of the slave master which the oppressors use to deny slaves their humanity.

According to Motsemme, slave mothers' language is the "the language of grief and loss [and] is usually located in silence" ("The Meanings in Silence" 5). Sila's silence is therefore best understood under the circumstances of withholding speech where speech is expected. It is in vain in such circumstances for the slave to confess to their 'crimes' because the slave master and the slave live in two different worlds, speaking two different languages, each language defining one's world in a different way. The novel is manifest of this difference:

To say what? What is it you have in your minds when you ask me to make the picture?

Speak Sila van den Kaap. You have committed a heinous crime.

Yes. Yes. That is the name in this room.

Before god, you must speak.

I looked at them and I was out of the room where I had put my mind.

Do you refuse?

... I did not tell them how I thought. (*Unconfessed* 243)

Consequently, Sila's 'unconfession' to the authorities juxtaposes the master's and the slave's perceptions of Baro's killing. The difference in perceptions is captured in various instances in the novel, for example, Sila states that "they wanted to know about that last moment my boy was of this earth. But not if he suffered" and asserts that "it's one law for them and another for us" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 243, 242). The narrative therefore presents the legal perception of Sila's act as a crime of murder, a disgusting act denoted by their looking away and embarking on a mission to correct the "wrong" that she has committed. The law's preconception of her actions is evident in the resolve it had already made even before she offers her testimony: "Speak, Sila van den Kaap. You have committed a heinous crime" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 243). The difference in judgement is summarised in the slave authorities' judgement that rules Sila a "Child Murderer", "[a] woman fit for hanging", while Sila sees herself as Baro's saviour (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 19).

The judges' demand to have Sila plead guilty on one hand, is contrasted with Sila's refusal to talk on the other. Drawing from these illustrations, the oppressor's language and the language of the oppressed are two different languages that are not intelligible to each other. What is a crime to Van der Wat and the legal system, is a brave act of salvation in Sila's perception. As evidenced, throughout Sila's narration of the court session, the judges aim to prove the point that Sila is a murderer. Sila is not heard because the slave master perceives her as a criminal. While Sila understands that the killing is a terrible act, she had little choice and control over what happened. Her intention is driven by the desire to protect her son from the torture of slavery. To the slave master, however, she is on the wrong side of the law, as is illustrated by the statement, "[t]he accused refuses to answer any further questions" (Christiansë, *Unconfessed* 254).

While the court accuses her of “insolence” for refusing to speak, Sila perceives them as those who will never be able to fathom her state as a slave. This is illustrated by her remark that “[t]hey said, let it be noted that, in her insolence, the accused refused to answer a further question” (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 243). To Sila, the language of the white slave master is constituted of lies that are meant to manipulate, control and propagate enslavement while “the truth is like a leaf in a big wind” (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 244). Her refusal of speech is therefore motivated by her experiential understanding that the slave master does not understand her basis of focalisation. According to Sila, the white master class – the judges, slave master, and landdrost – cannot understand her trauma, even if she confesses. This is illustrated by the minister’s wife, who similarly perceives her as a stubborn and emotionless woman when Sila refuses to confess to God, in Christian terms. The dynamic of the silencing here is the fact that the judges will not understand Sila’s act or her reasoning. Sila’s narrative therefore repeats the phrase: “I could not say” (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 242). The recurring phrase shows discordance between Baro’s ghost (and maybe also the reader) as one who would understand, in juxtaposition to the legal authorities as those who would not be able to make sense of her act.

In this confession, silence therefore juxtaposes the master’s perception and experience of slavery to the slave’s, presenting the extremities in the dialectics of the discourse of slavery. First, these different languages can be seen as embedded in the monologic, cyclic narrative structure that foregrounds the mother’s silence to the slave authorities. As Sila, speaking to Baro, says:

Can you see me?

I see how you are looking at me. Is it because I have changed? (Christiansē, *Unconfessed* 71)

This quotation illustrates that the narrative adopts a monologic narrative structure that entertains silence as opposed to dialogue. These monologic inquiries, enshrined in the first person narrative voice, frame Sila’s emotional conflict, which does not transform into a dialogic construction. Because, in the space of the novel, Baro’s ghost is not placed to respond to these questions, the narrative style cannot offer tangible solutions to these haunting questions. The lack of response by Baro’s ghost further heightens Sila’s tension, causing her to incessantly narrate more details to the ghost about the horror of her enslavement.

As opposed to the dialogic, the monologic structure of the novel embodies the loss of the conversational, responsive and therapeutic. In the narrative, monologue speaks back to traumatic and repressed memory and silence, and in its symptomatic haunting character, becomes a witness on its own. The nature of Sila's haunting is symbolic of the nature of cultural haunting, which keeps recurring and exists only as questions in the minds of haunted individuals who engage in monologic modes of questioning (Brogan 151). The narration involves narrating to the dead, who are absent from the telling, and so Sila becomes a "teller without a listener" (Wyatt 140). The monologic mode of narration therefore signifies the lack of a coherent language that can communicate Sila's trauma as a slave mother. At the same time, the narrative voice formulates the complexity of the slave mother's memory of slavery to the reader. This is achieved through the use of the heightened language of poetry in order to explain the intricacy of telling the mother's trauma and depict the difficulty and intensity the narrator, and ultimately also the author experienced in expressing themselves.

In closing the discussion on silence, I draw from the novel's ending which fails to offer a clear indication of Sila's fate. The omniscient narrator notes:

Some say she left the island, but there is no agreement on how ... Some say, it was nothing fanciful, all of the women left the island for a house of correction on the mainland. (*Unconfessed* 350)

The narrative defies closure, metaphorically signalling not only the difficulty of giving voice to slave memory but also the lack of such memory. The ending speaks to the suppressed and unrecorded histories of slave mothers and the trauma they experienced. As such, it reflects the absence of archival information on Sila's later life in the sense that reports regarding Sila's verdict after she is sent to Robben Island are not available. Consequently, any conclusive information on Sila's fate is left to guess work and the conclusion of the novel metaphorically indicates that there are still silences in this part of Sila's life story.

In conclusion, the narrative shows the extreme oppression that slave mothers experienced at the Cape. This chapter has explained that female slaves were automatically transformed into sexual objects, resulting in the birth of children who would, in turn, be slaves. I have explained

the agency of the slave mothers in that many attempted to and succeeded in killing their children, both as a result of their helplessness and as a way to intervene in and bring an end to the suffering of their children. *Unconfessed* particularly imagines trauma as central to the lives of these enslaved mothers, situating silence as the language of trauma. As such, the chapter concluded that because of the trauma that the slave mothers lived through, motherhood, as an ideal, was an impossible experience for them. I have also discussed the narrative as central in explaining the silence of slave memory at the Cape. The novel is unique in constructing the silence/silencing of slave memory in the Cape Archive while also evidencing layers of other silences that still exist in the post-apartheid era. The discussion in this chapter therefore projects the image of the haunted slave mother as a metaphor for the various levels of haunting that exists in the collective memory of post-apartheid South Africa, a country which displays a tendency to suppress the memory of slavery as a way of dealing with the pain and trauma that resulted from it.

CHAPTER THREE

Patriarchal Whiteness and the (Female) Black as a ‘Body’: The Politics of Representation in André Brink’s *Philida*

A story is after all a story, it all depends on who tells it. (Brink, *Philida* 162)

It’s a slave’s word, and mine is a white man’s word. (Brink, *Philida* 49)

...all the dead who can never lie still in their graves, but who go on living invisible among us, people who were born here and who died here and who will never leave us in peace. I don’t want to know about them but I cannot shake them off to pretend they’re not there. (Brink, *Philida* 90)

This chapter reads André Brink’s novel *Philida* (2012) to engage with an important aspect of this dissertation: the concept of representation. It examines the politics of slave representation using whiteness as an analytical framework evidenced at two levels of dominance: *contextual* and *textual*. The chapter dwells on how whiteness has been used, mapped and appropriated to construct, ‘other’, gaze and propagate (female) black slave subjectivity in the narrative. In order to do this, I divide the chapter into two general sections. First, I problematise representation in *Philida* by showing how white privilege plays itself out in relation to authorship and recording of history in this re-memory. The chapter shows the problematic nature of this representation across historical, gender and racial divides in what scholars on postcolonial African literatures, such as Tim Woods, term “exclusionary history” (13). I argue that in the narrative such exclusionary history is embedded in whiteness as a place of power and privilege and in the construction of the fictional protagonist who is a historical female slave who was enslaved by the author’s ancestors. Secondly, I show how black (female) slaves have been constructed and consumed as objects of slavery. Here, I discuss how the novel has narrated black people as ‘the wretched of the earth’, to use Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon’s term. Following from Chapter One, this chapter expands the discussion on sexual slavery by looking at the conditions that made the construction of black people as slaves possible.

Brink is a prolific South African novelist, poet, literary critic and academic who has written substantially on the apartheid and post-apartheid space in South Africa. Often referred to as an

Afrikaans writer due to his numerous publications in Afrikaans, Brink can be regarded a popular creative writer in South Africa. He was professor of English at the University of Cape Town and a widely published author prior to his death in February 2015. His writing covers topics such as race, history and apartheid and can be analysed as part of the interrogation of post-apartheid memory in South Africa. Brink's oeuvre consists of over twenty English novels and an equivalent number in Afrikaans. Two of his earlier novels: *Rumours of Rain* (1978) and *An Instant in the Wind* (1976) were shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction. Published in 2012 and longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, *Philida* is one of his latest novels set on the eve of the emancipation of slaves in 1834. The novel imagines the complications of slave freedom at the Cape through the personal struggle of the main character Philida and her disillusionment with emancipation. Though free, slaves have to be apprenticed by their masters for four more years. As such, the novel's depiction of slaves' struggle to attain freedom revisits a rather critical period of South Africa's national history of slavery.

Philida's story is imagined using the historical family archive of Cornelis Brink, a brother of Brink's "own direct ancestors", who kept a slave by the name Philida on the farm *Zandvliet*, now called *Solms Delta*, at the outskirts of Stellenbosch (Brink, *Philida* 305). The novel depicts Philida's sexual abuse at the hands of Francois Brink, also called Frans, the son of her master Cornelis Brink, who is popularly referred to as Pa. Philida is brought to *Zandvliet* as a nine-year old knitting girl and the narrative shows her relentless quest for freedom, initiated by Francois Brink who manipulates her during their first and subsequent sexual encounters by promising her manumission and marriage. Philida has four children with Francois, but kills one of them out of the frustration with these false promises. The novel opens with Philida in the Grootbaas's room, having walked a long distance with her child strapped to her back to seek justice at the Drostdy, a court in Stellenbosch. The trigger for this action is her realisation of the futility of Francois' promises, since he is now expected to marry a white girl, Maria Magdalena Berrangé for reasons to do with race and economic standing. Francois's defence rests on lies; he denies that Philida's children are his own. He states that Philida would whore with any man, that Philida was not his slave and as such, he would never have promised to set her free, and that his word as a white person is more credible than that of a slave. The office of the Slave Protector accepts Francois's witness and takes Philida's statements as lies. Philida has to take the long trek back to *Zandvliet* to face the wrath of her slave master, Cornelis Brink. In a demeaning public auction, Cornelis sells Philida to the interior as the only way to deal with

her insistence that Francois's promises be kept. Philida's story is told alongside those of the manumitted slave woman, Ouma Petronella, who plays the role of a mother at *Zandvliet*, and other slaves such as Labyn. The novel closes by speculating on the complications of slave freedom.

First and foremost, *Philida* displays several parallels to Christiansē's *Unconfessed*: both authors are confronted by the lack of slaves' self-representation in the archive and thus are forced to re-memory the repressed story of black female slaves in the Cape Colony. Both authors explain how they engage the archive, though they are positioned differently in relation to it: Christiansē as a descendant of a slave, Brink as a descendant of a slave holder. Both attempt to imagine the voice of the slave, the context of slavery and the slave-holding society. The two texts also depict a female slave as their main character and both women experience sexual violence from their masters, give birth to their children and kill one of them. *Philida* and *Unconfessed* furthermore evidence the presence of ghosts and hauntedness. *Philida* particularly pronounces the ghost trope as one that haunts both the individual and the collective. This chapter proceeds from these parallels to depict the complexity of representation, thereby examining the problematic nature of Brink's representation of Philida's slave memory.

Problematising the Novel

As mentioned above, the haunting in *Philida* is slightly different to that in *Unconfessed*. The ghosts in *Philida* haunt both the individual and the collective, unlike in *Unconfessed* where only one ghost torments one individual. The ghosts in *Philida* populate the landscape, and are portrayed as disrupting the peace in the land. The novel depicts the ghosts of multiple slaves who were tortured to death and hanged, such as the slave leader Galant and his companions who led protests at the Cape. The omniscient narrator narrates, "[o]nly when they come right up to it Philida can make out what it is: a human skull, dirty and dilapidated, with very little of it left. A tuft of hair here and there on the bare white bone. Two hollows of eye sockets staring into nothingness" (Brink, *Philida* 178). The individual haunting is directed towards Pa, who is constantly tormented by the ghost of his slave, Abraham, whom he murdered. Pa is tormented by the apparition of Abraham in the following manner: "He looked at me from the gallows that day. With those bloodshot eyes which I shall see in front of me for the rest of my life" (Brink, *Philida* 67). The rest of the ghosts haunt the expansive landscape described in the narrative:

from *Zandvliet*, through the route that Philida takes to Stellenbosch, to the River Gariep where slaves go to escape slavery. For example, Philida describes a cat's reaction to the ghosts who traverse and haunt the farm *Zandvliet* at night. She explains that “[a]lmost every room [has] its ghost, some rooms got two, some four or five” and that “[g]hosts, ghosts [are] everywhere, there are nights when they're moving and swarming and moaning and screeching so much that nobody can sleep a wink” (Brink, *Philida* 33). On her walk to the Gariep, Philida also observes the many ghosts who haunt every place they pass. The ghosts, she feels, “carry fresh memories of death inside them” (Brink, *Philida* 291). As suggested in Philida's statement, the ghosts belong more to the land than she does because they were the first people to inhabit it. Though “they are already gone, their shadows still rustle and fidget in the dry grass” (Brink, *Philida* 60). The old freed slave Petronella furthermore claims that the land belongs to her ancestors, her kind of people who were buried in the land hundreds and thousands of years back and will one day come to reclaim what belongs to them (Brink, *Philida* 88). The novel narrates that these ghosts are the dead come back from the graves to haunt the land, *Zandvliet* and Pa for the injustices that were inflicted on them:

Then I can see the people from those old graves rise up ... and I see them coming on over the mountains and dales, not in twos or threes or handfuls but in their hundreds and thousands, from all the mountains and cliffs and across all the dusty plains and thickets ... all the dead who can never lie still in their graves, but who go on living invisible among us, people who were born here and who died here and who will never leave us in peace. (Brink, *Philida* 90)

Philida, for example, mentions one of these ghosts as the baby she had killed, “[her] own little Frans” who “cr[ies] and cr[ies] all the time and never stop[s], no matter how deep [she tries] to hide” (Brink, *Philida* 33). These ghosts and skeletons that refuse to remain buried are metaphors for colonisation and power relations and mark the irrepressible memory of past injustices (Wenzel 101). The skeleton of Galant, for instance, explains the physical presence of the haunting caused by the atrocities of slavery. The presence of the many ghosts in the landscape metaphorically visualises the collective haunting by slavery.

In this novel, individual as opposed to collective haunting is demonstrated along hegemonic relations. Pa is haunted in his position as the slave master, while the haunting of the landscape acts as a metaphor for collective memory within the context of slavery at the Cape.

Contextually, authorship by a descendant of the slave owner represents both individual and collective haunting. The author's haunting is evidenced in his revisiting of this ancestral history that describes the slave master's memory of slavery. Philida's story has a background relationship with the author that is important for the analysis of slave representation in this chapter. Brink is "an heir to the formerly privileged colonialists", while the novel's protagonist, Philida, is a historical slave woman (Wenzel 92). This relationship depicts a contextual hegemonic relationship with Philida as the subject which Brink textualises. These are the two extreme identities that I use to interrogate what I see as self-representation and other-representation in this chapter. As I stated in Chapter One, self and other representation form a central axis of inquiry in this dissertation. In this analysis, 'self' is associated with the author's ancestry as slave master, while 'other' represents the historical slave woman Philida. The spaces of 'self' and 'other' raise various questions: What levels of appropriation does the author adopt to represent the other? What is the interplay of the self and other in this representation? How is such an appropriation and representation meant to be read? As I will show, the relationship between self and other plays a central role in the power relations of the text both *contextually* and *textually*. First, Philida's master, Cornelis Brink, was a brother to Brink's own direct ancestor. Brink, in the acknowledgement of the novel, notes that Mark Solms, the present wine farmer on the farm *Zandvliet*, now *Solms Delta*, brought to his attention the repressed and almost forgotten memory of Philida. In the acknowledgment, Brink notes that Solms informed him of the slave woman Philida who worked as a knitting girl on the farm from 1824 to 1832 (Brink, *Philida* 305). Cornelis Brink "sold Philida at an auction after his son Francois Gerhard Jacob Brink had made four children with her" (Brink, *Philida* 305). The relationship between Brink's writing and his central character Philida, therefore provides my starting point for the analysis of the novel. I argue that if *Unconfessed* allowed for the dead to speak, and imagined the silence of their untold story, then *Philida* forces the dead to speak. Signs of the author's presence are apparent in the narration. For instance, the cat that is depicted throughout the novel as Philida's companion and favourite pet turns out to be the author's favourite pet. In his acknowledgements, Brink thanks "a small cat called Glinka, without whom this book would not have been possible" (Brink, *Philida* 305). I will provide further illustrations in my discussion in the chapter. As such, the novel exposes various levels of authorial intrusion.

Authorship, Whiteness and Hegemonic Patriarchy

To interrogate the representation of slaves in the novel, I structure this chapter by looking at authorship, whiteness, hegemonic patriarchy and the writing of female black slaves as bodies. As discussed in Chapter One, South African narratives of slavery differ from Atlantic ones in the respect that no first person slave narratives have survived. Maria Olausen has noted that in certain aspects, the use of historical and archival material in the re-memory of the experiences of slavery takes place within a context where the problems of appropriation, as well as the presence of power structures between author and the subject of the narrative, are highly visible (Olausen, "Approaching Asia" 38). With regards to African-American slave narratives that I mentioned in Chapter One, some slaves were only able to write and publish when they found a sympathetic biographer who would produce their accounts (Whitlock 15, Wenzel 93). If the writing in these cases depended on the attitude and position of the biographer as "sympathetic, unsympathetic or even over-ambitious" (Wenzel 93), then the questions evoked here are: what stance does Brink adopt? The framing of the narrative as "family history" must therefore be seen as part of this debate (Olausen, "Approaching Asia" 38). On such grounds of a biographer and family history, this neo-slave narrative can be read as an appropriation of first person narratives of slavery. Given that there were no avenues for slaves to narrate their stories, appropriation, representation and writing for the other presents certain complexities. Though detached, Brink's narrative structure, in allowing the slave Philida to focalise her own story, can be interpreted as appropriating this mode of writing (for) the other. This neo-slave narrative comes as close as it can be to such biographies. For example, the narrative of Mary Prince is supplemented by white voices that determine its reading in various editions (Whitlock 13). In similar terms, *Philida* can be read as a "biographical occasion where quite different ideologies and identifications intersect and dissect ... in contradiction, consonance and adjacency" (Whitlock 12). The difference in Brink's construction is that the story of the slave is not told by the slave to the biographer, rather he appropriates and imagines the memory of the historical subject, Philida. In this way, the neo-slave narrative exists on the borderline between self- and other-representation.

Brink's writing sits uncomfortably in the space between a type of colonial/settler writing and biographical slave narrative. As is noted by the postcolonial critic on women's writing, Gillian Whitlock, the white settler story is a writing that has limits culturally, socially, politically and

ethically (38). The slave narrative, however, was an autobiographical occasion where the script for writing self as a colonised subject was omnipresent (Whitlock 38). The identities of self and other in the spheres of representation in the spaces of coloniser and colonised therefore present contestations of claims to identity. Marita Wenzel has identified the dynamics of reconciliation as operative in contemporary South Africa. She explains that these dynamics are clearly also reflected in the literature from both sides of the ‘colonial divide’ (91). Brink expresses the difficulty of narrating a slave story after having done research in the Cape archive as follows:

It was only when I attempted that dangerous fire-leap from self to other, that history could become what it had always yearned to be, namely *story*: and for this, it was necessary to try to *imagine* what it is like to be a slave who has been promised his freedom and sees that hope frustrated. (*Reinventing a Continent* 199)

The complexities of Brink’s imagining emerge within the dynamics of his enslaver’s heritage writing the enslaved. What arises in such a background of other-representation is the race, gender and historical power relationship between the subject of the narrative and the author’s position of enunciation. Having noted Brink’s task in revisiting this particular ancestral memory, the author evokes the possible haunting of white slave masters. According to Wenzel, “from the colonized’s point of view, [this writing] entails a search for roots and markers of identity; for the former colonizer [it] implies a retrospective, soul-searching exercise in determining the origin of blame and venturing some form of expiation” (91). Haunting therefore evidences itself in Brink’s revisiting of his genealogy in order to write *Philida*. Quite

White hegemonic patriarchy as embedded in the white male master’s dominance and the slave’s subjugation is evident in the *contextual* – the authorial and historical – as well as the *textual* – the imagined and represented. Here representation is contested in terms of various subjectivities such as race, gender and history. In this way, white supremacy in the novel embodies the subjugation of the slave at multidimensional levels. Brink’s authorial position as white, male and educated and *Philida*’s subjectivity as an illiterate, female historical slave speaks to the background of the author-character relationship. *Philida* as a subject of history is formulated as the subject of the novel. This way, her subjectivity is (re)written in the present and future, because despite Brink’s research and writing, like Sila, her fate is still unknown. *Philida*’s subjectivity is also embedded in her absence in the historical present of the novel’s

writing. Authorship in this text therefore entails white patriarchal writing that represents female slave subjectivity. Representation in the novel is not only along the lines of the master descendant the historical slave “but also expressed in and relevant to female/male perspectives on history” (Wenzel 91). I therefore critique the presentation of slave memory by interrogating the contradictions in the narrative voice and structure.

Conceptualisations of whiteness as a social construct and category are useful in understanding representation of the slave Philida in the novel. In *Philida*, whiteness becomes foundational at the level of narration and imagination. Melissa Steyn’s research on whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa defines whiteness as a position of ‘privilege’ that possesses “ideologically supported social positionality with economic and political advantage gained during subsequent European colonial expansion” (“*Whiteness Just Isn’t*” 121). She further describes whiteness as “the shared social space in which the psychological, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of this privileged positionality are normalized, and rendered unremarkable” (“Postcolonial Whiteness” 121). In a similar line of argument in *Whiteness: An Introduction* (2007), Steve Garner conceptualises whiteness as “a lens, through which particular aspects of social relations can be apprehended” (1). This lens articulates whiteness as a “system of privilege” that is “construed as an exploitative set of power relations” and “represents normality, dominance and control” (Garner 5, 8, 9). Both Garner’s conceptualisation of whiteness as “systemic supremacy, absence and invisibility, norms, capital, and contingent hierarchies” and Steyn’s definitions of the various ‘advantages’ of whiteness foreground conditioning and privilege as embodiments of whiteness (2). I therefore employ Garner’s and Steyn’s formulations to understand constructions of whiteness as manifested in Brink’s narrative. I also follow American scholar Ruth Frankenberg’s injunction that there is a need to name whiteness as a location of structural advantage, of race privilege, a “standpoint” and a place from which white people look at self, at others and at society (1). She explains that the terrain of whiteness is marked by race privilege, dominance and structured invisibility (Frankenberg 1). Similarly, for Steyn, “being white should offer possibilities for engagement and personal embattlement that accompanies an interrogation of what it means to be a white person” (cited in Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 106).

My analysis of whiteness in the novel is also based on the explanation of South African perceptions of the concept of black consciousness as offered by renowned black consciousness activist, Steve Biko. Biko observes that the “discrimination against a black man originates from the exploitative attitude of the white man” and further notes the high instances of exploitation of blacks by whites in South Africa (91). Though Biko here does not specifically address exploitation in slavery, his ideas regarding the exploitation of black South Africans illuminates the institutionalised superiority of whiteness represented in *Philida*. In this sense, whiteness is construed in the narrative as a meta-character embodied *contextually* by the author and *textually* in the image of the Brinks and the court system. The meta-character of whiteness reiterates the previous chapter’s discussion of the homogeneity of the slave institution that was revealed in individual slave owners who colluded with the legal system to propagate slavery. To further that discussion, I show how *Philida* depicts whiteness in a hierarchical relationship to blackness.

My analysis of *Philida* discusses authorship and readership in relation to representation. As a part of the debates on representation, Brink in his article “Interrogating Silence: New Possibilities Faced by South African Literature” is opposed to a ‘binaristic’ reading of texts. He supposes that a binary system of reading has “persisted in the tendency to reduce the world to predictable patterns of us and them, black and white, good and bad, male and female” (16). Brink further asserts that this kind of reading happens even “when this climate did not overtly impinge on the processes of writing” and that such thinking still “condition[s] the reception of whatever was written” (16). Though critical, Brink’s suggestion masks the privileging of white colonial histories that extend the subjectivity of its historical subjects. If it is adhered to, this view can be used to further suppress the silenced voices that surface in the representations of slave memory. Conversely, Steyn has suggested a critical stance towards whiteness, one that acknowledges its past meanings and consciously refuses to re-inscribe its historic blindness and privilege (cited in Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?*107). I show that Brink’s contextual relationship with *Philida*, as a subject of colonial history as discussed earlier, and the narrative’s rendition of her story, illustrates white supremacy that directs the reader’s interpretation of the text. I position Brink’s arguments on readership in conversation with the framework of whiteness to understand what it means for Brink to imagine this narrative. I furthermore agree with Steyn’s statement on how “critical scholars have become acutely conscious of the implications of who is controlling representation, and for what purposes” (“*Whiteness Just*

Isn't" xxxiii). Similarly, there is need for discussions on South African writers who engage with the silences of apartheid (Brink's "Interrogating Silence" 19).

The narrative has a polyvocal structure that I argue facilitates a white patriarchal dominance in the writing of history. The term polyvocal indicates a multiplicity of voices as an attempt by the author to distance himself from a subjective presentation of Philida. The novel is divided into three parts: First the "Complaint" which narrates Philida's complaint to the Slave Protector, Francois's defence and Cornelis's reaction to the situation. The second part is titled "Auction" and tells of Philida being auctioned off and her subsequent enslavement by her second master. The third part is "Gariep" which depicts the complications of slave freedom and the 1834 emancipation of slaves. The novel is furthermore structured around five narrators who each tell their side of the story. These narrators include Philida, Francois, Cornelis Brink and Ouma Petronella as well as an omniscient narrator. As a result of this technique, the novel gives various viewpoints on the state of the slave, the slave master and the freed slave.

Chapter Two pointed to the difficulties of telling a slave woman's story, as is evident in Christiansē's cyclical, poetic and elliptical narration. On the surface, the polyvocal narrative technique in *Philida* acts to give voice to the various subjectivities in the novel. Yet, a close examination shows the authorial intrusion that does not manage to destabilise the "whitewashing" of history. One example of the silencing of Philida's subjectivity in the novel can be found in sections that are narrated by Philida herself. In these sections, Philida's complaints are presented in substandard English grammar. For example, during her report of the sexual abuse by Francois to the Slave Protector, Philida says: "... when he see me crying, he get so hot that this thing also jump up, just like the dead man on the gallows, and that is when he get on onto me to ride me" (Brink, *Philida* 6). Philida is presented as unable to use proper grammar during the interrogation by the Slave Protector. In response to the protector's question whether there were any consequences of sexual intercourse with Francois, Philida responds: "I don't know about intercourse thing and the consequences" and "[o]nly after he lie with me a few times, I start to swell" (Brink, *Philida* 7). In the same manner, the author presents Philida's command of language as incoherent and incomprehensible to the Slave Protector. The novel illustrates Philida's difficulty to narrate the sexual abuse in the following manner:

He do what a man do with a woman
 And what would that be?
 I'm sure Grootbaas will know about that.
 I want to know exactly what he did.
 He take me
 How did he take you? (Brink, *Philida* 7)

In this case, the author's choice of the language assigned to Philida can be argued to signal the illiteracy of slaves at the Cape Colony. Lack of formal education, as I foregrounded in Chapter One, meant that slaves could not write first hand slave narratives. Illiteracy therefore formed part of the subjectivity of slaves.

Similarly, in the novel, slaves do not have access to written education, with the exception of Labyn. Philida inability to write is narrated in her attempts to write her name at the back of her slave master's Bible, where all the names of family members have been documented as a marker of patriarchal inheritance. Notably, "her arm knocks over the brown ink jar so that the ink ... is overturned and a huge blot starts to spread right across the page where she has dreamed of her name written next to [Francois]" (Brink, *Philida* 38). Philida's inability to write metaphorically indicates the empowered position that literacy evoked. As such, whiteness in the novel is characterised by a construction of power that links writing to the recording of history. This power is echoed in the novel by Philida: "[t]hese people got a thing about writing everything down" (Brink, *Philida* 4). Writing as history is contrasted with the slave's powerlessness in their inability to write and refer to such recorded history. Consequently, Philida cannot include her name as an heir of her master, Cornelis Brink. The act of her knocking the ink and blotting the page symbolises the impossibility of her being written into the lineage of the Brink family, and that she will eventually be written out of history. While it was unlikely that Philida could write, the novel's construction of illiteracy as the failure to speak in a grammatically correct way projects her subjectivity as one who cannot communicate clearly. There is no basis for this problematic assumption because she may well have been very competent in oral communication.

In light of slave illiteracy, the narrative voice and structure therefore disavows Philida's voice. The use of substandard English can be furthermore understood in reference to Gqola's

explanation that “most traditions, either racist or patriarchal or a combination, do not represent *thinking* African women subjects” (*What is Slavery to Me?* 67). Though *Philida* can be read as “a more inclusive history from a male perspective”, on the basis of South African history where the recording of history was a preserve of the colonial and white male, “the question of the narrator has always been a sensitive issue” (Wenzel 96). This is because “the transcription or editing of an illiterate ‘author’ is often perceived to be ideologically biased” (Wenzel 96). Hence, the presentation of *Philida* as illiterate shows the race deference that has fated her position as a slave. Later on, I will show how *Philida* is further oppressed as a female black slave, but of interest here is how the lack of written education also creates several other subjectivities for the slave. For example, as is observed by Wenzel, the lack of education was a means to prohibit protest in public, as they were too illiterate to do so (93).

The memory of slavery in *Philida* indicates the long-lasting domination of white colonial rule represented by the setting of the novel near the 1834 slave emancipation. Gqola writes about “the success of 340 years of white supremacist physical and epistemic violence to suppress other histories, stories, memories” (*What is Slavery to Me?* 202). *Textually*, white supremacy and hegemonic patriarchy ultimately dictate *Philida*’s experience in the novel, and her memory outside of it. Pa’s remark exposes the colonial nature of history. He says, “this is all that matters in the end: that it was recorded” (Brink, *Philida* 74). Pa here refers to Francois’s witness at the Drostdy, where it was falsely recorded that *Philida* had had sex with two male slaves but not with Francois. Francois’s false witness is accepted by the court because he is white, while *Philida*’s true account is rejected because of her black slave identity. Responding to the case, the Slave Protector says to *Philida*: “[y]ou made your Baas come all this way just to listen to a heap of lies” and to the prison warders he says, “Here’s the *meid*, ... She lied to the court. You know what to do about that” (Brink, *Philida* 53). *Textually* and *contextually*, the slave has no say in the recording of her history. These illustrations elucidate white privilege to literacy, language and knowledge and by extension, the law and history itself. White privilege can therefore be elucidated at the narrative level in Francois’ white patriarchal hegemonic access, and in history through Brink’s authorial position.

Patriarchal whiteness, in this instance, constitutes the legal entities evidenced in the court’s ruling in favour of Francois despite the lies that he offers as witness. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, a

writer specialising in whiteness studies, observes that white “power and privilege converged and conspired to sabotage the ideals of justice” (430). In this court case, his race exonerates Francois from taking responsibility for his sexual exploitation of Philida and the children conceived as a result. Francois evokes patriarchal whiteness by appropriating the critical issue of slave ownership to distance himself from the promises he had made to Philida. In his response to the Slave Protector at the Drostdy, Francois states, “It’s a slave’s word, and mine is a white man’s word. . . . Her word means nothing against mine because I already told you she is a slave and not even mine. She belongs to my father. I have no say over her, my father is the only one who can decide about setting her free or not. So there is no way I could ever have promised her such a thing” (Brink, *Philida* 49). Despite the fact that the Slave Protector notes that Philida’s child is “a white child” (Brink, *Philida* 55), Francois absolves himself from the both the responsibility as a father and the promise to manumit Philida. Francois’s invocation of whiteness shifts his relationship with Philida from one that is sexual to one that is sexually exploitative. The invocation at the same time seals Philida’s chances of manumission through marriage to the white race. The narrative structure, in its mode of response, allows Francois to tell his side of the story, therefore providing justification for his sexual exploitation of Philida under the pretext of the promise of freedom by marriage.

Based on the above propositions on narrative structure and the subjective creation of the historical Philida, white privilege manifests as a form of writing that narrates the story of the Other. Brink’s statement that “history is first of all inaccessible because it can only be accessed through what was recorded” further informs my explanation of the colonial and subjective nature of recorded history (“Stories of History” 32). Brink’s construction of *Philida* evokes this further challenge with recording history in the question of the white racial domination that surrounds the recording of Philida’s story.

Another way that the white recording of history pronounces itself in the narrative, is through authorial intrusion. The different narrators in the novel, the narrative point of view and the linguistic choices made by characters indicate the variety of the characters’ world views as well as the author’s ideology and voice in various dimensions. The best way to understand the

characters' world views is through Bakhtin's concept of polyphony.³⁵ Bakhtin explains how an author can develop characters who possess independent world views which are different from other characters in the novel (Morris 89). In this kind of narration, there is a plurality of world views because the author is removed from the narrative and lets the characters experiment with and develop their own perspectives (Morris 90). This is not the case in *Philida* for, in particular instances, the author's world view emerges in a character's world view. For example, the author's ideology surfaces in Philida's feeling of emptiness when she finally sets foot at the River Gariep. Philida's choice of words: "in this place I am not. The only place where I am is back where I come from" contradicts her earlier illiterate formulations and use of substandard English (Brink, *Philida* 301). The author, using Philida's voice, idealises the physical space of the River Gariep as an in-between space that acts as a metaphor for the futility of slave freedom at the official slave emancipation in 1834. It is therefore paradoxical that Philida's diction in this section waxes lyrical and ideological, deviating sharply from her initially illiterate voice.

These internal contradictions in the narrative voice exemplify authorial intrusion as the writer's ideology permeates the novel through Philida's voice and narration. Philosophical questions like "why am I not here, and why am I there" and a perception of the Gariep as a place where slaves do not belong idealise the author's conceptualisation (Brink, *Philida* 301). Such instances evidence the author's presence in the narrative and question the reliability of the narrative voice. On the surface, the narrative structure can be easily read as giving agency to Philida, however a deeper interrogation evidences the absence of Philida's voice. The author in this way uses Philida's subjectivity to voice his own ideology, therefore furthering the subjectivity of her slave memory. This construction of Philida resonates with Gqola reading of Jacobs that "representations are always constructed and therefore partial" and at times even problematic ("Slaves don't have Opinions 45"). I base my argument on the novel's construction and voicing to ascertain how it illustrates white privilege that articulates alterity.

In this line of authorial intrusion, the individual first person narrative voices and the omniscient narrator sympathise with the collapse of the slave system of the Dutch at the time. This is

³⁵ In Mikhail, Bakhtin's. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*.

elucidated at various levels in the plot of the novel. For example, the novel foregrounds Cornelis's bankruptcy and misery which drive him to dictate Francois to marry the wealthy Maria. The racist and patriarchal system of slavery in the novel is reduced to individual failures and character weaknesses such as Cornelis's falling financial states and Francois indecisiveness. For instance, Francois's is characterised as weak and unable to contend with his father's orders to detach himself from Philida. In this way, the novel shifts blame and responsibility from the known to the unknown; from her individualised sexual abuse by Francois to the institution of slavery as a whole. Consequently, Philida cannot not succeed to confront the injustices of the slave institution that has been formulated as abstract with no physical tangible figure attached to it. This characterisation portrays white privilege in its relegation of the sexual abuse of slaves to the individual character weakness of white individuals rather than the system of slavery. White privilege here serves as an excuse for the violence of slavery. Despite the author's formulation of Francois's voice as less violent and helpless from that of Cornelis's outright violent nature, Francois appropriately invokes patriarchal whiteness when he has to defend himself to eventually disavow his violence towards Philida.

Studies on postcoloniality have highlighted the shifted interest in research in colonial studies. These studies, notes Ann Laura Stoler, no longer focus on the colonised alone, but on the "instabilities and vulnerabilities of colonial regimes" (10). She points out that these studies emerge from the conviction that "colonialism was not a successful hegemonic project" (Stoler 10). The white recording of history and the projection of the author's worldview in the novel, as I have discussed so far, can be understood as characteristic of such colonial studies. In various ways, Brink's representation addresses the vulnerabilities of the 'colonizer' by presenting the susceptibilities of the slave master. The narrative stretches this representation by positioning a dialogue between the slave and the master in the kind of response form that the narrative structure adopts. It therefore presents the vulnerabilities of the oppressor in a space of the continued oppression of slaves. I view this relationship of oppressor and oppressed in line with Graham Huggan's discussion on postcoloniality in which he considers the increasing trend to study the colonised subject as a way of giving voice to the subjects of history (vii). However, such attempts to voice the oppressed still appropriate colonial narratives of control (Huggan vii). In this narrative, colonial (re)presentation raises issues of self-representation and other-representation in the appropriation of slave histories.

J.M. Coetzee term “white writing” is useful in understanding the ‘self’ writing the Other in *Philida*. David Attwell uses the term to describe “writing about the self and its relationship to Africa” (15). Brink’s writing about *Philida* can be aptly captured by this concept which enshrines the idea of white colonial writing about the black Other. To this extent, white writing exercises white advantage to write about the Other. Self and Africa are embodied in my analysis as the descendant of the slave master and the historical slave, respectively. Attwell further explains that “white writing is writing in search of a language in which self and Africa can enter into a fulfilled, reciprocal relationship” (15). I identify such a ‘reciprocal relationship’ in *Philida*’s narrative structure that portrays a reconciliatory attempt between the narrative voices. The slave master’s son, the slave and the master tell their stories separately, all the while justifying why they make the decisions they make. *Philida* tells how she has been sexually abused in exchange for her freedom, while Francois justifies why he cannot marry *Philida*. The master attempts to negotiate with the slave, illustrated by the several attempts by Cornelis to mitigate *Philida*’s quest for freedom. On one occasion, Cornelis travels to de la Bat’s farm to plead with *Philida*, because he needs her intervention to rescue his family’s failing financial fortunes. Here, *Philida*, although she has already been sold off by Cornelis, is expected to convince Francois to marry the rich white Maria in order to secure the financial and social standing of the Brink family. Attwell identifies white writing as emerging “from a place of instability, tension and negotiation” (16). If re-memory is an attempt by the author to give voice to the slave woman *Philida*, then Brink – as a descendant of the slave owner attempts to atone for the silencing and oppression of the historical *Philida*.

To reiterate earlier definitions of whiteness, the conspicuous invisibility of whiteness is evident in the mark of white superiority acquired through the author’s position as “an heir to formerly privileged colonists” (Wenzel 92)³⁶. Whiteness provides an invisible platform that manifests

³⁶ Brink has responded to critiques by black critics mainly directed at his novel, *A Chain of Voices* that “no white writer has either the right or the ability to appropriate a black character’s voice for the purpose of interpreting the Black Experience” (*Reinventing a Continent* 12). Providing a case for his creative writing, Brink contends that as a writer, he has the prerogative to write about his experiences. As a creative writer, he perceives himself as one

as “structural and race privilege” (Frankenberg cited in Musila 150). As a descendant of the Brinks, the author is privileged in terms of access to the archive – the *Solms Delta*³⁷ farm and as a creative academic writer. From such an authorial position, whiteness acts as the unmarked centre from which his relationship with history is anchored. The other-presentation in the novel, as I have so far shown, evokes an interesting interplay with presenting the subjugated Other. As I will discuss in the second section of this chapter, Brink’s formulation of Philida in the narrative evidences the white gaze upon the black slave as a body: First, from his historical relationship with Philida, which is formulated as a gaze at the Other; second, in his construction of Philida as the Other and third, through the re-memory that constructs white slave drivers who gaze at Philida as the Other.

Brink’s argument in the book chapter “Interrogating Silence: New Possibilities Faced by South African Literature” contradicts my reading of his construction of Philida’s memory. In his chapter, Brink argues that white dominated history has contributed to the silences in South African writing (22). However, his re-memory of Philida surfaces the same white dominated recording of history. Steyn’s analysis of whiteness is helpful at this point to further explicate white dominated writing. She observes:

As a privileged group, whites have tended to take their identity as the standard by which everyone else is measured. This makes white identity invisible, even to the extent that many whites do not consciously think about the profound effect being white has on their everyday lives. (*Whiteness Just Isn’t What It Used to Be* xxvi)

Steyn’s observation can be used to understand white invisibility in the recording of history where non-white recordings of that same memory are absent. White privilege dictated that whites have privileges over the law and allowed them ownership of property and slaves; the key embodiments of power. In other words, over long periods of history, only documents which were white and colonial dominated and could be accessed by whites only, were available for reference. Pa, as if referring to the issue of white dominated history and authorship states, “[o]ne day in the future, when no one of us is still around, that is all the world will know, and

who writes out of the “private experience that drives a person to take the pen” and justifies that “as individuals, writers have a primary responsibility to their ‘own experience’” (*Reinventing a Continent* 18, 14).

³⁷The recent owner has also given some of it back to the descendants of the families of former slaves.

all that needs to be known. We came to this land white, and white we shall be in the day of judgement” (Brink, *Philida* 74). In this vein, Gqola asserts that the “[r]ecording of history has been predominantly the preserve of the conqueror and it is this condition which has been conventionally sanctioned as paramount and universal” (“Slaves don’t have Opinions” 46).

As I foregrounded in Chapter One, the dynamics of representation depend on what the writer chooses to focus on, remember or forget. This argument is relevant in the context of the larger discussion of silences in slave memories. In as much as it denies white privilege, the narrative displays both the white privilege of the master and the author. A focus on the master class in the narrative indicates this white privilege. As I explained in Chapter One, recording and recorded history has been the preserve of the coloniser. The privileges of whiteness, as I have shown so far, are related to the access to literacy. *Contextually*, the novel is imagined around whiteness, while *textually*, *Philida*’s voice is populated by the whiteness that acts as a meta-narrative. In this way, in the case of *Philida*, history is recorded from the white man’s perspective. White supremacy and hegemonic patriarchy ultimately dictate *Philida*’s life in the novel, and also her memory outside the novel. Hence, there is a metaphorical relationship with the novel’s representation of recorded history that explains the *contextual* representation. Brink’s statement that “[h]istory is first of all inaccessible because it can only be accessed through what was recorded,” further informs my explanation of the colonial hegemonic nature of recorded history (“Stories of History” 32). At the authorial level, as I have argued already, the impediment with the imagined is the question of white dominated recording. Further still, not only does *Philida* ‘traverse’ the line between white and black, as noted in the critique of his earlier novel, but it also occludes female spaces of focalisation, as I will explain next.

In addition to the white dominance of history, male authorship appropriates the female slave subject for the male author’s vision. Authorship in *Philida* is from the perspective of the white male colonizer’s ancestry, imagining a historical black slave woman’s story. Wenzel, in her analysis of Brink’s, *The Rights of Desire*, has explained how “[t]he male perspective remains implicit in the role and significance of the male narrator’s interpretations” (96). Though Wenzel’s focus is on the male narrator’s imagining of female historical subjects, her argument is also applicable to novels where male writers imagine historical female subjectivities. In a similar vein, Samuelson elaborates how male authors, such as Zakes Mda in *The Heart of*

Redness, have used female historical subjects such as Qukezwa as characters to attain the author's vision (*Remembering the Nation* 53). Samuelson is critical of novels that "shift the site of authorship from the female [historical subject] to the male writer" (*Remembering the Nation* 53). She terms this writing as "disembodied authorial transcendence [that] is achieved through the identification of women with the physical body and the embodiment of textual meaning on women's flesh" (*Remembering the Nation* 53). In this way, historical women subjects are excluded from cultural production (Samuelson, *Remembering the Nation* 54). A similar argument has been made by philosopher Michelle Boulous Walker, who explains how women are silenced through their construction as a metaphor by philosophers (12). She elaborates that in these cases, philosophers use the woman as a stepping stone for their journey to 'truth' (Walker 12). This appropriation has been used for different ends. Wenzel has termed this writing as a "male assertion of female identity" (95). Mda's writing, as analysed by Samuelson, can be used to examine Brink's positioning as author in *Philida*.

Philida is identified as the subject of history, made the subject of the novel, a process that further affirms her subjectivity both as a slave and as a historical figure. As such, what would have been historical agency is individualised in authorship. Brink's construction of *Philida* is discordant with his arguments that "woman as a presence [is] largely excluded [and elsewhere marginalized] from official South African discourses" and that "historiography has been for so long a male dominated territory ("Interrogating Silence" 23, 24). Brink's use of the historical *Philida* shows how she has been written out of the possibilities and margins of her slave history. It is therefore ironical that Brink's imagination of *Philida* appropriates the book idiom, resonant with a character's remark: "books are dangerous things and we must take great care to get past them" (Brink, *Philida* 75). Brink seems to fall into the same trap from which he seeks to disentangle himself.

The argument here is that the woman slave character is formulated *textually* as the slaveholder's appendage and *contextually* to achieve the author's vision. This position of the slave woman reads in line with feminist scholar, Florence Stratton, gendered theory of nationhood and of writing that excludes women from the creative production of the national polity, of identity and of literary texts. Instead, the man actualises his vision by constructing the woman as an embodiment or a collaborator of his literary/political vision (111, 122). Such writing

purports to ‘know’ another’s memory at their expense. This is evident in the novel through the narrative structure where Philida tells her side of the story. The author assigns Philida voice in the following manner: “Who still care about listening to the Ouman? It is my turn to speak. Because it is terrible things that happen from the day I go to Stellenbosch” (Brink, *Philida* 96). Reading Wole Soyinka, she argues that the woman’s function is one of “collaboration in man’s vision” (122). Stratton’s formulation illuminates the historical Philida’s appropriation in *Philida*. In this way, the historical Philida becomes a carrier of Brink’s vision of writing the story about Philida. Feminist writers such as Carole Boyce Davies, Anne Adams Graves and Naana Banyiwah-Horne have explained that “women writers,” as opposed to male writers, “tend to create a woman’s world in which women characters exist in their own right, and not mere appendages to a male world” (120). Texts by males “are seen through the eyes of males”, which is different from a woman’s presentation (25). Such “tropes operate against the interests of women, excluding them, implicitly if not explicitly, from authorship and citizenship” (Stratton 112).

In this kind of male authorship, “the author function claims the status of the Author-as-God” (Samuelson, *Remembering the Nation* 53). Making use of the ‘mother Africa trope’, Stratton analyses the works of male writers such as Okot p’ Bitek, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Wole Soyinka, Ayi Kweyi Armah and Nurrudin Farah that have constructed women in various ways (Stratton 113).³⁸ I extrapolate her analysis to mean the contradictory exaltation of women characters by male texts that ultimately suppress their position with regard to the roles the authors give them. Such narratives have also idealised women characters as super women, a position that “supports or distorts the creation of a female mythos and how it conforms to the realities of women’s lives” (Davies, Graves and Banyiwah-Horne 15). Such a description of women characters as tenacious while simultaneously portraying them as objects, is also evident in *Philida*. Philida is constructed as forceful and strong enough to seek legal redress for the injustices committed against her. As illustrated in the novel, Philida dares the Slave Protector that she would “find out what the Council of Justice and the Governor [would] say about [the ruling]” after the unjust ruling (Brink, *Philida* 54). Because of her challenge, the Protector cancels the punishment he had spelled out for her. Her resilient character is also described in

³⁸ Feminist critics such as Stratton, Davies, Graves and Banyiwah-Horne have warned of the romanticisation of mother Africa, which stemmed from the Negritude movement, and explicate how it has been used to suppress women and give them a second position to that of men.

the way she faces her master Cornelis when he attempts to rape her, as a punishment for her leaving the farm. Philida says, “My name is not Meid, Ouman. I am Philida” upon which Cornelis demands: “Come out, *poesmeid*” Philida in response says, “I am nobody’s *poesmeid*. I am Philida” (Brink, *Philida* 81). I will continue this discussion in the next paragraph, but for now it suffices to explain that in these characteristic narratives authored by men, the woman is positioned as the possession of men in ways similar to land and property. As is explained by Stratton, “the woman [also] bears the writer’s interpretation of history” (Stratton 123). This understanding of male authorship troubles Brink’s writing of female historical subjects such as Philida. The structure of the narrative depicts a layered subjectivity that is elucidated in the authorial intrusion and the pronounced focalisation of the slave holders. At the authorial level, the male author uses Philida to express his ideologies of the slave trade at the Cape. In the narrative, the voice of the slave master is represented using the male characters Cornelis, Francois and De la Bat. Though ideally presented as the main character of the text, Philida is depicted in relationship to these main male characters, and her life as a character depends largely on the decisions they make.

As touched on in the previous paragraph, novels by men that depict the subjective characterisation of women have also portrayed them as the backbone of society (Stratton 112). Here, women are narrated as strong, resilient and able to withstand abuse and oppression. These presentations of the stereotypes of women in literature inform my understanding of representation in *Philida*. In the novel, Philida is painted as a strong-willed character in relation to her tenacity to resist slave oppression. First, she is presented as a slave whose body is exploited for labour, and second, she is romanticised as a resilient fighter who withstands all oppression. Apart from Philida’s courage to report her oppression to the Slave Protector, her quest and fight for her freedom, is illustrated in how she questions why her name cannot be included at the back of the Bible where all the other names of the patriarchal family members are listed. Upon Francois explanation that she cannot be included in the list, Philida demands: “then we got to change the way of the world. If you can’t or won’t do it I’ll do it myself. And she grabs the pen out of my hand” (Brink, *Philida* 37, 38). Philida is described as one “who since her earliest days used to ask questions about everything” (Brink, *Philida* 115). Her decision to leave the farm for the Drosdty at Stellenbosch to report her oppression, having to walk for more than a day with a three month old baby on her back depicts this presentation of a resilient woman. Regardless of whether Brink gives Philida agency as a strong-willed slave,

or whether she was strong-willed in real life, such a portrayal achieves the author's vision. And yet, to use Stratton's phrase, she remains "practically nothing" (123). Stratton posits that "[w]omen by male authors are seen primarily in relation to male protagonists and in secondary roles" (120). *Textually*, Philida's oppression is embedded in her gender for as I will elaborate later, she is sexually exploited by Francois. As a woman, Philida was historically, as well as in the text, misused because of her capability to offer sexual reprieve and pleasure to Francois. Elsewhere, Cornelis seeks Philida's intervention in an attempt to rescue the family's falling financial fortunes, as narrated in his resort to plead with Philida to deny her love for Francois and so set him free to marry the white and wealthy Maria. In this way, Cornelis aims to use Philida to restore the family stakes, while at the same time, as the female Other, she is treated as the black woman with whom Francois should not associate.

Power relations in the novel are also narrated from the perspective of a male gaze. Philida is set up as a woman and slave for objectification and possession. The male gaze is illustrated in the pornographic description of the sexual violence and rape experienced by Philida. Here Philida fits Fanon's description of "the female body as always a sexualised body" (*Black Skin* 84). The author offers a grotesque description of the violent rape of Philida by Pa. Pa thrashes the two slave boys he has brought from the neighbouring farm *L'Ormarins*, forcing them to rape Philida in plain view of the rest of the household (Brink, *Philida* 41, 42). This public rape scene is described by Francois voice in pornographic terms. Francois terms the slave boys as "two young stallions" and the act of being on top of Philida is described as "mounting" (Brink, *Philida* 43). The author's choice of the words and unempathetic stance towards the rape displays of violent white masculinities in this representation. The choice of animalist phonemes indicates the author's attitude towards Philida's female body and his perception of the male slaves as animals. This gaze, whether empathetic or romanticised, objective or innocent, projects a male dominated colonial gaze. The author does not critique this act through the narrative voice, nor does he take sides, except for Francois's futile rush to rescue Philida. This stance speaks back to Brink's authorial voice. The other way violent white masculinity is evident in the novel is Cornelis's sexual desire for Philida. Illustrated through his thoughts, Cornelis narrates: "[o]nce more I became aware of the stirring inside my breeches" and "I wanted [Philida] for myself" (Brink, *Philida* 79). Cornelis formulates his sexual desire as a punishment for Philida, demanding Philida to accept the rape as a punishment for leaving *Zandvliet*. More broadly, it also articulates how white masculinities are often not spoken about

as violent, maintaining and reinforcing notions of whiteness as protected by unearned privilege. The plot serves to expose Philida's shame and embarrassment at the violent rape but does not implicate the slave master Cornelis. Philida's silence after and during the rape helps us understand what such authorship does: it re-states the historical shame and silencing of women subjects.

By using the female character, Philida, the male author consequently silences her memory as a slave woman. The novel's point of view suggests that texts written by men carry, in Walker's formulation, a "masculine imaginary that works to silence women in specific ways" (1). Samuelson further observes that there are significant problems that emerge in such fictional texts that try to give voices to previously silenced and unspoken stories (120). In Chapter Two, I discussed how one can never accurately give a voice to one who never spoke and depict what one has never experienced. Samuelson critiques male authorship that takes upon itself the task to write female stories. Her argument on "shifting the site of authorship" (53) from the historical woman to the male author, rejects Brink's concept of giving voice to the silent in "Interrogating Silence". This principle is visible from the point of view of *Philida* that has so far emerged as a master's narrative. Samuelson's argument corresponds with Stratton's claim regarding the woman being used for the male author's vision. In this narrative, the female historical character is used as a subject of the male author's fiction, ultimately creating her as a subject of history. Brink's authorship, as a white male writing about a black female slave, situates him at a privileged point of enunciation, one which additionally makes for complex theorisation of the platforms of racial superiority, the dynamics between the ancestral master and the historical slave, and gender interpretations. Brink's writing repositions and appropriates Philida's subjectivity as a black female body. Such an appropriation of black people as bodies elucidates extreme violence on black slaves. As I will show next, in the final section of this chapter, the white hegemonic writing that I have discussed in this initial section relies on the invention of black subjectivity.

Theorising the (Female) Black Slave as a 'Body'

In this section I show how slavery, as a vehicle of capitalism and economic gain, was racialised and constructed as directly proportional to race. I begin by providing the inventions and constructions of the black race which formulated discourses of desire and control as established

in *Philida*, and conclude by showing how Philida is also oppressed through her sexuality. I show how these discourses foregrounded the consumption of black people as objects and advanced their enslavement and abuse. As has been argued by Gqola on the South African context, “the conditions of the Khoisan were very similar to those of legally called slaves” (*What is Slavery to me?* 15). The ideas of indegeity, native, Khoi and later on coloured then become intertwined with those of slave, and black in the spectrum of colonialism, slavery, apartheid, and post-apartheid. Gillian Whitlock has similarly noted the “systematic operations of slavery in black and white” (81). Such research dates back to theories such as those of David Hume which argued that “negroes and in general all the other species of men were naturally inferior to whites” (Walder 33). *Philida* reveals the consumption of the (female) black as a body and not a human being with intellect and conscience by virtue of her blackness. Her construction surrounds her characterisation as inferior to white people. For instance, as I have illustrated in the previous section, the possibility of her freedom is not considered in the court because she is black. She is consequently unfit to be married into the Brink family, despite Cornelis own roots of a black slave origin. In the same manner, the hanging of slaves evidences their treatment as inferior beings. The presence of locations for hanging slaves in the landscape such as the one Philida observes: “next to the gallows are the stakes where they tie up the people for flogging. That is where they also have the wheel on which arms and legs are broken with iron poles. When we get to it there is a man hanging limp over the wheel” (Brink, *Philida* 110), provide visual reminders of the position of slaves. Illustrated here, the construction of blackness becomes a mode of identification and subjectivity. Black as bodies can be argued to be established in 17th Century Europe where it was fashionable for aristocratic families in England to own a black houseboy, later turned into slaves (Dabydeen 17). Furthermore, as I will illustrate in this section, , “sexuality becomes a critical site for maintaining patriarchy and reproducing ... [black] women’s oppression” (Sylvia Tamale cited in Gqola, “Blackwomen’s Bodies” 107).

To understand how Philida and the slaves in the novel are consumed as black persons, I begin by discussing the narratives that surrounded the invention of black as a category. In his seminal text *White Hero Black Beast* (1979), Paul Hoch outlines the origins of the formulation of black as a category for the identity of the black race. He highlights that in the sixteenth century black is used interchangeably as a description for people of both dark and light complexions. He notes the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition at the time that included “deeply stained with

dirt; soiled, dirty, foul.... Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant...baneful, disastrous, sinister...iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked...indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment” as descriptors of the black person (50). Though Brink’s novel does not depict all the above invented definitions of black people, it narrates how the slaves are treated as liable to violence. Such punishment is illustrated in the cases of the slave Klaas who is tied to a pole behind the Drostdy and his back beaten to shreds, the two slave whose backs are sliced open by Pa’s Sjambok, Philida’s punishment in the public rape, the hanging of Abraham and Galant and the fatal beating of Kees (Brink, *Philida* 19, 42, 43). These punishments on black slaves resonates with Hoch’s observation that “[b]lack was attached to the colour of the devil and all that was base, bestial, sensual and evil” (50). In a similar line of argument, Laurent Dubois points out that in 1778 Comte de Buffon laid out a hierarchical portrait of the human species that justified and rendered necessary the slavery of certain groups (4). As has been widely argued, the theme of black men as inferior was also already engraved in European literature such Shakespearean plays³⁹. Black people, notes David Dabydeen, appeared in 16th and 17th Century British art as low class people, namely pageboys, coachmen, highway robbers, pimps, prisoners and beggars (19-20). The construction of slaves as bodies and the production and organisation of race was also evident at the beginning and the end of 19th century postcolonial autobiographics (Whitlock 80). Closer to home is the example of Karen Blixen’s *Out of Africa* that describes the content of Africa’s darkness and Europe’s civilising mission to rescue it from that darkness. These definitions and inscriptions exemplify the components that colonial whiteness used to construct the black body.

It is useful at this point to explain some of the early categorizations of black people that constructed them as inferior humans. Narratives of black people as uncivilised originated in the inventions of alterity. Walter Mignolo has explained that the invention of the Other entails the managing of the discourse (verbal, visual, audial) by which you name and describe the Other and succeed in making believe that it exists (134). The branding of the black race as the Other has been traced to the invention of the Other for the conquest of America which, in turn, “set the pattern for much of the history of western colonialism” (Tzvetan Todorov cited in Walder 31). Explained elsewhere in Steyn, the notion of Other originates from Christians’ reference to non-Christians as Other (“*Whiteness Just Isn’t*” 16). It was this notion that resulted

³⁹ Examples include *Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*.

in the naming of Africans as Kaffirs and savages because they were not Christians. Myths and constructions of the black Other also go back to what Mary Louise Pratt has explained as planetary consciousness among Europeans part of which was illustrated in Carl Linnaeus's nomenclature. Linnaeus's nomenclature classifies the African as: Black, phlegmatic, relaxed. Hair black, frizzled: skin silky; nose flat, lips tumid; crafty, indolent, negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice (Pratt 32). Linnaeus naming creates a category that has been alluded to as biological realism – a metaphysical position where race is understood as a biological classification. As is evident, this categorisation uses subjective temperamental and behavioural classifications that stereotype and set a platform for creating myths about Africans and black people at large. Pratt notes that this is the most explicit naturalisation of the “myth of European superiority” (32). These constructions are useful to highlight the perception of black skin as “the derogatory ontology of the black men” (Mignolo 139). Such myths were further pushed to position blacks for enslavement and civilisation. As such, Biko has brought to our attention the realisation that the cause of black people's suffering is their black skin (67). These inventions and categorisation of the black person as different from the European create social narratives that justify the treatment of the African as a lesser human being on one hand, and as subject of experimentation on the other. Pumla D. Gqola has elaborated of the racial body branding of historical slaves as explained in the racist scientific discourses evident in the project on Sarah Bartmann⁴⁰ and “the status of the Khoi as the missing link between animals and people” (*What Is Slavery to Me?* 13). Citing Krotoä and Bartmann, Gqola has shown how the conditions of black women's bodies “were very similar to those of legally called slaves” (*What is Slavery to Me?* 15).

Given these foundational inventions of black people, the representation is not critical of them, but rather retells moments of similar treatment of Phillida and other slaves in the novel. The practice of these inventions of the black people are evidenced in the public rape of Phillida, the hanging of Abraham, the fatal beating of Kees and the compulsory trips to view the skull of

⁴⁰ Sarah Bartmann was taken to England in 1810 and disgracefully exhibited “at the Picadilly Circus in London because of the purported abnormality of her sexual organs. She was said to suffer from both steatopygia (an enlargement of the buttocks) and an elongation of the labia (thus named the “Hottentot Apron”) and “Hottentot Venus” (Magubane 817). She was dissected by the French surgeon Cuvier upon her death and in the ongoing exhibition of her fragmented remains in the Muse'e de l'Homme. Her remains were repatriated to South Africa for burial in 2002 (McCorkle 18-9, Samuelson, “Oceanic Histories and Protean Poetics” 548). For further details, on Baartman, see Sander L. Gilman's “Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature” (1985) and Clifton C. Crais, and Pamela Scully in *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (2009).

Galant. The novel in this way, reproduces the violence on black people. Brink's re-memory reiterates violence on slaves as bodies, re-enacting it in a way that makes the reader uncomfortable. The graphic descriptions of these violent acts cause the reader to experience the violence anew, as if it is happening to them or someone they know. In this way, the explicitness of the narrative repels the reader. Attempts to quote such illustrations felt like replicating the same trauma so I have refrained from doing so here. Therefore, the novel raises the ethics of representation with regard to how the author positions the Other in relation to the self. This way the novel portends a "white's assertion to a normative position against which all non-whites are measured and found wanting" (Richard Dyer cited in Musila 150). In the text, such cultural superiority is expressed in Pa's exaltation of his own white race as superior and as those who were instated by God to take care of the land. Pa's remarks imply that God includes whites and excludes blacks in his command to rule over creation. Hence, in the novel, Philida is created as "ontologically and epistemically" inferior (Mignolo 139-40). The novel illustrates that Philida is essentially deprived as a result of being labelled black.

Constructions of inclusivity and exclusivity become foundational to understanding the formation of the black slave as Other in the novel. The construction of Philida and other black slaves embody notions of belonging and non-belonging. These constructions are elucidated in the novel as creating racial superiority and a hierarchical class structure that create Philida as outside the family of the Brinks. Race is therefore significant in the novel because it determines and maintains the hierarchical relationships between the master and slaves. Pa is narrated as the superior white master who has the dominion over his slaves. He admits: "I have no respect for a slave" (Brink, *Philida* 71). Pa's remarks reveal social constructions of class superiority that visualise his slaves as less human, animal-like, dirty and heathen. His relationship with Philida furthermore showcases this hierarchy of black and white; slave and master. For example, Pa believes that Philida's search for justice threatens the family's image and that she should be disposed of. The author's characterisation of Pa's stance illustrates the invention of the Other in "fiction created to dominate" (Mignolo 135). Consequently, "[s]ocial hierarchies are stamped on" the slaves in the text "to identify and define them and their position in the ordained social order" (Gqola, "Slaves don't have Opinions" 49). In this regard, they are socially constructed by whiteness as outsiders.

The novel's focus on racial purity is expounded in the treatment of Philida as one who cannot fit into the family tree, because she would tarnish the image of the Brink family. The novel fails to reconstruct this narrative of racial purity, even when Cornelis's mother, Ouma Petronella, was a black slave woman (Brink, *Philida* 34). The novel instead tells Cornelis's mixed ancestry as a past, and does not integrate what Cornelis's identity could mean for Philida's possibility of freedom. As illustrated, Cornelis distances himself from his identity: "I've never had anything to do with a slave meid" (Brink, *Philida* 39). On the contrary though, it is Cornelis who had bought his mother's freedom, and elsewhere attempts to rape Philida as a punishment for leaving the farm. To maintain his legalistic practice of racial purity, Cornelis censors his act of manumitting Petronella, and warns that the family should not talk about it. This is illustrated in Francois remark: "I myself had heard him say openly that if anybody on this farm, big or small, slave or white man, ever tried to gossip about that, he would be thrown into the shithouse pit to choke in *kak*" (Brink, *Philida* 39). Cornelis treatment of Philida surrounds this anxiety of his origin and the desire to distinguish himself from a future sexual engagement with a slave. Ironically, this anxiety for racial purity exists in the course of the paradoxical sexual relations between Francois and Philida. The novel's lack of disruption of the sexual violence towards Philida, undermines any agency for the black slave in this imagination. Such complacency with narratives on the black Other is illustrated in the structure of the novel that allows Cornelis and Francois to provide their case at different points in the plot. Their narratives seek to excuse Francois sexual abuse on Philida's. The excuses for racial violence is further evidenced in the belief that Ma Janna's, Cornelis wife, demands to have her son "marry well" (Brink, *Philida* 26). Her desire speaks to the insistence by Cornelis on a pure racial marriage. Cornelis passes this legalistic racial purity on to his son, when he warns him of what to say at to the Landdrost concerning Philida's complaint about sexual slavery. Cornelis warns: "you must tell him what you saw with your own two eyes ... About those two slaves of Izak Marais who *naaied* Philida" (Brink, *Philida* 39).

Brink's novel begins to introduce the tensions around racial mixing in this dissertation. Cornelis identity of slave ancestry and mixed race creates his anxiety to silence his black ancestry in his strive to create a family that is of a 'pure white race'. This is manifested in his disapproval of Francois's sexual relationship with Philida. His relationship with Philida is therefore characterised by insistence on constructing Philida as black and slave, aimed at justifying his distance from black identity. Cornelis's hatred is evident in his response to

Philida's agency when she reports her sexual abuse to the Slave Protector. Cornelis's hatred for black people is further illustrated in his complaint about slaves. He laments: "In my childhood ... [slaves] knew their place" and "I have no respect for a slave." He also asserts that slaves "don't have feelings like [white people]" and consequently, cannot be regarded as human beings (Brink, *Philida* 70-71). Similar views are reiterated by Maans Oosthuizen, another a slave owner who describes his slaves as 'things' (Brink, *Philida* 157). In other words, slaves – as prescribed through their derogatory labelling – should not exercise any agency. The masters' categorisation of slaves as non-human is further demonstrated in the public and brutal physical and psychological violence they visit on their slaves. These include Philida's public rape, which I discussed earlier in this chapter, and the public hanging of Abraham. According to Cornelis, the slaves do not seem bothered when he takes them to the Caab to witness Abraham's hanging. This makes him conclude that the slaves are sub-human. Pa states, "I think I was the only one there to feel upset ... I noticed that no one else's hands were shaking" (Brink, *Philida* 71). Pa's judgement is, however, contrasted with Philida's reaction when she involuntarily wets herself after seeing Abraham's lifeless body. Pa is not privy to this rush of emotion but it is, in fact, this psychological torture that forms the playground which Francois uses to exploit Philida's emotional torture and have sex with her for the first time.

Myths surrounding the Other which result in belonging and non-belonging are the basis to understanding why Francois cannot marry Philida. The race and slave position in the novel label Philida as one who cannot fit into the patriarchal white family tree. Cecily Lockett argues that two dominant stereotypes about black women have been at play in South African writing since their first appearance in English literature during the 17th and 18th centuries (1). These were travel stories written by white, male Europeans who were the first travellers to visit South Africa. This writing, she argues, comprised of distorted reflections concerning the Other's gender and race (Lockett 1). She further notes that writing on gender and race included "complexities of miscegenation, sexual taboos, [a] stereotype [that] evolves further into what may be termed either an untouchable or an unattainable" in the images of Krotoã (Lockett 2). Such writing privileges white over black, wealthy over poor and master over slave, and are critical in setting the boundaries in family relations and marriage considerations. This novel reflects such writings, in its explanation that it is impossible for Philida to be married to Francois. The narrative also exposes the subtlety of the invention of the black body in Francois's character development. As a baby, he is nursed by Philida. The young Francois is

described as trusting Philida and possessing a close emotional bond with her. That Francois treats Philida as a human being is illustrated during her public rape. At this point in the plot, Francois is not in good terms with his father because of his continued bond with and love for Philida. Though he does not manage to rescue her, Francois is burdened by his inability to release Philida from the public rape and shame. I therefore argue that in spite of his love and affection for her, Francois adopts racist labelling through social acculturation, evident when he evokes the “untouchable” stereotype to defend his white identity in court. It is at this stage that he acquires the myth that because she is “related to animals, any white man who consorts with [a slave] woman debases himself” (Lockett 3). Francois’s initial affection for Philida illustrates the possibility of love across race, an argument that I dwell on in Chapter Four.

Francois’ perception of Philida as black is illustrated in his court witness when he states that hers is “a slave’s word” whereas his own “is a white man’s word” (Brink, *Philida* 49). He consequently rides back to the farm, leaving Philida to trek the long journey with her child strapped to her back, because he cannot associate with Philida as a result of this newly evoked myth. His concern for his white identity and reputation is illustrated by his thoughts: “It wasn’t just about me and her and the child. What about Pa? What about MaJanna? What about the whole family, all the way back to Grandpa Andries who came on the ship? What about the Berrange family I was supposed to marry into? What about every man, woman or child that was in this godforsaken land? (Brink, *Philida* 51). Francois deems that Philida has already brought enough shame to his family by reporting their sexual relationship at the Drostdy. For similar reasons, he also initially wanted to kill the child that Philida conceived during their sexual relations. The other social pressures that influence his invoking and appropriation of the myth of the Other are Cornelis’s lectures that categorically warn Francois of tarnishing the Brink’s name and the danger of demeaning his own societal standing by associating with Philida. Francois relates these warnings to Philida: “It will bring shame on the family, and Ma Janna would like for our farm to be counted among the best in the Drakenstein” (Brink, *Philida* 26). Francois explains that Pa “doesn’t want his name dragged through shit just because I’m too hopeless to deny something a damn slave girl did with me” (Brink, *Philida* 38). Whether Francois has gradually learned to believe these myths, or whether he just uses them as a way to free himself from the crisis he is in, race and alterity are at the core of his ultimate rejection of Philida.

Robert Shell, looking at the family as a central motif in slavery, defines patriarchal slave owners as those who never expected their slaves to be part of their family as opposed to paternalist owners who created the fictional ideal of the humble, contented, and docile slave (xxvii). The anxiety around Philida's unsuitability to fit into the Cornelis family is first illustrated by Francois complaints when he shows Philida the back of the Bible where Pa has written the names of his white lineage. Francois says: "And that was where Philida became a real pest. She kept on saying she also wanted to get into the Book. the more I told her it was a book for white people only, the more she kept on" (Brink, *Philida* 37). Francois belief that Philida cannot be included together with his heritage as a white person is evident in his response to Philida's remarks: "Philida, it doesn't work like that" (Brink, *Philida* 37). In the strict sense of Orlando Patterson's argument, Philida as a black person is "socially dead" to any family relations (5). The list of names at the back of the family Bible are meant only for Brink's white lineage. Symbolically, Philida's incapability to write her name, illustrated in her rushed action which blots out the Bible page onto which she had wanted to write her name next to that of Francois, denies her the opportunity to fit in as a member of the slave owner's family (Brink, *Philida* 38). Francois' explanation that Philida's name cannot be inscribed on the Bible's back page illustrates her Othering and the racially purist construction of patriarchal whiteness. Francois says to Philida: "[T]here's nothing you and me can change about it, this is just the way the world is ... some things cannot be changed from the way the Lord God made them" (Brink, *Philida* 37).

The denial of black ancestry and black association explains constructions of racial purity in the apartheid and post-apartheid eras. In the South African setting, slave women were inscribed in terms of miscegenation and racial mixing and were represented as deviant, contagious and shameful (Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 13). The young Brink rejects Philida on these terms even though he is of black slave ancestry himself. Philida narration explains the very difficulty of how Petronella's freedom might have come about: "Ouma Nella was a slave once, but she's a slave no more. She was set free. And only the LordGod and the Oubaas can tell how that happened" (Brink, *Philida* 34). However, the plot does not follow this mixed race origin of Cornelis, instead it focuses on Philida's impossibility to be married to Francois. Notions of Philida as the Other drive the plot of the novel and determine her survival; right from the forced

rape, to Philida's case at the Drostdy and Cornelis having to sell her to reduce the 'shame' that Philida has brought to the family. The novel therefore emerges with this strict yet inconsistent racial policing. Francois's love for Philida disrupts the very myth of black as abhorrent. I will pick up this discussion in the next chapter in order to show that the rigidity and insistence on sexual policing to preserve the purity of the white race is disrupted on various occasions. As is noted by Gqola, "Afrikaner families knew that there was slave ancestry in their families [therefore] claims to racial purity and securing privileges based on the coupling of white racial purity with white supremacy, were a deliberate lie" (Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 126). In essence, the very need for policing sexuality showed the defaulting of such rules. In Philida's case, constructions of the black person as socially unfit for inclusion into the white family simultaneously relegates her to a space of enslavement.

Constructions of blackness can be understood in various other ways in the text. For instance, using the Aristotelian theory of the natural slave that was founded on the "fetishization of the wild man" (White 186). Aristotle argued that black people live together without a king and without a government, and everyone is his own master. Hoch notes Aristotle's proposition that black people have no rule and are seldom sick (51). Lewis Hanke also explains Aristotle's argument that black people need to be governed and in this sense, he agrees with Hoch who expounds Aristotle's notion that they "are as much inferior to others as the body is to the soul ... are slaves by nature and it's advantageous for them always to be under ... a man who is most perfectly formed in body and soul" (Hanke 5; Hoch 51). These explanations are helpful to understand the author's construction of Philida and the slaves in general as those who have to be governed. In Philida's words, "[I am] always going back to the place they tell me to go back to. Not because I want to be there, but because they tell me to. I am never the one to decide where to go and when to go" (Brink, *Philida* 62). Pa's attitude towards his slaves evidences similar stereotyping. He says, "they'll all die in a heap. It's us who kept them alive. Can a dog survive if there is no longer a baas to take care of him? And a slave is worse than a dog" (Brink, *Philida* 128). He states about slave punishment, "all of which confirm why I have always figured that with a slave or a child nothing works as well as a good thrashing" (Brink, *Philida* 74). Even De la Bat, Philida's second slave master who is described as liberal, thinks that "it is important for a slave to be reminded regularly of who is the Baas" (Brink, *Philida* 245). The masters' perception of slaves echoes Aristotle's stand that black people or slaves should be governed in order for them to be productive. Consequently, as noted by Patrick

Brantlinger, “the construction of Africans as primitive and unimprovable necessitated they should have civilized masters” (181). Descriptions of the black man as lacking government foregrounds the civilising agenda, enslavement the ground for the apartheid agenda.

I will elaborate further on the discursive and practiced constructions of racial purity and racial superiority in the following chapters, but for now it suffices to point out that the Aristotelian idea that relates blacks close to animals. The relation resonates with Linnaeus’s ranking of blacks as next to animals. Gqola in her research question *What is Slavery to Me?* explains that “Africans and animals were often the subject of similar characterisation in art, literature and public discourse” (63). These same narratives that depict blacks as inferior to whites are simultaneously riddled with myths related to the unbridled sexual energies that make blacks unreasonably resilient and hardy. Here again, the relegation of black people to the sphere of the animal has been used to justify their enslavement. In its description of the auctioning and examination of Philida’s body, the novel showcases this narrative of slaves as animals. Her suitability is checked using a stick: each part of the body is pointed at, selected, and then checked to see if it is strong enough for the purpose that it is bought for. After her dress is lifted to see if she could still provide sexual reprieve for the master and whether her body would give birth to more children, Philida is regarded as suitable as a stud. Through these constructions, the black person is invented, in Hayden White’s terms, as an object, an ontological Other and a ‘thing’ to be done with as needed (188). In this way, the slave is commodified as property.

Violence on black people is ultimately associated with the relegation of the slave to a less than human being: their construction as animals, less than animals, and as property. Such treatment of slaves is illustrated in the novel by Philida’s new slave master de la Bat who habitually takes his slaves to see the skull of the rebellion leader Galant.⁴¹ In one of these trips when he takes Philida, de la Bat says: “this one was the gang leader Galant. And as you can see, he is still here” (Brink, *Philida* 178). This is meant to instil fear and discourage slave insurrection. Masters also routinely summon slaves to witness fellow slave being beaten and hanged, as in the case during Philida’s rape and Abraham’s hanging. The depiction of the fatal beating that

⁴¹ Galant together with the three gangleaders were hanged and their heads put on poles in the Bokkeveld. *Philida* illustrates Galant as a memorial image that the whites use to haunt and force the slaves into obedience.

the white farmer Maans Oosthuizen “bushman Hottentot” Kees’s demonstrates violence on black bodies:

Whereupon Maans lost his temper and ordered two of his slaves to hold Kees down for a proper hiding with a new sjambok he wished to try out before the auction. ... [h]e did his Christian duty and applied some corrective treatment to Kees, not for too long, perhaps half an hour, but it could have been an hour, one cannot always keep an eye on the clock. And then the useless Kees just went and died on him. (Brink, *Philida* 153)

After Kees dies, Maans Oosthuizen is sarcastically defended by the white witness who says that “[h]e will never hurt a man without reason, and anyway he can only count to thirty-nine” (Brink, *Philida* 154). The public display and counting of the stripes on the dead man’s body as well as the act of dragging his body to where his children and wife are crying, is similar to the display of Galant’s skull and illustrates the dehumanisation of black slaves as bodies (Brink, *Philida* 155). While this display of violence capitalises on human attributes of emotions, it downplays the psychologically trauma that the slaves experience.

Categories of the slave as an animal and in need of governance take different forms in the novel, for example, *Philida*’s portrayal as a resilient slave woman who confronts the master. Other examples include the depictions of the slaves’ disillusionment with their emancipation. The novel projects that many slaves will end up tied to their master even after they have been set free, as is the case for *Philida* who is disillusioned when she travels to Gariiep at the end of the novel. Autobiographies like American Solomon Northup’s *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853), which is based on a true-life experience, expresses the myth that the black person exists perpetually as a slave because he/she is black⁴². The re-enslavement of the freed black protagonist speaks to the unlikelihood of *Philida* attaining freedom, despite the possibilities that are open to her, including Francois’s promise. In Chapter Two, this impossibility manifests in the idea of re-lived slave trauma and will also be discussed in Chapter Five in an argument on the complexities of slave freedom. In light of black inferiority and white superiority, *Philida*’s desire and attempts to attain freedom are policed by the laws of patriarchal whiteness. Her complaint is recorded as false because she is a slave and black (Brink, *Philida* 49). As already mentioned, the huge blot of ink that covers the page on which *Philida* attempts to

⁴² Solomon Northup is a black freeman who is kidnapped and sold into slavery.

inscribe her name symbolically reflects this rejection and the impossibility of her ever being included in the family, and by association, in other white spaces (Brink, *Philida* 38). Narrated in the build-up to the slave emancipation of 1834, the narrative portrays the rigidity of the slave master to embrace the forthcoming official dissolution of slavery.

Sexual Slavery

As is emerging from my discussion, the black female slave as narrated in *Philida* exists in multiple liminal spaces. As suggested in the chapter title, the subjection of the black slave as a body in *Philida* is embodied in the female black slave. *Philida*'s re-memory illustrates that slave oppression was not only racialised but also sexualised. Wenzel in similar terms explains that “[w]oman slaves were even worse off because they were also exploited sexual objects who were at the mercy of their masters’ whims” (Karel Schoeman 131 in Wenzel 94). *Philida*'s liminal space by virtue of her sexuality refers back to Sila's slave subjectivity in Chapter Two, and the treatment of female slaves as merely bodies follows up on the same gendered discussion of slavery in Chapter Two. *Philida*, to borrow philosopher Iris Marion Young's argument, is depicted as an object and subject at the same time (44). The objectification of female black slaves as a sexual playground of the white hegemonic phallus intensifies the violence towards them. As I have so far argued, constructions of the black as a body manifests in various forms of othering and categorisation. In the same breath, the construction of the Other and the myths on black sexuality already qualified slaves for sexual slavery.

Stoler gives us a sense of the misuse of black female subjects in colonial frontiers. She notes that “the tropics provided a site for European pornographic fantasies long before conquest was underway, with lurid descriptions of sexual licence, promiscuity, gynaecological aberrations, and general perversion marking the Otherness of the colonised for metropolitan consumption” (43). Reading Sander L. Gilman's *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness*, Stoler expounds that sexuality was the most salient marker of Otherness (77). Stoler reveals that, just like skin colour, “sexual structures such as the shape of genitalia, are always the antithesis of idealized self” (79). Similarly, Gqola notes, “Sexuality was an important way in which colonial Otherness was constructed” (44). The invention of the Other involved the control of sexual relations between natives and settlers, black and white. Such treatment of black people is related to inventions and myths regarding their sexual excesses.

These discussions on the construction of the female black body are useful to understand the novel's imagining of Philida.

The above conceptualisations on the female black body's sexuality foreground my discussion of Philida's use as a sex object. Though Francois is narrated as having fond feelings for Philida, his defensive reaction to her report to the Slave Protector offers a different interpretation of his perception and sexual relations with Philida. Equally, Francois' desire to have Philida after she has been sold are presented as futile. Francois laments, "I need her. And now it may be too late. Because I betrayed her" (Brink, *Philida* 200). The violence on Philida as a female slave is illustrated in the sexual slavery that she encounters in her relationship with Francois, despite his promises of love for her:

Come lie with me Philida. My body will make yours happy. It will be good for you, you'll see. I shall buy you free, I shall go to Stellenbosch and speak to the Landdrost, I shall walk all the way to the Caab if I have to, and pay whatever they ask so you can be free, then you can walk everywhere you want to. With shoes on your feet. (Brink, *Philida* 15)

Francois sex with Philida foregrounds the white male's desire for the female slave's black body. Here, Francois has sex with Philida based on the promise that he will marry her. Though Philida is narrated as a willing actor in the subsequent sexual relations, her position is still one of little agency. Her position in the relationship is enshrined in her need for freedom and the psychological violence surrounding her stay at *Zandvliet*. Francois therefore uses Philida's hopes in these repeated sexual encounters, with Francois always reiterating in various words that he loves Philida and plans to buy her freedom. Philida repetitively refers to the imposed sex throughout her narration (Brink, *Philida* 7, 15, 22, 23). Every re-telling is coupled with Francois's promises of freedom. Philida first sexual encounter explains the violence and manipulation that surrounds her alleged willingness: "If I start crying, he will push himself into me, until I no longer care any which way, I just do whatever you wish, you are the Baas" (Brink, *Philida* 22) and

I shall make sure that you're made free, I'll talk to Pa, and to the Landdrost, and to everybody in the whole wide world, from Zandvliet all the way to the Caab, I promise and I promise and I promise, from now on you are mine, for ever, for us there will never

be a slave and a baas any more, just you and me, I promise and promise and promise, from now on we shall both wear shoes, forever and ever amen. (Brink, *Philida* 23)

As evident, Francois's manipulation of Philida's need for freedom is entrenched in her sexuality. Philida notes her own vulnerability and as narrated, is caught up between believing these promises and succumbing to the hope that they provide. Her desire for freedom clouds her judgment and prevents her from denying his sexual advances.

Needless to say, *Philida* illustrates the subjectivity of the slave not only as black but also as female. According to Stoler, heterosexual unions based on concubinage and prostitution across the colonial divide were defended as a "necessary evil" (2). Several writers have noted the abuse of black female as bodies across racial, slave and colonial frontiers. Feminist Angela Davis highlights the institutionalisation of rape under slavery as a cornerstone of racism, an illustration of economic power or property rights over black women and as a weapon of control (cited in Musila 75). Likewise, literary critic Grace Musila draws attention to "colonial rape laws [that] were race-specific" (76). Baderoon has also shown how enslaved women's bodies in the Cape Colony were subject to sexual violence (84). Wenzel has similarly noted the sexual interest in slave women at the Cape Colony (94-5). Stoler's explanation that "[s]exual abuse of black women was not classified as rape and therefore was not legally actionable, nor did rapes committed by white men lead to prosecution" (16) helps to shed light on the impunity with which Philida is abused. Because sexuality was charged as a transfer point of power, the assertion of virility often lay in taking control of the other group's females – most obviously in the institution of slavery (Stoler 16; Hoch 47). Colonial control involved sexual violence and sexual slavery on female black slaves.

Philida is depicted as a sexual body freely accessible to white patriarchy. As a woman, she is consumed as "a body in crisis", in Walker's terms (3). In the novel, the author portrays Philida as a willing player in the sexual acts with Francois, illustrated in her thoughts, "Ouma Nella tell us, that we call love ... because we want to be together, he and I, and because he care for me and I for him, and because the world can only happen for us because we are together" (Brink, *Philida* 22). This depiction is told in the midst of Philida complaint of the manipulation of her sexual encounter with Francois. First, the reader witnesses the brutal rape that Pa uses to humiliate Philida and discourage Francois from having a sexual relationship with her. In this

scene, where Pa orders two slave boys to rape Philida, the author uses excessively graphic and gruesome phrasing to describe the violence of the enacted rape (Brink, *Philida* 42). Pa's act of forcing the boys to rape Philida in the presence of the family can be contrasted with other rape cases where female slave 'bodies' are invaded by a rapist in secrecy. The brutality of the act, and that of its description by Brink, underscores the perpetual rape of the black person, reinforcing constructions of the sexual virility of the slave boys whom Francois terms as "Stallions". Pa reiterates the stereotype in his retort of them: "That's all you bladdy randy goats are good for!" (Brink, *Philida* 42,43). The ramifications and mutations of the animal-like myth is furthermore expanded here to propagate the idea that the black race has an uncontrolled sexual libido and can bear or does not show pain. The same myth is evident for Philida, who "doesn't move and makes no sound" when the boys raping her (Brink, *Philida* 42). Gqola reminds us of the insatiable sexual tendencies that have been ascribed to female black bodies. The legal slave institution, for instance, in its reluctance to persecute Francois, institutionalises the rape of black slave women. In other words, "a black female body was unrapeable, as such, it was impossible for the slave woman to be vindicated for rape by a white master" (Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 92). Pa's violence in this forced rape further deprives the black slaves of their sexuality. Philida's silence depicts the trauma of the emotional violence.

The violence of sexual slavery is further extrapolated in the birth of four children, and Philida's killing her own son. Elsewhere, the novel portrays the sexual abuse of Philida's mother, Frieda, who is raped by her Baas's brother and later faces the punishment of a peeler, the punishment that slaves faced for running away aimed at incapacitating the slave's ability to move. She bleeds to death as a result of the peeling of her soles (Brink, *Philida* 121). The sexual abuse of these slave women draws significant attention to how the white colonial male gaze constructed female slaves as sexual objects. Musila elaborates on the "myths of black sexuality as aberrant, uncontrolled, contaminating yet intriguing" and notes that, as such, "black sexuality was both desirable and repulsing" (66). Stoler explains the origins of this paradoxical emergence of the European colonial's intimacy with the black native, explaining that the "vulnerabilities of body and mind were tightly bound to the conjugal and sexual arrangements in which Europeans lived" (1). Though there was a European "template for living" in as far as sexual relations were concerned, "European men were to 'take on' native women not only to perform domestic work but to service their sexual needs" (Stoler 1). Pa's spying and gazing on Philida's nudity as she bathes in the river explains this patriarchal white gaze and sexual desire for female slaves. The

consumption of female black women as bodies, as is the case of Bartmann, is indicated in the patriarchal male desire that invaded women of black origin. The consumption of black women is reiterated in the novel in Francois's recounting of stories of masters having sex with their black slave women resulting in children that were born into the slave institution. Francois asserts: "It's the sort of thing most of the men at the Caab do, so you can't pretend you don't know" (Brink, *Philida* 39). For example, Francois' grandfather, Oupa Johannes, had a sexual affair with Ouma Petronella, who is Cornelis's mother.

As has been illustrated throughout this chapter, *Philida* depicts the abhorrent black and female body that is feared for its tainting and ungodly image, yet remains sexually tempting. The female slave as body is therefore used in sexual slavery to gratify the desires of the white masters. I will explore in the following chapter the existence of the female slave in the simultaneous constructions of undesirability and desirable. My analysis of this representation of *Philida* has illustrated that the sexuality of the (female) black slave is constructed as a policed space where the power of the patriarchal master is privileged. It is on this basis that we can understand the landdrost's dismissal of *Philida*'s case against Francois. Francois and Pa's sexual violence on *Philida* as well as that on *Farieda* is situated in the experimentation on black female as bodies. Francois and Pa therefore embody the patriarchal image of the slave master marked by male dominance over *Philida*'s ontology and sexuality and serve to illustrate how the inventions, constructions and narratives about black female slaves normalise their oppression.

This chapter has discussed the whole question of representation of slave memory with regard to patriarchal white dominated history. Haunting in this chapter is manifested in the author's revisiting of the history his ancestry in a representation that surfaces racial constructions that still exist in the post-apartheid present. Here, Brink writes history from a white male perspective in the midst of national discussions and debates about ownership of both land and memory. The representation of self and other emerges with complexities of representation across history, race and gender. In this neo-slave narrative, whiteness as a position of privilege pronounces itself both contextually and textually to ultimately construct *Philida*'s position outside history. As discussed, the background of access to the recording of history presents the author's white privilege in writing this novel. The chapter has also shown how constructions

of black people as bodies acts as a precursor to their subjection as slaves. Hence the imagining of the novel in the post-apartheid space evidences a white dominance on history that still exists in the South African post-apartheid context. To this extent, representation in this novel depicts how white dominance of history produced the oppression of black people both in history and in the memory of Philida. As such, the chapter demonstrates the power of colonial dominance on history in erasing and silencing slave memory.

CHAPTER FOUR

(De)Centralising power: Negotiating and Disrupting Racial Identity Categories in Rayda Jacobs's *The Slave Book*

Black blood's a funny thing. You never know when it'll surface.

(Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 137)

The constructions of the black body that formulate the oppression of slaves, as I discussed in Chapter Three, also foreground the embodiments of the hegemonic structures around the slave institution. I have elaborated on these hegemonies in both my previous chapters. In this chapter, I make a shift from the central power of the master to discuss other forms of power centres by zooming in on the position of the slave foremen as narrated in Rayda Jacobs's *The Slave Book* (2008). The novel invited me to draw my attention particularly to the issue of racial relations as one of the basic construction around violence in slavery. The novel narrates the alternative post of the slave foreman, which is portrayed as a position of immense control over other slaves, as the second centre of power and command after the slave master. This position therefore provides an interesting dimension and insight into the practices of slave management in the slave institution. This shift is new because *The Slave Book* offers a re-memory regarding two slave foremen, an imagination which is absent in *Unconfessed* and *Philida*. I discuss the racial contentions bestowed in the power structure of the foreman by anchoring my discussion in a character analysis of Harman and Kananga, the two foremen represented in the novel. This discussion shows how the character Harman negotiates and disrupts the practice of sexual racial policing in slavery and how that of Kananga deconstructs narratives of black violence. This discussion foregrounds various dimensions of racial identity formation as well as the socially constructed stereotypes that were used in the maintenance of slavery at the Cape by both the Dutch and the British. The novel not only illuminates the fact that enslavement was founded on narratives which invented the Other as an object of use, as discussed in Chapter Three, but it also unsettles and reconstructs such narratives. The novel, therefore, offers avenues for examining the border lines of race and power in order to interrogate the myths of power that governed these divides. In order to make this argument, I juxtapose Harman and Kananga as figures negotiating race and power from these border spaces.

The Slave Book focuses on the young Cape-born slave Somiela, who the reader encounters at the opening of the novel in an auction scene close to the Slave Lodge in Cape Town. Somiela is auctioned separately from her mother Noria from Malabar, and sold together with her step-father, the Javanese Sangora Salamah. Somiela and Sangora are bought by Andries de Villiers of the wine farm Zoetewater in Wynberg. At Zoetewater, Somiela and Sangora join other slaves, key among them, Salie, Hanibal, Kananga and Rachel, under whose custodianship Somiela falls, as well as Arend, whose task is to translate for the master. Somiela's story interacts with those of the abrasive slave mistress, Marieta, who treats Somiela with hostility, and Kananga, the black slave foreman whose ability to fatally flog the rest of the slaves is dreaded by them all. The plot of the novel takes a turn when Harman, a free young white man from the interior visits the Cape and replaces the ailing Kananga as the foreman. Harman's love for Somiela creates a stir in the white community and among the slaves, both of whom do not comprehend and are suspicious of Harman's intentions. He, however, manages to overcome the racial and class tensions that divide him and Somiela to eventually buy her freedom and marry her. The novel closes tragically with Harman's death. After marrying Somiela, he returns to Hantam – the interior – and is shot dead by the white farmers out of revenge for his earlier murder of a white farmer in defence of the Sonqua⁴³. Somiela returns to the Muslim slave community to marry another of her suitors, Salie. Consequently, the novel addresses the anxieties regarding creolisation that existed at the Cape.

The Novel's Re-memory

The Slave Book is one of ten novels by Jacobs. Among these are *Confessions of a Gambler* (2003), *Eyes of the Sky* (1996) and *Sachs Street* (2001), all of which have drawn the attention of researchers. Apart from being a widely published South African creative writer, Jacobs is also a filmmaker whose novel *Confessions of a Gambler* has been produced as a movie. Like the authors of the novels discussed in my other chapters, Jacobs is also the descendant of a slave. And yet, unlike *Unconfessed* and *Philida*, *The Slave Book* does not imagine the story of particular historical slaves. It nonetheless fits into my focus on neo-slave narratives and slave re-memory in post-apartheid South Africa. Published in 1998, it is the earliest of the neo-slave narratives I study, therefore its imagination of racial tensions that reflect on present day post-

⁴³ The Sonqua are some of the indigenous tribes to the Cape.

apartheid coloured identities is useful. Similar to the other novels I study, Jacobs's novel evidences research and re-memory from the Cape archive and historiography. Its archival sourcing is reflected in the introductory epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter that are drawn from various historical records on slavery. Jacobs's work of re-memory from historiography is equally invoked in her acknowledgments where she praises "those writers who spend years researching the past" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* np). She terms herself as among the "historical scavengers" who "ruthlessly plunder" the works of historical research "for atmosphere and ideas" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* np). Not only do the challenges and the limit of the archive again become very pronounced, but the challenge of representation is also evident in the following remark by Jacobs: "the best you can hope for is a glimpse, and trust that the glimpse will open a much larger window in your mind" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* np). As is noted by David Johnson, the novel "is typical in displaying a sure knowledge of the histories of Cape slavery by Ross, Worden and Shell" (Johnson 510).

The novel's re-memory from the archive is also evidenced in Jacobs's appropriation of the name "The Slave Book", which was the legal book in which slave names were registered at the point of sale. The names of slaves would be re-entered against the names of their new masters each time they were bought by new owners. For example, the main characters are named "Sangora van Java, Noria van Malabar and Somiela van de Kaap, using the designations given to them by slave-owners ... in the records" (Olaussen, "Approaching Asia" 39). In the novel, De Villiers also re-names Sangora, February, as soon as he buys him. As such, the recording of names indicated the transfer of ownership from one master to the next. A slave would only be deleted from the record when he died or attained freedom. A case in point is Sangora's story as explained in the novel. When Sangora escapes the farm for fear of severe punishment after accosting the mistress, Harman has to seek the landdrost's help to have Sangora's name erased from the slave book. This is the only legal way that could render him free (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 217). The slave book is, therefore, a marker for the identities of the free and enslaved, as illustrated by Noria's words to Harman: "I'll not go back in the slave book" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 92). In addition to the court documentation of slaves from the Cape Town court record that I discussed in Chapter Two as being used in the re-memory of Sila, Karel Schoeman indicates that slave auction records with the entries of names of slaves represent one of the few documents that give information on slaves (cited in Wenzel 94). The entry of slaves' names pointed to the treatment of slaves as property, and the fact that their names were entered with

the surnames of their masters indicate that these masters owned them. Writing on *The Slave Book*, Maria Olausson notes that “[i]t is therefore significant that the enslaved characters in *The Slave Book* are introduced through this naming apparatus and that Sangora ... [manages] to keep his own name” (“Approaching Asia” 39).

The Slave Book has received much literary attention because of its response to the coloured slave identities at the Cape. The novel has raised the attention of literary analysts such as Pumla D. Gqola in “‘Slaves don’t have opinions’: Inscriptions of Slave Bodies and the Denial of Agency in Rayda Jacob’s *The Slave Book*” (2001), who shows the centrality and subversive role of Islam in the slave society at the Cape. Marita Wenzel in “Re-Writing the ‘Slave Narrative’: Rayda Jacob’s *The Slave Book* and André Brink’s *The Rights of Desire*” (2004), discussed the novel alongside Brink’s, *The Rights of Desire* to show how the two qualify as neo-slave narratives at the Cape. Gabeba Baderoon in “The African Oceans—Tracing the Sea as Memory of Slavery in South African literature and Culture” (2009) is interested in the kitchen space as a site of resistance. Her interest is in the food cultures of the Cape Malay and also the kitchen as a space of agency where slaves shared eavesdropped information and food. Meg Samuelson in “Making Home on the Indian Ocean Rim: Relocations in South African Literatures” (2010) employs the novel to address the Asian Muslim identities of the Cape slaves as that which was often ignored in European and African Cape slave histories. She discusses the novel as a romance story that plays part in the integration of these cultures. Maria Olausson in “Approaching Asia Through the Figure of the Slave in Rayda Jacobs’s *The Slave Book* (2011)” and James McCorkle in “Narrating Memory: Rayda Jacobs, Yvette Christiansë and André Brink and the New Slave Narrative” (2016) is keen on the use of the colonial archive in the text to imagine racialised identification and project the subversion of the same. Such scholarship discusses *The Slave Book* together with other post-apartheid South African novels. Many of these analyses, such as those by Olausson and Gqola, respond to the romantic story of love between characters of mixed race that the novel imagines. I pick up on some of these discussions on the love story to direct my attention to power structures and racial categories that surround its possibility.

My analysis of the novel differs from those mentioned above to employ a character approach as a way to discuss power centres in the slave institution. I show how these centres disrupt the

various racial constructions and identities narrated in the novel. My chapter title “(De)centralising Power” points to the redundancy of the position of the slave foreman that is ideally meant to empower him. Yet, in actual sense, the foreman position is narrated in the novel is an appendage of the slave master whose brutality was not enough to exert the required oppression of and resultant fear in slaves. On the one side, the characterisation of Harman shows how he disrupts the societal racial constructs of power and sexuality in this appendaged position. On the other side, I analyse Kananga’s characterisation as brutal to deconstruct constructions of black violence. A character analysis is informative in a study on representation in its ability to zoom in on what such characters represent in relation to the larger narrative of slavery. I argue that these characters, in their construction by the author, are a mirror of the society in which they are socially constructed. The characters, whether antagonistic or complacent, constructed social misfits or heroes, not only denote the spaces of self and individual, but also that of the other and of the collective. As such, I read the characters as types, not only to understand the individual and personal, but to also understand the political and social collective. In this sense, the discussion of characters will be strategic in illustrating the narratives surrounding the construction of power relations in the slave institution. Since my study emerges from an interrogation of how the individual affects the collective, this chapter’s perspective is instrumental in examining how the collective affects the individual, and vice versa.

Unsettling Racial Identity Categories

As it emerged in my discussion in the previous chapter, restrictions on sexual relations and marriage across social and racial divides were integral to the administration of slavery. The practice of curtailing sexual relations entailed the administration of the private and the personal, all of which the slave institution deemed necessary as a way of controlling and containing slaves. Such control over sexual relations was later enshrined in apartheid laws meant “to regulate sexual contact between the races” and what David Attwell describes as apartheid’s obsession with “polic[ing] intimacy” in South Africa (3). These racial rules entailed policing “European sexual activity, reproduction, and marriage” (Stoler 16). Though she does not describe it as such, Ann Laura Stoler discusses the foundational establishment of ‘the policing of intimacy’ in her analysis of the political discourse that determined racially coded notions of who could be intimate with whom (2). The policing of intimacy ideally dictated that a white

person should not have sexual contact with a black person, and worse still, a slave. The previous two chapters have highlighted how relationships across race; between the slave master and the slave women were met with objection, despite the fact that such sexual encounters still existed. Such examples were illustrated in Sila's abuse by Van der Wat, Francois relationship with Philida and Cornelis parents. In her book *What is Slavery to Me? Postcolonial Slave Memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Gqola has also discussed these anxieties regarding racial mixing. Here, I discuss how the novel narrates and disrupts the practices of policing intimacy which were founded on myths of alterity and the black as a dirty, beastly body, to employ just some of the denigrating descriptors that I already elaborated on in my analysis of the black as body in Chapter Three. The policing of intimacy can therefore be understood using Frantz Fanon's explanation of the white belief in its own superiority that demands practices to "whiten" and "save the race" (*Black Skin* 38, 33). As is noted by Gqola, the claim to racial purity sustained slavery and apartheid (*What is Slavery to Me?* 18). The argument I make here proceeds from the one made in Chapter Three on the impossibility of Francois's marriage to Philida as a result of such racial labelling, to the one narrated by *The Slave Book* which portrays that the constructions of blackness were meant to police the reality that black women were as human as white women and that white men were attracted to. This section therefore becomes pivotal in unsettling and disrupting the sexual-racial categorisation of the slave institution.

I will start here by highlighting part of the foreman's story that is the focus of this section of the chapter. Harman is a young, racially mixed man from the interior of the Cape, whose father is the Dutch farmer Roeloff Kloot. His birth already traverses the contested racial lines of miscegenation because he is conceived through his father's 'illicit' sexual intimacy with a Sonqua woman, Zokho. Though Roeloff Kloot had fallen in love with Zokho, he regrettably disavows this affair and names it as a mistake of his youth. After getting married 'correctly' to a white woman, he takes the son Harman, whose complexion is white, to stay with his family. Harman's identity of a black Sonqua mother is kept as a secret; Harman only hears it from his father when he is sixteen. Consequently, his white skin colour determines the expectations that the society has of him as a white person, even though he fights on the side of the Sonqua against the Dutch farmers. At the climax of the story, he kills one of the Dutch farmers in a fight to get back the children of one of the Sonqua families that were abducted by the Dutch. Harman has to flee for his life from the hinterland to the Cape. At the Cape, he ends up at the farm Zoetewater, working for De Villiers as his foreman. Here he falls in love with the young and

beautiful coloured slave, Somiela, and forms very close and friendly ties with her stepfather, Sangora, whom he helps escape slavery towards the end of the novel. The novel's interesting twist rotates around his racial mixing: his birth by a black native woman, the white complexion that defines him as white and his inclination to fight on the side of the Sonqua. His decisions to fight for the Sonqua are not, however, out of rebellion, neither is his love for and marriage to Somiela. His decisions cause havoc in the white community, with his father, his half-brother, Martinus, and De Villiers attempts to police how he should behave as a white person. As such, the statement that opens this chapter: "[b]lack blood's a funny thing" and "[y]ou never know when it'll surface", uttered by his father shows the hatred and frustration with racial mixing (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 137).

Harman's story illuminates constructions of racial relations that reflect "how what is currently dominant and hegemonic came to be so" (Bhambra 117). Harman's identity, and his relationship with Somiela illustrate how the policing of intimacy dictated that a white person should not have sexual contact with a black person, and worse still, a slave. The novel draws attention to the narratives about racial mixing in the sexual and racial tensions that surround Harman's parentage and interest in marrying Somiela. The expectations of his father, Martinus, De Villiers and the white society at large that he perform as a white person should, echoes the European man's "template of living" as highlighted by Stoler (8). The template entailed racially demarcated rules regarding sexual relations in the colonies. As it is in the text, Harman's romantic attraction to Somiela is met with animosity by his white relatives who do not expect him to marry a slave and someone with a coloured-black identity. Such resistance is illustrated in his father's comment that he should not "complicate life for [him]self" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 187).

The racial categorisation of Harman's parents demands that Roeloff Kloot, Harman's white father, has to abandon the black mother of his child, because the social constructs do not allow their relationship. Roeloff tells Harman: "You are not from the same mother as your brothers and sister, Harman. Your mother is Sonqua. We played together as children. I won't make apologies for my youth" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 44). Roeloff Kloot distances himself from the woman with whom he had sexual relations and consequently also a son. He furthermore names their relationship as a 'mistake of his youth' and reduces their sexual encounter to

‘child’s play’ yet, as is noted in the narrative, he “had a great feeling for Zokho” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 44). Roeloff’s love feelings for Zokho disrupts the notion of Othering in the white beliefs on intimacy with black people. The omniscient narrator further reports that Roeloff had a soft spot for the Sonqua (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 83). His love for Zokho and her people therefore shows the possibility that white people can have normal affective relationships with black people. The irony here is that Roeloff is implicated in the very sexual act that he wishes to disentangle himself from. Roeloff’s experience of intimacy with Zokho disrupts narratives of racial purity, replacing such narratives with the quotidian possibilities of sexual practices across race. The discursive practice is narrated in the novel where Zokho, Harman’s mother, is depicted as one who does not qualify to be a mother to Harman. She is excluded from the family narrative and her name is never mentioned. The reader, and even Harman, gets to know more details about her sexual relationship with Roeloff as well as her name and rejection by Roeloff from Roeloff’s servant, Sanna, who witnessed the relationship. The servant’s account relates the societal sexual conventions that determined Harman’s existence. She says: “there’s no place for people like them [Zokho and Roeloff] in the Karoo ... Neeltje ... (is) your real mother, Harman. Not the one who gave you birth, but the one who saved you and loved you ever since” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 44). As is observed by Stoler, “ultimately, inclusion or exclusion required regulating the sexual, conjugal and domestic life of both European colonials and their subjects” (13). The sexual relationship between Roeloff and Zokho is nullified under the codes that police intimacy, yet Harman’s existence is accepted because his complexion is white.

The idea of contact zones is a useful tool in understanding Harman’s identity and to consequently make sense of the constructions and deconstructions of race, sexuality and enslavement in the novel. In her book *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), Mary Louise Pratt introduces contact zones as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (7). Pratt highlights slavery as one of these spaces (7). I single out the contact zones in the slave institution as distinct in its inhumanity and brutality, manifested in the exploitation of human labour for economic gain. *The Slave Book* is characteristic of the nature of contact zones as emblematic of stereotypes that are used to sustain subjects and a master class. In the novel, these classes are illustrated in the exploitation of slaves by the Dutch and English slave holders, and the clashing of and grappling with not only geographical and

historical spaces, but also racial and class relations. The clash between the Dutch and the native people is illustrated in the shooting, killing and abduction of the Sonqua as slaves (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 44, 45). These struggles highlight the contestations in the possession of both physical space and human beings at the level of capital, but also the danger of one race being under the complete domination of another. As I will illustrate, “the reductive categories of race and culture show that identity politics operate as discourses of control and servitude” (Steiner, *Translated People* 4).

Harman is caught up in this contact zone through his support of the Sonqua’s quest to get back their land and abducted children. As is noted by Olausson, “[t]he epilogue to the chapter” which tells of this fight “consists of a quote from the rebel leader Klaas Stuurman Barrow and the story of the capture is told from the point of view of Harman and the leaders Tuka and Koerikei” (40). The fight, the shooting of a farmer and the whites setting a trap for the Sonqua, all explain this clash at the contact zones. The Dutch need for slaves as free human labour at the Cape colony is portrayed in the novel as the cause of the central conflict at the contact zones. The fight for free labour also governs the interracial relationships in the novel. As is illustrated in the case of Somiela, it is the greed for slaves and the treatment of slaves as the Other who should not be freed, that drives De Villiers’s desire to retain ownership of Somiela even after Harman commits to buying her freedom. De Villiers’s reluctance to release Somiela illustrates that the divides of skin colour still determine who is free and who is a slave. De Villiers’s unwillingness is also evidenced when he withholds Somiela’s freedom as a ransom for Sangora’s return. I therefore analyse Harman as a character who is caught up in the conflict of the contact zone between the slaves/Sonqua on the one side, and the slave drivers/Dutch and British on the other.

The image of Krotoä-Eva is helpful here to understand the space in which Harman exists. As is discussed by Samuelson, Krotoä-Eva was a native Goringhaicona⁴⁴ Khoisan young girl who was taken by the Dutch East India Company as a linguistic translator between the Khoisan and the Dutch (15). Krotoä (also known as Krotoä-Eva or simply “Eva”) was born in approximately

⁴⁴ The Goringhaicona and Chainouqua, among other ethnic communities, are part of the tribes of the Cape that were gradually dispossessed of the land and pushed into the interior by the Dutch under the VOC administration. Dan Sleigh’s *Islands*, narrates more of the fights of these communities with the colonial settlers.

1642 in the Cape Colony and later imprisoned on Robben Island (McCorkle 19). She was used by van Riebeeck as a linguistic translator and “cultural broker” (Samuelson, *Remembering the Nation* 16). I argue that Krotoä becomes a significant character type in South African literature as a maker and marker of history in the contact zones. Samuelson has also noted Krotoä as a character type in the character Kamma/Maria in André Brink's, *Imaginings of Sand*, (*Remembering the Nation* 16). Similarly, she has been represented in the characters of Chief Harris and Eva Krotoä in Dan Sleigh's *Islands* and Eyes of the Sky in Jacobs's previous novel *Eyes of the Sky*. Most importantly, such characters foreground identity contestations that map out the conflict that characterised contact zones. They operate in the in-between positions of cultural and linguistic translators which, according to Homi Bhabha, suggest the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves (38). These symbolic characters exist in highly polarised spaces that contest constructions of identity and belonging. Bhabha's argument on the emerging of others as selves is useful in examining the notions of racial categorisations in the novel.

Thus, the contact zones in *The Slave Book* expose power imbalances marked by conflict, deceit, collusion and coercion. Like Krotoä, Harman treads in an in-between space as a cultural and ‘linguistic translator’ between the Sonqua, who are constantly being pushed into the interior, and the Dutch, who have established themselves as farmers at the Cape. He similarly acts as a cultural translator between the slaves at Zoetewater on one side of the power divide, and De Villiers and the white community on the other. These in-between designations of identity become the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between the upper and lower classes, the black and white races (Bhabha 4). With the Sonqua, his position as a cultural translator is denoted in his praise name ‘son of the eyes of the sky’ which he earns for helping the Sonqua fight the Dutch farmers. Harman's identification with the indigenous people and the interest he takes in the well-being of the slaves earn him their adoration. Harman adopts a messianic stance by risking his life to rescue the children who have been abducted. His messianic role is also replayed when he stages the murder scene that manages to free Sangora from slavery. At this point in the story, Sangora has escaped from his master and Harman, as the foreman, is sent to look for him. In order to save Sangora's life, which would have been in danger if he returned, Harman stages a murder scene, and reports that Sangora is dead. Harman then seeks the help of his brother Martinus – who is the Protector of Slaves – to delete Sangora's name from the slave book. In this way, Harman negotiates

Sangora's freedom in spite of the fact that his own life will be in danger if he returns without Sangora. For Sangora and Somiela, Harman also bridges the gap of slave separation by enabling daughter and mother, husband and wife to meet in what would have been an otherwise impossible reunion. All these positions of interception and negotiation at the contact zone are at a risk to his own life.

As it is emerging, Harman's heroic role as saviour places him in a compromising position in relation to the Dutch cultural and social space. Harman's position as a cultural translator disavows the binaries of black/white, slave/master and native/settler, subverting the cultural and ideological constructs of slavery. As has already been noted, Harman does not embody the racial identity of the oppressed and the enslaved that he defends. Notably, Harman's racial identity allows him access to more spaces than a slave can access. As such, Harman's use of his identity to help the Sonqua and the slaves places him in an antagonistic position in relation to whites. To appropriate Samuelson's description of Krotoä, Harman becomes "the most evocative emblem of ... cross-cultural contact" (*Remembering the Nation* 15). Here, Harman's 'in-between' position invokes loyalty in very evocative ways on either sides of the contact zone and he faces the same dangers as Krotoä who "eventually falls foul of both" (Pratt 43). Harman's existence in the space of like and dislike, attraction and repulsion, provides useful analysis on how he negotiates and disrupts stereotypes and narratives about the enslaver and the enslaved in the contact zones. I therefore analyse Harman's 'in-betweenness' as extraordinary by drawing attention to his 'white' status but his coloured identity.

The character of Harman contests, unsettles and reconstructs the myths and stereotypes of racial categorisations and identity politics that I elaborated on in Chapter Three. As is observed by Olausen, "Harman's new identification – the discovery of his "black blood" – could constitute an argument for a marriage to a slave woman within the white community" ("Approaching Asia" 40). She further notes that this discovery "disrupt[s] the binaries that Somiela expresses in her resistance: "I know what white men want with slave girls" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 142). As such, Harman's discovery "reinforces a racial ideology while creating a new dimension to freedom" (Olausen, "Approaching Asia" 40). Harman's mixed origin and his love for Somiela as a 'white' person destabilises and subverts the demarcations and fixity of racial categorisations imposed by the Dutch settlers. The fluidity of racial relationships

illuminates how myths on the policing of intimacy are unsettled in the identities of individuals of mixed blood such as Harman and Somiela. Their racial identities can be described in Stoler's words as veering toward either side of the colonial divide or remaining awkwardly in between (8). Though Harman exists in the position of master, his relationship with the slaves presents him as one who can empathise with the slaves's oppression. And yet, as I will discuss at a later stage in this chapter, his predecessor, Kananga, provides a different set of analysis altogether.

Harman's construction in the novel disrupts the master narrative at various levels. First, using the argument on language explored in Chapter Two, the slaves can access Harman's space because he treats them with dignity. Such treatment is evident in his role as supervisor, where he allows them to work without supervision and brutal treatment. As is illustrated in the narrative, Harman is described to understand that "[t]ime was something a slave had very little of, and to give it to someone else was a precious, precious thing" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 174). This he tells the slaves when they hand him gifts which they had crafted using their own skills. His humanitarian nature is contrasted with the inhumane De Villiers who chains Sangora with the view that chains will tame him. The slaves equally embrace his humanity, as demonstrated in their request that Harman be their foreman without De Villiers's knowledge: "The others want me to tell Seur that they hope Seur will be the new man at Zoetewater" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 83). Secondly, he counters constructions of power that name master and slave. This is evident when he forbids Somiela and Sangora from calling him 'Seur', but instead asks that they refer to him using his first name: "I am not Seur. I'm Harman" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 103). Harman's permission lasts for the rest of the narrative, as is evident in Somiela's reference to him as "Harman" in the presence of his father and brother (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 135). Another way in which Harman disrupts the power structures in slavery is through his introduction of Somiela to his father and elder brother. I quote: "Pa, Karel, this is Somiela, the carpenter's stepdaughter" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 136). This formal introduction removes the hierarchal power relationship between them and elevates Somiela from the position of a slave, while at the same time lowering Harman from the position of a master. The demolition of his power as slave foreman is also illustrated in his first address to the slaves soon after he is employed on the farm that permits the slaves to work without supervision (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 100). Harman's permission opens doors for a humane relationship with the slaves. His presence at Zoetewater therefore unsettles racial categorisations and constructions of power

and replaces the shame and dishonour that is synonymous with slavery with a sense of humanity.

Framed by his mixed race identity, embodied in a white body, the boundaries of identity and categorisations of race overlap in Harman. Bhabha has noted that such “in-between spaces initiate new signs of identity” (1). Harman’s individual identity is entrapped in societal and collective definitions of self and other, white and black. His body therefore becomes a contested space in which the categorisations of race and sexuality are destabilised and his portrayal unsettles the presentation of subject and slave, self and other in the novel. Gillian Whitlock’s notion of “the inseparability of imperial and subaltern subjects” is useful in this discussion (5). Whitlock’s argument indicates the inevitability of the convergence and fluidity of human relations, even amidst the enslavers’ constant invention of separationist ways of existence. For Marita Wenzel, Harman’s racial identity “provides an implicit and ironical commentary on the South African apartheid system and reveals how artificial and superficial the racial demarcation lines were” even in slavery (98).

By virtue of these political and racial constructions of sexuality, Harman’s parentage by a black woman is downplayed and his intention and declaration to marry Somiela is met with outright shock and hostility. For Roeloff, his son’s wish to marry Somiela feels like a “stab in his heart, that plunges him to the carelessness of his youth” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 136). A similar rejection is expressed by Martinus when Harman discloses that he wants to marry Somiela. Martinus says, “But she’s a slave. You can’t marry a slave. You’re a Kloot. You want to dilute the strain? What would happen if there were children?” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 187). The tension of sexual racial relations emerges from discourses on power relations in the slave institution. Stoler reminds us in her critique of the codes of conduct given to the colonial administrators, the stringent rules on sexual relations with slaves. Later on, under the apartheid laws, such racial rules became established in the sexual Immorality Act of 1957, later renamed the Sexual Offences Act, which forbade sexual relations and intercourse between whites and blacks. Such practices of policing intimacy is captured in Athol Fugard’s *Statements after an Arrest under Immorality Act* (97-98) through Miss Farieda Joubert’s guilty feelings and ‘intimate confession’ regarding her sexual affair with a coloured man to the police. The

anxieties of relations across race, which led to policing intimacy still became a critical socio-political issue in the post-apartheid nation.

Jacobs's novel elucidates the hypocritical use and appropriation of sexuality in colonial terrains. During this age, sexuality emerged as "something to be silenced, hidden, and repressed" (Stoler 145). The novel illustrates what Gqola sees as "the anxieties of 'racial mixing' and 'miscegenation that plagued the colonial and apartheid imagination and [the] series of laws [that] were enacted to legally curb its occurrence" (*What is Slavery to Me?* 130). She argues that the fear of miscegenation was one of the reasons behind the policing of intimacy and that "race mixing" threatened racial hierarchy and consequently produced "anxieties" (44). Consequently, as is depicted in the novel, the terror of miscegenation lies behind the anxious policing of cross-racial intimacies. As such, the narrator observes Martinus's shock at the possibility of Harman's marriage to Somiela. He is first of all dumbfounded, then repeats what Harman is saying out of shock, and lastly cannot find the courage to pronounce 'black children' (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 187). The fear of miscegenation is furthermore evident in Harman's response to Martinus when he asks: "You mean if one of them came out black?" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 187). Harman's relationship with Somiela is, to use Grace Musila's description, treated "with sexual anxiety which trace[s] myths about ... black people" (*A Death Retold* 66). Though Musila's context is not the *The Slave Book*, her analysis of the anxieties regarding sexual relationships between black and white that are still evident in present day society apply to Jacobs's novel as well. As is narrated in the different responses to Harman's love for Somiela, the policing of intimacy makes sexual intimacies between whites and blacks unacceptable, if not abominable. The codes around sexual relations and, later on, the laws on sexual intimacy are useful to understand the hostility with which Harman's liking for Somiela is met. His father and brother's response expresses the unwritten demarcations that were expected in such societal relationships.

The anxiety about racial mixing is not only prevalent in the white community, but is also projected by the coloured and black slaves at Zoetewater. The slaves, and in particular Rachel and Salie, are suspicious of Harman's intentions for Somiela. As I illustrated earlier, even Somiela doubts Harman's love because he is 'white'. However, the slaves' uncertainty is not founded on the idea of miscegenation, but rather on the realities of the sexual abuse of slaves.

As is already foregrounded in Chapter Two and Three, the sexual exploitation of slave women was a central practice at the Cape. Such fear of sexual abuse is also narrated in Noria's responses to Somiela's attraction to Harman. Noria warns, "You must forget it ... It is obvious child. He is what he is, and you are what you are ... Everyone needs a friend, and he seems genuine. But don't take it further than that" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 126-127). Though these warnings are also based on the fear that Somiela should not marry outside of her Muslim faith, they are intended to warn Somiela to guard against sexual exploitation by the 'white' Harman.

The ending of the novel creates more instability in racial stratification. Harman's death acts as a metaphor for the futility of racial mixing as embedded in the racial anxieties that still exist in the novel. This complexity is more apparent if considered from the perspective of Harman's racial categorisation: he is a freeman and not a slave like Somiela, and he is regarded as white as a result of his skin colour. In this case, Somiela's mixed race is not the same as Harman's mixed race. The complexities of racial mixing are illustrated in the event of Harman's death after which Somiela has to go back to be married to Salie, who is of her faith, class and race. Such rigid social stratification is further elaborated in their daughter, who leaves the Cape and is married to a German. The narrator notes that "her white blood claimed her" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 281). As is observed by Olaussen, "[w]hat we have then is an attempted but failed assimilation and a tragic death due to the inability to truly belong" ("Approaching Asia" 42). In the next chapter, I take this argument further and examine the complexities of the identities of generations of freed slaves and how the crossing between racial lines exists as a contested space. As such, in Chapter Five, I will interrogate the following question: What does it mean for black/coloured identities to attain their freedom through marriage to a white identity? However, it suffices to say here that Somiela's marriage to a Harman and the possibility of freedom it offers can be understood on the basis of Fanon's argument that in certain cases, such marriages carried prestige for coloured identities (*Black Skin* 41).

As I expounded at length in Chapter Three, the notion of policing intimacy is directly related to white patriarchal family politics. On one side of the construction of miscegenation is the fear of the white man sinking too low through racial mixing with a black woman. On the other side is the anxiety of the white woman producing what has already been constructed as the Other, namely the black body. In this way, the "white woman's body produces what the slave woman

produces” (Gqola, “Slaves don't have Opinions” 45). Reproducing the black body would mean being part of the dreaded black body and renders the white woman on the same racial pedestal as the black woman. Gqola notes that such a production would create the patriarchal anxiety about miscegenation since the slave master is directly implicated in the project of violently impregnating slave women and producing the very “miscegenation that he fears in his own house” (Gqola, “Slaves don't have Opinions” 45). The policing of intimacy is therefore part of the hegemonic settler culture used to invent a superior culture. I will discuss the construction of European white culture as superior culture in Chapter Five.

In her reading of South African writer Zoé Wicomb, Gqola argues that miscegenation has been associated with shame and the “historical connections of colouredness with degeneracy” (*What is Slavery to Me?* 22). Inclusions and exclusions emerge from the categorisation of sexuality and gender. Such categorisations become “standard narratives that reinforce particular conceptualizations of power” and are used to permanently exclude the slave (Bhabra 120). As it emerges from Martinus’s conversation with Harman, the white race is depicted with a superiority that should not be diluted or contaminated. Not only does racial exaltation speak in interesting ways to the invisibility of whiteness but it also disrupts the constructions of such conceptualisations in the identity of Harman as a product of an interracial relationship.

The policing of intimacy in the slave institution is made a “primary concern in colonial policy” because it is a tool that the matrixes of power use to consistently install the slaves in their subjected position (Stoler 2). It ensures that slaves do not climb higher on the ladder of power. Stoler observes the micro-management of sexual arrangements and affective attachments that was so critical to the making of colonial categories and was deemed important to the distinctions between ruler and ruled (8). Her analysis is useful here because it identifies other reasons why the policing of intimacy was so critical to the white person. The institutionalised macro-management of sexuality was a control tool that became integrated into social constructs of racial relations between black and white to the extent that the attachment of whites to natives was abhorred. In the narrative, the delineations of identity in terms of race include Harman as white by virtue of his skin colour, and not his mixed race origin. It is against this backdrop that his white brothers, father, and even De Villiers, expect him to perform. Harman’s failure to perform ‘white’ is evident in his fighting for the Sonqua and his decision to marry Somiela.

The policing of intimacy is as well evident in that despite Roeloff's love for Zokho, he has to disown his feelings for her. The novel captures this in Sanna's words to Harman: "Your father had great feeling for Zokho. But there's no place for people like them in the Karoo" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 44).

Somiela's physical identity as a mixed race subject disrupts the normalised categorisations of race and class and the practice of policing intimacy. The white men in the novel describe her body as "too handsome for her own good" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 136). Karel (Harman's brother) also declares that "[s]he's handsome for a slave" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 136). The description of Somiela as beautiful should be understood as a construction relating to certain notions of beauty as perceived by the white master class. Somiela's physical appearance goes against European descriptions of the Other and disrupts what has been constructed as a black woman. Her appearance therefore becomes dangerous for her, as I will explain shortly, and attracts violence from the master and mistress. The disruption of constructions of the black body as dark is not only evident in Somiela's beauty, but also in that fact that Roeloff, Harman and De Villiers all acknowledge and fall prey to that beauty. These white men's attraction to her provides an antithesis to the already circulated beliefs about the Other. The narrative espouses the belief that blacks and indeed slaves are human beings that white people could also desire and fall in love with. This is evident in Harman's romantic feelings and intentions towards Somiela as well as his eventual marriage to her. The omniscient narrator also lets the reader know that Roeloff "loved his wife, but had never forgotten the Sonqua girl [Zokho] he'd loved first" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 136).

My argument here is that there were possibilities for the normal attraction of white men to black slave women. As is illustrated in the stories of Harman and Roeloff, one of the hindrances to interracial sexual relationships was the stereotyping of such relationships. Such stereotypes also acted as a danger for the sexuality of the black female slaves who caught the eye of white masters. A useful example to consider here is the sexual exploitation of Somiela when De Villiers asks Somiela to wash his naked body:

"Take the cloth and wash my back. I've hurt my arm."

"Seur?"

“Wash my back”

It was an order which she daren't disobey ...

“The front now.” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 178)

The sexual predation of the slave by the slave master is grounded in Somiela's lack of agency to withdraw from the room entailed in the risk of a punishment if she disobeys the master's orders to scrub his naked body. Her failure to distinguish De Villier's instruction as an “order which she daren't disobey” is portrayed in her shock at finding him naked and the quick apology she makes for walking in on him (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 178). Somiela's shock is narrated by the omniscient narrator: “[h]er heart raced” and “[s]he wanted to flee from the room” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 178). The danger of sexual molestation that Somiela experiences is conveyed in Arend's worry regarding De Villiers's earlier inquiry as to whether any of the slaves had been intimate with Somiela. De Villiers's sexual interest in Somiela alarms not only Arend who wishes to rather leave the farm than witness the violence that threatens Somiela's stay at Zoetewater in the hands of De Villiers, but also Rachel. Rachel advises Somiela to never be alone in the house. Rachel's advice that Somiela is “too handsome for her own good” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 114) alludes to the narratives by slave masters meant to oppress black slave women, and contributes to her lack of agency. Ultimately, Somiela's beauty places her in danger of sexual violence by the unbridled patriarchal desires of the slave master in such a society. Somiela's violation is intensified by the disintegration of slave family units through the sale of slaves that sees her separated from her mother. Though at different levels, Rachel, Somiela and even Arend are faced with this lack of agency in the face of the sexual predation that faces Somiela.

Despite this outright sexual violence on Somiela that is similar to the sexual slavery, exploitation and rape that is faced by Sila, as discussed in Chapter Two, and Philida, as discussed in Chapter Three, the extra imagination in *The Slave Book* is De Villiers attraction to Somiela's beauty. Consequently, my argument regarding *The Slave Book* illustrates how the author unsettles constructions of the slave as Other. The novel shows that laws on the policing of intimacy applied selectively as is illustrated in the sexual vulnerabilities of Somiela and Zokho. Ironically, through policing intimacy, rather than protecting Somiela and Zokho, the law ends up allowing the white man to abuse these women. As a result of her beauty, Somiela is regarded as a sexual temptation for white men. Such representation contends that white

masters would not control their sexual inclinations towards black slave women. In such circumstances, as in the case of Zokho, the white man can neither take responsibility for the black woman whom he has successfully preyed upon, nor is the option of marriage possible.

The foundational practices that led to the institutionalisation of the abuse of black female slaves created a basis for the continued misuse of slaves even in the presence of white men's wives. Stoler notes the sexual (ab)use of local women labelled 'Asian', 'African' 'coloured' or 'black' by colonial men who were not accompanied by their wives (2). These practices explain the "disjuncture between prescription (forbidding sexual practices between white and black) and practice" in sexual relationships between whites and blacks can be applied to Jacob's novel (Stoler 2). I therefore observe at this point that white endogamy and the apartheid laws on sexuality were a venture to maintain a racial standing for the whites, whereas the practice on the ground was that white men had sexual relations with black women. Reading Roeloff's treatment of Zokho: "He had never married Zokho. Instead, he had used her crime to forget her, and found solace in Neeltje's arms" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 136). Consequently, as in Chapter Three, the violence is on the black slave woman who is abandoned in favour of a "societally correct" relationship. As is illustrated in Somiela's case, these sexual practices included the rape and sexual abuse of black slave women. As such, for black slave women the dangers of sexual abuse in the contact zones were more real than the purported dangers for the white woman and the white man.

Musila highlights this "blind spot" of sexual policing (*A Death Retold* 65). Whereas black men were seen as terror and threat to the white woman, evident in De Villiers's use of his rifle to fire when Sangora physically confronts his wife, Marieta, De Villiers is not seen as a threat to Somiela's sexuality (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 178, 185). This blind spot is better understood in the American context where black men were lynched for accusations of rape by white women and black slaves were seen as a danger to white women in general. J. M. Coetzee, the South African novelist and literary critic writes that "[t]he white body is inviolable and that inviolability is in direct proportion to the global vulnerability of the black body" (66). De Villiers's protection of his wife is understood in line with Ndebele's argument that "the global sanctity commonly alluded to the white body" (cited in Musila, *A Death Retold* 88). The consequent brutal treatment of Sangora by De Villiers – the chaining and shooting in the air –

is evidence of the brutality with which the black slave was treated as opposed to the romanticised white person.

The stereotyping of blacks by white enslavers is based on beliefs about the black as “inherently disorderly and sexually rapacious ... with an upsurge of lust, tendencies to rape, brutality and villainy of all kinds” (Hoch 46). The theorisations and myths on black peril warned the white woman of the savage nature and danger of black men. The constructions of blackness included black as terror. Black as terror associated blackness with darkness, linking skin colour with the terror that is associated with darkness (Gilroy 9). Black as terror is captured in the story of the blind young white boy who, as soon as his sight is restored to him by a surgical operation, produces a sublime feeling of terror when he sees a black woman (Gilroy 9). These conceptualisations of black peril that attribute brutality, beastliness, villainy and disorder to black bodies explain the chaining of Sangora in order to ‘tame’ him. The same myths on brutality and villainy explain the terror with which Sangora’s attack of the mistress is met. De Villiers freaks out and shoots in the air amidst the screams of the mistress. Sangora’s black self is therefore perceived as a danger to the mistress. The attribution of violence to black people went hand in hand with their perceived beastliness, as noted by Hoch, and created the grounds for characterisation as “horses to be bought, bred, spanned in, and sold again when they’d served their purpose” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 79). “Such inversion,” writes Gqola about the black body as terror to the white woman, as opposed to the actual terror that the black female slaves faced at the hands of white masters, “was not unique to slave society at the Cape” (43). Musila also identifies this same irony in the theorisation of black peril when she writes “that in practice, there was a more serious crisis of the ‘white peril,’ in the form of white male sexual predation of women of colour and, broadly, the shadows of white terror over black life” (*A Death Retold* 75). This white terror in the novel is evidenced in De Villiers’s sexual harassment of Somiela. My elaboration on the sexual exploitation of black slaves in Chapter Two and Three reads in line with Musila’s assertion that “one of the ways white terror manifested itself in slavery is in the ruthless shape of ‘white perils,’ as rape and sexual coercion that formed part of regimes of terror for women of colour” (*A Death Retold* 75).

White terror manifested in the danger that black slaves faced under the rule of white masters. Not only is white peril experienced through white patriarchal sexual abuse in the novel, but

also in the animosity displayed by the mistress. When Marieta encounters Somiela scrubbing her husband back, she “grabs the first thing she could lay her hands on and hurl[s] it” at Somiela. (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 179). Her violent reaction towards Somiela is further illustrated:

Marieta gave her a resounding slap. “Shut your mouth!” ... the door flew open and Somiela burst into the hallway, clutching her shoulder. Her dress was wet and steam seemed to be rising out of her clothes. Rachel looked at the kettle lying on its side on the floor ... Somiela ran screaming through the house into the yard ... “The nooi threw boiling water at me!” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 178, 179)

Elsewhere, Marieta whips Somiela because her husband likes Somiela’s cooking. Marieta’s hatred of Somiela is rooted in the fact that Somiela equally fits what would describe her as beautiful, and that her beauty has fuelled her husband’s desires. Marieta’s hostility is based on the fear that her husband will succumb to this temptation. Zine Magubane’s concept that “the fear of the anatomy of the Other is the source of negative representations of Black sexuality” (816) explains the mistress’s hostility to Somiela. This is illuminated by the omniscient narrator when he states that De Villiers “knew what Marieta’s trouble was ... Somiela was a young apple, fresh off the tree, sun-washed, and ripe, and uncommonly handsome for a slave” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 70). Marieta’s abuse of Somiela therefore illustrates other forms of terror that slaves experienced.

Deconstructing Black Violence

White terror not only referred to the sexual threats that I have expounded in the previous section, but also the violence on slaves meant to instil fear and endow the master with control over his slaves. This practice “connoted the fear of insurgence, and of perceived nonacquiescence to colonial control more generally” (Stoler 58). As has been illustrated in the previous chapters, violence was one of the central practices in the slave institution that was meant to curtail slave insurgence. The brutality of slavery would later map itself in the violence of apartheid South Africa. This section draws a circle that explains how white terror in the novel translates into psychic oppression that manifests in the violence of the black slave foreman Kananga. I argue that the singling out of Kananga as violent when violence pervades the slave institution reinscribes notions of violent black masculinity and makes white violence invisible.

The novel constructs this brutality and inhumanity through its imagination of the reign of the black slave foreman Kananga. The novel is quiet on the meaning of Kananga's violence, leaving the reader to interpret for themselves what his brutality means. Though Kananga is not narrated as having experienced violence himself in the novel, I employ the violence on other slaves in the story to show that his presentation is one of a broken slave. The question I ask in this section is: What is it that exonerates Kananga's violence as 'black violence' different from that of the slave master? Constructions that treated black people as violent also described them as irrational. As I elaborated in Chapter Three, such constructions portray the black as body and as close to an animal, possessing bestial energy and a tendency towards crime and caprice. In this section, I relate how narratives on black violence is surface in *The Slave Book*. This novel enables me to examine the presentation of Kananga as violent and is useful in understanding the histories of what has come to be known as black violence. Gqola has argued that the representation of the African slave in the novel follows colonial taxonomies where the cruelty of the slave's experience becomes displaced onto the African slave instead of onto the white master ("Slaves Don't Have Opinions" 47). One of the reasons that constructions of black violence have been constantly evoked by whiteness is because it is reactionary – predominantly seeking to speak back to the violence of slavery and that of apartheid. Violence was not expected from slaves because they were supposed to be tame and obey their masters. In discussing the ramifications of slave violence and brutality, this argument extends the discussion in Chapter Two on slave brutality. I analyse the brutal nature of the black slave foreman by interrogating the inhumane slave institution as that which produced Kananga as a ruthless being who abuses fellow slaves. Kananga's inhumanity draws attention to the long lasting implications of white patriachal violence and inhumanity on the slave.

The first time we encounter Kananga in the novel is when he is reported by the mistress to have given a fatal beating to the slave Siek Klaas for losing a cow. Incidentally, Kananga's brutality had previously resulted in the death of another slave due to a similar a beating. Kananga's brutality resonates with the depiction of a foreman in Frederick Douglass (the African-American fugitive slave and abolitionist) narrative of his life of slavery where he describes the overseer, Mr. Plummer as one who is so cruel "that even master would be enraged at his cruelty" (41). Kananga's brutality and merciless nature introduces the reader to a ruthless black slave foreman, one who lives up to the rumour of his brutality throughout his presence in the novel. Kananga's brutal nature presents the imagination of the first example of negative

construction of black-on-black brutality in the novels I study. Though Sila's killing of her son as discussed in Chapter Two can be understood as similar black-on-black violence, *The Slave Book's* imagination is different in that it inscribes Kananga's brutality as perpetual. Nonetheless, my analysis of the imagination of Kananga is critical of inscriptions of black violence and slave-on-slave violence. My discussion disrupts the pathologisation of black violence by arguing that characters such as Kananga can only be understood as products of the violence of the slave institution. The character of such slaves is grounded in the breaking of the slave and the consequent trauma. I interact with the practice of breaking the slave throughout this section in constructions such as the one observed by Achille Mbembe of colonialism and violence as practises of colonial power meant to tame the spirit of the black person, police his body and ensure that the productivity of his labour increased (Buell cited in Mbembe, "Necropolitics" 12). I also use various concepts from Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* as a productive way to understand Kananga as experiencing psychic brokenness. In the aforementioned text, Fanon discusses "how colonialism is internalized by the colonized, how an inferiority complex is inculcated, and how, through the mechanism of racism, black people end up emulating their oppressors" (x).

The novel's depiction of Kananga's brutality elaborates formulations of black violence when juxtaposed with his successor, Harman. This juxtapositioning is evident in Harman's formulation as humane in opposition to Kananga's brutality. I agree with Olausen in her discussion of *The Slave Book* that "the idea of ethnic identity and the values and prejudices attached to specific ethnicities [was evident] in the opposition created between African slaves and those of indigenous or Asian origin" ("Approaching Asia" 39). As narrated, Kananga's reign as a foreman at Zoetewater is narrated as dreadful and characterised by his arrogance, ruthless brutality and sexual molestation of fellow slaves. The omniscient narrator notes that for Kananga, "the sjambok had the last word" and that his brutality is worse and more dreaded than that of the master (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 55). Arend describes this brutality when he points out that "[y]ou don't talk back to that heathen and get away with it. Sometimes he's worse than the Seur" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 55). Evidently, Kananga's brutality is expressed in his position of the slave foreman and is contrasted in various ways to that of the master and Harman's. The master recognises Kananga's fatal punishments as extreme, yet accepts them as necessary to maintain his power over the rest of the slaves. Kananga's abuse of his fellow slaves is as detested by the slaves as it is by the master. De Villiers, who should be grateful for

Kananga's control of the slaves, introduces Harman to Kananga in the following manner: "[t]hat's the one I was telling you about, the mandoor. A big bastard, as you can see" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 80). In contrast, as is illustrated in De Villiers's punishment of Sangora, violence by the white master is praised as a necessary practise of power. In response to his chaining of Sangora, De Villiers says: "I did. Had to, to tame him ... He is now settled down" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 133). This narration reveals that no equivalent of 'black violence' exists for white people, because white violence is not pathologised in the same way.

Kananga's violence can be understood by examining the elusive position of power that he holds. Though he is endowed with power to punish and manage the slaves, he is still one of them. The liminality of his space is expressed when he is disposed off after his health deteriorates, in spite of having offered useful service to De Villiers. With his body frail and unable to do any productive work, he is rendered useless on the wine farm. Kananga's positionality can be explained using the Fanonian idea of the black quest for whiteness. In *Black Skin White Masks*, Fanon explains the dis-alienation of the black man and his inclination to attain whatever is associated with being white (4, 31-2). Here, Fanon explains that the black person, as a result of continued oppression and an inferiority complex, seeks approval from white people (36). Fanon further reiterates: "[t]he entire purpose of [the black man's] behaviour is to emulate the white man, to become like him, and thus hope to be accepted as a man" (*Black Skin* xiii). Fanon's concepts of the desires of the black man provide a way to understand Kananga as he is portrayed in the novel. Through his attempts to be the most cruel slave master, he desires to attract his master's confidence, but also to possess his power.

Therefore, novel offers ways of interrogating the potency of the black slave foreman's power and his false sense of agency. As depicted in the experiences of other slaves around Kananga, the brutality in slavery was formulated to break the slave into a subjective space of manageability. The potency of his position is illustrated through the practice of breaking the slave in the slave institution, and that Kananga as one of these broken slaves. The cruelty of slavery can be understood in the sense that it is not only meted out on the offender but also carried out to "make an example of" him to other slaves, a warning of the consequences of similar 'crimes' (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 193). Thus, brutality is formulated as an ideological and psychological tool of power intended to break the will, soul, body and the spirit of the

slave. As I already discussed in my argument on the invention of alterity, the brutality of slavery is best understood on the basis of the invention of the black person as a body. In the previous chapter, I argued that the invention of the Other is a “fiction created to dominate” (Mignolo 135). Brutality, as a process of breaking the slave, defines and formulates the slave and the master. As such, the conditions and structures of enslavement are set to affect the psychological by breaking the slave’s will. The inhumane working conditions marked by having too few clothes and working bare-footed in the rain and in the wind whether sick or unwell, in addition to poor living conditions infested by fleas, are essential factors that play a central role in the making of a slave (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 128).

As I showed in Chapter Two, justifications on black violence declared violent acts by slaves illegal, whilst simultaneously vindicating similar acts of violence by white masters. Such arguments also include the marking of coloured identities as an in-between identity category superior to “pure blacks” and marked by “a biologically based hybridity which at once made them superior to blacks and heightened the treatment of pure blacks as closer to savage beasts than their coloured counterparts” (Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 13). Such juxtaposition is present in the construction of Kananga and Sangora. Though a slave and more oppressed by De Villiers, Sangora is the voice of reason and hope in the novel. His voice of hope, coupled with his courage, acts as a counter story for Kananga’s brutality, as I will elaborate later. Sangora’s tranquillity can also be discussed on the basis of the difference in treatment of black slaves from Asia, and the treatment of black slaves from Africa. Gqola has noted that the difference between ‘native’, ‘slave’, and ‘Khoi’ were significant in the past and that these categories only appear similar after the benefit of various political developments, among them the Black Conscious Movements (Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 15). The collapsing of black and coloured identities point us to the generalisations in the description of blackness in the discursive, yet in practice, the marginalisation of black and coloured identities still exists through their continued categorisation and labelling. Such problematic ‘collapsing’ refers to the use of ‘Black’ with a capital ‘B’ to refer to “those people who have been classified as Indian’, ‘coloured’, and ‘black’, and ‘black’ with in small caps ‘b’ to refer to black people sometimes codified as ‘African’” (Gqola, *What is Slavery to Me?* 16).

Therefore, even though Kananga has been exonerated to the post of a foreman, he is still a black subject. Violence on slaves as I have shown throughout this dissertation, was characteristic of slave institutions, usually inflicted by the master on the slave. Though the reader does not witness the master's brutality on Kananga, an analysis of the violence on fellow slaves at Zoetewater is useful to comprehend Kananga. To start with, bloody and fatal floggings were founded on myths of black people in general and slaves in particular as possessing villainy and beast-like traits that only brutality could tame. Such treatment has been expressed in early narratives of the Indian Ocean such as Emily Ruete's memoir: *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar* (1907). Ruete relates:

Negroes are very lazy and will not work voluntarily, so they must be strictly watched. To let them go unpunished would be out of the question, would mean to invite anarchy....Under such circumstances nothing remains but the lash. (187)

This quote summarises the narratives of violence that informed the slave institution. Across the novels I study, violence is a consistent practice that produces slaves. Violence in slavery resulted in the dehumanisation of not only the brutalised, but also the brutaliser. Douglass identifies dehumanisation as one of the characteristics of slavery and describes the brutality of slavery as having soul-killing effects (47). The Kananga's brutality is therefore a trope that is produced by the inhumane nature of slavery founded on myths such as those noted by Ruete.

On the basis of the violence of the slave institution, Kananga's character illuminates the far reaching and dehumanising impacts of the 'breaking of the slave'. I borrow the term 'breaking the slave' from Douglass's depiction of the brutality of slavery that transformed people into slaves and objects of use by the master. Douglass's narrative, though in the different setting of American slavery, offers useful insights to understand the breaking of the slave in *The Slave Book*. In the novel, the breaking of the slave is enshrined in the dehumanisation and brutality of slavery. Jacobs's borrows the first epigraph in the novel from Douglass's slave narrative, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave Written by Himself* (1845). The epigraph is significant because it draws attention to the process of breaking as well as the broken nature of the slave that Douglass himself had experienced. Jacobs's notes:

I have found that, to make a contented slave, it is necessary to make a thoughtless one. It is necessary to darken his moral and mental vision ... He must be able to detect no inconsistencies in slavery; he must be made to feel that slavery is right: and he can be

brought to that only when he ceases to be a man. (94 cited in Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 13)

Jacobs's use of this epigraph speaks in various ways to the broken nature of Kananga. Not only does *The Slave Book* illuminate his broken disposition, but it also offers a detailed depiction of the processes of breaking slaves. The Tulbagh Slave Code of 1754 foregrounded before the beginning of the narrative prescribes what is acceptable conduct for slaves, equally provides the basis for slave drivers to break slaves (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* np). For example, the Code lists what slaves should not do: “[slaves] are not to stop in the street to talk to other slaves, [slaves] who struck a slaveholder [should] be put to death” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* np). This Code illuminates why Kananga is accustomed to his merciless beating of the slaves in the farm as a way to punish them for their failure to adhere to rules.

The overall situation of the slave underscores the brutality at the various layers of enslavement that break and are constantly used to break the slave. Such inhumanity and brutality are foregrounded in *The Slave Book* by the physical deprivation of basic needs evident in the squalor that the slaves are forced to live in. Furthermore, inhumanity is signified by the economic exploitation of the labour of slaves for the gain of the master. Sangora, for example, is highly prized because of his skill in carpentry (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 133). De Villiers uses him to make tables, which he sells at his own profit. The male slaves work on the grape and apple farm and are used for the production of wine. Noteworthy here is that the slaves labour while the economic gain goes to the master. Physical deprivation and economic exploitation foreground the consequent emotional devastation of the slaves' spirits as constituent of breaking the slave. Apart from these collective conditions for breaking the slaves, De Villiers isolates and chains Sangora for purposes of breaking his will to campaign for fairness for the slaves. Talking to a fellow farmer about the success of his farm, De Villiers admits his chaining Sangora in order to tame him into submission. Confiding in a fellow farmer, De Villiers says: “[b]ut he wasn't like this when he came. He was trouble, and I put him in chains and set him to work in the field” (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 132). This narrative about taming slaves draws my attention to the institutionalisation of the breaking of the slave. Though Kananga does not directly experience being broken in the novel, it strangely suggests that this must have happened to him.

Somiela and Sangora's experiences when they get to Zoetewater are also best understood as aimed at breaking them and are useful in understanding how the breaking of the slave works. The mistress, Marieta, forces Somiela to cut her hair and remove the lace from her dress. Marieta cuts Somiela's hair because she is too beautiful and threatens her position as the mistress of the farm, as well as that of her daughter. She employs the Slave Code to justify her actions: "Freed slave women are not to wear coloured or hoop skirts, fine lace, or any decoration on their hats, or earrings made of gems of imitation gems" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* np). Evidently, Marieta exaggerates the code in the cutting of the hair to subject Somiela to humiliation and "strip the girl of her dignity" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 33, 71). Sangora, on the other hand, is chained for questioning his daughter's mistreatment. Somiela's breaking also constitutes her auctioning and sale separate from her mother. On her part, Rachel "too had been separated from a loved one – her female child living elsewhere" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 29).

Such basis on breaking the slave is suggesting of Kananga as a brutal character whose power to reason has been taken away from him. The inhumanity of Kananga is illustrated in the novel's gesture in the opening epigraph already cited, where Douglass speaks about his own experience as a slave. In a further section of this quote not cited in the novel, Douglass notes: "... and he can be brought to [feel that slavery is right] only when he ceases to be a man (94). The epigraph suggests that Kananga is already at this point of inhumanity that is so aptly captured in Douglass's expression. Kananga has appropriated the deceptive offer of relative privilege by the slave institution to the point that he does not see the inconsistencies of slavery. Rachel is equally a type of Kananga who perceives that their condition is better than that of other slaves. For her, it is enough to have food as is noted in her welcome to Somiela at Zoetewater when she states that "[t]he benefit of being in the house is that you'll have food to eat and clothes to wear, and you'll sleep warm next to the fireplace" (Jacob, *The Slave Book* 30). Her injunction that "[t]he master's kind if you do as he says" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 30) suggests that her oppression has programmed her to compare their state with that of slaves in worse situations. This is the situation that Douglass explains; slaves are deceived to think that their condition is better compared to another slave in worse circumstances. In both cases, Kananga and Rachel are broken enough to fall prey to the psychologically deceptive illusion of feeling treated well. Some of Kananga's privileges include sleeping in a separate room from the rest of the slaves and that he is not beaten by the master. Kananga's 'mental vision' is his position of authority as a foreman. The emotional, psychic and physical breaking of the slave

has produced false selves in the slaves. For example, Kananga has lost the insight that he is still subject to the commodification of people that is the engine of slavery and that he is still a slave who is as expendable as the rest.

Sangora, who is portrayed as the voice of reason in the novel, understands the underlying mechanisms at work in the breaking of Kananga and thus he can explain Kananga's brutality. His understanding is illustrated in his response when he is chained for defending Somiela. In response to Andries he shouts, "[y]ou won't break me" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 35). Sangora's level judgement of fellow slaves sheds light on the nature of Kananga's brutality, as is illustrated in his explanation to Arend: "Kananga stands between the white man and the slave. Who does he have? Slaves have each other. There's comfort in that. He flogged me, he put me in chains, but he's following orders. Don't you see? He's forced to act against us. That's another way to keep slaves apart" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 56). Unlike the other slaves' perception of and hatred for Kananga, Sangora offers a nuanced understanding of Kananga as a human being whose humanity has been tarnished by the brutality of slavery. Referring to Kananga, Sangora says, "He's cruel, not soulless" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 56). Sangora's understanding provides a very informative contrast of the slaves and Kananga on one side and Sangora on the other. An analysis of Sangora's conversation with Arend informs Harman's disposition:

"I don't understand you, Sangora. He's responsible for the sores on your legs, and you feel sorry for him."

"He's not responsible. And you won't understand now". (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 56)

Sangora's reasoning provides him with the agency needed to confront Kananga. Addressing Kananga, he asks, "You're not stupid, Kananga. Why do you do this?" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 55). In the ensuing scene of violence where Kananga thrashes Arend twice, Sangora shouts at Kananga to "[s]top it" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 55). Consequently, Kananga drops the whip and later on, also refuses to whip Somiela. Sangora's responses present a comprehension of the psychic damage of the violence in slavery. This confrontation unearths Kananga's humanity that had been wrecked by the brutality of slavery.

Kananga's entry and exit in the novel is brief and marks his life by an absence of voice. In the few instances where he speaks, his speech carries the performed position of power, rarely communicating his feelings of the situation at hand. This is illustrated when he confronts Sangora: "Where do you think you're going!" Kananga shouted. "Stop!" ... "I said stop!" Kananga lashed out with the sjambok" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 34). Kananga's silence reads back to the silencing of slaves by the brutal power structures of slavery, and silence as the language of trauma as discussed in Chapter Two. His lack of speech is significant because it links to the breaking of slaves, which was initiated by the denial of voice, first by forbidding them to talk back to the slave master and second, to talk to each other. According to the Tulbagh Slave Code that I quoted earlier on, slaves were "not to stop in the street to talk to other slaves" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* np). Defiance of this order would provoke severe punishment. Such is further illustrated in Rachel's reprimand to Somiela for getting a flogging from Marieta to intone that Somiela "should've kept her mouth shut" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 67). The slave ideology that has taught her not to question authority has evidently been engraved in Rachel's psyche. These are some of the 'lessons' that she inculcates in the new, young slave, Somiela. Rachel's submission to the position of a slave provides evidence for the ideological subjection that have taught slaves that they should not talk back to power. Rachel's warning to Somiela to not "argue back, and [not] make [her]self grander than them" is embedded in the fear that Somiela might cause trouble (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 30). This fear has been instilled in her by her experience of the systemic violence of slave masters. In other cases, the male slaves in the slave house have to whisper to each other at night because they should not be heard talking. Whitlock notes that the processes of breaking a slave are "visceral processes which determined who might speak; how, when, where and why" (Whitlock 10). Jacobs's text draws attention to the verbal and psychological aspects of silencing slaves. The silence imposed by masters lowers the chances of slave "mutiny" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 14). The narrator notes that "to have [slaves] from the same part of the world, speaking the same language, was asking for trouble" (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 14).

Following this line of argument, it is evident that slaves ultimately learn "how, where and why" to speak, in some cases even learning the language of silence. I described in Chapter Two that the language of slavery centred on silencing the slave in order to instil fear in slaves. The black consciousness scholar Aimé Césaire describes the fear that had been inscribed on black people in the following manner: "millions of men who have been skilfully injected with fear,

inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement” (quoted in Fanon, *Black Skin* 1). Fanon similarly addresses the fear instilled in black people, saying that “the black is not a man” but “in a zone of nonbeing” (*Black Skin* 1, 2). Kananga’s state expresses the fact of the experience of blackness, illustrated here as the degradation of the humanity of the slave. Degradation is explained in the continued subjectivity brought about by black slave experiences of violence and brutality. The degradation of the humanity of the slave has been explained in psychological disciplines as the ego that is “driven to desperation by the amputation of all its defence mechanisms” (Fanon, *Black Skin* 42). This explains the ego of the slave as weakened by the violence of slavery. As Fanon has further explained, the state of the black person, “having been made inferior, proceeds from humiliating insecurity through strongly voiced self-accusation to despair” (*Black Skin* 43). I do not intend to foreground psychopathology as the case with Kananga, but it is a useful concept if loosely interpreted in terms of the disillusionment that enslavement brings. The desire to be white, as explained by Fanon, can be seen to manifest itself in different forms. For Kananga, in his disillusionment, the aping of the master’s power enables him to appropriate the master’s position of command, possibly in a bid to sustain his position and restore his ego and his masculinity.

Emasculation therefore is a necessary concept to draw on in order to understand Kananga’s brutality. Emasculation implies that male social roles cannot be not realised and actualised and consequently, sets in motion psychological, emotional and even physical annihilation. My analysis of emasculation would entail conceptualisation of the superiority trope of masculinity. By elaborating the formulated and manifested of emasculation, I discuss Kananga’s brutality as a symptom of the inner tensions and insecurities that result from not having realised his maleness. I find Paul Hoch’s argument insightful here. Hoch foregrounds the belief that the peak of masculinity is when the “white hero” achieves his manhood and that he reaches this summit of masculinity first by winning victory over the “dark” beast (10). Hoch’s concept of victory is a process of enslavement which sees the colonial master own the slave. Kananga’s position as foreman, which allows him to direct, punish and instruct, links to the rationale of slavery in terms of presumed inferior manhood of the slave founded on notions of the superiority of the white man (51). De Villiers and Harman, in their positions of power, are possible embodiments of superiority and therefore also of masculinity. If masculinity suggests dominance and control, then Kananga’s brutality strives to embody the characteristics of that dominance. Hoch’s argument on the institutionalised myth of manhood as a quest for

domination makes sense here in two ways: firstly, the slave master suppresses the male slave in order to actualise his own manhood. Secondly, the male slave, having been socialised within the same myth, exercises his manhood by using brutality to dominate fellow slaves.

In the slave institution, emasculation emerged through the disruption of family spaces among slaves, resulting from constant separation through the separate selling of slaves. In such circumstances, slave men found their masculinity in a formidable competition with their white slave masters. As has already been argued, the disintegration of the slave family opens the plot in *The Slave Book*, in the auction scene that sees Somiela and Sangora bargained for and auctioned off separately from Noria. Noria's plea to De Villiers to "[p]lease buy [them]" as a unit highlights her devastating fear of losing her family (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 16). The novel's tension increases at Zoetewater because of Sangora's desperate attempts to defend the teenage Somiela, not only from the oppressive arm of the slave master's family, but also from the gaze of the men on the farm. In the case of Somiela's sexual abuse by the master, the novel narrates Sangora's response to Marieta's heightened hatred for Somiela:

Sangora watched. He felt a horrible, horrible rage. He stepped out of the barn and started walking ... He had no business addressing her and asking questions, but he wanted to know why, what Somiela had done. He wanted to understand. He needed something to make his rage go away. When Marieta saw him approach, she started to scream. "Get away, heathen!" ... Sangora stopped. Then everything inside him exploded. All he was aware of were people shouting, running in all directions, pulling at his clothes, Marieta de Villiers choking. Shots ringing out over his head. (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 185)

Sangora's fight with his mistress functions as a manifestation of emasculation which, as I discuss in this section, enforces a certain helplessness in male slaves manifest in various psychological expressions. As Stoler notes: "The demasculinization of colonized men and the hypermasculinity of European males are understood as key elements in the assertion of white supremacy" (46). Stoler's conceptualisation illuminates that the slave institution enforced the disempowerment of male slaves to ensure its power over them. Family disintegration and emasculation are meant to kill the will and spirit of the slave. Kananga's brutality can be understood as his way of asserting his masculinity.

To conclude this discussion of the various ways to understand the slave's brokenness, I call attention to psychological meanings of domination in relation to the breaking of the will and the psyche of the slave. Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* identifies psychological elements such as inferiority complex as the cause for alienation of black against a fellow black (58). Sigmund Freud's concept of psychic trauma further illuminates Kananga's brutality. Freud refers to "residues of emotional experiences" that arise from multiple traumas (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 463). Freud further explains that

the repressed desire continues to exist in the unconscious; watch[ing] constantly for an opportunity to make itself known. It soon comes back into consciousness, but in a disguise that makes it impossible to recognize (acts as its surrogate). (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 463)

I borrow Freud's concept to propose that Kananga's brutal nature is related to psychic trauma. The notion of displaced trauma, which implies Freud's explanation of the trauma coming back to consciousness, further helps understand such violence by the black slave. In her discussion of Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* Jean Wyatt talks of displaced trauma in the individual who has experienced psychic trauma (135). She explains that this trauma is expressed to another individual who is not the perpetrator of the trauma (135). These conceptualisations of the possibility of repressed trauma to be re-enacted in a different setting sheds light on Kananga's expressions of violence on fellow slaves and suggest that they emanate from continued oppressive traumatic experiences in slavery.

The banishment of communication in slavocracy is also useful here to understand Kananga's silent self. As is the case with Sila in certain ways, Kananga's voice is silent, but unlike the case with Sila, the reader does not have access to Kananga's consciousness. For instance, the reader is not privy to what Kananga thinks about the fellow slaves whom he so brutally abuses. How then can we understand the silence of such a slave? As I have argued in Chapter Two on "Impossible Motherhood", such a 'loss' of voice is emblematic of trauma. I suggest that the brutal reign of Kananga is an expression of trauma as a result of the "psychic damage" caused by the 'breaking of the slave' (Wyatt 128). As discussed, for Sila, Hester and Philida, their experiences of trauma result in their killing of their children. In Kananga's case, it can be interpreted as breeding a helplessness in himself and a brutality towards others.

Unlike the case with the ghost characters in *Unconfessed* and *Philida*, haunting is not directly alluded to in this novel. However, haunting is related to Kananga's behaviour which exposes how he is haunted by a violent past and a present that he has to deal with. The omniscient narrator aptly describes "the agony that had claimed him" on his sick bed toward the end of his stay at Zoetewater (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 87). This haunting is similar to the way the neo-slave narratives considered in this study extrapolate the the author's slave ancestry and hauntedness of the post-apartheid era. In addition to the author's slave ancestry, aspects of the intergenerational trauma that I discussed in Chapter Two shed light on the possibility that trauma can be examined from a transgenerational perspective in this text as well. Jean Paul-Sartre has argued that the memory and trauma of slavery can last up to the fourth generation⁴⁵. As elucidated in the re-memory of Sila, her descendants would be affected by the same pain that she suffered. In same way, by 1834, the official year of the abolition of slavery, the living slaves were second, third, fourth or even fifth generation slaves. This implies that the slaves had experienced the trauma of their immediate ancestors. It can thus be argued that in present day Africa, descendants of slaves still psychologically suffer the trauma of slave ancestry. Though the novel does employ this generational trope, Kananga's trauma corresponds to and epitomises the signs of transgenerational trauma. Fanon's attribution of the behaviour of the black man to a collective unconscious as a possible way to understand the black man also makes sense in comprehending Kananga's behaviour (*Black Skin* 112). For Fanon, slave oppression is implanted in the subconscious of the collective group (*Black Skin* 112). As is evidenced in my analysis of Kananga, I have used other characters in the novel to understand him as a slave who has been constructed by the same institution that constructed his master. The lingering effects of slavery and its traumatic experiences for subsequent generations are key in understanding the nature of trauma. I see the relationship between past trauma and the traumatic memory of the descendants of slaves as helpful in understanding the trauma of slavery and its inter-generational effects.

Sangora's confrontation shows the reality that Kananga, even though acting from a position of relative power as a foreman, is still a slave like the rest. Sangora on his part has to deploy his religion as agency throughout the narrative to survive the brutality of his enslavement. Unlike Kananga, Sangora's strength to confront is directed towards the oppressor and not the fellow

⁴⁵ Such illustrations are evident in African American literature for example as narrated in Gayl Jones *Corregidora*

oppressed. Kananga's brutality towards fellow slaves demonstrates his inability to extend his bitterness and trauma towards the slave institution that has positioned him in this way. I underscore here that Kananga as a black slave foreman is caught between loyalty to the master on the one hand, and to fellow slaves on the other. In opposition, Harman's friendly demeanour towards the slaves is embedded in his being free. Consequently, he is an outsider to the slave institution and, as a free man, he can resign from the foreman position at anytime and can disagree with the master, a privilege to which Kananga does not have access.

To conclude, Kananga's violent nature has been created by the slave institution that consequently uses him to advance enslavement. His positioning as foreman therefore disavows his power and centralises the power in his master, De Villiers. In other words, the same slave institution that makes Kananga a foreman initially made him a slave. With regards to his sale, the difference between Kananga's position and that of Harman is notable. In this way, the slave institution uses Kananga and disposes him when it has exhausted him. As illustrated:

The men stood silent. They glanced briefly at the dejected figure on the other side of the yard. Kananga was going the same way he'd come, with no words of introduction, no words of farewell. He was waiting at the wagon house because the farmer was leaving with him the moment he was through instructing the slaves. "With Kananga sick all this time, and the rain, we've fallen behind." (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 98)

Sick and not useful anymore, Kananga is sold like any other slave who never had a special assignment. In the same breath, as a black slave foreman Kananga is named "the black overseer" or "Mandoor" – which is in itself a derogatory title – and this differs from Harman's title as a 'white' foreman or 'seur' which already classifies him as a master (Jacobs, *The Slave Book* 134). The plot of the narrative also serves to enforce this stark difference between Kananga's inhumane nature and Harman's humanity, structuring Kananga as the violent and hated predecessor of the caring, loved and productive Harman.

On the one hand, my analysis presents the narrative as one which disrupts racial labelling and provides room for the contestation of social patterns in slavery. On the other hand, it reiterates myths about the sexual rapaciousness and violence of black people. The chapter has discussed how the novel's depiction of the position of the slave foreman provides engagements with

racial and sexual categorisations while at the same time interrogating the pathologising of black people as violent. The character analysis in this chapter unsettles the homogeneous representation of slaves and depicts the experiences of individual slaves. Harman's racial categorisation as white in spite of his mixed blood provides pockets of agency for the slaves at the farm. As such, his identity exposes the failures and pitfalls of the master narrative. Inasmuch as the narrative unsettles racial categories through the character of Harman, I also analysed Kananga's character as a psychic manifestation of the oppressive and violent realities of the slave institution based on those same race categories. Using the depictions of slave brutality in the narrative, I showed that he embodies inner brokenness which suggests a violent history. This chapter concludes that the oppression of slaves led to diverse traumatic manifestations which ought to be understood in the contexts of the violence and trauma. Racial categorisations such as anxieties on racial mixing and purity and notions of black violence are still evident in post-apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reading the ‘First Person (Auto)biographical Narrative Voice’: The ‘Door of no Return’ in Therese Benadé’s *Kites of Good Fortune*

Any history of the Dutch Cape needs to keep both land and sea in sight, as this was the contemporary perspective of the world inhabited by those who came to the Cape. (Ward, “‘Tavern of the Seas’?” 137)

Contemporary social thinking in Europe obliged those who kept slaves in the New World to pretend that the practice did not exist once they returned to the Old. (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 7)

This chapter situates itself within Indian Ocean Studies by discussing cultural identities of freed slaves at the Cape. It suggests that slavery is one of the lenses central to understanding the construction and contestation of cultural identities at the Cape Peninsula – a space of intersection between the Atlantic Ocean (culture) and the Indian Ocean (culture) that has emerged as a separate field of study in recent years, as elaborated in my introduction. The chapter moves its focus from the immediate slave institution that was the focus of the previous three chapters, to discuss the life after slavery, as imagined in Therese Benadé’s *Kites of Good Fortune*. The opening quote by the Indian Ocean historian Kerry Ward, who demands that we “keep both land and sea in sight”, captures the scope of my analysis of the novel in the sense that I adopt a perspective focused on both the land and sea to discuss the colonial establishment at the Cape littoral and its implications for slave freedom. I look towards the sea, and back to the land to examine “oceanic crossings” as a precursor for the formation of relations of servitude, colonisation and cultural hegemonies. The focus is part of the Indian Ocean connections that I foregrounded as part of the dimensions of this dissertation. The chapter is significant in its outlook of servitude as an integral part of Cape oceanic histories. This outlook is useful in that the narrative of Cape colonial settlement has often been told separately from that of slavery, yet as I explained in the introduction to this dissertation, slavery is as old as the colonial administration. I examine how the narrative constructs slavery as a middle passage that uses the sea’s image of the ship and the land as a metaphor for the colonial administration and its encounter with littoral societies. Re-memory in *Kites of Good Fortune* is unique in that it narrates how the personal slave story intersects with the historical colonial narrative that was marginal to the previous three narratives that I have examined here. This chapter analyses the

narrative as a self-reflective story on slavery by reading the silences of the text in order to show how the representation of littoral cultures characterises the politics of inclusion and exclusion as well as the complexities of slave freedom.

Published in 2004, *Kites of Good Fortune* is Therese Benadé's debut novel that narrates "the good fortune" of freedom by manumission of Angela of Bengal, a female slave from Bengal and the subsequent freedom of her daughter Annie, as well as her eleven grandchildren. The novel is structured in parallel plots: The main plot of the narrative tells the family love stories of the manumitted Angela and her daughter, adopting a generational trope that narrates up to the third generation of free slaves. The subplot of the novel is the early establishment of the Cape Colony under Jan van Riebeeck in the early 1650s until late 1734. Angela is manumitted by the Swedish ship captain of the Dutch East India Company, David de Koning, who pledges to buy her freedom and marry her. Even though David de Koning dies prematurely in a shipwreck in a voyage back to Europe, the commander van Riebeeck ensures that his promise for manumission is realized in accordance with David de Koning's will. Angela had been sold into slavery and concubinage to the Portuguese Captain Pedro da Silva, an enslavement that sees her give birth to Manuela. In a ship attack, Angela is taken by Captain Kemp together with the Angolan slave Domingo, Angela's lover, with whom she has a daughter, Maria. Angela and Domingo, with the two children, change masters a third time when they are sold to the Commander van Riebeeck at the Cape. The narrative advances from Angela life, fondly referred to as Mai Angela in the novel, to that of the first-person narrator Annie, and her marriage to Olof Bergh, a Swede from Ceylon who is a sergeant with the Company.

In the first section, this chapter focusses on the land to interrogate the imagination of colonial rule at the Cape in the narrative's sub plot. I show how *Kites of Good Fortune* draws attention to the Cape littoral as a meeting point of the political and cultural as a result of colonization and enslavement. The argument I make about the land touches on how enlightenment ideals were used to invent the Cape littoral as a remote and barren place, setting it up for what I term the "enslavement of the Cape littoral" in this chapter. The second section navigates the oceans to show the complexities of slave freedom by thinking through the intercultural connections of Atlantic and Indian Oceans, Orlando Patterson's idea of "social death" and Marcus Garvey's appeal for the "return to Africa". This chapter follows on from the discussion of the possibilities

of manumission through cross-racial marriage in Chapter Four. Angela's manumission through marriage in Benadé's novel allows me to draw parallels to Somiela's marriage discussed in the previous chapter.

Kites of Good Fortune lies uncomfortably in the shelf of the narratives of slavery in the post-apartheid moment. This is because it does not at length narrate the life of slavery in the Cape Colony. Instead, similar to novels such as Russel Brownlee's *Garden of the Plagues* (2005) and Daniel Sleigh's *Islands* (2002) that narrate the colonial administration of the Cape Colony with marginal slave stories, *Kites of Good Fortune* elucidates the unavoidable narrative of slavery as an integral system of the Cape Colony. Discussed in Chapter One, the Cape Colony was a slave society from the very beginning (Shell 6, Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* 29). The focus on the colonial administration is one of the reasons that the narrative does not fall squarely under the analysis as purely a narrative of slavery. *Kites of Good Fortune* is particularly unique in its narrative voice that I read in this chapter as complicated in its elucidation of the salient features of the autobiographical genre. Here, Benadé briefly introduces the life of a slave woman, who is soon manumitted in the early stages of the story line. The story therefore seems to abandon, and deviate from the narrative of slavery and slave life, unlike the other narratives such as Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* (2006), André Brink's *Philida* (2012) and Rayda Jacobs, *The Slave Book* (1998), which have elaborately imagined slavery.

Though various literary critics have discussed slavery at the Cape at length, the life of manumitted slaves and the idea of slave freedom seem neglected. Significantly, among the other novels on slavery at the Cape, *Kites of Good Fortune* has received the least scholarly attention. It is also notably the only post-apartheid novel that imagines the lives of freed slaves. As is suggested by the title of the novel, *Kites of Good Fortune*, the narrative designates a happy mood and a tone of triumph that celebrates the good luck and freedom of the slave woman Angela of Bengal, who is a historical figure and an ancestor of the author, Therese Benadé. The history of this ancestry is told through the first person narrative voice of the main character Annie de Koning, the daughter of Angela of Bengal, who traces the manumission of her mother and her subsequent freedom. The narrative veers off from the trauma of slave oppression, natal alienation, and sexual slavery to focus on the romantic tale of Angela and the

Swedish captain David de Koning who loves her, and narrates Annie de Koning's appropriation of her paternal heritage in order to belong to the esteemed Dutch (and European) culture. As is illustrated early in the plot of the narrative,

Angela played the game and pretended that she was a nursemaid like any Dutch nursemaid, but bondage hung over her like a permanent cloud. She and Captain Kemp both knew that she could, at a moment's notice, be transported from Holland and sold as a slave. (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 7)

Angela is forced to adopt the demeanor of a house servant when visitors call at Captain Kemp's house where she is a slave, yet even the Commander kept house slaves and Angela later serves as house slave before her manumission. As Captain Kemp notes to Angela and fellow slave Domingo, "I have heard that Commander van Riebeeck at the Cabo de Boa Esperança has been given permission to own slaves. We will see if he has need of the two of you" (Benadé *Kites of Good Fortune* 13). This pretence of slavery somewhat questions the overriding triumph of slave freedom that is narrated in the novel. The mention of these pretences at the beginning of the novel informs my interest in the narrative voice that emerges in various subjectivities in the narrative. As such, the second opening chapter quotation informs my approach in this chapter: the colony carried the pretense that servitude did not exist in the Cape.

I argued in the previous chapter that racial categorisations were at times disregarded and marriage across race was actually a practice. However, the story about marriage across race in *Kites of Good Fortune* troubles the practice of racial policing in a quite distinct way, because the slave woman is married to a white free colonial administrator. As noted by Maria Olausen, "Benadé's family history, although presented as the story by a descendant of slaves, offers the opposite perspective and tells the story of the assimilation of slave descendants into Cape Dutch society" ("Approaching Asia" 36). The novel is also different from the others I have analysed so far, because it narrates the possibility of freedom, thus enabling me to discuss the nature of slave freedom at the Cape. Additionally, though Benadé does not particularly imagine ghost/s as character/s, her dead ancestors act as a metaphor for the ghosts who are given the voice to speak for themselves. The representation of these dead ancestors act as the mark of haunting in the novel.

The author uses Annie's first person narrative voice, which borrows from the archive of her mother's storytelling gift, to re-imagine the identities of the family. The novel situates the family and their personal stories as an archive from which Benadé constructs her re-memory. In addition to this archive, the narrative borrows from personal memories, family letters and photographs of these historical family members. This family archive includes photos of the plants that are native to the Cape and their Latin nomenclature in the work of doctor and botanist Heinrich Claudius. Claudius's visit to the Cape Colony is foregrounded in the narrative as having influenced Annie's interest in Botany. It also includes the letter that David de Koning writes as the will that Jan van Riebeeck implements to free Angela after his death (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 20). A photo of Annie's husband, Olof Bergh is also included from this family archive. Annie's personal memories, recollected from her mother's stories and the family archive draws attention to the kind of archive that (auto)biographical writing foregrounds. These personal memories, as appropriated by the first person narrator, complement the documented family archive that the author uses to re-memory the story. The author's ancestral relationship to the subjects of the narrative directs my reading of the novel as an autobiographically inflected one. Such an autobiographic quality is evident in the ability that the author gives to Angela and Annie to tell their own stories. In this way, it can be argued that they have given first-hand accounts of slavery. The (auto)biographical nature of the writing is also evident from the point of view that the author, by writing the story of her fore bearers, also writes her own life story. Different to Christiansē, Brink and Jacobs, Benadé is distinct in that she writes of her immediate lineage, offering names of the family members, and their historical places of origin. Her borrowing from these family archives draws attention to the autobiographical inflections in the narrative, as I will discuss next.

The 'First Person Autobiographical Narrative Voice'

In their work on autobiography, scholars Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, note that the autobiography "is not a single genre but an 'umbrella' term for widely diverse kinds of life narratives, literally dozens that engage historically situated practices of self-representation" ("The Trouble with Autobiography" 357). Though the narrative is not a conventional autobiography, its autobiographical inclination is useful in examining the nuances of the narrative. Smith and Watson identify personal memories in the form of letters, journals, photographs and conversations as the primary archival sources for life writing, and

biographical writing sources from historical documents and family archives (*Reading Autobiography* 7). If we borrow Smith and Watson's conceptualisation here, then historical documents, family archives and personal memories are highlighted as the sources of both the life writing and biographical writing. It is therefore of much interest that *Kites of Good Fortune*, as a fictional narrative, borrows from the archives of life writing. In this case, the novel can be read as the biography of Angela and Annie, and by extension the autobiography of the author. The relationship of the author with the first person narrator who is a historical figure embodies an "authorial signature with the narrator" (Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography* 11), invoking interesting nuances for analysis.

In its use of what I term the 'first person autobiographical narrative voice', *Kites of Good Fortune* is different from the other three novels in this study. As elaborated above, this voice emerges from the author's relation to, and narration of, her ancestry in the novel. In certain ways, the novel shares attributes with Brink's *Philida*, which, as I explained earlier, can be understood in the context of the African-American writing of slave narratives by a sympathetic biographer. As such, the narrative voice in *Kites of Good Fortune* is the closest to the first person slave accounts in the African-American context. On a scale with the other texts in this study, this novel comes closest to the mark of self-representation. Olausen notes in her discussion of *The Slave Book* that "[w]hen placed within the context of American slave narratives and their use within the abolitionist movement, the question of the narrator in a novel about slavery becomes significant" ("Approaching Asia" 37). In a place like the Cape where no first person slave narratives have survived, the first person narrative voice therefore draws useful extrapolations for analysis. For this reason, I am first interested in examining the narrative voice and second, how the narrative voice works to hide the silences of the archive.

The narrative voice in the novel can be understood in two ways: as the result of the autobiographical inflections of the narrative, and as a first person narrative voice. I combine the two in what I coin the 'first person autobiographical voice'. The 'first person autobiographical' points to an expression of agency in the sense that Angela and Annie are given the ability to tell their story. In writing her ancestry, the author also writes of her identity. This can be interpreted as a process of agency and identity formation narrated in the search for self in the midst of servitude and colonialism. However, I also question this 'first person

autobiographical voice' as not only 'self-revelation' but also as a problematic way of seeing the 'others' as evident in the silences of the narration. For this reason, I employ autobiographical truth, one of the salient features of an autobiographical narration, and the subjective nature of the first person narrative voice as a useful tool in my analysis of the novel.

The narrative voice therefore evokes various questions: How is this narrative supposed to be read as fiction when it elucidates autobiographical details? What drives Benadé to an 'autobiographical call to witness' and what is the meaning of such self-representation? As illustrated in the narrative, Angela and Annie appropriate and deny the binary identities of coloniser/colonised. The narration of a family history takes place within a context where issues of appropriation in relation to constructions of power, culture and contestations of identities are at play. If the family story represents a "desire to recover origins", then in line with my central objective of representation in this study, the representation of family histories and memory of slavery in this narrative advances issues of identity contestation and identity production (McCorkle 18). Therefore, in this representation, "memory is linked to identity politics" (Woods 25). The search for identity and belonging, as it will emerge from my conclusions, is symptomatic of haunting in the post-apartheid nation and can be argued to contribute to the interest in tracing of family genealogies that are, at times, used to justify present-day identities. Viewed from the author's point of enunciation, this (auto)biographical representation raises issues of power relations between the author and the subjects of her narration.

The autobiographical voice is tailored to narrating the self and articulates identity based on the idea of self-representation. Gillian Whitlock as well as Smith and Watson have, in different contexts, discussed how postcolonial autobiography is used to write self and subjectivity. Whitlock, in reading women's autobiographies, notes that colonisation and resistance are deeply embedded in the writing about the self (7). *Kites of Good Fortune*, engages with the writing about the self at two levels: at the level of the author, and at the level Annie and Angela. Here, memory acts as a chain with missing links that connect the postcolonial subject to his or her disrupted history (Woods 25). In certain ways, Angela and Annie, as historical subjects without voices, are given the opportunity to write their own stories. Smith and Watson have rightly pointed out that fictionalised narratives inscribe the voices of subjects without access to

writing, converting an autobiographical discourse of subjectivity into testimony (“The Trouble with Autobiography” 362). As can be drawn from their conceptualisations, the politics of contesting and justifying identities in the post-apartheid era become central to the autobiographical voice. Whitlock’s, Smith’s and Watson’s idea of the postcolonial autobiography as writing self and subjectivity is useful in the novel’s post-apartheid space that reaches back to the seventeenth century in order to map colonisation and servitude onto the selves of the manumitted slave, Angela, as well as her daughter, Annie, and their descendant, Benadé. In this case, the narrative can be interpreted as a search, if not a claim, for identity and belonging. As such, the autobiographical voice in this narrative foregrounds issues of identity and belonging, access, re-memory and representation of ‘founding’ families at the Cape.

The ‘first person autobiographical narrative voice’ offers ways of discussing slave representation that I derive from the narrative structure of the novel: the personal/private story of a family lineage and the political/public account of the Cape Colonial Administration. In the case of a narrative that imagines historical events, the question of autobiographical truth and the silences of the text become central tools of analysis. Following Whitlock’s invocation, I “use the agency of the reader to make connections across [this] autobiographical” narrative (4). The autobiographical truth allows me to question the silences of the text as well as assess the idea of slave freedom on psycho-social grounds. Consequently, I explore the silences in the narrative as moments that interrupt the overriding joyful mood and triumphant tone of the narration. For instance, as I will discuss throughout the rest of this chapter, the silences of the text display the liminal spaces occupied by the slaves owned by Annie and the marginalisation of indigenous culture in the narration. In the next section, I examine how the ‘first person autobiographical narrative voice’ depicts the constructs Europe as a superior culture.

The ‘Edenic’ Project: Inventions of Barrenness and Naming in the wake of Enlightenment

Apart from employing the family archive in its re-memory, the narrative also borrows from the historiographic archive of the Cape Colony. For this reason, I now turn my attention to the land, more precisely, the Cape littoral, to show how it was invented and constructed as barren, consequently setting it up for colonisation and enslavement. The presence of the history of Cape Colonial Administration is obvious right from the first page of the novel, which exposes

the reader to a scaled map of the oceanic littoral of the Cape colony, named in the map as *Caap der Goede Hoop*. This geographic landscape of the oceanic littoral marks the hilly terrain of the Cape and oceanic encounters with the land, invoking the indigenous inhabitants evident in the names of the locations: the Hottentots Holland, the land of the Sonquas, Namaquas, Coringhaiconas, Grigriquas among others. The last pages of the novel also resonate with this geographical-historical archive, displaying a chart that summarises the historical timeline of the novel's plot in terms of years with "dates and facts around which the story is constructed" (Benadé *Kites of Good Fortune* 242-45). Furthermore, the historical archive that the narrative imagines from is made up of historical information such as the names of the colonial administrators Commander Jan Van Riebeeck, Sergeant Olof Bergh and Commander Simon Van der Stel. As illustrated, Angela had been as a slave of the Commander van Riebeeck: "Maria de la Queillerie, wife of Commander van Riebeeck, was only too happy to have a house slave who had been trained to the high standards of Dutch hygiene (Benadé *Kites of Good Fortune* 14). Equally the novel includes names of historical figures such as Sheikh Yusuf, the liberationist Muslim Iman whose old age revolved around providing refuge for many slaves at the Cape; the names of ships and voyages such as the *Drommedaris* captained by David de Koning and the voyage that brought van Riebeeck to the Cape. Despite this implantation of colonial geography on the first page, the narrative interrupts the focus on the cultures of the Cape and veers off to look outward to Europe for cultural enlightenment, as I will show in this section. I outline that the geographic landscape models the cartographic but also evokes the cultural boundaries, speaking in various ways to subjectivity and agency of the slaves and freed slaves in the narrative. Far from this mapping describing the interior, it offers a colonial gaze to the the Cape littoral.

Literary critic Linda Hutcheon defines these novels as "historiographic metafiction", a term which refers to "novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (5). Historiographic metafiction, she argues, incorporates a theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction, employing it as grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past (5). *Kites of Good Fortune* is metafictional in its imagining of historical characters, and historiographic in its use of historical characters in the parallel subplots of the family and political. In addition to the subjectivities of the 'first person autobiographical narrative voice', the narrative's borrowing from historiography evokes post-apartheid present subjectivities of history. Like I discussed in

Chapter One and Chapter Three, the historical archive was already subjective in the nature of its recording of history which was dominated by colonial ideology. Chapter Two showed that re-memory from such an archive needed more caution and nuance, otherwise the authors risked the danger of re-inscribing certain forms of subjection and silencing.

Early histories of the Cape refer to a remote littoral; a land that is inhabitable, a difficult terrain and a hostile environment. Here, I pick up the theme of the ‘Cape of Torments’ that I foregrounded in Chapter One to problematise the construction of the Cape as a simultaneously barren and hospitable littoral. As summarised in John Barrow’s 1801 *Travels into the interior of Southern Africa* as follows: “Africa’s southernmost extremity was perceived as a useless and barren peninsula promontory connected by a sandy isthmus to a still more useless and barren continent” (cited in Jamal 157 and Białas 53). This construction of a barren littoral relates to the distorted, forged discursive construction of South Africa by European cartographers for political advantage. Explaining this political reason, postcolonial scholar Zbigniew Białas, notes: “the source of the forgery lies with Christopher Columbus and his brother, who needed to prove that Africa extended much further south than it did in order to facilitate the financing of Columbus’s voyage westward” (50). Białas notes that the world map of Henricus Martellus Germanus presents the Southern tip of Africa extending beyond the frame of the map, literally pointing from the very start, a discourse of marginality only partly introduced by geographical distance (49). In this section, I therefore analyse the novel’s opening map by borrowing Jamal and Białas’s arguments on this discursive construction of the South African peninsula as based on exaggerated geography. I employ their ideas in order to discuss how *Kites of Good Fortune* adapts or aligns to these inventions of the Cape as a difficult terrain, “an uncircumnavigable region said to exist outside knowledge” (Jamal 159) in its narration of the lives of the freed Angela and Annie. Annie and her son Simon’s remarks upon Annie’s return to the Cape from her maiden voyage to Europe exemplifies this prejudice:

Think of those who came before us and saw the Cape for the first time. When your grandfather, David de Koning, came here in 1652, there was nothing, not a single building – a complete wilderness. ... [I]t must have looked pretty primitive to all of them, replies Simon. It looks pretty primitive to me, now after Amsterdam and Gothenburg. (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 3)

These beliefs, as voiced by the characters in the novel, consequently restate the marginality of the littoral. I argue that the constructions of ‘remote’ and ‘barren’ created a vacuum and justified the intervention of Europe for the purpose of bringing to Africa enlightenment and western civilisation, a forerunner of colonisation.

The invention of a remote Cape littoral reminds us of Valentine Y. Mudimbe’s explanation of the the European and Western View of Africa in *The Invention of Africa*, and its sequel, *The Idea of Africa*. Such ideas of Africa even in the social science sorrounds an “intellectual space [that] outlines Africa as a paradigm of difference” (xii). The inventions of alterity echo Vasco da Gama’s 1497 voyage around Africa, circumnavigating West Africa and the Cape of Good Hope in order to get to India, and Christopher Columbus’ ‘discovery’ of Central America⁴⁶ which depopulated these regions and invented them as uninhabited (Białas 51). The moves of both da Gama and Columbus as foundations for subsequent colonial invasion have been demonstrated to apply to South Africa as well (Białas 51). Discussing the cartographies of the Columbus brothers, the South African based cultural scholar Ashraf Jamal observes that “Southern Africa bears an asymptotic relation to the European imaginary; it is a region seen variously as remote and sinister; desirable yet insurmountable; accessible yet insignificant” (156). The description *Cabo de Tormentoso* or ‘Cape of Storms’ as I discussed in Chapter One, was given as a result of the tempestuous nature of the seas surrounding the Cape that spelt a nightmare for sailors. The ‘desolate’ terrain of the Cape littoral was also exaggerated to explain it as a “barren isthmus, leeched of sustenance, wracked by the most severe weather patterns” (Jamal 167). As is the case in the narrative, the tempestuous nature of the peninsula was inflated to describe the land as concurrently hostile and inhabitable.

Yet the Cape “emerged as a littoral society fundamentally engaged with the intersections of multiple imperial networks of trade, information, and migration across the Atlantic and Indian oceans”, incorporating various sets “of people [such] as settlers, slaves, sojourners, sailors and soldiers, convicts and exiles” (Ward 146). According to Meg Samuelson, its contrary optimistic renaming as the Cape of Good Hope presents the Cape as the long-sought portal into the Indian

⁴⁶ See *The Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama 1497-1499* and *Explorers of new lands: Vasco da Gama and The Sea Route to India* by Rachel A. Kroestler- Grack. Białas also discusses at length the visit of Vasco da Gama to the Cape.

Ocean that inspired hope because it “made known not only itself but also [connected] another new world of countries” (“Rendering the Cape-as-Port ” 524). Samuelson further explains that this positioning of the Cape already suggested the onset for colonisation (“Rendering the Cape-as-Port ” 524). These two extreme constructions of the littoral exemplify how its invention as remote, insurmountable and barren, was in turn appropriated for colonial gain.

In its portrayal of the land as barren, the novel therefore avoids its romanticisation. Instead, the silences in the narrative voice reveal the invention and consequent perception of the Cape littoral as geographically, economically and culturally remote and inhabitable. In narrating the story of the freed slaves, and marginalising the experiences of the other slaves, and the indigenous aspects of the littoral in which the story is set, the novel focuses on the class transcendence into European culture of the freed slave Angela and her daughter Annie. As such, the subplot of the narrative imagines the Cape as a difficult terrain for the colonial administration and for the descendants of the manumitted slave. These hardships at the Cape are illustrated at multiple points in the novel, for instance, in the “constant comparisons between the opulent and elegant life in Batavia and Ceylon and the drudgery and struggle of life at the Cape” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 53). Referring to the Cape, the narrator furthermore explains that “[a]s far as [she] kn[ew], no one had the courage to establish a mine in that inhospitable region” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 73). The narrative voice also specifies how the governor’s wife, Marie van der Stel descends into psychological turmoil: “‘Oh Annie, I am so unhappy!’ she said, ‘How am I going to manage in this godforsaken place?’” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 173). In yet another illustration, doctor Christiansen, one the visitors at the Cape remarks how “unusual” it is “to find a young woman so informed in this remote place” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 173).

The above notions of a remote, barren, uninhabited Cape littoral illustrate the attitudes of Angela and Annie, and the author point of articulation. The novel is set during the Enlightenment years of the mid-seventeenth Century and equally expresses belief in Enlightenment. The Enlightenment movement emerging from Europe, viewed itself as having revolutionised mankind, moving it out of the darkness of the Middle Ages into sophistication. As Mudimbe aptly points out, “the fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe invented the savage as a representation of its own negated double” (xii). As I show in my analysis, the novel

represents what Mudimbe describes as the exploitation of travellers and explorers writing that builds a colonial library around slave trade, colonialism and imperialism (xii). This library, as Mudimbe further explains, represents a body of knowledge constructed with the explicit purpose of faithfully translating and deciphering the African object (xii). Enlightenment's ironic foundational principles of human reason and freedom worked to colonise the seventeenth Century Cape littoral and are portrayed in the subplot of the novel as the invasion and exploitation of the hinterland. The epistemological postures of enlightenment lay in the seams of the narrative's Eurocentric view of Africa. The first person narrator says that "[they] had hopes that Commander Bax would stay and make something of the place" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 53). Similar to the notions of black people to be governed that I discussed in Chapter Three, these discursive constructions of the Cape produce foundational beliefs that stereotype Africa as poor. Benadé's narrative therefore displays convictions regarding the remoteness of Africa that were deliberate Eurocentric positions meant to install hegemonies of colonial control. As such, in *Kites of Good Fortune*, we encounter statements regarding notions that "the Cape would remain nothing but a victualling station without vigorous and visionary leadership" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 53). Such characterisation of the Cape littoral as remote and barren work to dispossess and own it, erasing the existence of indigenous populations. Yet, as is observed by Ward, Europeans were dependent on the indigenous population for their provisions: "[f]rom the sixteenth century, fluctuating numbers of European merchant vessels flying flags from England, France, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands stopped at the Cape of Good Hope to reprovision their ships with fresh water and meat bartered from the local Khoikhoi" (137). As such, the Cape is created as detestable yet desirable, one of the ancient mythical creations used to manage frontier zones whilst consuming the exotic. For Grace A. Musila, "Manichean structures lay at the core of the enlightenment project" that preceded colonisation (*A Death Retold* 19). Similarly Dennis Walder, a literary critic, notes that Britain had already colonised India using similar constructions of remoteness and desirability to establish the East India Company that ruled over Bengal (33). In this case enslavement acts not only to subject individuals, but the invention of a superior European culture is also used to subjugate the Cape littoral, a process I term as the 'enslavement of the Cape littoral' in this chapter.

The image of a barren littoral is also present in post-apartheid novels such as Dan Sleigh's *Islands* (2004) and Russel Brownlee's *Garden of the Plagues* (2005), both of which were

published during the same time as *Kites of Good Fortune* (2004). Jamal, in his discussion of *Garden of the Plagues*, notes the narrative's intention "to write not only of the torturous remoteness of Africa's Appendix, but the inevitability of this peculiar fate assigned to it" (158). Both Sleigh and Brownlee narrate the prevalence of the "plague" at the Cape Colony, a space where diseases were rampant and the land agriculturally infertile (Brownlee 33, 14; Sleigh 68). Showing glimpses of slavery at the Cape, *Garden of Plagues* and *Islands* predominantly imagine the hardships of the establishment of the Cape Colony, as experienced by the settler community and Cape administration alike. Alongside the narrative of the freed Angela and Annie, the subplot of *Kites of Good Fortune* similarly narrates this terrain as difficult. By foregrounding these hardships, the narrative invokes the haunting histories of the marginalisation of the native communities who had dwelt in this same space described as inhospitable.

Kites of Good Fortune explicates such remoteness and barrenness in different ways to indicate the state of the people, their culture and economic endowment. The idea of a barren economy is better understood in Adam Smith's 1776 extrapolations in *The Wealth of Nations* in which the named savage communities fall under communities whose forms of labour lack the skill, dexterity, and judgement – hence their poor economies (1-2). The notions of economic bareness and empty modes of production justify colonisation as an economic tool of production, and slavery as a basic and needed labour tool. Winthrop Jordan foregrounds these "notions of primitive and civilised which had been integral to pre-modern understandings of 'ethnic' differences and became fundamental cognitive and aesthetic markers in the process which generated a constellation of subject positions (cited in Gilroy 9). Paul Gilroy, further notes that these notions of the "primitive" catalysed the political problem of slavery (9). The notion of a barren economy was used to perpetuate justifications for the Dutch settlement at the Cape and the consequent enslavement and dispossession of the black inhabitants off the hinterland. The silences of the narrative describe the Cape as sparsely populated and a hinterland that was not owned by indigenous people. Gaurav Desai explains "this reading that echoes the empty historical slot assigned to Africa most famously by Hegel" (715). This resonates with earlier fictions about the Cape such as the series of movies titled "The Gods must be Crazy", which portray Africa as a forsaken virgin land sparsely peopled by deeply ignorant cultures.

The invention of a remote and barren littoral constructs two foundational hegemonies for the Cape Colonial administrators. The clearing of frontier zones declared them unoccupied and annulled the existence of any inhabitants before the arrival of the Dutch. This construction of barren emptiness also created room for desirability and accessibility in the mapping, partitioning, naming and apportioning of the hinterland. As illustrated in the novel, “[o]n the second trip to Namaqualand, Henrich made accurate readings and produced the first maps of the north-west of the country” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 53). The novel also describes the first ventures into the hinterland, under the command of Simon van der Stel, to look for copper. Van der Stel says, “the next expedition to Namaqualand will be led by me personally” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 73). The novel also tells of other ventures to inspect the colony: “Before the inspection of the colony went inland to Hottentots Holland, Stellenbosch and the valley of Berg River ...” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 87). Similar to the expedition to the hinterland, naming of plants serves as part of this ventures to learn the Cape geography. This naming includes the “press[ing] and class[ification] of collection [of plants] from the Table Mountain” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 28). As further narrated by Annie: “[b]efore pressing the plants, [doctor Hermann, a German botanist] made accurate sketches of the entire plant, flower, leaves and roots, naming each plant according to the system used in Leiden and Copenhagen” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 28). The naming of these plants indigenous to the Cape using the Leiden and Copenhagen system acts as the subtle beginnings of naming as a colonial venture. The naming of lands makes it the company’s property, as is demonstrated by the governor’s allocation of the land to settler farmers and his concurrent side-lining of the natives who originally lived there. Additionally, commander van der Stel assigns teams of explorers to the interior. Like Olof Bergh, these explorers are under great pressure to discover what will profit the company. In one of these explorations, the commander gives a stern warning to Bergh,

Twice now you have come with nothing but stories of an arid and inhospitable terrain. Excuses, excuses. I’m tired of excuses, I want results, I want copper. How can we persuade the Lords XVII that this is a viable colony if we produce nothing more than wine? (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 72)

Mary Louise Pratt in her widely employed text *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), explicates that mapping was a precursor to the partitioning of Africa

for the colonial invasion of Europe that was closely related to circumnavigating. Explaining what she terms as “planetary consciousness among the Europeans,” circumnavigating and scientific classification emerged from the European need to name the world in circumnavigation and map making that was embedded in the desire to have travel writing forms that would help the empire name and navigate the world (12, 29,32). As illustrated in the novel, Annie explains about doctor Hermann’s further plans: “The doctor had promised some plants and seeds to his friend Professor Bartolinus in Copenhagen who wanted to include information on rare plants of the Cape in a new book he was writing” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 72). The construction of Africa as non-existent, that which needed to be discovered, explored and mapped fits into the model of the ‘discovery’ of the Cape. Yet at the same time, as illustrated in the above examples, the land is needed for its natural resource. The myth of its barrenness created the grounds for naming and ownership. As is the case with slavery, naming serves as a central practice meant to erase identity, disembodiment individuals for ownership as property.

Such dispossession reiterates Columbus’ invention of the New World that was marked by the killing of the indigenous inhabitants in order to empty the land for possession by Britain. Samuelson notes that “Sleigh directs his account of the settlement [of the Cape] towards a history of land dispossession”, narrated in the gradual dispossession of the Croghuqua and their consequent (retreating) dislocation into hinterlands deeper into the interior⁴⁷ (“Rendering the Cape” 530). Encounters between the settlers and the indigenous inhabitants led to “violent clashes over livestock”, and further erupted in the South African Wars as a result of the “longstanding tension over slavery between the Dutch and the British” (Ward 137-38; Walder 34). These evictions play an immense role in the oppression of the indigenous people of the Cape, later transforming into racial segregation during the apartheid era. The *Group Areas Act* that saw thousands of natives removed from various spaces can be traced back to this foundational act of dispossessing the indigenes of the Cape. As noted by Samuelson “the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape are cast away from their land” in the colonial administrators’ greed for a geographical location marked by power and mineral resources (“Rendering the Cape” 531). Evictions transformed into various forms of segregation in the founding society at the Cape that are still mapped onto the post-apartheid nation in many ways.

⁴⁷ Dan Sleigh’s novel focuses on the preoccupation of the colonial administrators in sending trekkers to look for lucrative locations in the interior.

I argue that Benadé's representation of the Cape as "primitive" and "a complete wilderness" stems from the enlightenment practices that saw Africa as a *tabula rasa*, later providing reasons for the European invasion of Africa. As it is already evident from my discussion so far, the invention of remoteness can be traced back to myths about Africa, constructed as one of the new worlds and the 'dark continent', a location outside civilisation with reference to its geographical location and culture. This is evident in enlightenment thinker David Hume's argument in 1753 that "negroes and in general all other species of men were naturally inferior to whites" (18). Toni Morrison highlights that "[o]ne has to remember that the climate in which [slaves wrote their autobiographies] reflected not only the Age of Enlightenment but its twin, born at the same time, the Age of Scientific Racism" ("The Site of Memory" 8). Morrison further explains that writers such as "David Hume, Immanuel Kant and Thomas Jefferson ... had documented their conclusions that blacks were incapable of intelligence" ("The Site of Memory" 8-9). Consequently, the creation of the Other in this chapter is mapped onto a geographical location, unlike in previous chapters where Othering is individualised. The novel offers Othering as a model which was used to run the Cape littoral as a colony and an extension of the European Empire.

Othering is illustrated in the Dutch colonial administration and the frequent visitors to the Cape who exercise the self-assigned European mission to civilise the Cape at political and cultural levels. Cultural influence is illustrated in the preoccupation of visitors such as the botanists doctor Paul Hermann, doctor Ten Rhyne and doctor Christiansen. Doctor Hermann is described as a "dapper young man of twenty-six, full of enthusiasm for our plants ... anxious to see the ericas and *carduus* of which he had heard so much about ... [and keen] to press and classify his collection from Table Mountain" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 27, 28, 45). Annie also joins in these expeditions of searching, naming and drawing the plants as illustrated: "I was allowed to go along ... he let me carry one of his special collector's knap-sacks ... It was my job to prepare his drawing cards for him ... he let me finish the roots and, later, the leaves" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 27, 28). Not only Annie is excited in the naming expeditions, but also Angela. Annie narrates: "My mother was persuaded to abandon her garden for once and climb the Table Mountain with Doctor Hermann, in search of plants" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 27). The preoccupation with the naming, pressing and classification of plants

which Annie joins form part of this civilising agenda. Further narrations of the littoral as uncivilised include the description of the “real” Krotoä as the exotic one dressed in skins. As illustrated in Annie’s voice of Krotoä, “Doctor Ten Rhyne was astounded by the metamorphosis. Barth Borns said he had seen her ‘in skins’ before, but never as handsome (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 37). Such descriptions are furthermore a metaphor for this remoteness and the vacuum created for western civilisation. Krotoä’s encounter with Europe as she is re-named “Eva” after Europeans are confronted by what I term her ‘Edenic’ nakedness point to the descriptions of an uncivilised littoral.⁴⁸

The historical and geographical trajectories in the novel narrate enlightenment and colonisation as an aspect of the civilising mission to modernise Africa. As I have illustrated in the previous paragraph, the political and the individual narratives involve constructions of the remote as being civilised by western modernity and the enslaved as being set free by Europe. This ‘help’ is gendered to situate patriarchy as the channel of civilisation and freedom to a feminised barren littoral as well as the enslaved Angela. The gendered manumission of Angela is manifest in Annie story of how her mother’s freedom was initiated, as illustrated in the following flashback conversation between Angela and De Koning:

“We’re alone now,” he said in Portuguese ... “I told you we would meet again. How lovely you have become. You’re a grown woman now.”

“You seem to continue where you left off eight years ago, but you forget how that meeting ended. I reminded you that you were a married man and I a woman in bondage.”

“What would you say if I told you that I could cut you free? Because I am free now, a widower.” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 17)

In this case, the female slave needs freedom similar to the way the land is feminised as rich in flora, thereby needing to be salvaged through capturing and classifying in naming and writing about the plants. In this way naming and writing about the rare plants of the Cape adopts a similar notion of constructions of patriarchy as intervening in order to salvage. I will problematise manumission by marriage later, in the second section of this chapter. The

⁴⁸ Krotoä is re-named Eva because as a child, she is only covered in a loin skin when van Riebeeck’s team encounter her at the Cape (Sleigh 65).

patriarchal trajectory in the attainment of freedom of Angela speaks to the patriarchal constructions of colonisation and enslavement of the Cape littoral. Angela's manumission by marriage to the company captain De Koning denotes this patriarchal construction in both the political colonial narrative and the personal enslavement story. As already stated, De Koning, was a ship captain of the VOC. As illustrated, "[he] was such an old and dear friend of the Van Riebeck's" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 16). "It had been David Koning who had brought [Van Riebeck] to the Cape in the *Drommedaris* nine years before" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 16). Such social and political constructions of patriarchy resonate with initial stereotyping of the land as feminine and in dire need of 'masculine' and western development. Colonisation and enslavement in the novel illustrate the roots of the invasion of Africa, invented in a "sexualised discourse, not only in terms of desire, rape [and] penetration" as is the case of Annie's rape by the governor, but also in "the feminisation of the new frontiers" (Musila, "Phallogracies" 42). As is illustrated in the novel, hegemonies are created in relation to constructed gender roles, with the masculine adopting the governing position while the feminine submits to his authority. The stereotypical image of a feminine land compounded by the Cape littoral myth as barren becomes "a passive counterpart to the massive thrust of male technology" (McClintock 13). The enlightenment project is therefore installed as a key and urgent agent for the 'salvaging' of Africa in order to keep it in step with the 'rest of the world' (Musila, "Phallogracies" 42). Not only is Annie's life of freedom mapped out on this patriarchal trajectory, but her subjective understanding of the Cape, and that of her son Simon, as earlier illustrated, also colludes with this European masculine gaze that declares Africa as simultaneously naked and barren.

The question I pose in this section is: Remote according to whom? And how is the notion of 'remote' defined? These questions are based on the silences of the narrative, which do not voice the fact that there were indigenous populations at the Cape. Annie and Simon's outlooks that the Cape "looked pretty primitive," after their travel to Amsterdam and Gothenburg prove dominant throughout the novel, marginalise the experience and existence of indigenous communities (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 3). The description of Krotoä "in skins" displays a European patriarchal gaze that plays around with the idea of nakedness as related to the lack of civilisation (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 37). Paul Hoch's descriptions of ancient myths about native Americans points to the "ancient desires by white heroes to prove their manhood by exerting 'civilisation' over the 'dark brutes' of all the subordinate classes and castes [that

was] a key rationale for the maintenance of a class stratified society at home, and for the quest and control of the ‘darker’ peoples of Africa, Asia and the Americas” (46-47). As such, the definition of a backward littoral echoes the invention of the black race as close to animals that I explored at depth in Chapter Three.

These notions and inventions of barrenness and naming can be understood using the idea of the ‘Adamic’ godly-given duty to name and rule. Extrapolated in similar terms as barrenness, the idea of nakedness has been traced by scholars to this same ‘Adamic’ assignment given to Adam by God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis Chapter 1 verses 28-30 *Holy Bible* 2). Among these writers, Walder notes that Columbus was following the European dream, which was a Christian vision of being the first man, in other words an Adam, to name the world (24). As I have illustrated from the novel, Columbus’s vision (to name the New World) in India and the Americas is no different from Europe’s preoccupation with naming the Cape. J.M Coetzee, novelist and literary scholar, defines the constructed African wilderness as the place where “the first culture, Adam’s naming has not been performed” (49). The long history of naming is reiterated in Annie’s voice in her celebration of the botanists who had visited the Cape and met her in person: “Doctor Christiansen was lucky to be there in the flowering season of the *carduus*. The Europeans who had read the descriptions of our flora by Doctor Clusius knew about this plant. They were all keen to see it. Clusius calls it ‘an elegant thistle’, Doctor Christiansen commented” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 45). Using Carl Linnaeus’s naming project in nomenclature that Pratt identifies as Europe’s need for “planetary consciousness” (29), I next discuss how the narrative endorses this ‘Adamic’ assignment, which creates room for the colonial invasion of the Cape and Africa at large, as appropriated by Europe.

In my discussion on naming, the metaphor of Linnaeus’s Latin nomenclature using the Leiden and Copenhagen systems functions as a characteristic creation of a master culture that enslaves the indigenous culture of the southern littoral. The naming using Latin nomenclature is demonstrated in the novel by the appearance of Linnaeus’s ‘disciples’ botanists Paul Hermann, Ten Rhyne, Cleyer and Christiansen at the Cape with their preoccupation to collect, assign Latin names and publish the plants of the Cape. Annie narrates:

It seems everyone knew everyone. News about the Doctors Hermann, Ten Rhyne and Cleyer bounced back and forth. The conversation then moved to collections, and plans

were made for us to see the Baron's pride and joy, his great opus, the *Hortus Malabaricus*. In return, Heinrich would show the Baron his collection of illustrations for the planned but unpublished *Hortus Africanus*. (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 75)

Botanical renaissance is described by Pratt as Linnaeus's students⁴⁹ turning up everywhere to gather specimen, build up collections, name and draw new species and try desperately to get it all home intact (25, 26). Pratt notes, "[a]longside the frontier figures of the seafarer, the conqueror, the captive, the diplomat, there began to appear everywhere the benign, decidedly literate figure of the herborizer" (26). About the collection of the plants, Annie explains that "[Doctor Hermann] made accurate sketches of the entire plant ... naming each plant according to the system used in Leiden and Copenhagen" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 28). She further elaborates: "After the drawing came the pressing ... This I did, layer upon layer ... Every layer was meticulously labelled in Latin before the next was added" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 29). The Linnaeus project of Botany, notes Pratt, is a self-bestowed assignment of Adam in Eden to name and was one of the forerunners of the colonial invasion and 'cultural enslavement' (28, 31). Notable, this assignment creates Linnaeus and the European as a "superintendent" of the planet. As corroborated by Beth Wyrill, one of the enlightenment ideals was the scientific revolution that "was connected to the enlightenment's obsession with naming" (133). I extrapolate that the novel's depiction of Europe's interest in botany, as illustrated in the several visits of various botanists, constructs Europe as "the womb of originary modernity, [and] Africa's alleged position outside history" (Musila, *A Death Retold* 17). As such, Linnaeus's project of naming can be mapped as a confluence of political economy and cultural hegemonies. Pratt observation about the botanists' desperate attempt to get the plants home intact is illustrated in Annie description of Hermann's practice: "He personally supervised the making of the presses and gave the carpenter special instructions on the exact measurements and fit of the wooden screws" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 28). These botanists influence Annie's interest in botany, but significantly replace the unrecorded indigenous names of plants native to the cape with Latin ones. Hermann's visit to the Cape Colony apprentices and influences Annie's interest in botany. Annie admits: "And so I built up my first botanical vocabulary and started calling plants by their proper names. [My Latin name] would be *Anna Regis Capitis Bonae Spei*" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 29). The metaphor

⁴⁹ Carl Peter Thunberg, who as a ship's surgeon in the Dutch East India Company, was one of the known botanists who practised between 1770-1779 at the Cape, in Java, Sri Lanka, and Japan (Koerner 149,150).

of botany signals the uprooting of African cultures in order to replace them with a European alternative.

Annie's narration shows how she and her mother Angela directed and pointed out to the botanists the places they would find the plants. In one of the trips, Annie explains their adventure to get the plants as follows: "Our trip to the Bosheuvel was made more by the necessity of camping overnight in order to climb the kloof early in the morning ... We found the spotted lilies that my mother had promised Doctor Hermann, and many other exotic mosses and ferns besides" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 29). As is suggested by Walter Mignolo, writing about the enlightenment's politics of knowledge, botany's written literature represents the class of knowledge and education (the written and drawn) that were constructed as more European. The preoccupation with naming Africa is engraved in "territorial and imperial epistemology grounded on ... politics of knowledge" (Mignolo 132-133). Mignolo's term 'geopolitics' highlights the construction of botany as a tool of enslavement in its appropriation of the act of naming to dominate both geographical and epistemological, cultural and political spaces. As is elucidated in the novel, European naming transforms indigenous practices such as herbal medicine into a science driven by careers in botany, species collection and plant hunting and drawing. The professionalising of indigenous herbal practices is evidenced in Angela's interest in medicinal gardening before the arrival of the European botanists: Annie narrates: "An interest in plants came to me almost naturally since it was by gardening that my mother earned a living ... she helped establish a medicinal garden and found for [the company gardeners] specimens of indigenous flowers to show the collectors who had called" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 29). In line with the argument on the legitimisation of colonial knowledge, Wyrill argues that enlightenment functioned by excluding all outsiders and naturalised its workings, effectively effacing alternative ways of thinking (117). Wyrill further explains that "[e]nlightenment erases the ideologies and sensibilities of its predecessors" (117). The narrative therefore exposes the imperial gaze directed at Africa and the invention of narratives of the enslavement of the Cape littoral. Naming illustrates the (re)writing of the Cape by European hegemonies and points to the emergence of colonial histories as the official histories in frontier colonial zones.

Though Annie and Angela engage in this naming projects, the ideals of naming formulate Europe as the source of the culture they should ascribe to. The use of Latin in the narrative points to the creation of a superior language, evident in Annie's assumption that the botanical vocabulary would enable her to start calling plants "by their proper names" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 29). Renowned psychiatrist Frantz Fanon observes how the renouncement of blackness, which he describes as the mother country's culture, becomes the mark of cultural elevation (*Black Skin* 9). The use of Latin is tantamount to erasing subjects' existing indigenous knowledge by adopting European knowledge systems. I argue that the act of renaming resonates with stereotypes of African languages as "not apt for rational thinking" (Mignolo 133). These stereotypes have been stretched to propose that African languages were not rational enough for modes of instruction. For instance, European naming counters indigenous oral cultures that did not have written cultures and therefore did not record the names of places and plants. The foundations of Latin nomenclature foreground the institutionalisation of the coloniser's language such as English, among others, in colonial frontiers. As I will point out in the next paragraphs, all these European ideals are meant to construct Europe as a superior sophisticated culture, and position it to colonise and enslave the rest of the world.

The language of the civilising nation is noted by Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks* as one of the contributing factors of a cultural inferiority complex (9). According to Fanon, language emerges as a key domineering factor in colonised cultures (*Black Skin* 9). Annie admits to this inferiority complex: "I was less sophisticated and, therefore, completely taken in" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 167). The idea of an inferiority complex is useful here because in relation to culture and dominance, Fanon observes that inferiority is created by the death and burial of local cultural originality when it finds itself face to face with the language of the 'civilising' nation (*Black Skin* 9). Fanon's notion of inferiority is illustrated in the novel through Annie and Angela's feelings about their cultural standing. Annie says: "who would have thought that the daughter of a Bengali slave woman would learn Latin and play music?" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 62), and about Angela she notes: "The Baron approached us. He greeted my mother with a special warmth. 'So you are Annie's mother? Angela van Bengale? Do you remember me from eighteen years back? They tell me you are married now and a respectable member of the community'" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 85). These illustrations reveal their joy for not only having been accepted into the Dutch community at the Cape, but also of having attained Europeanness. As Annie explains:

Since my childhood, fragments of Europe had come to me at the Cape, washed ashore by the tide, spilling out of ships. European people bringing bits and pieces of their language, their art, their fashions, their manners, their science, their ideas, which I adopted eagerly in an effort to be European myself. I was encouraged by my mother, my husband. (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 1)

This tone of Annie as the first person narrator illustrates how she and her mother Angela appropriate the former master's culture as superior to the Angela's Bengali and the Cape indigenous culture.

Therefore, the narrative is inclined towards reaching out to Europe for survival by focussing on what the visitors from Europe bring to the cape. Apart from the Latin plant names, the text also introduces different visitors to the Cape. Among these are the Jesuits fathers who introduce Annie to astrology:

The next evening we were shown patches of an infinity of stars in the Milky Way and examined the stars of the Southern cross ... In the short week they spent among us, the Jesuit fathers made an indelible impression on me. Not only was the night sky altered forever, but the Catholic religion.” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 89)

To this extent, the novel dwells on Enlightenment sensibilities such as the exaltation of French music, German medicine, the Latin botany and Swedish reading and writing. This cultural complex of superiority, to borrow Walder's proposition, “stems from the European conviction and goal commonly expressed in the phrase ‘civilizing mission’” that “meant that whatever European white people did could be regarded in some way as ‘civilized’” (35). The imposing nature of Europe is noted in Engeng Ho's observation that “the Dutch, and English in the Indian Ocean were strange traders who brought their states with them. They created militarized trading port empires in the Indian Ocean [...] and were wont to do Business at the point of a gun” (Ho xxi). The novel elucidates forms of ‘gun points’ in Governor van der Stel's resolution about the Cape: “He arrived with his wife Maria de Hase, determined to transform our little backwater to a Colony worthy of the splendour of the Dutch East India Company and, of course to add to his wealth” (Benadé , *Kites of Good Fortune* 167). As previously discussed, the depictions of remoteness and barrenness in *Kites of Good Fortune* are inventions constructed

for the extension of the European nation state.⁵⁰ A European cultural superiority is foregrounded by the formulation of an indigenous inferiority complex in the novel. This exaltation is obvious in Annie's remark that her subjects in school were European history and geography. Annie remarks, "the lands and rivers of Europe were better known to us than our own wild and unexplored colony, where only the mountains and streams in our immediate vicinity were known to have names" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 24). The author therefore, through Annie's first person narrative voice, marginalises the possibilities of the existence of native cultures.

Fanon's reiteration that "colonialism was a denial of all culture, history and value outside the colonizer's frame" on the basis of the construction that the black person "has no culture, no civilization, no 'long historical past'" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 200; *Black Skin, White Masks* 21) is evident in this section in that the invasion of the Cape littoral by European presence, politics and culture disturbs the cultures of the enslaved and the indigenous. The European dominance of politics and culture as narrated in *Kites of Good Fortune* is similar to Walder's argument that the emergence of European culture in more than half of the world's was "based upon exploration, enterprise, government patronage and cultural advantage" (26). *Kites of Good Fortune*, in its marginalisation of the existing indigenous culture and its consequent exaltation of the Eurocentric, presents the contestation of these two cultures and the further subjugation of both the manumitted and still enslaved slaves. I trace this subjugation by tracing and examining the movements of the sea as a metaphor for the connection to Europe in the next section.

The Two Seas as Contending Cultural Hybridity

The above discussion of the enslavement of the Cape littoral points my attention to the sea as the metaphor that foregrounds the (im)possibilities of slave freedom and cultural mobility. I argue that the novel offers two possible ways to attain freedom. Here, I use the sea as a metaphor for oceanic crossings to show how these crossings complicate the nature of slave freedom as it is portrayed in the text, and how the depiction of these movements in the narrative

⁵⁰ Tim N. Harper has compared the expansion of the European nation state in its colonial frontiers to the phrase that the sun never set on the Empire.

disrupts the expected cultural hybridity. As literary scholar Tina Steiner has noted, the sea is “a literal and metaphorical marker of movements” (“Navigating Multilingually” 51). Employing Bakhtin’s notion of the chronotope, Steiner sees the ship as the chronotope that carries and connects, moving to and fro, traversing literal and metaphorical borders (“Navigating Multilingually” 50). Here, I analyse the sea by examining the Cape Peninsula as a port connecting the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, “an ‘oceanic crossroads’ within the imperial network of the Dutch East India Company” and a “‘half-way house’ between Europe and Asia” (Ward 138; Boxer cited in Samuelson, “Rendering the Cape” 527). Ward, describing the oceanic history of the Cape foregrounds these oceanic junctions in the nature of the “Cape as a provisioning stop for European shipping”⁵¹, and later the “importation of slave labor, mostly from the Indian Ocean” (138; 140). This nature of the Cape as a point of transoceanic crossing offers ways of understanding slave freedom in the text, and also allows me to examine the nature of cultural syncretism as far as this freedom is concerned. Consequently, I read the metaphor of the sea as the ‘chronotope’ where cultural encounters and identities are questioned and defined. I analyse how the narrative portrays these transoceanic crossings in the movement of Angela, transported from Bengal to the Cape, and the African-Angolan Domingo, ferried from Angola to Bengal and back again to the Cape. Annie discloses: “Angela and Domingo had no choice; they would have to go back to the East on the *Amersfoort* ... The idea pleased Domingo ... For Angela, thoughts of home were not an option. Captain Kemp had obviously thought he was showing them kindness by selling them as a family, it being not uncommon to separate parents from each other and from their children” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 13).

To understand the contestations of slave freedom originating in the first person autobiographical narrative voice, I employ Indian Ocean World historian Markus P.M. Vink’s notion of the sea as useful in defining “the numerous, often flexible and permeable, spatial and temporal boundaries or frontiers of the Indian Ocean world(s)” (41). Following the publication of Thomas Bulpin’s book *Tavern of the Sea*, which suggests that “[a]lmost anyone who travelled between Europe and Asia visited the port”, the Cape has constantly been referred to as the ‘tavern of the seas’ by various Indian Ocean scholars (Worden ix). Samuelson has also interrogated the idea of the sea and its meaning for Indian Ocean connections.⁵² She notes that

⁵¹ Notably, initially “[t]he Dutch settlement at the Cape functioned primarily as a refreshment post, a hospital for crews, and a repair dock for European ships plying the waters between Europe and Asia” (Ward 143).

⁵² Samuelson has also used the trope of the sea to discuss Zoe Wicomb’s oeuvre in “Oceanic Histories and Protean Poetics: The Surge of the Sea in Zoe Wicomb’s Fiction”

Islands and Garden of Plagues “bring into central focus the sea as a player on the Cape stage” (12). Similarly, in *Kites of Good Fortune*, the seafarers, slaves, manumitted slaves, sojourners, soldiers, exiles, settlers and the colonial administrator, as imagined in the sub-plots of the narrative, construct the memory of the Cape Peninsula through the sea, and the emerging cultural fluidity as well as contestations of identity. For example, Annie narrates the activities of the exiled Muslim Imam Shaykh Yusuf whose “[r]eports of miracles [he] performed convinced his followers that he was not only a Sufi but also a saint [and was marked by] a growing number of people [such as] oppressed people, some actually in bondage, all spiritually deprived [who] flocked to the Imam” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 150). As I will illustrate in the following paragraphs, the sea, particularly, becomes a metaphor for various exchanges: the shipping of updates from Europe for the colonial administrator and the possibility of freedom for the slave.

In reference to slave freedom, the sea acts as the metaphor for the Middle Passage, complicating in various ways the possibility of slave return, if looked at from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade model. In the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the ‘Door of no Return’ in Ghana, was the last physical exit point on land that ushered the slaves to the slave ships that ferried them to the new world. Therefore, the ‘Door of no Return’ meant that the sea acted as a permanent marker of enslavement. This is because boarding the slave ship and going onto the sea implied grim chances for the slave’s return. It would take a voyage back to the Atlantic for the African-American freed slave to restore natal alienation. The native Jamaican Marcus Garvey’s disillusioned ‘back-to-Africa movement’ in the early 1920s⁵³, which involved the facilitation of return voyages to West Africa, the perceived home and of freed American slaves, illustrates this (im)possibility of the sea to restore home. In his massive crusade for the return to Africa, Garvey’s movement displays the critical role played by the sea in distancing the slave and permanently removing the possibility of natal restoration. For Gilroy “[s]hips immediately focus attention on the Middle Passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland,” as does the sea in this novel (4). The metaphors of the sea and the ship as a function of the Middle Passage, are useful precursors to understand the narrative’s construction of freedom for the slave. Transoceanic crossings enable a return of the concept of

⁵³ See Mary Lawler’s *Marcus Garvey: Black Nationalist Leader* on the Garvey’s movement, UNIA, and the establishment of the shipping company, Black star Line, meant to transport black Africans back to Africa (Lawler 40).

home. I will discuss these constructions of freedom using Domingo and Angela's story illustrated next.

The narrative illuminates the sea's function as Middle Passage; a 'Door of no Return' to a life of enslavement, indicative of the (im)possibility of return for both Angela and Domingo. The oceanic crossing of the two slaves – the black Angolan Domingo and the Bengalese Angela – translates into two different meanings of freedom. For Domingo, his first movement across the sea was the Middle Passage to enslavement. The voyage to the Cape wakes the possibility of a return back home and natal restoration: "He would do anything to get his feet on African soil again. Once there, all one needed to do was to keep going north to get home" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 13). As illustrated, Domingo had been a slave in Holland. Domingo and Angela had been slaves of Captain Kemp, and had also previously been slaves in Maccassar, and had been sold together as a family: "she was aware that she and Domingo could be expected to work for the Kemps without the children being accommodated" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 13). One of the central factors of Indian Ocean slavery is household slavery, and the possibilities of slave movement across the networks of the Dutch East India Company. As it emerged in Chapter Two and Three, slaves were frequently sold from one household to another. Domingo's case is an example of this movement that indicates how the Indian Oceanic histories of slavery deviate from those of the black Atlantic.

For Angela, the sea route spells subjection but at the same time provides agency. This "dual vision" of the sea has been discussed by Gabeba Baderoon as present in the history of slavery in South Africa (*Regarding Muslims* 69). I say subjection because her crossing of the Indian Ocean as the slave of Captain Pedro da Silva and later Captain Kemp is a permanent marker for Angela's natal alienation and enslavement: "Angela was hoping they would be rejected by the Commander at Cabo and taken to Ceylon or Batavia where, at least, one would occasionally see a mosque and hear the calls to prayer" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 13). In light of Orlando Patterson's natal alienation, she is moved from home, where the possibilities of a return are visible, and shipped to the Cape, far from home. However, for Angela, the sea also translates into freedom as a result of the voyage from Sweden to the Cape of her benefactor Captain David de Koning. David de Koning proposes marriage and thus offers her manumission. Annie explains, "[h]e would settle his affairs in Batavia and come back for her

on his journey back to the fatherland, early in the following year. He would buy her freedom and marry her” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 18). As illustrated through this manumission, Angela does not voyage back home to attain her freedom. In addition, even though Angela does not return to her geographical home, the oceanic crossings bring the memories and hopes of home; the possibilities of a return of home. Such return is illustrated in her return to her Islam faith in her old age: “... My newly-found Muslim religion? It has been there all along, now that I am free from the yoke of submission to a husband, personally I will follow my own faith” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 130).

In the cases of Domingo, Angela and Annie, the sea acts as a Janus-faced metaphor that deprives and gives simultaneously, invoking its ability to both drown and float. For Angela, agency is also embodied by Islam’s movement to the Cape through the historical figure Sheikh Yusuf, whose deportation to the Cape installs Islam as the religion of freedom from oppression. In Ishtiyag Shukri's novel *The Silent Minaret*, “Yusuf continued to agitate against Dutch colonial rule so that the history of Islam in South Africa is therefore synonymous with the struggle against oppression” (Shukri cited in Steiner, “The Indian Ocean Travels” 172). Reading Isabel Hofmeyr, Steiner also discusses how “the spread of Islam is one of the universals of the Indian Ocean world (“The Indian Ocean Travels ” 172). The arrival of Sheikh Yusuf offers Angela, in her old age, the opportunity to go back to her original Islamic faith. Given that enslavement had forced her to abandon her faith, her return to Islam offers an important restoration of her religious identity. This is also true for several other slaves at the Cape, for whom the sea delivers this revered religious scholar whose presence at the Cape offers refuge through religion. As if taking its cue from *The Slave Book*, *Kites of Good Fortune* therefore affirms the possibility of home and restoration. Evidently, in its depiction of such a possibility, *Kites of Good Fortune*, is different from the other narratives under consideration in this study, with the exception of *The Slave Book*.

Roots and routes surface as defining features of belonging and identity. Here, the sea reveals the “memory” of home and the “desire” for freedom (Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims* 67). However, the narrative shows the limitations of the expected possibility of slave freedom through a geographical return. For Domingo, this turns out to be futile, though not much about him is narrated in the novel, the next time the reader encounters his story is after his death:

“My own mother confided later that she had gone to ask for a prayer of intercession for Domingo, who had been hanged for stealing a sheep, ten years before” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 88). For Domingo, the sea turns out as a vision of “origin and alienation”, “a potent combination of trauma and belonging” (Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims* 67, 68). Similarly, Angela is manumitted by way of marriage and not through a physical return home. The politics of inclusion and exclusion, as demonstrated in the plot through first person narration, also places Domingo in liminal spaces. Domingo remains a slave and the next time he surfaces in the plot is when he is hanged for stealing sheep. This stands in contrast to the grain of the novel which narrates the joy and freedom of Angela’s manumission for her and her daughter, Annie. As I discussed in Chapter Two, natal alienation is part of the existential predicament of the slave’s “social death” as elucidated by Patterson. The concept of natal alienation – which comprises alienation from home and family, firstly geographical and secondly social – foregrounds the parameters of belonging and identity. As such, a restoration of home in relation to identity and belonging should imply slave freedom. So how do we make meaning of the representation of freedom in the narration of the manumitted slave Angela who does not return to her geographical home? For Garvey, the attempt to restore natal alienation was the ‘failed’ project of a return to Africa. Metaphorically and even ideally, natal restoration in the wake of a return home would mark freedom, and consequent restoration of family relationships. However, Garvey’s problematic return resonates in interesting ways with my discussion here of the ideas of slave freedom in *Kites of Good Fortune*.

The difference in experience of natal restoration by Domingo and Angela show that Angela’s manumission by marriage is not in any way influenced by the abolishing of slavery. Similarly, freedom through marriage is not a possibility for the male slave. The silences of the narrative therefore illustrate that Angela’s manumission takes place amidst the continued enslavement of other slaves. This is evident in Domingo’s continued bondage and the fact that Angela and Annie still own slaves. Annie says, “[t]here were enough slave children around to serve as an example of our good fortune” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 22). Annie’s statement here attracts a different analysis when put in conversation with Angela’s remark to her daughter that “[her] father would never have hacked off the hand of a black slave in an effort to lighten the load on the lifeboat. It was probably his good heart that sent him to the same grave as that slave!” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 188). Elsewhere, a visitor to the Cape, in conversation with Annie, explains that “even though [he] use[s] slaves [him]self, the slave trade is a practice

that makes [him] uneasy” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 194). As illustrated in the opening chapter quotation, even in the early 1660s “contemporary social thinking in Europe obliged those who kept slaves in the New World to pretend that the practise did not exist once they return to the Old” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 7). For example, David finds Angela in Captain Kemp’s house in a state where she has to pretend that she is a nursemaid and not a slave. Manumission by marriage ignores other slaves who cannot obtain their freedom in the same way and slavery carries on beyond the 1834 emancipation declaration. The pretence of not owning slaves, or the running away from slave origin and identity foreground the narration of slave freedom in the novel. I argue that the joyous tone used to narrate Angela’s freedom and manumission embodies these attitudes that elide the truth of the continuation of slavery. Therefore, the narrative’s manumission by marriage does not offer humanitarian grounds for the abolition of slavery, but instead denotes the capitalist ends of those it may benefit. The narrative documents a capitalistic model that sets free whom it would, while at the same time still advancing slavery and colonisation. Presented as a romance, the novel presents the reader with a happy love story, but this becomes questionable on the basis of the existing narratives of sexual slavery that I analysed in Chapter Two and Three. Looked at through the lens of the sexual slavery discussed in Chapter Two and the postponed nature of slave freedom in Chapter Three, Angela’s manumission via marriage in this narrative does not disrupt the advancement of the empire’s capitalism. Reading it in line with Chapter Two’s discussion on slave motherhood, I do, however, suggest that for female slaves, “assimilation and subsequently manumission were thus also a question of securing or choosing the future of their children” (Olaussen, “Approaching Asia” 40).

Perhaps this is the reason for David Johnson’s complaint that these historical novels on slavery in South Africa do not re-story the continuities from slavery to capitalism but instead imagine the past of slavery as the legitimate and unconnected antithesis of a present defined by free labour and democracy (505).⁵⁴ Johnson notes the novels’ failure to account for the continuation of slavery into the present day post-apartheid nation state. However, in as much as this claim is true, my interrogation of freedom shows continued constructions of slavery in the post-apartheid contestations of cultural racial identities imagined in this novel. Although the novel does not offer a blatant critique of the institution of slavery, it does show the complex

⁵⁴ Johnson references Georg Lukacs’s principal criterion for the historical novel, that it should represent the past as the concrete precondition of the present (505).

negotiations of an individual slave woman in a society where the categories of slave and master were much less fixed than in plantation slavery. The offer of freedom for Angela is not made out of the realisation that slavery is inhumane, but on the continuation of a capitalist project based on the same slavery. Contrary to Johnson's claim that novels about slavery at the Cape do not show post-apartheid representations of slavery as an advancement of the capitalist project (504), the marginalisation and silences in the narrative draw attention to the advancement of capitalistic projects through the manumission of some slaves, but also by Angela's and Annie's keeping of slaves even after her own manumission as illustrated in Annie's story: "[The party] set out before dawn, calling at our house to collect our slave, Scipio" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 49). The advancement of capitalism is also illustrated in the isolated freedom of Angela while the Company keeps slaves and oversees rampant sexual slavery at the slave lodge: "If there was anything she could do to improve the lot of the company slaves, she would do it ... although many of us did this through our own domestic slaves, instructing them to share old clothing and leftover food with their friends at the lodge" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 86). Therefore, Angela and Annie's sympathy for the brutality faced by the company slaves while they themselves still keep slaves, undercuts the idea of slave freedom advanced in the novel and shows how the claims of freedom ring hollow.

Quoting Joseph C. Miller, Olausson points out that manumission by marriage was an incentive and a psychological safety valve for individual slave women who, through assimilation, also came to participate in the practice of slavery by taking the position of slave owner ("Approaching Asia" 41). Olausson further notes that "*Kites of Good Fortune* can be placed in this category of narratives depicting the process of assimilation and construction of whiteness" ("Approaching Asia" 36). The freed slave's mind-set in supporting the coloniser in the novel is revealed in Annie's belief that "[her] husband has worked long and hard for the welfare of [the] Colony, contributing to its talents and security, construction and administration" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 187). Angela's privilege of manumission is related to her 'non-African' origins and Annie's freedom is distinctly related to her paternal European heritage and the support she finds from the master culture as opposed to the black slave of African origin. Olausson points out that assimilation on the part of slave women was closely linked to their function within slaveholding households ("Approaching Asia" 41). In this case, marriage serves to include them in the master culture that does not fight enslavement.

As such, I problematise the freedom of the female slave of Indian origin, whose possibility of restoration of home is greater than that of the black male slave of African origin. Except for the subtle critique offered by the presence of Islam in Angela's act of returning to Islam after her husband dies, the novel lacks criticism of the colonial administration at the Cape and disassociates itself from the oppression of slavery altogether. Olausen explains that the "[m]arriage between slave women and men of European descent in Dutch South Africa that led to their manumission was a wide-spread practice within slave-holding societies", however, "[t]his practice did not as such challenge or undermine slavery" ("Approaching Asia" 41). As noted earlier, David de Koning acknowledges the evils of slavery, yet as a captain of the VOC, his ship transports slaves. Angela's reference to "his good heart", as quoted earlier, and her statement that he "would never have done such a cruel thing", referring to the officer who hacked off the hand of a black slave in an effort to lighten the load on the lifeboat, shows the family's belief that there are certain levels of enslavement that can be judged as worse than others (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 188). Notably, a distinction is also made between bad slave masters and good ones as is evident in the remark by Annie: "I agree there are bad slave traders who think of nothing but profit, but I would not be one of those" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 194).

In *Kites of Good Fortune*, the Indian Ocean disrupts some of the propositions of the black Atlantic. This is because for the colonial settler, the sea is the link to home culture, whereas for the slave, it is the Middle Passage to the terror of enslavement while simultaneously offering freedom. Angela looks to the sea for the return of her benefactor David de Koning. After her manumission, Angela and Annie also yearn to ascend from the slave position of non-being, to that of the master culture they have been cultured to understand as the standard of living. The narrative displays Annie's continued susceptibilities to European culture: music, languages, fashion and a career, as well as "the belief that beauty and virtue are white" (Fanon, *Black Skin* 31-32). Annie says that "[t]he lavishness of the new fashions [of French and Italian influence] thrilled [her]" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 55). Elsewhere, admiring her own advancement, she asks: "who would have thought that the daughter of a Bengali slave woman would read Latin and play music?" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 62). Her convictions are also illustrated in the confession that "European people [brought] bits and pieces of their [culture]

which [she adopted] eagerly in an effort to be European [her]self” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 1). Though Angela “[speaks] her native Bengali, Dutch and Portuguese fluently” and later on returns to the religion of Islam, for her, the meaning of life is associated with European culture (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 22). As far as their definition of freedom is concerned, Angela and her daughter Annie do not look to the Indian Ocean (Bengal) for the restoration of that freedom, but rather shift their attention to the Atlantic Ocean (Europe) in order to attain social standing. Annie’s desperate craving for this culture denotes her reaching for the ‘supreme’ colonial stature of Europe.

For the Dutch colonial administrator, the novel imagines the sea as a symbol of hope and revival for the maintenance and running of the Cape colony. The sea is seen as the link to Europe and the purveyor of much anticipated replenishment in terms of personnel as well as instructions from the headquarters: “The arrival of ‘*t Wapen van Holland* at the Cape had been eagerly awaited, since it would bring commander van Riebeeck’s replacement” and later on, “the new commander and his family were met by a guard of honour formed by soldiers in their full splendour and a salute form signal hill. Not a soul was absent from the crowd gathered at the dock” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 15, 54). In the novel, the much needed ‘resources’ that cross the Atlantic, and sometimes the Indian Ocean, to the Cape include: the church ministers eagerly awaited to wed couples, art and aesthetics in the shape of ‘authentic’ French music, fashion and fabrics from Amsterdam, science, astrology and botany from Holland and teachers bringing with them the gift of language and the skills of reading, writing and drawing. Though the sea fails to deliver at times due to the many shipwrecks and deaths, this continued connection keeps the administrators updated and in constant touch with Europe (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 16). In her comprehensive analysis on the Asian connections in Indian Ocean slavery, Olausen takes note of the settler community’s relationships with ‘back home’ as well as the rest of the world. She writes: “[t]he slave-holding society at the Cape was constituted by its connections to the Indian Ocean World ... through Europeans of different nationalities who were employed by the Dutch East India Company and often worked in Batavia before they came to settle at the Cape” (“Approaching Asia” 35/36). The sea becomes a crucial connection between Africa, Asia and Europe, as noted by Indian Ocean scholars Hofmeyr and Vink and appropriates “the transformative character of the sea” (Samuelson, “Sea Changes” 10). In this sense, the sea holds different meanings for the European colonial administrator and the (manumitted) slave.

Gilroy's idea of the ship is a useful way to interrogate the meanings of cultural interaction in the servitude of the Indian Ocean World, as narrated in the novel. Examining cultural interactions and oceanic connections both helps to interrogate slave freedom in the text and makes room for interrogation of the cultures of the Cape littoral on the basis of colonisation and enslavement. In his seminal text *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Gilroy uses the "image of the ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa and the Caribbean as a central organizing symbol for" cultural hybridity as based on the trans-Atlantic trade relations that constitute modernity (4). Gilroy's argument regarding the Black Atlantic centres on the idea of double consciousness – a "rhizomorphic, fractal structure of the transcultural, international formation" (4). Gilroy proposes that cultures are always unfinished and being remade and warns that "striving to be both European and black requires some specific forms of double consciousness" (1). As such, the ship for Gilroy is a micro system in motion providing cultural and political exchanges (4).

However, Cape slavery, as narrated in *Kites of Good Fortune* disrupts some of these cultural exchanges offered by Gilroy's idea of double consciousness and the concept of cultural hybridity. The first person autobiographical voice ignores the indigenous and native cultures, replacing them with the Eurocentric colonial cultures. As already argued, Annie marginalises the presence of slaves in her estate and in the Cape, in order to focus on the story of her liberation, the colonial class, and the stories of other liberated slaves. Further illustrations were evident in Annie labours to accustom herself to the cultures and fashions of Europe in order to fit into the class of the free. Freedom, in this case, is associated with European and not indigenous culture. Domingo, who was Angela's lover, and the child they had together are relegated to the margins of the story. In this way, the novel silences slave oppression and foregrounds Annie's relationship with the 'progressive' colonial class.

As is illustrated in the text, Angela adopts her husband's Lutheran faith and Annie is engrossed in learning the Swedish language and the elegance of European fashion, music and education. American pan-Africanist W.E.B. Dubois idea of double consciousness meant that the African American existed with the dual identities of the home culture and the acquired American culture. *Kites of Good Fortune* offers readers a different sense of double consciousness. Instead

of acquiring the culture of their new space and location (Africa), Angela and Annie reach out for European culture. In the same way, the European culture is not impacted by the Indian culture of the Bengalese slave. The narrative traces the influx of visitors from Europe en route to India, the doctors, sailors, teachers, traders, but is silent on their interaction with Indian Ocean cultures. As a result, the Bengalese and the African indigenous cultures are subjugated under European and western culture.

Inasmuch as *Kites of Good Fortune* depicts the Cape Peninsula as an oceanic crossroads, it rejects the cultural hybridity of the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans. Here, there is a one-way cultural movement across the sea from Europe, and the novel does not show any influence indigenous cultures might have on European culture. The first person autobiographical narrative voice polices such expected merging of cultures described by Indian Ocean scholar Michael Pearson, of littoral societies as those who possess a mixture of maritime and terrestrial influences (354). Similarly, Samuelson notes the expectation that cultures in littoral contact zones will portray “amphibian” tendencies – moving between land and sea (“Rendering the Cape-as-Port” 524). If the land denotes the indigenous while the sea denotes the European and Indian influences among others, the presence of African diasporic connections is therefore equivocally absent in this novel. As is suggested by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “the question of the place of Africa in the world, and the world in Africa, of the intersections of Africa and world histories” remain relevant for research and publication (16). Indian Ocean researchers argue for the movement of these cultures.

Desai has remarked that paying attention to the movements of peoples and ideas across the Indian Ocean is useful for contemporary discussions of African cultural politics and identities (716). The example of Domingo, as well as other slaves, whose returns and cultures are not described in the novel, illustrates the silence of non-European cultures evident in apartheid and post-apartheid histories. Domingo’s movement across the Indian Ocean is also silenced by freed slaves’ adoption of European culture. Part of the silence on slavery is related to the loss of identity in slave descendants “distancing themselves from their slave past in order to claim a more privileged position in the colony than indigenous Africans who were being increasingly marginalized” (Ward and Worden 205). Samuelson has raised the disclaimer that “[h]istorians [produce] a paradigm that is unable to account for the vestiges or survivals of cultural practices

brought to the colony by African slaves” (“Lose Your Mother” 92). Looking at how the narrative constructs autobiographical truth allows me to articulate the silences of the text in order to interrogate the notion of freedom in the background of this predominantly European master culture. Despite the description of the Cape Peninsula as a “multiethnic” and “cosmopolitan transoceanic empire” (Ward 141), the silences in *Kites of Good Fortune* draw interesting connections between the submerging of the indigenous cultures at the Cape and the consequent cultural identity crisis of the manumitted slave.

Research by Baderoon as well as other scholars like Hofmeyr, Desai and Samuelson show that while Indian Ocean histories and the presence of Indian Ocean merchandise, including slaves, influenced western culture, Indian and East Malay culture was suppressed at the Cape. Part of the suppression included the marginalisation of the Indian Ocean cultures (Desai 715). As is noted by Ward, the role of the sea in the history of the Cape has been ignored by historians for a long time (140). *Kites of Good Fortune* suggests one of the reasons for such absence: the suppression of ‘slave’ cultures in favour of a superior western culture. Another layer of these Indian Ocean cultures as represented in the novel, is that the focus is predominantly on the Indian, Bengalese slaves. Even with the foregrounding of Indian slaves in the novel, there is a consequent submerging of black African slaves’ experiences. The pretentious practice of slavery equally speaks to the suppression of indigenous cultures and the forgetting of slave memory at the Cape. The colonial encounter with littoral communities is also marginalised by the foregrounding of European presence at the littoral. The refusal to acknowledge cultural syncretism in the littoral zone ultimately silences indigenous cultures. The lack of cultural syncretism in the novel therefore problematises the identity and belonging of Angela, Annie and Domingo. The absence of such cultural hybridity in the novel silences the memory of black slaves of African origin.

Following this train of thought, it can be argued that the two oceans map boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in *Kites of Good Fortune*. The restoration of family for Angela on the one side, and the tragedy of Domingo on the other, reads in conversation with the exclusion of African indigenous cultures in the narrative. Significantly, if the oceans map cultural identities, then in this novel, the Atlantic and the Indian oceans flow their separate ways. The widely published South African literary critic and novelist Zoë Wicomb notes that “[a]t Cape Point

oceans meet and part, the Indian and the Atlantic fight for their separate identities” (cited in Samuelson, “Oceanic Histories” 545). Perhaps the exclusion of indigenous culture in *Kites of Good Fortune* can therefore be explained by “the orientation of indigenous societies in the region as not primarily toward the sea” (Ward 143). Notably, the only mention of Annie’s interaction with the Cape indigenous culture is her encounter with Krotoä, whose identity does not ultimately fit into the class structure of Dutch culture (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 38). This discussion on cultural stratification proceeds from the racial branding of the black race that I raised in Chapter Three and the marking of coloured identities as an in-between and superior identity to “pure blacks”; “a biologically based hybridity” that “at once ma[kes] them superior to blacks and inferior to [whites] because of their lack of culture” (Gqola 13). The novel’s perspective of cultural identity consequently deviates from that displayed in Chapter Four where the narrative disrupted racially constructed cultural identities. The failure of cultural hybridity in the novel signals the limited perspective on of slave freedom. Such marginalisation also justifies the impossibility of freedom for black indigenous slaves.

Even though slave freedom is celebrated in the lives of Angela and her daughter Annie, natal restoration is depicted as complex. In spite of the fact that Angela acquires social and religious freedom, certain levels of freedom are not achievable. The narrative reveals the elusive concept of home and belonging illustrated in Annie’s comment that “all her life she felt divided” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 3). Her feeling of division can be extrapolated in the parallel subplots, which connect her marriage to the political administration of the Cape. This relationship interrupts the domesticity of their freedom. For example, Angela’s freedom is almost undercut because of David de Koning’s death in the service of the company and Annie’s slave ancestry is invoked when her husband, Olof Bergh is involved in an administrative disagreement with the governor that leads to his imprisonment on Robben Island. The governor rules as follows: “I recommend to this council your immediate removal, under close guard, to Robben Island until such time as a sentence arrives from the Council of India” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 105). Annie is forced to pack and leave the company’s house that had been a privilege of her husband’s position as Annie discloses: “Have you ever had two men and a slave take your whole house apart, inspecting your every possession for inventory” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 106). As is developed in the parallel subplots, the political and the domestic spheres are constantly enmeshed in the story. This connection is understood in Ann Laura Stoler’s observation that the family conduct of colonial administrators was a central

concern of the state and at the heart of colonial politics (8). The unequal power relations characteristic of slavery continue even after Angela's manumission, as is evident in Annie's rape, which is exacerbated by her low self-esteem and desire to be European. Second, the nature of Angela, and by extension, Annie's freedom does not allow geographical restoration of home. For Angela, her burial place becomes the Cape, and despite Annie's longing for Europe, she does not belong there.

In this case, the sea voyages transform and settle Angela's geographical home and identity as well as those of her descendants. Though Angela and Annie establish families as well as relational and physical homes, the politics of identity and belonging, inclusion and exclusion are still at play. Angela's actualisation of natal restoration as family is connected to the sea, when David de Koning sails back to Batavia aboard the *Wapen van Holland*, promising to journey back and buy her freedom (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 18). Coincidentally, Annie's happiness too is disrupted by the sea when her husband is exiled to Ceylon (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 122). She waits for the sea to deliver him back to her. Annie's final 'freedom' comes when her yearning to visit home is made possible by the same sea. Even in this case, Annie does not belong to Europe, and can only relate to acquaintances and friends she had met at the Cape during their short visits to Europe or Asia. For the slave, 'home' becomes an elusive concept, and manumission through marriage becomes the only possible way of restoring what is seen as a shifting construction. Such a struggle for belonging is narrated in the description of Annie as one who does not belong to the African landscape and yet is also excluded from Europe. Born in Africa, but aping Europe, the freed slave who does not establish cultural connections at the Cape, but rather looks up to the European culture that they can never be a part of, is marked by a permanent up-rootedness.

Angela and Annie's desire for European culture can be understood as a "performance of the self as an imperial subject" (Whitlock 76). Despite what seems like freedom from slavery, the silences in the narrative foreground the ideological difference between Africa and Europe which perpetuate racial oppression. For Samuelson, the sea is described as an "archive in which the afterlife of slavery continues to surface" ("Lose your Mother" 38). Given the various identity constructions during apartheid, the idea of the sea acts as a metaphor for the various

dark tides that continue to transport and haunt the post-apartheid imagination in a South Africa located at the junction of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans (Samuelson, “Lose your Mother” 10).

The inclination to copy the master culture creates an insightful intersection with the psychological freedom of the manumitted slave. The novel exhibits the existential ambivalence of the manumitted slave. Angela and Annie’s aping of the fashions of Europe and their gaze towards Europe as the source of liberation foregrounds the psychological entanglements that trouble the freedom and complicate the identities of freed slaves. Such aping is evident in Annie’s confession: “an excellent musician would call on his way to the East and play the latest music from Europe, delighting us and recharging our enthusiasm” and “The lavishness of the new fashions thrilled me” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 131, 55). These complications, as I have argued, engage with issues of race and gender. The Eurocentric longing that defines Europe as ‘home’ and the centre of civilisation introduces issues of inclusion and exclusion in the search for identity. Even with Angela and Annie’s integration into a settler family, their psychological freedom and identity are still at stake.⁵⁵ Freedom is therefore a complex existential issue that does not emerge as soon as a slave is manumitted, neither does slavery end with the first generation manumitted slave. Annie still carries the stigma of a ‘half-breed’ and has to reach for the approval of the European ruling class and high society at the Cape in order to belong. The first person narrative voice notably only describes her relationships with those of the upper class, and how well she gladly fits in and is accepted by the high profile European visitors to the Cape.

The Enlightenment frame of history sustains the psychological enslavement of the manumitted slave and her descendants. Annie’s unresolved psychological identity is evident in her perception of herself as “born and bred in the Cape yet so European!” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 2). It is further complicated during the voyage to Europe that makes her realise that “all the while [she] knew that [she] would only be a look-alike, that [her] understanding would be incomplete until [she] had seen for [her]self, touched and smelled the original on which [her] African copy was based” (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 2). The freed slave’s craving

⁵⁵ Isabel Hofmeyr in “The Black Atlantic Meets the Indian Ocean: Forging New Paradigms of Transnationalism for the Global South - Literary and Cultural Perspectives” poses a similar question by interrogating the relationship of freedom and slavery and notably argues that slaves were integrated into households (14).

for Europe creates interesting dimensions that read in line with the movement of Gilroy's ship back and forth over the seas to mark transcultural exchange. Enslavement has engraved itself firmly into the psyche of the subject as is suggested in the governor's remark to Annie when he states that "[t]he slave mentality is bred in [her] bones" (Benadé, *Kites of Good Fortune* 139). As such, the manumitted slave gets stuck on the shore line; neither adrift in the sea nor anchored on land. Even for the freed slave, enslavement becomes a way of looking at the world. Consequently, the narrative voice in its silences pronounces layers of invisibilities as illustrated in the presentation of the littoral and the identity confusion of the manumitted slave.

Published in 2004 as a re-memory of the 1650's Cape settlement, *Kites of Good Fortune* gives room to interrogate the foundational cultural constructions of the founding societies in light of the post-apartheid present. I have discussed how the Enlightenment ideals imparted the cultures of the Cape, and those of the freed slave and her descendants. The first person autobiographical narration was useful to examine the marginalisation of the existence of indigenous cultures and the freedom of the manumitted slave in its pronounced and detailed depiction of European culture. Consequently, this chapter has analysed the complexities of cultural identity at the Cape littoral, for the freed slave and other slaves. I suggest that despite manumission, the silences of the text show that the freed slave still battles with psychological enslavement. This chapter concludes that psychological conflict can be read as a metaphor for ambivalent racial identities in post-apartheid present. It has argued that European cultures were constructed as superior to Indian and African cultures. These constructions emerged through the enlightenment, and the civilising Europe agenda. In addition to interrogating the existential ambivalence of freed slaves, the lens of autobiographical truth brings to the surface the marginalising cultural practices that still haunt the post-apartheid era. The erasure of the indigenous culture through naming continues to provoke debates on the decolonisation of knowledge and language in South African Universities. These debates propose the institutionalisation of indigenous knowledge systems and language into their curricula.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The Past is Not Just Recalled; it Merges with the Present⁵⁶

[S]he is held captive once again
 this time by a broken chain of events
 our degrees of amnesia
 the root of her dis-ease. (Ndlovu, “Lydia in the Wind” 20)⁵⁷

All that is buried is not dead. (Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm*)

Cape Town’s dark beginning has cast a long and chilling shadow on its present: the morphing of slavery into colonialism and later apartheid. (Davids np)⁵⁸

The ghost [is] a go-between, an enigmatic transitional figure moving between past and present, death and life, one culture and another. (Brogan, “American Stories” 152)

This dissertation set out to examine how authors have constructed slave memory in narratives on slavery at the Cape published in the post-apartheid era. It explored how such imaginings portray slave histories as haunting the South African present on both the individual and collective level. As such, this conclusion draws a connection between the various manifestations of haunting in the novels and the present post-apartheid moment in order to show how the memory of slavery are “the past that is not just recalled [but that] merges with the present” (Wyatt 135). I base this on my theorisation in Chapter One that the publication of the novels over a century after the practice of Cape slavery ended can be attributed to being haunted by slave memory and that the authors of the novels I analysed represent the trauma of a larger historical consciousness. The very idea of haunting, as I have discussed in this dissertation, evokes a past that is a “concrete precondition of the present” (Lukács 18). Even though the authors do not confess personal trauma, haunting or guilt regarding their slave or slave-owner ancestry, their novels engage with issues that manifest as haunting in the post-apartheid moment. In Ross Chambers’s formulation, these can be seen as the ghosts that have refused to be laid to rest. The themes that have emerged in the texts I discussed include white

⁵⁶ Quoted from, Jean Wyatt’s “Failed Messages, Maternal Loss, and Narrative Form in Toni Morrison’s *A Mercy*.” (135).

⁵⁷ The poem is published in Lueen Conning Ndlovu’s anthology, *Born in Africa but* (2000).

⁵⁸ <https://johannesburgreviewofbooks.com/2017/07/03/it-began-with-a-burial-site-nadia-davids-on-her-new-work-what-remains-a-play-about-slavery-and-the-haunted-city/>

privilege, constructions of blackness, intergenerational slave trauma and the continued silence on slave histories as well as contestations, complexities and practices of racial purity and cultural identity. Though these issues cannot be directly claimed to haunt the post-apartheid moment, some disturbances in the South African present stem from society's failure to engage with such slave histories.

The concept of haunting is therefore significant in engaging with histories of slavery. Reflecting on what Chambers refers to as a haunted society, I have discussed how the narratives are understood as instances of cultural haunting. I also illustrated, with reference to manifestations of black violence in Chapter Four, that slaves experienced trans-generational trauma that can be understood as being haunted. As such, haunting is necessary because it calls back to memory regardless of its suppression at individual or societal levels. I agree with Pumla Gqola, that “[m]emory is a shadow always hovering and governing our relationship to the present and the future” and that it “resists erasure and is important for the symbols through which each community invents itself” (*What is Slavery to Me?* 8). The manifestations of haunting can consequently be read in line with Tim Woods’ observation that “African authors inscribe belated and cumulative epiphenomenal post-traumatic stresses in their writing as a way of beginning to repair their identities and cultures” (6).

And yet, manifestations of a haunted present are indicative of tendencies to suppress the trauma and pain of slavery. As reiterated by Gabeba Baderoon, “[t]he way in which slavery has been remembered in South Africa is a crucial subject” (*Regarding Muslims* 10). Thus it is hardly surprising that my study on literary representations revealed subjective narratives both about the slave institution and about the representation of slavery at the Cape. I interpreted historical subjectivities of slavery, opening space for discussion. Similarly, the study evidenced that re-memory becomes the “Foucauldian genealogist’s task”, one which “afflicts the comfortable by dredging up what has been forgotten, whether actively or passively” (Michael Mahon cited in Samuelson, *Remembering the Nation* 120). Re-memory therefore opens avenues for the post-apartheid writer to engage with the issues that haunt him/her and provides opportunities for coming to grips with the past. For this reason, I have argued that the novels respond to silences in the archive and serve as a means of recording and remembering slave memory. This is because the narratives historicise differently from the archive in their telling of the

uncertainties, contradictions and complexities of the archive in order to engage with traumatic slave histories and to counter social amnesia.

The narratives return the repressed past of slavery by turning to the Cape Colonial Archive and historiography to imagine the lives of historical figures. They act as ways of storing memory and offer “the capacity to recall the past [and] to project the future” (Wa Thiong'o 65). The role played by the novels in re-enacting the past echoes Jan Furman's observation that “[o]nly by remembering the past can there be liberation from its burden” (80). In this way, they haunt the reader and can be read as a cry for justice that is evocative of the poem by Lueen Conning Ndlovu that I used to open this chapter. It states: “[T]his wind is a wounded witness / she will not be still / not until we are listening” (19). Consequently, the novels' representations of the dead and their ghosts invade the world of the living to interrupt the ‘normal’, as I argued in my introduction. By imagining the stories of historical slaves, they project new voices for the historical subjectivities created by the silences in the archive.

The idea of cohabiting with the ghost was one of the central discussions of Chapter Two. Cohabiting with the ghosts of slavery in the post-apartheid moment entails witnessing manifestations of the trauma of slavery. Freud's “insight to trauma that the impact of a traumatic event lies in its belatedness” gives meaning to such manifestations (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 6). As is argued by Marita Wenzel, the representations in these novels conjure “metaphors of colonisation and power relations, apparitions or skeletons that refuse to remain buried, and irrepressible memories of past injustices” (101). In the epigraph to this chapter, Nadia Davids points out that a beautiful city such as Cape Town is built on graves and bodies of slaves such as those found in the Prestwich place and she sums up the state of the post-apartheid moment as “the morphing of slavery into colonialism and later apartheid” (Davids np). These transformations of slavery also exist in various shapes within the post-apartheid present, as is suggested in Ndlovu's poem in the section that reads: “This hole in our history ... / Her feet are bleeding / From this haunting dance of grief” (19, 20).

As has been discussed, definitions and contestations of identities were central to the lives of slaves and freed slaves as represented in the novels. I elaborated on the search for identity as

founded in the slave's loss of identity embedded in natal alienation. My discussion agreed with those by Robert Morrell and Ouzgane Lahoucine in arguing that slavery was highly destructive in the sense that it fragmented the identities of individuals as well as communities of people (2). However, the narratives also suggested diasporic movements in Cape slavery, emerging with a focus on both the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. The loss of identities consequently emerged from silences on slavery, both as an effect of colonial dominated history, as discussed in Chapter Three, and the (im)possibilities and complexities of slave freedom, as explained in Chapter Three, Four and Five.

My discussion of haunting in this dissertation was also closely related to the concepts of womanhood and motherhood. Again, Ndlovu's poem evocatively frames this argument when it depicts memory as a woman:

this wind is a haunted woman
 she is wild with rememberings
 singing the truth and the tragedy
 of our buried heritage
 our slavery. (19)

The narratives show the prevalence of female slavery as evident in the main characters of four of the narratives: Angela and Annie in Benadé's *Kites of Good Fortune*, Sila in Christiansé's *Unconfessed*, Philida in Brink's *Philida* and Somiela in Jacobs's *The Slave Book*. As I indicated in Chapter Two, the study of female slaves has been marginalised, yet female slaves comprised much of the slave populace at the Cape. These narratives therefore begin to fill these gaps in representation as highlighted by scholars. My discussion of the texts showed that women suffered multiple liminal positions as slaves at the Cape. In Chapter Two, I discussed how female enslavement impacted on motherhood and how women gave birth to generations of slaves after them. This acts as a metaphor for the intergenerational trajectory of slave trauma. In Chapter Three, I discussed Philida's sexual exploitation and in Chapter Four, the sexual demarcations that surrounded Somiela's possibility of freedom. Chapter Five foregrounded Angela and Annie's identity struggles as attempts to cleanse themselves of the mark of slavery.

The narrative of the slave woman in this study therefore becomes the embodiment of slavery in her struggles to attain freedom for herself and subsequent generations. As Nthabiseng Motsemme argues, female slavery “draws us to the highly gendered nature of the recollection of South Africa’s past” (Motsemme 914). Though Motsemme addresses herself to the hearings of the TRC, her observations inform my discussion to point to the complex ways in which trauma needs to be looked at from a gendered perspective.

This study engaged with the realisation that black women of African origin existed in more liminal spaces as compared to those of Asian origin and Cape born slaves. This was illustrated in the story of Angela and Somiela, whose chances of manumission by marriage were displayed. Equally, freedom was more complex for slaves of African origin as was illustrated in Sila’s, Kananga’s and Domingo’s stories. Generally, the relegation of trauma to motherhood in the narrative sidelined slave paternity, pointing to the emasculation of men in the slave institution. The marginalisation of slaves of African origin was also evident in narratives on black violence and the constructions of black people as bodies and slaves. I discussed such stark racial categorisation, black subjectivities and racial labelling at length in Chapter Three and Four. Particularly in Chapter Four, I discussed the dynamics of violence by black people on fellow blacks. Such categorisations call attention to the similar existence of violence in the post-apartheid present. For example, constructions of black violence have been attributed to the high crime and rape rate amongst black people. Other cases of black-on-black violence include the eruptions of the 2008 and 2015 xenophobic attacks in South Africa. My discussion in Chapter Four, however, suggests that such violence in the post-apartheid space should be understood with an eye on the haunted histories of slavery and unresolved traumatic pasts in black communities.

My analysis furthermore presented the elusive reality of freedom for the slave. The complexity of freedom was characterised in slaves like Philida and Sila who were on the verge of freedom but never attained it. Such complexity was evident when slaves such as Angela, Somiela and Sangora gained freedom in the presence of those who still fought the chains of slavery like Kananga and Domingo. The (im)possibilities of slave freedom was illustrated in *Philida’s* depiction of the apprenticeship of slaves for four more years after their emancipation. Similarly, the practice of slavery mentioned in *Kites of Good Fortune* explain this near possibility of

freedom, yet the very futility of it for the slaves. The selective providence of slave freedom provides a basis for white privilege while black slaves continue to suffer.

Whiteness and the impossibilities of slave freedom constitute what Melisa Steyn has explained as the historical construction of white privilege, which include the institutional and psychological strategies that economic policies used to enforce and secure advantageous positions (“*Whiteness Just Isn’t*” xxix). I discussed white dominance in the recording of history in Chapter Three. I showed that the construction of the novel in the post-apartheid moment portrays white dominance on history that still exists in post-apartheid South African. The evidence of white privilege and white dominance in *Philida* can be used to extrapolate the continuation of white dominance and black subjugation in the present. In relation to the nature of slave freedom, I discussed how “whiteness emerged and matured in complicity with capitalism” (Steyn, “*Whiteness Just Isn’t*” 10). The novels’ depiction of the complexities of slave freedom point to slavery’s role in the advancement of modern capitalism, as is evidenced in the illustrations of freedom only through manumission by men of white origin. This indicates that the abolition of slavery was not necessarily the result of an awakening in the conscience of oppressors to the fact that slavery was a human rights violation, but rather a way of advancing into a different more favourable economic order. The transition from slavery to other favourable economic orders can be used to explain “the stigma that ex-slaves faced in the distinct formation of ex-slave populace living in townships with low income and no or scarce means of income” (Campbell 19). Another example is the fact that many people whose ancestors were slaves still work on farms for a pitiful wage.

As I stated in the introduction to this dissertation, colonial historiography contributed to the silences around slavery at the Cape. Chapter Five has grappled with the reality that Cape indigenous culture is written out of the history of Cape slavery. Inasmuch as it can be attributed to fewer numbers of slaves from the Cape, both in the history of slavery at the Cape and in the constructions in the narratives, the marginal representation of the Cape indigenous culture reiterate what Steve Biko has expressed as the often told lie that blacks arrived in South Africa after 1652 – the official time of the founding of the Cape Colony (76). Such narratives served to suppress black cultures, as noted in Chapter Five, and resulted in much reduced chances of freedom for the African black slave.

Ndlovu's poem introduces my closing argument when it asks:

Are we listening

will we recognise her
circling the crevice
between two worlds
our reality and hers
howling around this empty plot
this hole in our history. (19)

In the midst of advocacy to embrace the 'Rainbow nation', discrimination and deprivation along racial lines weigh immensely on the post-apartheid South African space. Particular protests in the post-apartheid present hark back to oppressive pasts such as slave histories. The marginalisation of certain cultures can be used to understand the bitterness and outbursts around race and gender that have emerged in protests by University students and even workers across South Africa in 2015. These unrests were initiated under the banner of 'decolonisation', which read Biko's Black Consciousness ideology as well as Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. The movement was evident at universities across South Africa, culminating in the *Fees Must Fall* activism that resulted in a shutdown of public Universities at the end of 2016 and start of 2017.

I suggest that all the above emerge as the various ramifications of being haunted by repressed and silenced historical pasts and injustices. Such instances show that "traumatic experiences from the past will constantly attempt to re-inscribe themselves in the present, if they are not acknowledged, interrogated and addressed" (Laubscher 45). They indicate that "[t]he reluctance to awaken pain ... does not [make it] lose its power to interrupt, disturb and trouble" the present (Chambers vii). For this reason, this study has examined literary representations of slavery at the Cape and ultimately engaged with remembering and what such attempts to remember can offer for the future. As is noted by Christiansë, "remembering is like being haunted by demons. You open your door to one, and the rest come rushing in" (*Unconfessed* 265). I therefore suggest that the novels' re-memory through writing embody a way of engaging

memory and dealing with the past through a method that is itself depicted as a more adequate way of revisiting history. As such, my analysis of these literary representations in the novels also form part of the process of engaging memory in what Homi Bhabha declares as the critic's responsibility to "attempt to fully realise, and take responsibility for, the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present" (12). The ultimate question for the post-apartheid moment concerns the ways of dealing with the ghosts of traumatic slave pasts. Dealing with the ghosts that 'refused to be laid to rest' demands that we either cohabit with or exorcise the ghosts of slavery. I suggested the novels do both. In closing, I therefore cite from Ndlovu's poem one final time:

[S]he will only know relief
when all our hosts are put to rest
when their stories are re-collected
returned to their place of honour
recorded in our history
embedded in our memory

can we hear beyond our fears. (19, 20)

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