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Van Roy, Caitlin

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Caitlin Van Roy
Student number: 1610526

Master's Thesis Abstract

Remembering the Past, Informing the Future: Writing the familial and communal as acts of memorialisation in Coloured literary texts

Within the realm of South African literary studies, Coloured literature- that is, literature which speaks to or reflects on the experience of being and living Coloured in South Africa, is often underrepresented. This is in part due to the complicated history attached to the emergence of the identity which is informed by a racist and oppressive past as well as the ever-changing definitions of what Coloured identity is, how it operates and who it can define. As such, the task of unpacking what it means to live and experience Coloured identity can often be reflected alongside themes of familial and communal memory which serve as the only modes of information through which Coloured people, subjected to an indeterminate and under- recorded history, can make sense of their ever-fluctuating senses of identity. In aid of these ideas this paper discusses Richard Rive's *Buckingham Place: District Six*, Zoë Wicomb's *October* and C.A Davids *The Blacks of Cape Town* and focuses on the manner in which memory and forms of remembering emerge in each novel as a complicated but necessary source of information that enables the subject to engage in various forms of identity exploration for the purposes of self-discovery or identity preservation. This paper also reflects on the ways in which Coloured identity and experience is grappled with across generations, especially by those who are left behind with the task of unravelling complicated histories and painful pasts.