



Exchanging Symbols

Monuments and memorials in post-apartheid South Africa

Editors

Anitra Nettleton & Mathias Alubafi Fubah

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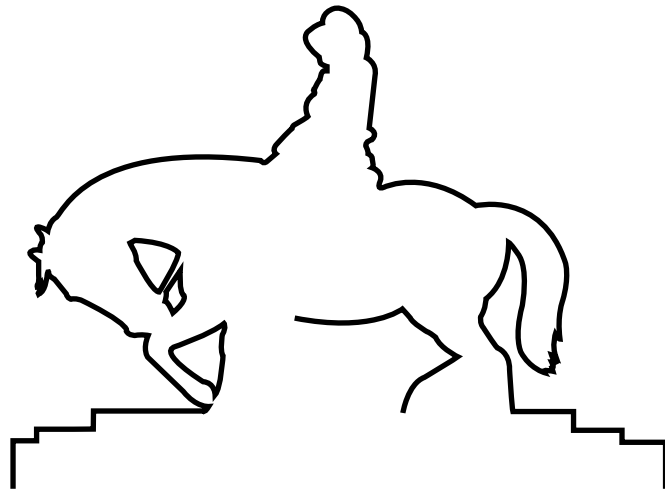
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Written or built, photographed or cooked, printed or casted, installed or performed, recorded or collaged, Königstein's works examine his ability as an artist, as well as the capacity of his spectators and co-creators, to participate in an alternative narration of past and future.

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Introduction

Mathias Alubafi Fubah & Anitra Nettleton

South Africa, like most African postcolonial nations has gone through a history of cultural representation that was largely one-sided. The end of colonialism and apartheid has resulted in the exposure of a cultural landscape that was largely seen as normal in past, but which is problematic at the present moment. One notable outcome of South Africa's new dispensation, however, has been the difficulty of matching the cultural landscape, especially in terms of cultural representation to the ideals of the new democratic state. Like the rest of the African continent, South Africa is undergoing a socio-political and cultural renaissance that has necessitated a rethinking of the country's cultural representation and aesthetic practices. In an attempt to rethink South Africa's cultural landscape, historical statues and monuments are increasingly becoming visible. This visibility, according to Coombes (2003) is entirely "contingent upon the debates concerning the reinterpretation of history that takes place at moments of social and political transitions."

If we take into consideration the extent to which the South African cultural landscape has transformed over the past twenty-three years, we cannot overlook the fact that historical statues and monuments still dominate public spaces in major cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban. Moreover, the continuous existence of these cultural heritage resources has affected the way in which people view certain public spaces and institutions for a number of reasons. For example, most of these spaces are seen as restrictive, provocative and a symbol of failure by certain

institutions to transform. The failure to transform certain institutions, and in particular, the cultural landscape was one of the main reasons for the #RhodesMustFall Movement that started at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2015. From its humble beginnings, it attracted nation-wide attention and left the population aghast at the physicality of the rejection of these symbols. There was, in some quarters sheer bewilderment as to why historical statues and monuments, heretofore promoted as part of South Africa's diverse cultural heritage, should now be at the centre of the transformation debate.

Against the above background, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) took upon itself the task of working with the research community to understand the rationale behind the call for the removal of historical statues and monuments and what they envisaged as the ideal cultural landscape for the country. Professor Vasu Reddy, then Executive Director of the Human and Social Development (HSD) Research Programme at the HSRC and current dean of Humanities at the University of Pretoria must receive credit for contacting Dr Alubafi to come up with a title and to write a project proposal focusing on the #Rhodes Must Fall Movement. The title: "The Symbols South Africans Want: Documenting and Assessing the Impact of Symbols in a Transformative State" was accepted by the HSRC and a proposal for a research project was drafted following this theme.

The proposal was first presented and discussed at the HSD Business Lekgotla (meeting) in April 2015. Thereafter, it was refined and submitted to the HSRC Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) Discretionary Fund for assessment and approval for funding. This was at a time when the then CEO, Dr Olive Shisana was on her way out of the organisation and as a result could not decide on whether or not to fund the project. Her response was simply that her successor would decide when he or she was appointed. Later in 2016, Professor Crain Soudien took over and was very keen to see the project implemented. By this time,

Professor Vasu Reddy had left and Professor Sharlene Swartz was the acting Executive Director of the HSD and facilitated the negotiations with the new CEO's office. He allocated funds for the project (for which we are grateful) in October 2015 and the author refined the proposal again and submitted it to the HSRC Research Ethics Committee for assessment and approval. Ethics approval was granted in February 2016 and the research team embarked on fieldwork in three major cities, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria. Fieldwork was conducted using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

In April 2016, the author and professor Sharlene Swartz organised a symposium at the HSRC focusing on the project. Representatives were invited from the Universities of the Western Cape, Witwatersrand, Cape Town, Rhodes, Fort Hare, University of South Africa, and the HSRC to provide a variety of views and arguments on the call for the removal of historical statues and monuments from the South African cultural landscape. Scholars were also invited from the University of Ghana, Legon to gain an alternative perspective as was an artist from Canada who has been practising for some time and whose work examines both his ability as an artist, and the capacity of the spectator to participate in alternative historical, social, institutional and national narration. Some of the chapters were also presented at a session organised by the author and sponsored by the Centre of Excellence (CoE, Wits University) at the Science Forum South Africa, in December 2016. The book results from the above narration, although not all the participants at the symposium are represented in the book. Professor Nettleton was invited to participate as editor and contributor only after the symposium and the papers for the book were submitted.

The messages conveyed through the research in these essays may well disturb and disrupt the settled views of the cultural landscape that are currently promoted and preserved in South Africa and further abroad in Africa. They could offer alternative avenues to government

policy makers in South Africa, as they pinpoint governments' failure to adopt and promote an African iconography of memorialisation. Perhaps the book will help to awaken the policy makers of Africa to the need for change in the ways in which public heritage resources are allotted in present day. We need not continue to replace or exchange large-scale and intimidating historical bronze statues and marble or stone monuments with others using the same materials and styles in the name of constructing a post-colonial and post-apartheid cultural landscape. There are alternative ways of doing this, and this book highlights the course for action to disrupt the current trajectory.

This book comprises eight essays that consider the politics and polemics of monuments in Africa in the wake of the #RhodesMustFall movement in 2015. The removal of the Rhodes statue from UCT main campus is the pivot on which the discussion of monuments as heritage in South Africa turns. It raised a number of questions about the implementation of heritage policy and the unequal deployment of memorials in the South African and other postcolonial landscapes. The essays in this volume are written by authors coming from different backgrounds and different disciplines. They address different aspects of this event and its aftermath, offering some intensive critique of existing monuments, analysing the successes of new initiatives, meditating on the visual resonances of all monuments and attempting to map ways of moving forward.

In the first chapter Sharlene Swartz, Benjamin Roberts, Steven L. Gordon and Jarè Struwig use nationally representative public opinion poll data to consider how far the adult public could be gauged to have accepted the #RhodesMustFall's principal goals. They first examine attitudes towards the removal of South Africa's pre-transitions statues (such as Cecil John Rhodes, King George and Jan van Riebeeck) from public spaces. Subsequently, they investigated what members of the general population think about collective decision-making on this

important restitution issue. The emphasis of their analysis is on how attitudes differ between important socio-demographic groups with a particular focus on age cohorts. Its conclusions set the stage for locating the debate about the relevance and use of memorial statues in a post-apartheid, democratic and egalitarian South Africa.

In chapter 2 Anitra Nettleton offers a critical, art-historically based, view of the western origins of large-scale bronze civic memorial statuary made to commemorate events and secular personages in the public sphere. Her analysis calls on both Riegl's conceptualisation of the function of monuments and Habermas's definition of the public sphere. She considers the ways in which such works, of which the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town was an example, were used in colonial contexts and their current demises. She critiques the redeployment of similar forms in post-colonial South Africa as a means of 'equalising' the memorial spaces of South Africa and the continuing patriarchal and non-democratic nature of its deployment.

Alude Mahali, in chapter 3 probes what is commemorated in South African memorials, and explores the tensions around where that commemoration takes place. Using a framework of discourse of pain, place and memory, the author considers how South African monuments have been constituted and contested. One of the forms of contest encompassed here, the queering of place, involves very close and critical examination of how memorial and monumental connotations of both buildings and public spaces could be stripped of their colonial residues and how this might aid in democratising access to memorialisation.

Sipokazi Sambumbu Madida touches on similar ground in chapter 4, but addresses the issues through a different lens. She addresses a perceived failure in contemporary debates to understand post-apartheid heritage practice as constituting an exhibitionary complex. Comprising many practices, disciplines and approaches, this complex addresses questions of the governmentality of public citizenry in many different ways. To develop

a nuanced understanding of knowledges and meanings embedded within these practices, this essay offers a critical analysis of post-apartheid monumentalisation, with a focus on the sporadic troubling of public statues over the period 1990-2015. In doing so the author focuses on how post-apartheid monumentalisation has been reproductive of continuities of the old traditions of knowing and understanding pasts and histories.

This theme is picked up by Thabo Manetsi in his essay, Chapter 5, which considers the ways in which the old style monuments of the apartheid era offer possibilities for deconstructing aspects of South African heritage. He interrogates the question of political instrumentality informing the denunciation of past monuments and the enunciation of heritage resources in the present state of South Africa. He centres his argument on the political uses of heritage as part of a post-colonial discourse on heritage management. He considers in particular the South African state's prioritisation of 'liberation' heritage and the ways in which this interacts with the rewriting of histories and the reclamation of the public spaces of heritage by government, ostensibly in the name of the people.

Guy Königstein's photo-essay in Chapter 6 speaks of similar concerns, but through a visualisation of absence and presence. He considers the ways in which monuments act as both the providers of presence, and the markers of absence, working with a process of removal of monuments in the context of digitally re-worked photographs. The author/artist, as a visitor to South Africa just after the #RhodesMustFall period of unrest at South African campuses, responded to the uproar by exploring the ways in which the removal of monuments from archival photographs could express aspects of the issues of memorialisation through marking monuments' presences in photographs despite their removal from the frame.

Nancy Dantas in Chapter 7 takes both the exhibitionary and the visual aspects of the debate further. She looks at how selected South African artists, both modern and contemporary, engage with issues

of memory and trauma, employing strategies of *verfremdung* within the built environment. She argues that monuments are to be seen as personifications or embodiments of the forces that condition and shape our times, as artists respond to these. She selected artists from different generations and geographies, moving from Leonard Tshela Mohapi Matsoso who worked in the apartheid years, to Lungiswa Gqunta, Sikhumbuzo Makandula, and, most recently, Haroon Gunn Salie. All work with histories of trauma, albeit from different angles and with different approaches, in specific mediums which help to inform their, and by extension, our thoughts and perceptions of the cultural and lived landscapes we inhabit.

The final chapter, chapter 8, by Mathias Alubafi Fubah and Catherine Ndinda examine the rationale behind the newly constructed anti-colonial and anti-apartheid statues at the Groenkloof nature reserve. In doing this, the authors aim to show that while the statues are largely a replication of the colonial imagery, they have become one of the embodiments of the ANC's response to the cultural imbalance on the South African and Tshwane landscape. Working with participants in a workshop situation, and with students, they discuss their responses to seeing their heroes being commemorated through the use of bronze statuary. They consider both the positive impact that such memorialisation might have, and the problematics of the forms it takes.

In the essays in this book the authors tackle policy questions, aspects of history and some of the new monuments aimed at redress in the present South African climate. It is to be hoped that a reading of this book will inform the decisions made by politicians and culture brokers when they spend taxpayers' money on the erection of monuments. It would be refreshing if the artists commissioned to make such monuments could look at African traditions of figuration and commemoration which fall outside the monumental, and if the artists could be professional and theoretically informed of the ways in which monuments are commissioned, planned and accessed.

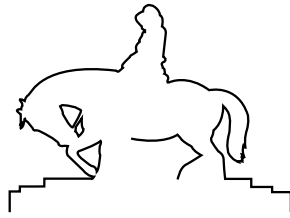


Chapter 1

Statues of Liberty?

Attitudes towards apartheid and colonial statues in
South Africa

**Sharlene Swartz, Benjamin Roberts,
Steven L Gordon & Jarè Struwig**



The concept of public memory is used to explain the many and varied ways in which communities deal with the past. However, public memory refers not only to what we *remember* about the past, but what we *forget*, and how we chose to *frame* these recollections.¹ The idea of memory as including ‘what we forget’ is very relevant to South Africa, where historical and collective amnesia, as well as a resolute desire to live in the present and focus on today’s challenges,² is sometimes an obstacle to rectifying past injustices. It is not uncommon to find that there is a worrying number of South Africans who would like to forget the past and move on. Consider some of the results of The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation’s (IJR) South African Reconciliation Barometer which indicated that two thirds of South Africans across all race groups agreed with the statement, ‘Forget Apartheid and move on’. This view is held almost equally by Black (63%) and White (69%) South Africans. Furthermore, White South Africans are less likely than other South Africans to acknowledge the relation between the apartheid legacy and post-apartheid poverty levels.³

1 Matthew Houdek & Kendall R. Phillips, “Public Memory.”

2 The work of Primo Levi, the Italian writer and Holocaust survivor, in relation to memory and trauma is particularly relevant here. He argued in *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986, 187) that memories become distant and historical over time and across generations, and that young people increasingly “are besieged by today’s problems, different, urgent: unemployment, the depletion of resources, the demographic explosion, frenetically innovative technologies to which they must adjust”. This desire to focus on the present rather than the past is a salient aspect of ‘forgetting’ and resonates with South African debates about memory.

3 Kim Wale, *Confronting Exclusion: Time for Radical Reconciliation South Africa Reconciliation Barometer Survey*: 2013, 37.

Houdek and Phillips argue that public memory is socially constructed, with symbols and structures constituting powerful ways of analysing memory (2017, 2). Furthermore, as argued by Halbwachs and Nora,⁴ the symbols and events through which these recollections are expressed can also function to consolidate a sense of nationhood. The social activism of a movement like #RhodesMustFall can be situated at the intersection between public memory and nationhood. This is because it critiques the way in which the past has been memorialised in the rainbow nation project and the manner in which symbols of the “ruins” of empire and segregationist and apartheid histories remain in the present as “documents to damage”,⁵ while simultaneously questioning the legitimacy and transformative competence of social and political institutions. It also raises questions around who should participate (victims, perpetrators, their descendants, or everyone) in the construction of public memory. On this question, Araujo (2010), in the case of the slave trade in the South Atlantic, describes public memory as plural because of the involvement of the descendants of both perpetrators and victims.⁶ This applies to the post-apartheid state as well.

The #RhodesMustFall campaign resulted in the removal of a statue of Cecil John Rhodes from the University of Cape Town (UCT) campus in April 2015. This action cast attention on broader issues of racial transformation imperatives such as redress, restitution, social cohesion and active citizenship and invites us to ask how the general South African population viewed the movement’s central goal.⁷ Questions such as these are important since public opinion is

4 Maurice Halbwachs, *On collective memory*; Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*.

5 Ann Laura Stoler, *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*.

6 Ana Lucia Araujo, *Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic*.

7 Redress, restitution, social cohesion and active citizenship have all featured as key concepts and issues in daily public discussion as well as academic and policy discourse on racial transformation in South Africa. See National Planning Commission (2012), Sharlene Swartz (2016), as well as Kate Lefko-Everett, Rajen Govender and Donald Foster (2017) for examples. While there remains substantive contestation about the definitions,

essential to policy debate in any functioning democracy. Wilson (2013) argues that public opinion has been an “orderly force”, contributing to democratic political life for thousands of years.⁸ The convergence between public opinion and public policy is often considered to be a crucial characteristic of successful democratic governance.⁹ How widely the goals of the #RhodesMustFall campaign were shared by the general adult population in South Africa is, therefore, an important question. Answering this question will help us understand the different ways people think about redress and restitution in the country.

The character and nature of the 2015 #RhodesMustFall movement provoked questions about who should be making decisions about racial redress and restitution policies in South Africa. The movement’s leaders wanted the student body to exert greater decision-making power in the case of the Rhodes statue. The movement provoked questions relating to who the final arbiter should ultimately be when deciding the fate of apartheid and colonial statues. Should such decisions fall to the general public (through say a referendum)¹⁰ or to those who suffered most from the policies of the previous regime? Or should the matter be left to the traditional powerholders, academic boards and government departments? This question invites wider inquiries about the way decisions about the pace and extent of racial transformation policy are currently made. In a polarised society like South Africa, public preferences concerning *who* should have the final say in making such decisions is perhaps just as important as the

scope and practical implications of such concepts, they are nonetheless frequently invoked in engagements on transformation in the country.

8 Francis Graham Wilson, *A Theory of Public Opinion*.

9 Stuart N. Soroka and Christopher Wlezien, *Degrees of Democracy: Politics, Public Opinion, and Policy*.

10 It should be noted that the referendum, as a device of direct democracy, has increasingly become the subject of appreciable debate. This has been compounded by recent, contentious experiences, such as the Brexit vote in the UK (2016). Critics argue that referenda may enhance societal divisions, produce incoherent and ineffectual policy agendas, and are often based on weak levels of voter turnout, while supporters maintain that participation, strengthen democratic institutions and promote voter education and issue awareness (Morel 2001, 2011).

actions that stem from those decisions and will be interrogated as part of this chapter.

The 2015, the #RhodesMustFall campaign's platform garnered a considerable level of attention and debate in the international and domestic press. Political leaders, academics, media pundits and others have weighed in with their thoughts, but little is known about the views of the general public. In this chapter, using nationally representative public opinion poll data, we will look at how far the adult public accepted #RhodesMustFall's principal goals. The chapter will first examine attitudes towards the removal of South Africa's pre-transition statues (such as Cecil John Rhodes, King George and Jan van Riebeeck) from public spaces. Subsequently, it will show what the general population thinks about collective decision-making on this important restitution issue. The emphasis of our analysis will be on how attitudes differ between important socio-demographic groups with a focus on age cohorts. These findings will then be discussed, and their implications debated.

Literature review

Ndletyana and Webb (2017) clearly state in a recent work that the depth and magnitude of the furore around statues and memorials should have been anticipated.¹¹ According to these authors the initial approach circa 1994 to promote unity, social cohesion and a sense of nationhood through memorialisation was not based on intellectual rigour and lacked a well thought out approach. Policy approaches were essentially just an extension of the old regime's approach to memorials and did not try and address past attachments or identities whilst dealing with the formation of new group identities or attachments.

11 Mcebisi Ndletyana and Denver A. Webb, "Social divisions carved in stone or cenotaphs to a new identity? Policy for memorials, monuments and statues in a democratic South Africa", 97-110.

In a comprehensive examination of adult South African attitudes towards redress and redistribution policies, Gibson (2004) found that group attachments predicted individuals' policy preferences in South Africa.¹² This is because attitude formation is explained by the influence of culture on identity boundaries and values.¹³ It could therefore be expected that group identities would influence attitudes towards colonial and apartheid-era statuary.

The most obvious of these group identities are race¹⁴ and political affiliation. The former is particularly important in a divided country like South Africa where the collective memories of the nation's different population groups differ so dramatically. However, political affiliation is also significant as the country's major political parties – the African National Congress (ANC), the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) – all have different positions on racial transformation and restitution in the country.¹⁵ Consequently, there is a need to examine public attitudes in South Africa across these significant fault lines of group identity.

It is clear that statues, monuments and memorials are not value-free or neutral objects but important tools that have symbolic power and memory within a society. The recent protests around the statues have clearly highlighted the need for dialogue on this issue and this chapter is an attempt to get the broader public involved in discussions and decisions around the issue of statues.

12 James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?*

13 Susan T. Fiske, and Shelley E. Taylor, *Social Cognition: From Brains to Culture*. *Social Cognition*; R. Michael Alvarez and John Brehm, *Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion*; David Sears, Carl P. Hensler and Leslie K. Speer, "Whites' Opposition to 'Busing': Self-Interest or Symbolic Politics?"

14 While the authors acknowledge that there is no such thing as 'race' in biological or physical terms, at the same time, it must be recognised that race continues to play a salient factor in many aspects of South African society. It continues to inform discussions of historical injustices, as well as policies intended to promote restitution and redress. Through the long history of processes of classification, segregation, oppression, and persecution, the social construction of 'race' has come to assume meaning and purpose, and have a bearing on everyday life, and, by extension, may plausibly have a bearing on public opinion.

15 These three parties account for more than 80% of party support in the country, though the range of policy approaches to racial transformation and restitution is likely to be even more expansive if one takes into account a broader sweep of registered political parties.

Data

Data from the 2015 round of the South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) was used for this study. SASAS is an annual, nationally representative opinion survey with a realised sample of 3,115 people aged 16 years and older living in private homes. This sample excludes those living in places such as university residences, hospitals and old age homes. SASAS fieldwork was conducted between October and December 2015, roughly six months after the Rhodes statue was removed from the UCT campus. The questionnaire was translated into the major languages spoken in South Africa. Participation in the survey was voluntary and was conducted through face-to-face interviews. Respondents were assured of anonymity and signed consent forms detailing the confidentiality of their responses.

One of the main limitations of a survey is the difficulty of knowing whether respondents have provided truthful and accurate answers to the interviewer. Extensive literature on “response bias” has been published to identify the optimal conditions under which survey participants give ‘truthful’ responses. In the case of this study, asking questions about colonial and apartheid-era statuary may invoke memories of apartheid “pain” in the respondents. Questions of this type may also prime respondents to the norms that govern racial interactions in South Africa. Under such circumstances, the opinions ventured to the interviewer may vary with the race match between the respondent and the person administering the survey. This assumption is in accordance with research on race-of-interviewer effects in other divided societies (like the United States).¹⁶ In order to resolve this problem, SASAS deploys its fieldworkers to ensure (as far as possible) that a respondent is interviewed by an interviewer of a similar race group.

16 Shirley Hatchett and Howard Schuman, “White Respondents and Race-of-Interviewer Effects”, 523-28; Nora Cate Schaeffer, “Evaluating Race-of-Interviewer Effects In a National Survey”, 400-419.

SASAS included several standard questions to gauge a respondent's socio-demographic characteristics. These included age, race group, geographic status, formal educational attainment and political affiliation. In terms of the last, the survey obtained affiliation by asking the respondent which party they felt closest to. This is a more revealing technique to measure political partisanship than a simple question about voting behaviour as many people do not vote. To account for an individual's socio-economic status, we used the Living Standard Measure (LSM). This indicator is comprised of more than 30 questions on household assets and access to services and was designed by the South African Advertising Research Foundation. This measure partitions the population into ten groups – ranging from the wealthiest (10) to the poorest (1) – based on their access to assets and services.

Results

The results section is divided into three parts. First we will consider the public preferences for 'if' and 'how' apartheid and colonial statues should be removed. Then we examine the general population's attitudes towards 'who' should make such an important decision. We will look specifically at how attitudes towards these questions vary between key socio-demographic groups in South Africa. Finally, we look at whether attitudes towards apartheid and colonial statues are related to individual preferences for other types of racial transformation.

What should be done with apartheid and colonial statues?

Respondents were asked: 'In your opinion, what should be done with statues of South Africa's apartheid and colonial leaders, such as Cecil John Rhodes, King George, Jan van Riebeeck?' Responses to this question are presented in Figure 1.1 and demonstrated that close to half of the adult public (46%) believes that the statues should be removed. Of this group of 'removers', the main preference was for the

statues to be housed in a museum (27%) and just over a tenth (12%) felt they should be destroyed. A small portion (7%) of the general adult population favoured a different option – replacing the commemorative statues of the apartheid era with those of struggle heroes. Roughly a third (34%) of the adult public indicated that the memorialisations should be left alone while the balance (16%) expressed indifference or uncertainty. Between the ‘remove’ and ‘leave alone’ camps was a third option, which suggested that ‘statues of struggle heroes should be put up next to them’. By selecting this option, respondents could choose a strategy that ‘spoke back’ to the remembrance of apartheid and colonial monarchs and politicians with new artwork. Given the inclusivity of this option, it was surprising that it found only nominal support (4%) amongst adult South Africans.

Figure 1.2 depicts how responses to the question on removing of symbolic representations of colonial and apartheid figures differ across age cohorts. The percentage favouring the removal ranged between 43% and 50% across the different cohorts. Given the apparent similarity in responses, it is appropriate to employ bivariate tests to assess how well the observed distribution fits with our expectations that our two variables (i.e. age cohort and attitudes towards statue removal) are independent. The results show clearly that the two variables are unrelated.¹⁷ The #RhodesMustFall campaign appeared to have many of the hallmarks of a general youth revolt, similar in character to the famous 1968 university student strikes in the Global North.¹⁸ We anticipated, therefore, to observe a sizeable age effect.

17 To discern the probability of a correlation between these two variables, we used a Pearson's Chi-square test and the results are as follows, Pearson $\chi^2(36) = 39.359$; $Pr = 0.322$. Of course, this type of test is only an assessment of the probability of independence of a distribution. We then used the more complex one-way analysis-of-variance model to further test whether attitudes towards statues and age are correlated. Here we treated age as a continuous variable. The results ($F(6,3080) = 1.55$, $p = 0.157$) confirm our earlier test and clearly show that age does not seem to be associated with preferences for the removal of statues of South Africa's apartheid and colonial leaders at a statistically significant level.

18 For more on the character and dynamics of the 1968 protests, see Ali 1978, 2009; Kurlansky 2004.

However, we found little evidence of intergenerational variation amongst the general population.

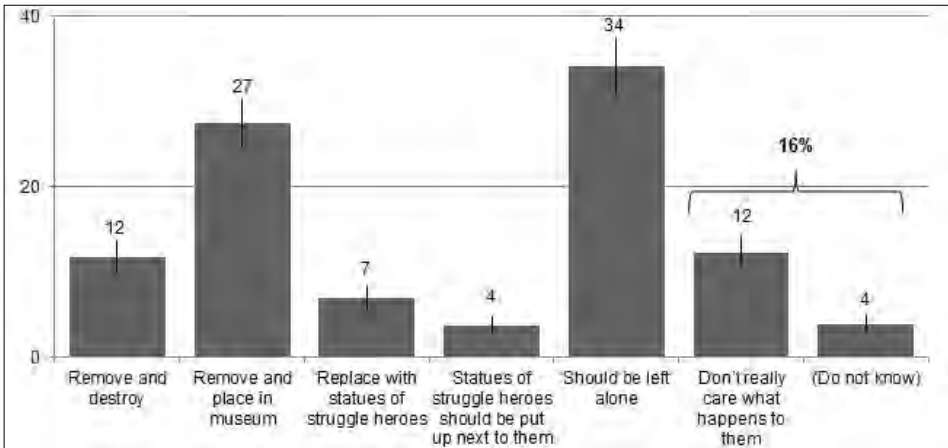


Figure 1.1 Views on what should be done with statues of apartheid and colonial leaders

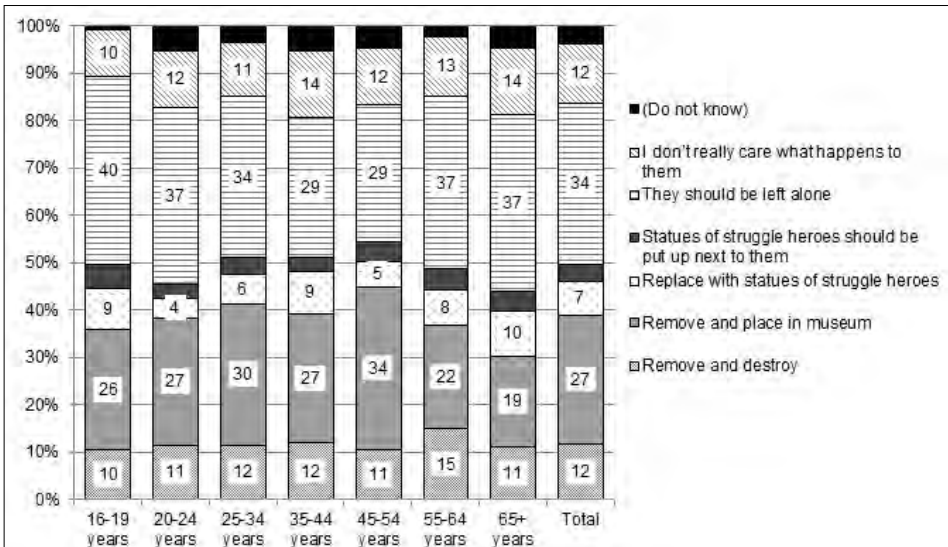


Figure 1.2 Age group differences underlying preferred action on apartheid and colonial statues

Looking beyond age cohort, Table 1.1 examines attitudes across four key socio-demographic characteristics in South African society: (i) educational attainment, (ii) spatial classification, (iii) political

affiliation, and (iv) population group. When reviewing the results of the table, it is important to remember how the characteristics of these groups intersect. Unsurprisingly, we noted distinct attitudinal variations between the country's four major population groups. The first choice of the Black African majority was removal (52%) while members of the country's different racial minorities were, on average, less willing to select this option. Relative to other population groups in South Africa, the Black African majority was also more in favour of the 'destroy' (14%) route. Compared to other racial minorities, White South Africans were the least likely to consider removal in general and considerably less willing to select destroy. A majority (61%) of White South Africans joined the 'leave alone' camp compared to about two-fifths of Coloured and half of Indian adults.

Given the country's post-transition history of party partisanship, political identity should exert an influence over individuals' policy preferences in this study. As can be observed in Table 1.1, ANC supporters strongly believed in removal (53%), with the placement in museums the most preferred choice. EFF supporters voiced an even stronger preference for removal (63%). Between ANC and EFF partisans, the main difference was between the 'museum' and the 'destroy' options. EFF supporters exhibited higher than average popularity for the destroy option (22%) when compared to other subgroups in the table. 'Leave alone' was the dominant response among DA supporters (51%), with less than a third (29%) favouring removal. Amongst those who were non-partisan – about 15% of the total adult population – primary support was again reported for the 'leave alone' (29%) and 'don't care' (24%) options. We used multivariate analysis to disentangle these results from our population group findings described above. We found that an individual's political affiliation did influence their preferences even when accounting for population group.¹⁹

19 To better comprehend the correlation between political affiliation and preferences for the removal of statues, we used a logistic regression. Here, we were interested in those who favoured destroying the statues. We created a dichotomous variable that was coded 1 for

Table 1.1 Support for the removal of Apartheid and Colonial Statues by Selected Subgroup, 2015

	Remove and destroy	Remove and place in museum	Replace with statues of struggle heroes	Statues of struggle heroes should be put up next to them	They should be left alone	(Do not care)	(Do not know)
Population group							
Black African	14.0	29.6	8.2	3.7	29.0	12.0	3.6
Coloured	3.8	21.3	2.6	3.4	43.6	21.7	3.6
Indian/Asian	6.7	15.5	4.9	6.0	49.2	9.6	8.1
White	2.0	19.0	2.0	4.4	61.1	6.2	5.4
Political Affiliation							
ANC	15.5	30.8	8.1	3.1	27.2	11.8	3.4
DA	3.3	22.3	3.4	4.6	49.8	14.1	2.4
EFF	22.4	41.2	2.5	3.0	21.0	5.8	4.0
Other Parties	7.7	26.0	8.0	6.8	35.2	13.1	3.2
No Party	5.0	19.9	4.6	5.3	45.2	15.3	4.8
Undeclared	9.1	22.6	10.2	3.4	37.6	11.0	6.1
Educational Attainment							
Post-Matric	8.8	23.6	6.1	3.0	44.7	9.1	4.6
Matric	12.2	28.5	6.7	3.8	33.1	12.0	3.7
Incomplete Secondary	11.1	30.1	5.9	3.2	34.5	11.9	3.3
Senior Primary	13.7	22.4	8.0	6.2	28.2	18.2	3.3
Junior Primary and Below	16.5	18.5	16.0	4.1	26.1	11.6	7.1
Geographic Location							
Urban formal	11.2	28.1	6.2	3.6	34.2	12.0	4.8
Urban informal	11.2	42.1	10.0	2.0	21.6	13.0	0.2
Rural trad. auth. Areas	12.3	22.3	8.7	5.0	37.9	11.4	2.5
Rural farms	18.8	17.4	2.8	2.6	29.1	24.4	5.0

Note: Row percentages.

'selected remove and destroy' and 0 'did not select remove and destroy'. We found that, even accounting for population group, the relative log odds of preferring that the statues be destroyed will decrease by 0.854 (SE= 0.368) if an individual supported the DA instead of the ANC. The relative log odds of preferring that destroy option will decrease by 1.033 (SE= 0.324) if an individual had no political party association (versus supporting the ANC).

A preference for removal was highest in the country's informal urban settlements where more than three-fifths of adults indicated an inclination to remove pre-transition leaders' statues. Looking at this general desire for removal more closely, we can observe that adult informal urban dwellers were more likely than those in living elsewhere to select the 'museum' option. Approximately two-fifths (42%) of the informal urban dwellers favoured this approach, about twice the portion of those living in other types of geographic spaces. The spatial proximity of many informal urban areas to more economically affluent areas, may be informing attitudes. Research has shown that residing in economically unequal spatial environments can have an impact on how an individual sees the core facets of a society's ethos.²⁰ In this case, it may be that informal urban dwellers' juxtaposition to economic inequality has had a specific effect on their desire for racial transformation.

We can observe an inverse association between formal educational attainment and removal of statues. Those with junior primary education or below were more inclined to support the 'removal' (51%) than other attainment groups in Table 1.1. Those with a post-matric education were the only group where the 'leave alone' (45%) option was more supported than the 'remove' possibility (39%). The observed relationship here may be informed by the overrepresentation of the racial minorities amongst the higher educational groups. We validated this thesis by using a multivariate testing and showed that formal educational attainment was not found to have a statistically significant association with preferences for the disposal of apartheid and colonial statues.²¹

20 Benjamin J. Newman, Christopher D. Johnston, and Patrick L. Lown, "False Consciousness or Class Awareness? Local Income Inequality, Personal Economic Position, and Belief in American Meritocracy", 326-40.

21 We used a standard multinomial (polytomous) logistic regression to test the predictive power of educational attainment on attitudes towards statues. We produced a model that included formal educational attainment and population group as independent variables and preferences for the removal of statues as the dependent variable. Using the 'leave alone' option as the base outcome, we found that years of formal educational attainment was not correlated with preferences when controlling for population group. This finding holds regardless whether we treated formal educational attainment as a continuous variable (i.e. years of completed formal education) or a categorical variable

This suggests that an individual's position on the country's socio-economic ladder did not predict attitudes towards this issue.

Who should decide about what should be done?

In this section we move from the individual's preferences for action to *who* should make decisions about historical redress. In SASAS 2015, respondents were asked 'who should decide what happens to these statues of South Africa's apartheid and colonial leaders?' The most common selected option was 'the government should decide' (34%) while around a fifth (22%) favours a referendum on the matter to allow citizens to decide (Figure 1.3). There was surprisingly low support (10%) for the strategy of letting 'those most hurt by the past' decide, while one might similarly have expected a greater share to opt for the 'academics and historians' option (15%). Around a tenth (11%) said they would choose 'none of the above', but these consist largely of those expressing indifference in the preceding question.

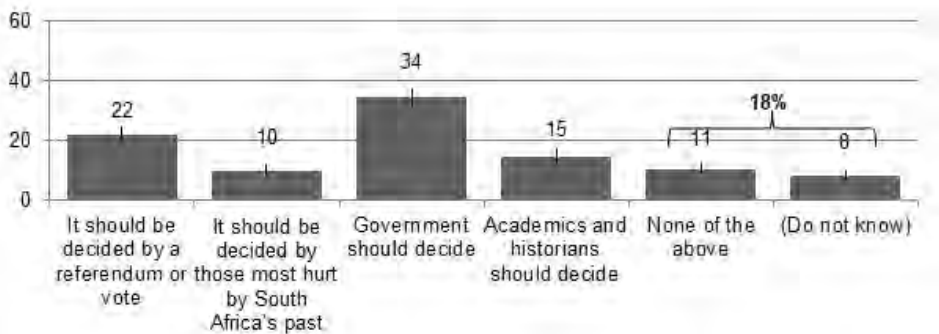


Figure 1.3: Public Views on who should decide what happens to the statues

(as it is treated in Table 1.1). If we substituted our LSM indicator with formal educational attainment, our other measure of socio-economic status was also found to be statistically insignificant.

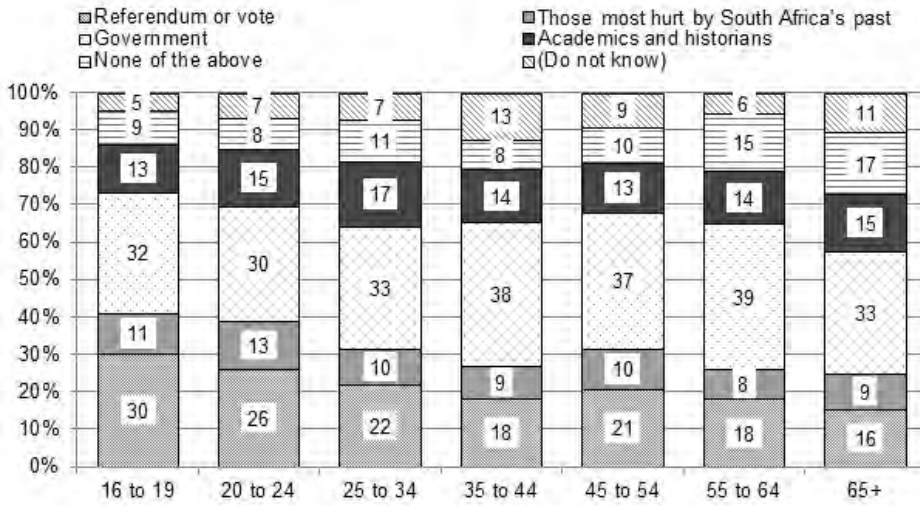


Figure 1.4: Age group differences underlying preferred group who decides on what happens to the apartheid and colonial statues

An individual's preferences for *who* should decide had a robust correlation with *how* they wanted South African society to resolve the problem. Adults who thought that the statues should be removed were more likely to indicate a preference for allowing 'those most hurt by the past' to determine the statues' future than those who preferred the status quo.²² This is particularly true of those who preferred that the statues be destroyed. In addition, we note that those who thought that the statues should be placed in a museum, were more inclined to trust the government to resolve the matter than those who favoured some other options. Remarkably, supporters of 'leave alone' were much more willing to trust the intelligentsia to determine the statues removal than those who backed removal.

²² We noted that those who favoured removing the statues tended to prefer certain decision-making options. This suggests a correlation between these two attitudinal variables. The results of a Pearson's Chi-square test ($\chi^2(30) = 1644.827$; $Pr = 0.000$) conforms to our expectations. In order to investigate this observation further we used a multinomial logistic regression to determine if this relationship held even when controlling for socio-demographic variables like population group, age, formal years of education, geographic location and political affiliation. The outcome of this regression confirmed that the statistically significant relationship between these variables persisted even accounting for these socio-demographic variables.

Preferences for which group should decide differ significantly by age cohort (Figure 1.4). It was interesting to note that twice as many 16-19 year olds (33%) support the option of a referendum as the basis for deciding, compared to those of pensionable age (16%).²³ To further explore attitudinal subgroup differences on this question, Table 1.2 presents data on how attitudes vary across three important socio-demographic groups in South African society. Black African adults were more likely than any of the nation's racial minorities to identify government as the arbiter of such decisions. In contrast, less than a fifth of white, coloured or Indian adults selected government. Of all population groups, coloured adults were the least willing, on average, to consider the government option. Compared to other population groups, white South Africans tended not to favour a referendum on the question of statues. Unlike what was observed for other population groups in South Africa, even young white adults were disinclined to selected referendum as a desirable route. Instead, young white adults tended to agree with their elders and opted for academics and historians.

Substantive differences on who should decide were noted amongst supporters of the country's major political parties. We note that 44% of ANC supporters were inclined to say that the government must decide – no other partisan subgroup displayed a similar level of faith in government. A correlation between age and decision-making attitudes play help explain why EFF supporters and the political unaffiliated have a strong preference for deciding by means of a referendum or vote. Both EFF supporters and the unaffiliated tend to be, on average, much younger than the supporters of other political affiliation subgroups.

23 A one-way analysis of variance indicated that mean age differs significantly amongst the different decision-making options ($F(5,3082) = 7.46, p = 0.000$). We then used a Scheffe multiple-comparison test to determine which groups differed from each other. The results show that the age difference between options 'government' and 'referendum or vote' is 3.65, and this difference is statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. Statistically significant differences were also noted between 'referendum' and 'none of the above' as well as between 'referendum' and 'do not know'. These observed differences remained statistically significant even if we used another multiple-comparison test like Sidak or Bonferroni.

Interestingly, EFF supporters were more likely to select government as an arbiter than supporters of the DA. It is noteworthy to observe that a large majority of the political non-aligned or undeclared indicated a preference for option other than government.

Table 1.2 How should it be decided what is done with the statues of South Africa's apartheid and colonial leaders, by selected subgroups

	Referendum or Vote	Those most hurt by the past	Government	Academics and historians	None of the above	(Do not know)
Population group						
Black African	22.7	11.2	39.3	12.8	7.4	6.6
Coloured	22.9	5.9	16.4	15.1	19.3	20.4
Indian/Asian	21.0	5.5	19.2	16.1	25.5	12.6
White	12.6	6.3	17.0	30.4	24.1	9.6
Political Affiliation						
ANC	20.7	10.5	44.0	11.6	7.3	5.9
DA	15.1	9.5	21.4	19.6	21.5	12.9
EFF	31.8	15.5	33.9	1.7	12.6	4.4
Other Parties	18.3	7.5	36.2	16.7	13.9	7.4
No Party	28.1	6.5	18.2	24.5	11.0	11.8
Undeclared	21.4	11.5	28.4	16.4	11.4	11.0
Living Standard Measurement (LSM)						
LSM 1-3	9.6	3.2	50.5	17.2	9.1	10.3
LSM 4-5	19.4	10.9	44.1	11.4	7.7	6.4
LSM 6-7	23.8	11.0	33.2	14.5	7.6	9.9
LSM 8-9	23.8	12.8	26.8	13.8	14.8	8.0
LSM 10	16.4	3.4	16.6	29.3	27.0	7.2

Note: Row percentages.

We detected substantive class-based differences in Table 1.2. Half of the poor (LSM 1-3) chose the state option, compared with 44% in the lower middle (LMS 4-5) and 33% of those in the upper middle (LSM 6-7). Compared to their less affluent counterparts, those in

the upper LSM categorisations were the least likely to select the 'government'. Support for a referendum was higher among those with a medium living standard and lowest amongst the poor. Members of the top LSM group were found to be more likely to choose academics than all other LSM groups. A similar pattern was observed if we used formal educational attainment as a measure of socio-economic status. It could be argued that this apparent relationship is artificial – a product of existing racial inequalities in socio-economic class composition. Using multivariate analysis, however, we find that these effects hold even when controlling for population group and political partisanship.²⁴ This outcome points to the salience of socio-economic position as a driver of attitudes towards redress in South Africa.

Support for existing policies of racial transformation

People often have limited information about a subject and this presents a problem when they must make a decision on an unfamiliar matter. Using sophisticated experiments, researchers have shown that people make sense of the world using heuristics.²⁵ Instead of engaging in exhaustive gathering and processing of information, individuals use cognitive mental shortcuts to categorise the limited information accessible to them and simplify attitude formation.²⁶ Cognitive heuristics are especially employed when individuals are asked to frame attitudes towards a complex policy issue (such as the disposal of colonial and apartheid statues). Heuristics can include general assumptions

24 In order to further explore the predictive affected played by LSM in selecting a preferred group to decide the problem, we used a multinomial logistic regression analysis. As our dependent variable we have preferences for decision-makers and we have population group and LSM as independent variables. Using government as the base outcome, we find that the relative log odds of selecting the 'referendum' ($r=0.259$; $SE=0.054$), 'those hurt by the past' ($r=0.184$; $SE=0.067$), and 'academics and historians' ($r=0.115$; $SE=0.057$) options will increase if an individual gained one LSM rank. These observed correlations were statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level or higher.

25 Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Phillip E. Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

26 Fiske & Taylor, *Social Cognition*.

about human nature or political predispositions or even elite clues. By using these shortcuts, individuals can form attitudes that are ‘rational’ in the sense that these attitudes are internally consistent.²⁷ This is a very limited conception of rationality, though, as it ignores any deeper rationality requirements for the content of attitudes.

We posit that people use their general predispositions about racial transformation policy as *heuristics* to shape attitudes towards the removal of apartheid and colonial statuary. The remainder of this section will seek to validate this thesis. In order to gauge understandings of transformation, we turned to data on specific redress policies. In SASAS 2015, respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with three statements about specific forms of racial transformation. Responses to these questions are presented in Figure 1.5 for the country’s Black African majority and racial minorities. It is evident that the Black African population is predominantly in favour of these policies of racial transformation while racial minority members are more hesitant in their support. Although we note dissimilarities in how each of the country’s different racial minorities viewed these policies in 2015, these disparities are not as stark as may have been anticipated. While disagreement was also more prevalent amongst White South Africans, high levels of disagreement were observed for adult members of the Coloured and Indian groups (see Roberts 2014 for a more comprehensive examination of redress attitudes of this type).²⁸

27 James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk, “Reconsidering the Rational Public: Cognition, Heuristics, and Mass Opinion.” In *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice and the Bounds of Rationality*, edited by Arthur Lupia, Mathew D. McCubbins and Samuel L. Popkin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153–82.

28 Benjamin J. Roberts, “Your Place or Mine? Beliefs about Inequality and Redress Preferences in South Africa.” *Social Indicators Research* 118, no. 3 (2014): 1167–90, <https://doi:10.1007/s11205-013-0458-9>.

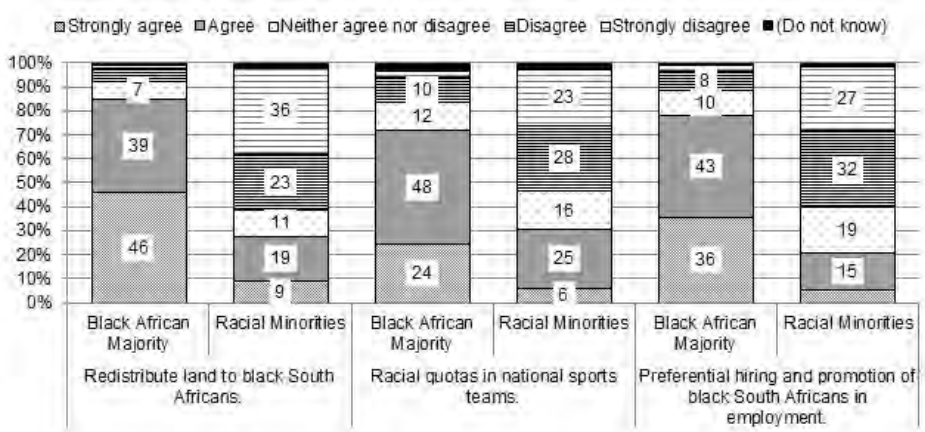


Figure 1.5: Public Attitudes towards Different Forms of Racial Redress across Selected Groups

In order understand whether individual attitudes towards racial transformation affected preferences for the disposal of statues we created a Racial Transformation Index. This indicator was constructed by combining responses to the three questions depicted in Figure 1.5 and converting them into a 0-10 index.²⁹ ‘Don’t know’ responses to these statements were treated as missing. The higher the score on the Racial Transformation Index, the greater the reported support for racial redress. Mean results on this index are depicted across the statutory disposal preferences in Table 1.3 and we can clearly see evidence of a substantive correlation. Individuals who favour the ‘remove and destroy’ (M=8.02; SE=0.13) or ‘replace with heroes’ (M=7.64; SE=0.14) options tended to have a high index score.³⁰ Conversely, low support

29 To determine the internal consistency of the Racial Transformation Index, we used Cronbach’s alpha to examine the index’s reliability. The result ($\alpha=0.78$) suggested that the three items have shared covariance and probably measure the same underlying concept. The national mean on the index was 6.73 (SE= 0.062), indicating a more moderate position on this measure than may be expected given the country’s history. Examining the skewness (-0.945) and kurtosis (3.117) confirm that the index has a symmetric distribution with well-behaved tails.

30 When investigating the mean Racial Transformation Index score on the ‘remove and destroy’ option we noted that the statistical distribution has a higher kurtosis (6.36) than the curvature you would expect to find in a normal distribution. In other words, the index mean values are clustered at the end of the distribution indicating a uniformity of opinion within the ‘removed and destroyed’ camp. This leptokurtic distribution result can be contrasted with how the index distribution looks in the ‘leave alone’ camp (2.10)

for redress was associated with the ‘leave alone’ (M=5.75; SE=0.12) option. This demonstrates that attitudes towards pre-transition statutory cannot be understood independently of attitudes towards existing policies of racial redress.

Table 1.3: Mean Racial Transformation Index Score across Attitudes towards the removal of Apartheid and Colonial Statues

	Mean	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]		skewness	kurtosis
Individual Preferences for Colonial and Apartheid Statues						
Removed and destroyed	8.02	0.13	7.78	8.27	-1.44	6.36
Replaced with struggle hero statues	7.64	0.14	7.36	7.92	-1.09	4.63
Removed and placed in a museum	7.30	0.10	7.10	7.50	-1.38	5.23
Struggle hero statues placed next to them	7.04	0.20	6.65	7.43	-1.08	4.38
(Do not know)	6.48	0.38	5.73	7.23	-0.64	2.37
I don't really care what happens to them	6.45	0.19	6.08	6.82	-0.62	2.26
They should be left alone	5.75	0.12	5.52	5.99	-0.44	2.10
Individual Preferences for Collective Decision-Making						
Those most hurt by South Africa's past	7.52	0.13	7.27	7.78	-1.03	4.69
Government	7.51	0.09	7.34	7.69	-1.39	5.65
Referendum or vote	6.89	0.12	6.65	7.12	-0.98	3.36
(Do not know)	5.77	0.26	5.25	6.29	-0.30	1.81
Academics and historians	5.74	0.20	5.35	6.13	-0.48	1.98
None of the above	5.30	0.22	4.86	5.74	-0.02	1.91

- here the distribution is more mesokurtic. People who are in this camp were found to be much less uniform in their support for racial transformation.

An individual's attitudes towards racial transformation policies seemed to be associated with their preferences for 'who' should make decisions on redressing post-apartheid memorialisation strategies. Those who were uncertain (M=5.77; SE=0.26), favoured leaving the decision to academia (M=5.74; SE=0.20) or selected 'none of the above' (M=5.30; SE=0.22) exhibited relatively low Racial Transformation Index mean scores. To better understand this apparent correlation we can use multivariate techniques to determine the predictive strength of the index relative to the following predictive variables: population group, socio-economic status and partisanship. In all cases, the predictive effect of the index was observed even controlling for these other variables.³¹ It is clear therefore, that the general public's preferences for who should decide on how apartheid and colonial-era statues should be preserved (if at all) cannot be isolated from their general attitudes towards the country's broader programme of racial redress and restitution.

Discussion

Overall, we found that the public's views on colonial and apartheid-era statuary were polarised. Many demanded removal which seems to signal a desire for a new type of commemorative public culture – one that excludes statues of colonial and apartheid era masters. Others preferred the status quo, displaying a defence of the current monumentalising efforts of the post-apartheid state – where new heroes stand alongside villains of the past. Even greater polarisation was observed when respondents were asked about who should decide the fate of these statues. Some backed government while others favoured

31 To test whether the relationship between the Racial Transformation Index and the individual preferences for who decides, we used a multinomial logistic regression. Preferences for decision-makers were the dependent variable while the index, age, population group, socio-economic status and political affiliation were the independent variables. Using 'historians and academics' as the base outcome, the relative log odds of selecting people most hurt by South Africa's past ($r=0.129$; $SE=0.044$), government ($r=0.259$; $SE=0.054$) and referendum ($r=0.212$; $SE=0.043$) increased if the Racial Transformation Index score grows by one unit. These associations were statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level or higher.

a referendum and there was no majority position. Our analysis has also shown that how the public sees the statutory reflects a larger division about how South African society should be transformed. Perhaps this is not surprising. Pre-transition monuments (like the statue of Cecil John Rhodes on the UCT campus) represent a range of different symbolic continuities with the colonial and apartheid era. They are, in other words, symbols of a truncated decolonisation process.

After the end of apartheid, the new democratic regime combined the preservation of colonial and apartheid monuments with the commission of new memorials next to or nearby the preserved monuments. This created spaces characterised by a multiplicity of different representations of the nation's various cultural and historical elements. This post-apartheid attempt to create polyvocal spaces encouraged the diversification of the symbolic landscape.³² Holmes and Loehwing call this strategy 'multiplicative commemoration'.³³ This strategy, however, finds little support amongst the general population. We found that only a small portion of the South African adult public backed multiplicative commemoration with most preferring either preservation or removal. This outcome should lead us to question the standing, and therefore suitability, of the country's current multiplicative strategy. Indeed, our results seem to support an existing critique of South Africa's strategy of heritage preservation within the literature on memorialisation.³⁴

The 2015 #RhodesMustFall campaign was a youth movement that seemed to speak to a common set of values amongst the wider (and so called) 'Born Free' generation. Consequently, we may have expected clear intergenerational differences to have emerged in our study.

32 Ali Khangela Hlongwane, "Commemoration, Memory and Monuments in the Contested Language of Black Liberation: The South African Experience." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 2, no. 4 (2008): 135-70.

33 Carolyn E. Holmes, and Melanie Loehwing, "Icons of the Old Regime: Challenging South African Public Memory Strategies in #RhodesMustFall", 1215.

34 Karel Anthonie Bakker and Liana Müller, "Intangible Heritage and Community Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa". 48-54; Elizabeth Rankin, "Creating/curating Cultural Capital: Monuments and Museums for Post-Apartheid South Africa", 72-98.

But we could not find proof for a strong age effect underlying statutory preferences. Despite the fact that today's young adults grew up under a different political system from their older counterparts, the new post-apartheid generation seemed to favour broadly similar options to redress the problem of colonial and apartheid statues. This outcome seems to correspond with public opinion research by Mattes (2012)³⁵ which found that South African youth was no more greatly predisposed towards principles such as equality and redress than older generations.³⁶ However, we did note that the youth were more likely to support the most democratic of the decision-making options when asked about who should decide the statues' fate. This outcome could serve as a possible contradiction of Mattes's central thesis that the country's post-apartheid generation is as "lukewarm" on democracy as their parents and grandparents.

There is little evidence that the observed polarisation over pre-transition monuments is the product of class-based differences. Population group differences characterise the survey results with black African adults more likely to support removal than members of the country's various racial minorities. It is possible to explain attitudinal differences amongst black African and white adults by referring to how individuals employ memories about their groups' collective pasts to form attitudes about present-day events. However, the lack of attitudinal variation between the white, coloured and Indian adults is unanticipated given the country's history. One admittedly contentious hypothesis is that this might be related to the popularity of the DA amongst the country's racial minorities.³⁷ Political support for the DA tended to correlate with backing for the status quo. This finding may be related to the brand of non-racialism currently employed and promoted by that party

35 Robert Mattes, "The 'Born Frees': The Prospects for Generational Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa", 133-53.

36 Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid*.

37 For a fuller discussion on the role of race and class in relation to voting patterns in South African elections, see Habib and Naidu (1999, 2006).

(see Anciano, 2016 for a fuller discussion).³⁸ More work is needed to validate this thesis and better understand minority group differences on the question of colonial and apartheid statues.

One of the most interesting findings of this chapter concerns how academics and historians are viewed by the general adult population. In our analysis those displaying greater levels of opposition to transformation policies tended to display more support for academics and historians having ultimate decision-making power over colonial and apartheid-era statuary. The basis for this preference will clearly require further follow-up investigation.

Conclusion

The 2015 #RhodesMustFall campaign brought renewed attention on issues of race, redress, restitution, social cohesion, and active citizenship in South Africa. However, the general public remains divided on one of the campaign's central calls – that of changing society's approach to memorialisations of the old regime. This division signifies the difficulties and contestations likely to be encountered in pushing forward change on this issue. One of the possible contributions to confronting and minimising such divisions would be to advocate for greater public dialogue as a means of promoting a fuller, multi-perspective understanding on historic memorialisation that is rooted within a broader agenda of redress and restitution. An imperative of such dialogues, as argued in Swartz's *Another Country: Everyday Social Restitution* (2016), would be to bring diverse groups of people together for conversations that recognise and acknowledge past injustice and the effects it continues to have on the present. Such intergroup dialogues also require meaningful location of oneself within these past histories and their legacies, and a consideration of

38 Fiona Anciano, "A Dying Ideal: Non-Racialism and Political Parties in Post-Apartheid South Africa", 195-214.

the obligations one acquires by virtue of their location.³⁹ While it by no means represents a social panacea to a complex debate, dialogues of this kind could prove transformative in creating a broader consensus on how we as a society deal with pre-transition memorials.

In the course of this chapter, we have analysed the attitudes of South Africa's sampled population towards an issue of particular importance. The findings presented from this analysis are the first evidence concerning the predispositions of the public towards the symbolic representations of colonial and apartheid figures following the end of #RhodesMustFall campaign. The study was based on a limited number of questions and, as such, the researchers were restricted in their scope and exploration. There is a need for further quantitative analyses and to continue to monitor change in attitudes over time. Moreover, there are certain questions that even a more in-depth quantitative survey would be unable to answer. Careful, nuanced and in-depth qualitative explorations that seek to further understand the 'stubborn kernel' of opposition to transformation (Dixon et al., 2007) that continues to exist in the country, especially amongst minority groups, is urgently required.

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39 Sharlene Swartz, *Another Country: Everyday Social Restitution.*

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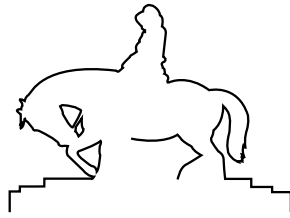
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Chapter 2

By design, survival and recognition:
Exploring the contemporary significance of
monuments in South Africa

Anitra Nettleton



In the past 23 years, since the first democratic elections saw the ascendancy of the African National Congress to power in the Republic of South Africa, there has been a continuous, if somewhat muffled history of both the destruction and the erection of monuments that inhabit the public domain. With a constitutional democracy in place, South Africa could be said to have the ideal platform for the formation of a public domain, a space of open debate in which different views could be aired and compared. This public sphere, extrapolating from Habermas (1989), could possibly be stretched contain elements of both western and indigenous African principles of debate and deference to majority decisions. Yet, over the last three years tensions around the status of public monuments have, as it were, erupted from a volcanic substructure of reaction to colonialism and apartheid, resulting in a wide range of shock waves across the republic's rather fragile politico-cultural landscape.

In this chapter, I take a deeper look at the whole question of why monuments are such a focus of attention, for their makers, their audiences and their detractors/destroyers. Of all the fixed forms of visual art that appeared in the public domain in the past, with the exception of architecture, monuments have been the most visible and accessible. That, today, many monuments from the past are dwarfed in size and prominence by the rampant billboards and banners of commercial advertising, seems not to have diminished the symbolic importance attached to their presence as things that commemorate, or otherwise remind, their viewers of the past. For monuments are not

merely more public sculptures, they are, as Reynolds (1996) succinctly puts it, ‘embodiments and symbols of [our] traditions and values’.

In what follows, I explore what constitutes the significance of a monument, from historical circumstances to the contemporary domain. Because both the word ‘monument’ and the current secular and civic practices (as opposed to religious and royal/elite/autocratic ones) of commemoration to which it refers, have largely (although by no means exclusively) been located within western cultural traditions and practices, it is important to unpack their origins and ostensible meanings to enable a forthright assessment of their relevance in a postcolonial and supposedly decolonising state. My argument, to some extent, derives from Alois Riegl’s (1982) tripartite definition of monuments, originally published in 1903, but only translated into English in 1982. Riegl’s concern was largely to establish how cultural and historical values of objects can be defined in relation to issues of preservation – so that anything at any scale or in any context may become a venerable ‘monument’ (Riegl 1982). My endeavour differs in that I want to understand why public, large-scale civic monuments having come into being particularly in the South African historical landscape, either live on or perish in relation to political and social imperatives. In other words, what makes their significance relevant or not?

Defining the field

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1964) definitions of the term “monument” are instructive in helping to circumscribe what may or may not be considered such. The word itself derives from the Latin *monumentum*: “Latin *Monere* = remind, and suffix *-ment* - result or means of visible action”, and I have picked out from a longer list the three definitions most relevant to my discussion:

1. Anything that, by its survival, commemorates a person, action, period or event.
2. A structure, edifice or erection intended to commemorate a notable person, action or event.
3. A structure of stone or other material erected over the grave or in church etc in memory of the dead.
4. A carved figure, effigy. (Oxford English Dictionary 1964, 1278)

These definitions encompass both the kinds of things that may be considered monuments, and their function as memorials that commemorate, and thus implicate notions of memory. Thus the relationship between monuments and memorials becomes an important factor in understanding the symbolic domain in which monuments operate. Clearly a memorial is something intended to “remind” the person paying attention, to call something past into the present, and can take a number of forms including a memorial service, a memorial action, a commemorative bequest. The Oxford English Dictionary’s definitions of “memorial”, in its simple formulation, is “*sign of remembrance, memorial, monument*” (Oxford English Dictionary 1964, 1232). But it then continues to outline the following substrata of “memorial”:

1. *Remembrance, recollection; (a person’s) memory or power of recollection.*
2. *A memorial act; an act of commemoration*
3. *A thing, as a monument, a custom, etc., by which the memory of a person, thing, or event is preserved.*
4. *A record, a chronicle; esp. in pl., memoirs.* (Oxford English Dictionary 1964, 1232)

It is a common contention that the memorial act, that is, the act of remembering, and so the remembrance, on one hand, and the thing, custom and/or record on the other are inextricably linked in closing the symbolic circle which makes the monument relevant in any context.

Once the thing is no longer part of an active form of remembering, it cannot act as a monument, or even as a memorial. The memorial aspect of monuments is reflected in the fact that many monuments are called memorials, as in the German *denkmal*, the Nederlands *gedenkteken* and the isiZulu term *isikhumbuzo*.

However, while it can be argued that all monuments can function as memorials in that they are reminders, sometimes embedded in commemoration that is proud and desired, at other times unwanted and injurious, it cannot be said that all memorials are monuments. Furthermore, for a monument to perform its memorial function, the memories it invokes/evokes would have to have some affirmative value, as, for example, in marking pride in those who fought for a (just?) cause and died in the process. It could also be argued that memorials that are not monuments might be preferable to the monumental structures that litter our actual and cultural landscapes.

The difference between a memorial and a monument can be clearly articulated by dissecting the adjectival form of the word monument, i.e. “monumental”. In its simplest application, something that serves as a monument may be termed “monumental”, but the more usual, metaphorical and colloquial use of the term, as in “monumental blunder”, meaning “*massive and permanent, extremely great, stupendous*” (Oxford English Dictionary 1964, 1278) is the one most commonly used in describing the things made to act as monuments. The fact that monuments are associated with size, grandeur and longevity or permanence, as memorials to persons and deeds deemed worthy of remembrance, suggests that the erection of monuments is always based in an intention to aim for immortality. It is also always based on assumptions that the values of those erecting the monuments will remain valid for succeeding generations, in spite of the fact that the destruction/removal of monuments – a form of iconoclasm (Gamboni 1997; Grant 2001; Freedberg 1989, 2012) – offers continuous evidence that they do not.

Monuments by design

The Oxford English Dictionary definitions numbers 2-3 cited above suggest that monuments that are made as such, are designed as mnemonic devices, erected to last and commemorate persons and events. Such monuments are moreover generally associated with public spaces, and, although some may be privately funded, the majority are funded through the mechanisms of the state or the polity, as statements of history. A monument by design must be VISIBLE from time of production: it must be intended to uphold a particular construction of memory in the public eye. If, as Nora (1989) suggests, history is written in order to enable us to forget, because public history is the repository of memory, then, presumably monuments, as public memorials, enable the same kind of forgetting and remembering. Nora offers the following differentiation between memory and history, which gives this differentiation more eloquently:

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectics of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformation, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. (Nora 1989, 7)

Yet it is questionable whether remembering events and persons depicted in figurative monuments is possible without verbal clues, or commemorative events and performances – in other words monuments as memorials are dependent on forms of history, and are therefore only as significant as the possible associations that can be made between them and known persons and/or events. It is possibly the enforced performance of obsequy demanded by larger than life-size and imposing figures of hated characters such as the colonial master Cecil John Rhodes that make them so distasteful to those who have been oppressed.

Historically, monumental public civic sculptures and memorial architectural structures intended to last over centuries were only occasionally, and quite exceptionally, erected in indigenous African cultures South of the Sahara. In 'the west', however, they have a very long history going back to Ancient Greece. In Egypt, Nubia, Axum, India and Asia most monumental structures and sculptures were religious and tied to a theistic monarchic polity rather than a nominally civic one. Apart from the large multitude of massive sculptures to deities and Pharaohs that littered the ancient Egyptian and Nubian landscape, there were no other figurative large-scale (life-size or above) stone or bronze sculptures made by African artists that were equivalent in size or propagandistic function to the civic sculptures of Roman emperors, such as the Augustus of the Prima Porta the Colossus of Constantine, or the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (Brilliant, 1974), all of which are still used as models for monumental bronze sculptures, even those in Africa. The tradition of commemorative, naturalistic and identifiable individual portraits being used as memorials/monuments, can be traced back to the ancient Roman Republic, with a provincial offshoot in the Fayum portraits in Ptolemaic Egypt and similar small forms dating much later in Ghana and possibly Nigeria. The portrait tradition continued through Europe among the aristocracy in tomb effigies, was revived in the Italian Renaissance in contexts that moved out of the burial context, and into the Enlightenment at which point, making monuments becomes part of the public sphere.

Jurgen Habermas (1989) argues that the public sphere emerged in Europe specifically, from a space in which the power of royal elites was advanced and upheld to one constituted by families and their heads, the urban middle classes. The constitution of the public sphere lies in how these private families moved outside and beyond the domestic sphere, with private individuals becoming public citizens. Here work/labour moved from the family compounds into spaces more open to public access and egress and in which debate and reasoned criticism could occur among peers. It was in this open sphere that new monuments could have functioned as memory-markers for secular and non-

royal events and persons. Yet, the tradition of monument making has remained elitist, driven by political agendas, and almost entirely patriarchal until quite late into the 20th century. Monuments depicting images of men standing high on plinths dominate in Europe and the USA, and, while allegorical group sculptures often include voluptuous female figures, many modelled on Greek originals such as the Nike of Samothrace, they seldom commemorated real-life women. Among the most vaunted memorial forms, equestrian statuary associated with status and power since Ancient Roman times – viz. the sculpture of Marcus Aurelius in Rome – has almost completely excluded women, being used to commemorate male leaders everywhere. It has been employed in similar ways in many (small scale) examples of African sculpture such as the Djenné terracotta horsemen (De Grunne 2014) and the horsemen of Yoruba house posts (Blier 1998). The power dynamics at play here are of course based in the fact that there have been few women in the past with sufficient power to hand to make such monuments either necessary or desirable.

The image of Cecil John Rhodes, in a prominent position on the campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT), belonged to a long line of images of seated male potentates, but possibly owed its closest debt to Auguste Rodin's sculpture called *The Thinker*. Its naturalistic rendering of anatomy, idealised form, scale and material all sit firmly within the western tradition of monumentality, even though its emotive exaggerations of pose suggest a debt to early modernism. This, nevertheless entirely predictable and almost bankrupt tradition of naturalistic sculpture was exported across the world in the form of colonial monuments followed by independence monuments, the latter often in the very tired style of social realism favoured in the old 'communist bloc', and now prevalent in the postcolonial industry of monument making by Chinese and Korean artists.

That the many colonial and some postcolonial monuments, made and installed by design have suffered, and are still now suffering similar fates of dismantling and deposition as that meted out to the statue of

Rhodes, or complete demolition (which fate is best, depends on one's point of view) bears out the idea that monuments by design are most likely temporary and most certainly not eternal. Such monuments' attempted imposition of values is replaced by their evocation of shared histories of oppression and exploitation, as is abundantly clear from the furore that surrounded the #RhodesMustFall campaign. The triumphalist messages the old monuments were intended to convey to their original white audiences (as though the black people who encountered them did not see them) can no longer be tolerated in a changed cultural and political space. Some of this intolerance may be related to an argument mounted by Steven Knapp (1989) in which he posits that collective memory, whether it has any actual relationship to actual events or not, in some senses coerces individuals to acknowledge their culpability in the remembered events. Following this logic, such statues should be as discomfiting for the descendants of white settlers (and new white settlers) as they are for the present generations of black citizens.

Monuments by survival: a matter of heritage

In the South African landscape there are innumerable monuments that have survived from the past. Many of these, like the Rhodes Memorial on Signal Hill above the UCT campus, are monuments that were built in the colonial and later apartheid eras. The Rhodes Memorial, because it is so far outside the normal passage of foot traffic of ordinary Cape Town residents or UCT students, has gone relatively unremarked. However, a monument such as the Kruger Monument in Church Square, in the centre of Pretoria/Tshwane city, while it still survives, has been moved, defended, defaced and restored many times and imprisoned in steel fences and rolls of razor wire when protest action is anticipated (Figure 2.1). It corresponds to a definition of a 'monument' (again from the Oxford English Dictionary 1964): *Anything that, by its survival, commemorates a person, action, period or event.* The Kruger monument in Pretoria commemorates, and undoubtedly

celebrates, a whole history of various successive forms of resistance to oppression, and to the supremacy of white Afrikanerdom.



Figure 2.1 Van Wouw, Anton. *Monument to Paul Kruger*. [Bronze sculpture]. Church Square, Pretoria. 1896. Photograph: Anitra Nettleton, January 2016.

Yet, because it forms part of an historical narrative, and is claimed as part of partisan heritage, functioning as what Kuhn (2010, 299) calls a “memory text”, it survives. Postulating that memory texts allow for social memory, and for an acceptance of memory as unfixed and open to interpretation, Kuhn places both narrative and performance at the centre of “memory work”. The Kruger monument has thus been a pivot on which numerous pro- and antagonistic performances have revolved and according to the Mayor of Tshwane, will remain at the centre of the square as it becomes a more inclusive heritage site. The Rhodes statue, however, went largely unremarked until it became a pivot in the antagonistic and agonistic political environment of the #RhodesMustFall movement in 2015. It formed a fulcrum for discussions about decolonialising universities, but not because of what it was (a statue in a western mode).

Some survivals are accidental in the sense that they are not understood, as might be the case with the Miner's Statue in Johannesburg. The statue represented three miners, one white, the overseer, fully dressed and with a lamp (to lead the way), two black rock drill operators, bare to the waist and doing most of the labour. The racist overtones of this composition appear to have gone unnoticed by all – students of mine interviewing passers-by about the monument in 2004-2006, were often told that it represented men manning an anti-aircraft gun rather than a rock drill. None of the interviewees appeared to have noticed the clearly delineated differences between black and white figures in the scene. Perhaps because these are nameless individuals, because nobody really knows what they represent, and because they are not at the centre of any performances they have been ignored, except by the metal thieves who regularly manage to remove parts of sculptures or their brass plaques around the South African landscape. Such sculptures are kept as heritage, restored and re-patinated, without a clear understanding of their origins, accepted as part of a wider history and a continuously shifting net of heritage

As 'heritage' is an idea that is pivotal in the cultural politics of remembrance and of identity, it is important to unpack its nuances to establish some parameters. The Oxford English Dictionary (1964, 894) defines heritage as: *What is or may be inherited, inherited circumstances or benefits, (fig) portion allotted to anybody*. Presumably, public heritage is commonly held, but is not governed by legal documents such as the will made out by an individual. It is on the assumption of the joint ownership of what is now defined as a cultural heritage that legal systems and acts of parliament attempt to outline what may or may not be done to with or around public monuments.

Some of the issues that arise are summarised here. As against a private heritage, public heritage should be of value to all, and the value would have to be arrived at by consensus. Clearly there was consensus, in the case of the Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town that the values that Rhodes represented were not acceptable to the majority

of students involved in the action demanding its removal. Yet there is an argument to be made that the value of a monument may inhere in aspects other than whom it represents. Schmahmann (2016) argues that the statue, as an artwork by a woman artist, should have been accorded some degree of recognition for its aesthetic worth and its historical importance as representative of a woman's overcoming of gender biases. While this may have been extraordinary at the time of its installation in 1934, the fact of its female authorship does not render the figure any less patriarchal in its affect. It also does not exonerate those, who decided to erect the sculpture as a monument to Rhodes, from a kind of complicity in the commemoration of a now widely decried colonial master. Schmahmann's argument also acknowledges the problematics of assuming a common understanding of aesthetic value, and a common recognition of the importance of women's advancement. Neither was acknowledged in the rhetoric of the protests.

The controversy highlights that the ways in which public heritage is allotted in contemporary society has not changed very much – in the contemporary, postcolonial, polyglot African nation state, public monuments are put in place by central governments, sometimes with a nod to ethnic minorities, but more often than not, with an eye to political consequence. In such societies where social structures of the past were not homogenous, and where contemporary social structures often harden along ethnic and religious boundaries, common cultural ancestries and futures can only be imagined, to use Benedict Anderson's (1991) notion. Ultimately this political context calls into question whether there can be a "public" heritage without a centralised political control through which values and narratives are filtered. As in the past, peasants had very little say in the vested interests of the kings, so, today, the working classes have little say in the ways in which monuments are designed and constructed. The toppling of monuments of the former Soviet regime across Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s after the fall of the Iron Curtain bears ample testimony to the ways in which people enact their power against their former oppressors (Freedberg 2012; Grant 2001).

Monuments by recognition, Art by appropriation

There is a final ontological status for monuments that encompasses both the dimension of design and survival. Many large-scale sculptures and architectural structures are in some sort monuments, being recognised as such in the present because of their size and aesthetic content (Riegl 1982). Often their size makes them inescapable, their materials make them venerable for their age, their aesthetic dimensions of design make them pleasing or impressive to behold. Consequently, they are recognised as monuments, even though they were not built as such. Two Southern African examples of this would be Great Zimbabwe in Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe in South Africa. Both of these ancient sites rank high in the heritage hierarchies of their respective contemporary nation-states, and both provide symbols for nation-building. They are both impressive for their scale and their African lineages that are impeccably pre-colonial. They are recognised as complex structures encompassing important iconographic elements and are thus subsumed into the realm of ‘art’ in its broadest definition. They offer precursors for new forms of memorial such as the experiential journeys mapped out at Freedom Park in Pretoria. But they were not built as monuments or as memorials. They have only become such in the context of debates about African heritage from colonial times onwards, and thus draw on theoretical paradigms such as that propounded by Riegl (1982). In this context, however, their significance has been made “African” by being extrapolated from their original ethnic connections to continental significance.

The particular problem of effigies

Number 4 of the Oxford English Dictionary definitions of “monument” cited above specifically mentions “effigies” as constituting a form of monument (Oxford English Dictionary 1964 1278). An effigy is essentially a figurative representation of a dead person (sometimes also a dog or a horse), which should be recognisable as a particular person

(or animal). Effigies were originally attached to tombs of deceased members of the European aristocracy. In this an effigy is different from a 'portrait', which is generally identified as a likeness of a person, the sitter, 'taken' by the artist during the sitter's lifetime (Brilliant 1974). But while neither the effigy nor the portrait is considered as a monument unless so constituted in a public space, the representational image as a portrait is often central to the commemoration of the person, and sometimes of a specific event with which the actor is associated. Freedberg has argued that the power of images centres on "... the assumption of presence – what is represented becomes fully present – the sign becomes living embodiment of what it signifies." (Freedberg 1989, 28). It appears to have been this assumption of presence that underlay the reactions of students to the images of Rhodes and others at UCT during the #RhodesMustFall campaign and protests of 2015/2016, but is barely discussed in any of the articles that have covered this specific debate, which is central to the discussion in some of the essays in this book.

It is interesting that it is precisely this power of attraction exercised by the likeness of the effigy or portrait (real or imaginary) of historical personages that has governed the kind of monuments that have been erected in post-apartheid South Africa and in many postcolonial African states. In the latter, one of the favoured modes is that of a stark socialist realism espoused by Chinese and North Korean monument makers who execute commissions for African states from Zimbabwe, and Senegal, through Republic of Benin, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia and Botswana (Arnold 1989; Kirkwood 2013). Furthermore, the monumental is often here completely aligned with the colossal, the size of the figure deliberately dwarfing the viewer, so that the obsequies paid and performed by those in the vicinity is physically inescapable and psychologically disturbing. While South Africa has descended to similarly aesthetically barren statements, in statues to Nelson Mandela at Sandton Square (Sandton) and the Union Buildings (Pretoria), these are homegrown variants, many of them made to 'match' existing apartheid monuments. These stratagems seem to be

adopted on the assumption that heritage divisions could be solved, simply by adding more effigies to an already overcrowded, almost entirely male-dominated space of public commemoration.

On a visit to Pretoria/Tshwane in late April 2015, to consider the present state of the Kruger Monument in Church Street, I spent some time in Pretorius Square in front of the Pretoria City Hall where another example of such accretion of monuments is visible. Here large-scale monuments to Andries Pretorius (an equestrian sculpture) (Figure 2.2) after whom Pretoria was named, and his son Marthinus Wessel Pretorius (a standing male figure with a book prominent in his hand) have stood as symbols of the ascendancy of white nationalism since the 1940s (Figure 2.3). Both figures, made by Coert Steynberg and unveiled in 1945, are unmistakably 'western' because dressed in trousers and shirts and hats and shoes, with beards and 'European' facial features, in all probability having some authenticity as portraits of their subjects. A sculpture by the well-known contemporary sculptor, Angus Taylor, representing Chief Tshwane, after whom the greater metropole takes its new name, joined the older pair in 2006 (Figure 2.4). This larger than life figure of a contested historical/mythological African indigene stands in the rear of a procession from the doors of the city hall towards the street. Tshwane is positioned therefore furthest away from those approaching from the street, and although on a higher base than the others, remains dwarfed by the equestrian figure and behind both white men.



Figure 2.2 Steynberg, Coert. *Andries Pretorius*. [Bronze sculpture]. Pretorius Square, Pretoria. 1945. Photograph: Anitra Nettleton, January 2016



Figure 2.3. Steynberg, Coert. *Marthinus Wessels Pretorius*. [Bronze sculpture]. Pretorius Square, Pretoria City, Tshwane. 1945. Photograph: Anitra Nettleton, January 2016



Figures 2.4. & 2.5. *Chief Tshwane*. [Bronze sculpture]. Pretorius Square, Pretoria City, Tshwane. Photograph: Anitra Nettleton, January 2016

The figure of chief Tshwane is equal in size to the two Afrikaner Boer heroes – also made in bronze, but dressed in indigenous African attire, comprised largely of skins covering the loins with long dreadlocks and other hair adornments. In all, the figure appears as a reconstruction based on anthropological accounts of indigenous customs and the artist’s idea of an heroic African indigene. In fact, it could have been copied out of a 19th century illustration of indigenous South African warriors whom the colonists depicted as a form of ‘noble savage’ (Klopper 1992; Nettleton 2017). That there is some question as to the exact genealogical origins of this personage – most likely he was a descendent of a Zulu chief, Muzi, who had migrated to the area from Natal, and was thus a leader of a group identified as Manala Ndebele.¹ Given that the identification of this character remains speculative, the monument itself must be more than usually visually speculative.

When I asked, few of the local visitors to the space occupied by the figures (used by a local photographer as a backdrop for the portraits he

¹ See a history of Ndebele in this area by Peter Delius (1987) – although there is no mention of Tshwane per se, it is clear that Nguni-speakers, Ndebele, had lived in the area prior to white settlement.

makes for paying customers) had any idea of whom any of the figures represented, their identifying brass plaques having been stolen. Most considered the African figure to be ‘Shaka’, because he was wearing what they thought were “Zulu” clothes. That there is little to differentiate this figure from another bronze sculpture, erected at Ondini Museum to commemorate King Cetshwayo Ka Mpande, clearly points to a form of iconological and visual mythologising that is elective, selective and thus flattens histories.² The onlookers’ misidentification of Tshwane is possibly also a result of Shaka’s being the only great culture hero of South African history with whom they are familiar from school – and this in a city occupied largely by Sotho-Tswana speakers. Only the resident park photographer knew that it was Chief Tshwane. The difference between the European and the African in these figures rests only on the style of dress of and possibly in their facial features, but is not visible not in their colour, because the tradition of uncoloured, naturally patinated, bronze (or marble) as a medium flattens out the racial marker of skin pigmentation. The reliance purely on renderings of detail to indicate differences of identity demonstrates the degree to which a realistic style of representation has become an apparently essential requirement for such sculptures. It may also explain the popularity of realism as a style of representation – often of varying degrees of competence – for use in contemporary monuments.

Although the Korean/Chinese social-realist style, used in the contemporary monuments made for many other African states, is both more dogmatic, more militaristic in its hard-edged-ness, it is, ironically, very similar in intention to the monumental sculptures erected within apartheid South Africa, by the apartheid regime (e.g. the now imploded *Strijdom Head* in Pretoria).³ And, of course, the style is part of the

2 It is interesting that this mode is reserved only for leaders of the mythological past. The sculpture of Chief Albert Luthuli, Nobel Peace laureate, in KwaDukuza, shows him as a dapper man in western-style suit with hat and walking cane. He has no African accoutrements such as those he wore to the award ceremony for the Nobel Prize. Thanks to Juliette Leeb-du Toit for bringing this fact to my attention.

3 Examples include the Head of Strijdom which mysteriously “collapsed” on 31st May, 2001 into a parking garage below Strijdom Square in Pretoria, to the large sculpture of

content, part of the meaning, as is the scale. To make a monument on a huge scale and in a realist style associated with fascist regimes such as Hitler's and Mussolini's, no less than Stalin's, is not an innocent act. It is an act impregnated with ideological assumptions in which (purportedly western) realism is foregrounded as the most *advanced*, the most *progressive* stylistic choice. This ideology, which presents distortion and abstraction as "child-like" and "primitive", is visible in the tracts written by western anthropologists on so-called "primitive" cultures and their arts, and in the attitudes of those who came to appreciate third-world arts precisely because they had not fallen prey to the allure of realism or mimesis. Most significantly, however, it is also evident in the kinds of sculptural monuments being erected to commemorate leaders of emergent African nations who are looking for a modern identity.⁴

Probably the ideological arguments for Socialist-Realist monuments would follow this trajectory: Monuments are erected for the people and so they are commissioned by the peoples' representatives in styles and forms that cater to the expectations, the tastes, the levels of understanding of the "people".⁵ It is probably true that most people expect monuments to be representational/recognisable figurative sculptures that are seriously sombre.⁶ Those anti-monuments, or conceptual monuments which have slipped through the noose, especially in South Africa, have generally, like the *Women's Monument* in the Union Buildings in Pretoria, met with mixed, if not lukewarm reactions from the public or the powers-that-be (Becker 2000). The extraordinary success of the poetic figuration achieved by Marco

Verwoerd in Bloemfontein, removed from its plinth and placed in the Afrikaner stronghold of Orania. See Coombes (2003) for a discussion of some of these issues.

4 The idea that African art traditions were worthy of imitation and emulation by contemporary artists was particularly a theme in Senghor's writing (Harney, 2004) and was echoed by others such as Enwonwu (Ogbechi, 2008). But it is not a proposition that has found much resonance with those who have the power to commission national monuments. See Maselela (2016) for a critique of Senghor and cultural assimilation in postcolonial African contexts.

5 See King (1998) for a discussion of such processes in relation to the erection of war memorials in Britain

6 See Swedberg (2005) for a discussion of the mismatch between the history/mythology of the Burghers of Calais and the actual historical records, and the lack of impact this has had on an understanding of Rodin's famous *Burghers of Calais* of 1889.

Cianfanelli in the monument to Nelson Mandela at the so-called 'capture site' at Howick in KwaZulu-Natal, goes against this trend. It is testament to the fact that one does not have to indulge in the kind of neo-romantic realism of bronze figure sculpture that seems to be in vogue amongst political commissars such as Dali Tambo in dealing with the monumental commemoration of members of the liberation struggle and its deeper history. While such realism might give the impression of these being 'portraits' of real people, their historical status is based on an appeal to a collective memory possibly embedded within the sculptural portrayal.

This can be illustrated in the monument recently erected at the "capture site" of Jacob Zuma in Groot Marico, set up in apparent emulation of, if not in competition with that of Nelson Mandela. Originally conceived as a 6 meter tall bronze sculpture (portrait) of the former president of the Republic, this idea was scrapped to be replaced by a cut-out portrait bust against a light-containing sphere, supported on a stand of multiple stainless steel arcs, also standing 6 meters tall. Interestingly the portrait only becomes fully legible once it is lit up at night. In this, and in its scale and elevation, it certainly vies for attention with billboard advertising; similarly to these it lacks any of the sense of interaction with the landscape, of becoming and dissolving, features delicately handled in Cianfanelli's Mandela monument in Howick. Its commercial qualities have seen it likened on social media to the trophy use for the Football World Cup. This is possibly explained by the fact that the artist, Chris van der Vyver, is a boilermaker by trade, and made the sculpture on winning the commission. Reaction to the sculpture/monument has been largely mixed: although the artist is reported to be very pleased with it⁷ and Jacob Zuma was all smiles at its unveiling, many commentators have been critical.⁸

7 see Tshehle, B. 2017 "I'm proud of my Zuma statue" *Pressreader/Sowetan* 6th October, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sowetan/20171006/281479276624718> accessed 2017 11 09.

8 See for example the twitter feed responses to Tshehle, B. "In Pictures: Residents divided over R1.8 million Jacob Zuma Monument" *Sunday Times: Times Live* <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2017-10-05-in-pictures--residents-divided-over-r18-million-jacob-zuma-monument/> accessed 2017 11 09

South Africa deserves better forms of commemoration. It has the artists, the conceptual capacity and the technical ability to make a more significant, thoughtful, and Africa-centred and Africa-inspired memorials, than tired remakes of colonial prototypes. Our narratives are varied and, when shared, our remembering is often fractured and fractious, but the tendency in making monuments seems to be to try to make a fairy tale past visible in a flattened notion of “Africa”, whether historical or contemporary, by using styles and genres of representation that are tired and tied to essentially non-democratic institutions.

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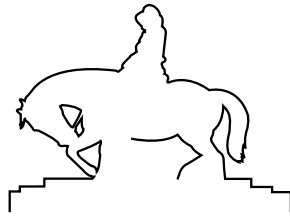


Chapter 3

In whose name?

On statues, place and pain in South Africa

Alude Mahali



It takes a lot of work to silence silent objects. (Cole 2012)

Calls for the removal or demolition of colonial and apartheid statues and monuments across the South African landscape has been the subject of dissension. This chapter proceeds from the national discussion around statues and representation starting with the performative act that catalysed the current dialogue about colonial and apartheid statues, namely, the #RhodesMustFall campaign. Through discourses of pain, place, memory and history, this chapter probes *what* is commemorated and explores the tensions around *where* that commemoration takes place. To queer place is to really look closely at what the decolonisation of buildings and of public spaces could look like and how this might aid in democratising access. What we are sensing now is that it is not enough to build new sites of public history and memory without problematising the existing objects of cultural heritage that no longer represent the values of a democratic South Africa – the statues and monuments of imperialists. This chapter asks how people make sense of their interaction with place and so-called objects of cultural heritage and illustrates why, in a South African context, statues and monuments are not just inanimate, innocuous things. They are loaded with meaning, histories and the pain of a traumatic past.

Background: from past to present

The year 2015 was a volatile and transformative year for South Africa's higher education institutions, catalysed in part by student protester,

Chumani Maxwele who – in the second week of March 2015 -- hurled faeces at the statue of Cecil John Rhodes¹ that stood at the University of Cape Town's (UCT) main Rondebosch campus. This single act, motivated by persistent concerns around systemic violence and structural inequalities in higher education and society broadly, also sparked debates around the contentious place of colonial and apartheid statues and monuments in contemporary South Africa. Maxwele's performative act supposedly set into motion the #RhodesMustFall (RMF) campaign which then galvanised a series of national student activist movements including Fees Must Fall, Disrupting Whiteness (University of Cape Town), Rhodes So White and the Black Students Movement (Rhodes University), Transform Wits (University of Witwatersrand), the Open Stellenbosch Collective (Stellenbosch University) and Black Thought at the University of Johannesburg. Other universities joined the protest simply under the overarching #FeesMustFall banner. The rage being expressed and the point being made by the students is that the existential struggles which shape South African life are no longer limited to the individual's experience, but that a magnifying glass is now being held up to embedded structural inequalities in the university that reflect society broadly (Keet, Zinn & Porteus 2009, 114).

The student movements also prompted conversation on the roles of intersecting identities (race, class, gender and language) in students' perceptions, experiences and agency in creating opportunities or being 'shut out' while at university. The message to the institutions and the government is very clear: things can no longer carry on as they have, as the current modes of operation within the universities are perceived as being oppressive, stifling and unsupportive. Further, the traditions, values and practices that have been disguised or explained as 'institutional culture', are exclusionary in manners so pervasive that they permeate the students' everyday reality in the institution (especially in historically white institutions). The issue of higher

1 Imperialist Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902), was a British business man who lived in South Africa. He is credited for establishing 'The Native Bill', a bill to force more Africans into the labour-wage market, a bill which became a precursor to apartheid policy and legislation.

education's oppressive financial schemes and lack of transformation in particular, were identified as catalysts fuelling the national student outcry. Other issues that prompted the protests included the lack of racial representation among faculty at historically white universities, the exclusion of African narratives and experiences in curriculum, the historical edifices and cultural heritage objects (statues, monuments, building names and artworks) whose meanings have changed in a democratic South Africa, and the outsourcing of student residence and low income university workers.

A week after Maxwele's inciting act at UCT, students at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), in solidarity, defaced the statue of British King George V that stands at the university's Howard College campus in Durban (Manda 2015). Suddenly statues were at the forefront of national discussion and, in a ripple effect, incidents of similar destruction were occurring throughout the country. The statue of a soldier on a plinth at the Uitenhage War Memorial was defaced and set on fire on 2 April 2015 (DeSwardt 2015). On 6 April (and again on the 11th), a statue of former president of the South African Republic Paul Kruger that stands prominent in Church Square, Pretoria was defaced with green paint (Khoza 2015). A day later, the statue of a kneeling soldier was pulled to the ground in Port Elizabeth (Spies 2015). On 9 April the statue of first South African Prime Minister Louis Botha, was splattered with red paint in Cape Town (Capazorio 2015). The following day a statue of Queen Victoria was defaced with paint in Port Elizabeth (News24 2015). In Pretoria on 11 April, a statue of Marthinus Pretorius (the first president of the South African Republic) was vandalised in front of City Hall (Lindeque 2015). On 13 April, the statue of Andrew Murray (the son of a Dutch Reformed Church missionary) was vandalised in Wellington (Raborife 2015). Finally, on 20 April 2015, the bust of Stephanus Schoeman (former state president of the South African Republic) was splattered with white paint in Polokwane (Mabeba 2015), the same day that the Anglo Boer War memorial was also defaced with white paint in East London (Linden, 2015).

Before the Rhodes statue became a target at UCT in 2015, there were only a few reported incidents of the defacing or destruction of statues since 1994: for example the statue of Steve Biko was defaced twice shortly after it was unveiled by President Nelson Mandela in September 1997 (allAfrica, 2015). The crash of apartheid leader J.G. Strijdom's head in 2001, and the repeated vandalising of Paul Kruger's statue, both in Pretoria, come to mind as well. The other incidents came in 2005 and 2006 when, in September 2005 the statue of King Makhado in Limpopo was defaced and then later in July 2006, the statue of Chief Tshwane was vandalised in Pretoria and painted with the colours of the old South African flag used by the apartheid government (Hlatshwayo & samaYende 2005; Nthite 2006). What these three historical figures have in common is that they are black Africans and all three statues were defaced at least 10 years ago, probably by disaffected members of right-wing white supremacist movements. The Biko incident occurred three years after the democratic dispensation in 1994, when the country was still struggling with its rebirth, and the destruction of the King Makhado statue came soon after the renaming of a town in Limpopo Province from Louis Trichardt to Makhado. The statue of Chief Tshwane was defaced with the old apartheid flag after there were talks that the statue would replace the existing one of Paul Kruger on Church Square. Evidently there was a faction of the population that was not ready to accept the ushering in of a new inclusive democratic age that would mean letting go of some of the polarising relics of the past, which had come to stand for different things in the present.

Although the colonial and apartheid figures listed above were memorialised as part of South Africa's history – several of whom served as rulers or benefactors – they also represent colonial and apartheid histories, as symbols of racism and genocide and one could argue, that their continued presence reproduces coloniality as representations of “the ‘metaphysical empire’ that have outlived the ‘physical empire’” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Zondi, 2016:4). One could also argue that the sites at which these deliberate acts of vandalism have taken place, have become “legitimate sites of decolonial struggle” (ibid.). From this

thought, I started to question the particularity of this contemporary moment. Is it that the presence of these statues always bothered us, but we have not yet been able to articulate the reasons why? Is it that we have arrived at a new place of conscientisation as a result of the slow pace of transformation in South Africa? Is it that we were focused on other issues at the start of democracy and can now turn our gaze to the statues and monuments we want because this is this generation's predicament? What is significant about this present moment? Or is it simply that we have now called this particular issue up to importance?

If we reconstruct the past according to our current views then the rewriting of individual biographies, the creating of new myths, or the reviving of old wounds and resentments is expected (Subrt 2012, 37). In every contemporary moment, our perceptions, understanding of and ideas about the past are constantly changing. New realisations, experiences, knowledge about the present can even influence the way we perceive the past, causing us to look at history and the past in different ways: this is the meditative decolonial state we currently find ourselves in.

Add to that already subconscious force the immediacy of history's grip, when the past is publicly memorialised through oppressive historical figures, who continue to haunt the contemporary landscape in prominent urban spaces throughout the country.

Images of the past haunt the present

Who we choose to commemorate and how we choose to remember them is complex, particularly in the case of memorialised subjects made into symbolic objects of history (Grunebaum 2001, 198). I would add, to *who* and *how* we choose to commemorate, *where* we choose to commemorate them. Perhaps place has not been privileged as much as the 'who'. For instance, when a cultural and political heritage site such as Robben Island becomes a project through which the government exercises its commemorative agenda, claiming to remember and celebrate the past through inclusive "multiculturalism", we start to see

an attempt at creating “new public histories” (Grunebaum 2001, 199). Even this is problematic because most South Africans do not have the material means to visit a site like Robben Island. Nevertheless, Robben Island has had many uses prior to UNESCO declaring it a world heritage site in 1999. It is an example of a monument built from an existing place, history and structure whose meaning changed with its ‘rebranding’. This is different for example from the pre-1994 monuments that remain largely uncontested and unchanged, even in a democratic South Africa. Examples of these existing monuments are the Castle of Good Hope (the oldest surviving building in South Africa, built between 1606-1679) in Cape Town (SAHO 2011), the Honoured Dead Memorial (1904) in Kimberly which remembers those who died defending the town during the 124 day Siege of Kimberley in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Interestingly, the Honoured Dead Memorial was commissioned by Cecil John Rhodes. Scenically bordered by Table Mountain, the Rhodes Memorial (1912) in Cape Town was built in remembrance of Cecil John Rhodes who contributed a great deal to the development of the sub-continent. The National Women’s Memorial (1913) in Bloemfontein was erected in memory of the women and children who died during the Anglo-Boer War, at the hands of the British, but excluded any mention of black victims. The Huguenot Monument (1948) in Franschhoek was built to celebrate the influence of the French in South Africa. The Voortrekker Monument (1949) in Pretoria commemorates the white Pioneer history of Southern Africa, especially the history of the Afrikaner. This was later followed by the Winburg Voortrekker Monument (1968) in the Free State, in honour of Winburg as the first Free State town established by the Voortrekkers. The 1820s Settlers Monument in Grahamstown was built to commemorate the contributions made by English-speaking settlers to South Africa – in particular – the introduction of the English language and the concept of democracy (SouthAfrica.com). Diggers’ Fountain in Kimberley (1960) was created in honour of past and present diamond miners and a bust of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer shares the same rose garden site as the fountain (SouthAfrica.info 2015). These are just a few examples of many.

These pre-1994 monuments are quite different from the monuments built specifically to commemorate people and events post-1994. For instance the Bisho Massacre Memorial (1997) in the Eastern Cape – a monument that commemorates slain anti-apartheid activists (SouthAfrica.info 2015). Similarly, the Hector Pieterse Memorial (2002) in Johannesburg commemorates the role of the country's students in the 1976 uprising against apartheid: The Freedom Charter Monument (2005) is a piece of land meant to memorialise the occasion on which some 3000 members of resistance organisations gathered to imagine the Freedom Charter (SouthAfrica.info 2015). Heroes' Park (2001) in East London was built to honour South Africa's struggle heroes and to celebrate the country's freedom and cultural diversity. Interestingly, Heroes' Park also incorporates the German Settlers Monument, which honours the German families who arrived in East London between 1856 and the 1870s (SouthAfrica.info, 2015). The Slavery Emancipation Monument (2004) in Elim was built in memory of emancipated slaves who were harboured at Elim in the Overberg, Western Cape (SouthAfrica.info 2015). The Gallows of the Pretoria Central Prison opened in December 2011 in memory of the political prisoners who were executed between 1967 and 1989 (SouthAfrica.info 2015). All these monuments are billed as sites that 'celebrate our freedom' and 'cultural diversity' and honour those whose lives were lost trying to gain that freedom.

Two things are curious about the pre-1994 and post-1994 monuments; the most obvious is that pre-1994 statues were of white men and women, while the post-1994 monuments are typically in celebration of black men and women. The post-1994 sites were built in the spirit of "creating new public histories" and claim to foster "inclusive multiculturalism". Can the pre-1994 monuments also make claims to 'celebrate freedom and foster inclusive multiculturalism' as the post-1994 monuments do? The other curious thing is the geographical sites and spaces on which these different monuments are located. Many of the pre-1994 monuments are in scenic suburban landscapes surrounded by the natural beauty of South Africa. Is it important to

have these colonial and apartheid monuments still sitting alongside more contemporary ones – not only symbolically but geographically?

What we are sensing now is that it is not enough to build new sites of public history without problematising the existing objects of cultural heritage that no longer represent the values of a democratic South Africa. It is not enough to focus on “new public histories” without addressing the remaining material public histories of old; the statues and monuments of imperialists. This is not an easy task, as the last three years have taught us.

The students at UCT were victorious in their protest efforts as the statue of profiteer Cecil John Rhodes was ceremoniously removed on 9 April 2015. At UKZN however, the statue of King George V still remains on the campus but it now stands damaged, splashed with white paint and bearing the words; “end white privilege”, “you do not represent us” and “symbols must fall” amongst other messages. There has been no news as to whether or not the other statues that were defaced, in other parts of the country, have been toppled. However, in a shocking move in February 2016, some RMF members removed and burned several historical artworks that hung in university residences at UCT. According to the activists, these artworks and photographs represent white colonial and apartheid oppressors and it should not matter that they were donors to the university: their presence on the walls of an African university is painful and traumatic. The drastic act of arson is said to have cost the university millions of rands in damages and in the melee, students also burned anti-apartheid works by prominent black artists. This came after the RMF members erected a makeshift shack on the main campus, aptly named, ‘Shackville’ in response to the lack of housing and student residences at UCT. Despite contention, the RMF campaign received widespread national and international support, but of course opinions about what should happen to colonial and apartheid statues in South Africa differ. Anecdotally, there are those who agree that the Rhodes statue (and other statues like it) should fall; those who argue that the statues should remain as evidence of the

country's history; those who argue that they should all be removed and placed in national museums; those who feel as if the statues should remain if they are explained and those who are indifferent. All this background is to say, now, sites memorialising historical statues have become charged sites of contestation.

On Decolonising Spaces

Teju Cole, writing on the 2012 destruction of the sacred tombs/mausoleums of Timbuktu, maintained: “it takes a lot of work to silence [these] silent objects”, for the reason that statues are not just inanimate, innocuous things. Statues are loaded with meaning, histories and the pain of a traumatic past. Cole recognises this by asserting: “Images are powerful. They can bring people into such a pitch of discomfort that violence ensues, and iconoclasm carries within itself two paradoxical traits: thoroughness and fury” (Cole 2012). Analysing the complexity of iconoclastic aggression, Cole identifies “politics, struggles for power, the effort to humiliate an enemy” as common historical reasons for iconoclastic acts (2012). Cole is making the subtle argument that the creators of images and the iconoclasts share the same psychological drive – both are obsessed with the power of the icon. Cole’s words; ‘discomfort’, ‘violence’ and ‘fury’ point to an anxiety around symbols and objects that cannot be denied and in South Africa, anxiety around statues points to the veracity of black pain. The pain is not always an immediate obvious pain happening in the ‘now’. Sometimes the pain is about the past, is buried in history, in memory, in lived experience and autobiography, and yet is felt in the present. The pain is not all now and it is not always painful, sometimes it is hidden by the beauty of scenic garden surrounds and towering city buildings, at times it is revealed through the fiery, ugly and grotesque, other times it subsides and sometimes it is not noticeably there at all but there is always an element of residue; the fragments of pain left in the South African consciousness and landscape. Achille Mbembe, acknowledges this pain when he warns that wanting to hang on to these statues can feel like “provincialism and nostalgia for a shameful and costly past” (Mbembe, Samuelson, Nuttall & Musila 2011).

Mbembe is clear in his assertion that Rhodes no longer belonged on the UCT campus, stating that the Rhodes Statue “and those of countless others who shared the same conviction – has nothing to do on a public university campus 20 years after freedom” (Mbembe 2015, 3). That taking the statue down should be not considered “erasing history” – despite the deeply problematic rhetoric that Rhodes “donated so much money” and “bequeathed his land” to the university – with little inquiry into how he amassed his wealth in the first place (Mbembe 2015, 3). Instead Mbembe holds that bringing Rhodes’s statue down is one of the many legitimate ways in which we can, today in South Africa, “demythologize that history and put it to rest – which is precisely the work memory, when properly understood is supposed to accomplish” (Mbembe 2015, 3). There are many places in South Africa that are still palpably occupied by the lingering feeling of whiteness, that is, that black bodies do not belong in such spaces. Crucially Cape Town is often jokingly referred to as the ‘Europe of Africa’ that

obsessively clings to its anachronisms, its ossified forms of spatial segregation, its statues, even its street names, and today to the hard edges of its ‘soft apartheid’. (Mbembe et al. 2011)

Add to this already complex “scandal of beauty”,² the statue of a colonial oppressor on an African university campus, then it is no wonder students feel as though they are being stifled by white ideals. Rhodes memorialised, becomes a mythologised figure that perpetuates the feeling that everything originates from him:

The demythologizing of certain versions of history must go hand in hand with the demythologizing of whiteness. This is not because whiteness is the same as history. Human history, by definition, is history beyond whiteness. Human history is about the future. Whiteness is about entrapment. Whiteness is at its best when it turns into a myth. It is the most corrosive and the most lethal when it makes us believe that it is everywhere; that everything originates from it and it has no outside. We are therefore calling for the demythologization of whiteness because democracy in South Africa will either be built

2 From the Cape Times article of the same name. See Mbembe et al (2011).

on the ruins of those versions of whiteness that produced Rhodes or it will fail. (Mbembe 2015, 3)

Mbembe proposes that the statue of Rhodes and the statues of other racist imperialists that are scattered across the South African landscape be placed in museums. At the same time he problematises the museum which he feels has not yet received the critique it requires as an institution, in other words, a good question is also, what is in South Africa's museums and why? (Mbembe 2015, 4). This question challenges what is archived and who decides what is historicised and why.

Really the decolonisation of African minds, places and institutions does not mean the dismissal of a troubled past, or a negation of history and its figures, but rather it is about "acknowledging, debating and encouraging critical scholarship on how exactly colonialism, settler colonialism and apartheid" have formed and continue to influence the thought, geography, languaging and customs of modern day South Africa (Pillay in Gatsheni-Ndlovu 2016, 3). The need for decolonisation is becoming more and more pressing in South Africa because the consequences of not recognising the damage colonisation has done to South African territory, the South African body and mind and South African epistemology, is part of the reason why youth in South Africa have unified to protest and quite literally, set the country on fire. It took young people to examine the symbols and images around them to say 'these ideals and versions of history do not represent me and make me feel as though I do not belong here'.

On Decolonising Symbols

Symbolic interactionism as defined by Herbert Blumer (1969) is the fundamental idea that people act toward things based on the meanings they have for them, that these meanings are arrived at as a result of interpretive processes and social interaction with others (Blumer 1969, 2). Snow introduces four broader principles where he feels Blumer's triad is too narrowly centred on meaning and interpretation: the principle of interactive determination, the principle of symbolisation,

the principle of emergence and the principle of human agency (Snow 2001, 368). The principle of emergence is pertinent here because it focuses attention on the unfamiliar side of social life and its dynamic character which means ‘emergence’ looks at the potential for change (not only structural societal change but also change associated with meanings and feelings) (Snow 2001, 372). Emergence is about the

processes out of which new, novel, or revitalized social entities, or cognitive and emotional states, arise that constitute departures from, challenges to, and clarifications or transformations of everyday routines, practices, or perspectives. (Snow 2001, 372)

Emergence is the idea of the altered ‘new’ and is a particularly useful concept in the context of social movements; this new generation organises with youthful vigour reviving the strength of past liberation strategies (for example crowd-pulling marches to parliament), assumes drastic tactics (for example throwing faeces), with new disputes (for example RMF) and new ways of taking collective action (for example erecting a shack on the university campus as a symbol of the displacement students face as a result of exorbitant residence accommodation fees). What emerges are not only institutional and legislative gains (typical results of social movements), but also cognitive and affective changes (socio-political conscientisation and identity politics). These changes affect not only how we view ourselves and the places we occupy, but our views of other groups and our relationships to/with them.

In *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (2008), Johnson cites Mead, in explaining Symbolic Interactionism as the close relationship between the psychological processes “whereby people make sense of their environment and their interaction with one another” and the alliance between people as they try to develop collective understandings of the positions in which they find themselves (in Johnson 2008, 110). Contemporary symbolic interactionism also takes into account how one’s self-image develops through awareness of the perceptions of others, for example the works of W.E.B. Du Bois or Toni Morrison show how the self-images developed by African Americans

(and no doubt other members of dis-privileged minority groups) reflect their ongoing struggles to resist the prejudice and discrimination they experience on a daily basis in interacting with majority group members. (Johnson 2008, 110)

In South Africa, self-image and perception emerges as a result of a majority dis-privileged group interacting with a minority privileged group. It is only when individual meanings and readings submit to extensive change that institutional transformation occurs, which then has the potential to change subsequent interactions at the micro level (Johnson 2008, 111).

All symbolic interactionists emphasize the micro level linkages between the subjective consciousness, interpersonal interaction, and identity formation, as well as the symbolic and socially constructed nature of the larger social world. (Johnson 2008, 111)

In this case the linkages occur between the individual student, the university space, the objects of cultural heritage and artworks (buildings, photographs, statues, plaques and paintings) and other people at the university (administration, faculty, support staff, other students). Therefore, decolonising the universities must start with reconstructing both these linkages and the public spaces they occupy. Transforming public spaces includes a change of those colonial names, statues, iconography and other symbols that continue to uphold white supremacy (Mbembe 2015:5). The act of de-imperialising public buildings and spaces becomes, in some manner, about democratising access:

But when we say access, we are also talking about the creation of those conditions that will allow black staff and students to say of the university: "This is my home. I am not an outsider here. I do not have to beg or to apologize to be here. I belong here" [...] It has nothing to do with me having to assimilate into a culture that is not mine as a precondition of my participating in the public life of the institution. It has all to do with ownership of a space that is a public, common good. (Mbembe 2015, 5)

In decolonising and transforming the significance of place in South Africa – in spite of histories of racial oppression – we get to acknowledge, question and reimagine our history, and this is an affirming act of self-determination.

Place and Memory

In *Space and Place* (1977), Tuan explains that ideas concerning place are multifaceted in adult human beings because they grow out of individual and shared experiences. He sees place as a pause in movement that makes it possible for us to endow place with value. Place, to a child for instance, is a great and to some extent, inert type of object. Place then begins to acquire profound significance for the child through the steady accrual of sentiment over the years. Every item in one's bedroom or even a stain on the wall tells a story. Similarly, every piece of art, photograph, statue, monument at a university, tells a story, tells a particular history. For Tuan, captivating or painful images of the past are evoked not only by the intact edifice, which can only be seen, but equally by its workings, parts and fixtures, which can be touched, heard and smelled as well. Therefore, despite having to constantly defend their position, RMF insists that their movement is not solely about a statue falling or even the actual edifice. Memory entwines its charms in lesser, more recognisable things, as Kevin Quashie reminds us in *Black Women, Identity and Cultural Theory* (2004, 7) ...

... memory crystallizes and secretes itself at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn- but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists.

Escobar recognises that place, body and environment integrate with each other, “that places gather things, thoughts and memories in particular configurations ...” (2001, 143). Site and memory then, are inevitably intertwined; particular sites may supply an excess of possible meanings. At the same time it is the site's very same assault on all ways

of perception (sight, sound, smell, touch and taste) that make it powerful as an underpinning of memory, as a thread where one strand ties in another (Creswell 2004, 86). A site can act as a container of experience that contributes effectively to its inherent memorability. An attentive memory connects impulsively with place, finding in it features that support and correspond with its own activities. So what happens – as in the case of historically white universities for instance – when you do not find these features that reinforce your sense of belonging?

Sites of memory are themselves a process, a dynamic location of collective and individual knowledge constantly refiguring, emitting and tearing. Sites of memory are described as having corporeal qualities, for example, Verderey (1999) terms physical attacks on monuments as “calculated acts to despoil their sacred character in order to bring them into the human realm” (cited in Kros 2015, 154). This is reinforced by Chumani Maxwele,

“quoted by a fellow student as saying that he wanted the statue to feel ‘ashamed, the same way he [Maxwele] feels ashamed that these faeces [sic] are in his living environment’”. (Boroughs cited in Kros 2015, 154)

In this manner, Maxwele is almost converting the statue’s representation from “untouchable icon to sentient human being” (Boroughs 2015). Kros makes the argument that even the word ‘Fuck’, painted in white graffiti on the base of the Rhodes statue or the phrase ‘end white privilege’ emblazoned on King George the V’s chest for instance, give the statues a “human quality” adding that in the RMF context, it might be suggested that even the photography and social media activity also contributed to the students’ efforts to demystify the statue (Kros 2015, 154).

Demystifying the statue in this manner is, as UCT student Kealeboga Ramaru observed, another way to say “look this is our space too, and we deserve to be here” (cited in Kros 2015, 155). This act of demystifying articulates “a cry for belonging” (Shringapure 2015). Maxwele, on the RMF campaign echoes: “It is a black cry, a cry of the workers, the cry of the staff and a cry from the students” (Bashton 2015). The cry is about the

unending state of recovery we seem to be in, in post-apartheid South Africa. The symbolic appropriation of ‘the cry’ is powerful because it is a life-saving expression of pain. Addressing the statue of Rhodes directly embodies an attack against the continued exercise of power his legacy has over their environment and lives, a legacy that memorialises a history of specific power relations. The act of demystifying statues is an expression of the country’s collective and individual anger, of collective and individual grief. The same act creates a ‘living’ thing to assign pain to, to put anger outside of ourselves and onto something else and to assign culpability when we are no longer being heard.

But then again creating public memory spaces that are significant and all-encompassing in a traumatised South African landscape is a difficult task: “such spaces are affected by a multitude of forces: individuals, groups, institutions, history and culture among others” (Leibowitz 2008, 5). How do we create spaces where the past is acknowledged but not at the expense of individuals’ senses of history and contemporary positionality? For this to happen, “there must be a deliberate shift away from colonial/Apartheid notions of what constitutes the past” (Leibowitz 2008, 19). There must be recognition of the publicness of the space that these statues occupy and of collective memory (also understood as social or cultural memory), that is, widely shared perceptions of the past that can no longer be trivialized or ignored (Leibowitz 2008, 4).

Leibowitz further posits that sites of memory can be material, symbolic and functional:

“While memory exists on both a personal and national level, memory space is constructed and maintained in order to facilitate a particular ideology or to sustain a national narrative” (2008, 5).

This is significant because in the past, the national narrative was constructed from a colonial and apartheid perspective and so it makes sense that now we are calling to see reflected in our statues and memorials “a contemporary form of memory practice born out of a more locally-generated aesthetic and meaningful to an [South]

African population” (Leibowitz 2008, 5). Perhaps we will, after many years, decide that the Western tradition of commemoration is neither relevant nor necessary in an African context and we will think of new ways to commemorate people and observe events in an anticipated non-patriarchal, robust and democratic society because, as Subrt reminded us earlier, in every contemporary moment, our ideas about the past are constantly changing. As a result, it is inevitable that in future moments our perception and understanding of what we want to see memorialised and how it should be memorialised will change. For now though, our longing to see worthy monuments is a moment we are resting in.

The new South Africa

After the dawn of the democratic dispensation, Nelson Mandela remarked:

During colonial and Apartheid times, our museums and monuments reflected the experiences and political ideals of a minority to the exclusion of others ... having excluded and marginalised most of our people, is it surprising that our museums and national monuments are often seen as alien spaces? When our museums and monuments preserve the whole of our diverse heritage, when they are inviting to the public and interact with the changes all around them, then they will strengthen our attachment to human rights, mutual respect and democracy, and help prevent these ever again being violated (quoted in Corsane 2004, 6).

Post-apartheid South Africa was branded ‘the new South Africa’ as a way to give a name to the huge political shifts occurring as well as to promote hope for the anticipated cultural and social change. Memory becomes critical in social theorising and critique during such transitions: it was critical for everyday South Africans to come to terms with what was done to them or in their name. But we also need new names and to appreciate the significance of the situatedness of history in the processes of transformation which characterise contemporary South Africa.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was perhaps the most visible public exhibition of engaging the human rights abuses caused by the apartheid government (McEachern 1998, 499). The TRC uncovered black pain in a way that had not been done before. It rendered black pain visible. How do we begin to think about other public ways we can work through pain, demystify place, interrogate iconography and express individual and collective memory in this country? An example of a project that attempted to both remember and give individuals agency over their own painful pasts was the Western Cape Action Tour Project (or WECAT). WECAT took people on walkabouts through the townships of the Cape Flats, while participants narrated the stories of their lives and their communities. In this way

... the project facilitated encounters that not only promote the remembrance of the social and political heritage of these communities and of the enduring effects of this heritage on people's lives and lived environment, but also evoked both new forms of socioeconomic marginalization contoured by persisting systemic oppression as well as new possibilities for change. (Grunebaum 2001, 203)

The tour facilitators (often former activists) then had the opportunity to fill the gaps missed by the TRC and include narratives that do not fit the “public version of Robben Island’s public historical narrative of transcendence, triumph, redemption, and reconciliation” (Grunebaum 2001, 203). In this way, the past continues to live and the ephemeral nature of this contemporary moment and the sites we move through, become transformed and “imbued with multiple meanings as stories are told in, about and through them” (Grunebaum 2001, 203). In the same manner, statues like these contested sites are not in dead spaces but they are always in dialogue with history and the present. The statues need to be problematised and probed, and we need people to speak around and about them and the places that they occupy.

Afterthoughts

The removal of the Rhodes statue, while largely symbolic, has been an appropriate rallying cry by which to tangibly address the practical implications of transformation and decolonisation and to re-imagine what the role and function of an African University should be. The success of the removal of the statue will illustrate an important step in the ability for social movements under these rallying points, to effect change physically in their environment. This process of physical change in the university space will begin to provide material shape to the changes taking place in post-apartheid South Africa. Moreover, toppling Rhodes and the RMF campaign in general, were not intended (at least by its initiators) to deny a particular history, but the process of physical change prompted by the statue's removal raises questions around the names we give to the spaces we occupy and helps us pay closer attention to the symbols and images that we are confronted with as we navigate these public spaces. So the issue becomes, not the statue itself, but how we as a society look at symbols of the past and understand the various ways in which those symbols interact with who we are now, and the places we traverse in our day-to-day lives. "Monumental symbols, like statues have a rhetoric. These rhetorical functions or meanings shift as society shifts and changes" (in Crowley 2007, 56), and we are now in a time where these meanings have definitely shifted and demand clarification.

Many of the UCT students recognised that the historical narrative of which the statue was the most conspicuous feature in their immediate environment, continues to exercise power over the present. As Teju Cole reminds us in the opening of this paper: "It takes a lot of work to silence silent objects" (2012). The presence of these statues topographically shapes silence. If they are to remain then serious conversations around their place and meaning need to be had. This means a recognition that symbol, place, memory and sentiment are inextricably linked.

As Teju Cole so poignantly articulates: “That which doesn’t speak dumbfounds. After all, who can tell what such objects are thinking? Best to destroy the inscrutable, the ancient, if one is to truly usher in a pure new world” (Cole 2012). To decolonise space then, means to dismantle that which continues to reproduce and promote whiteness in favour for ushering in a new order that represents the values of a democratic South Africa for all.

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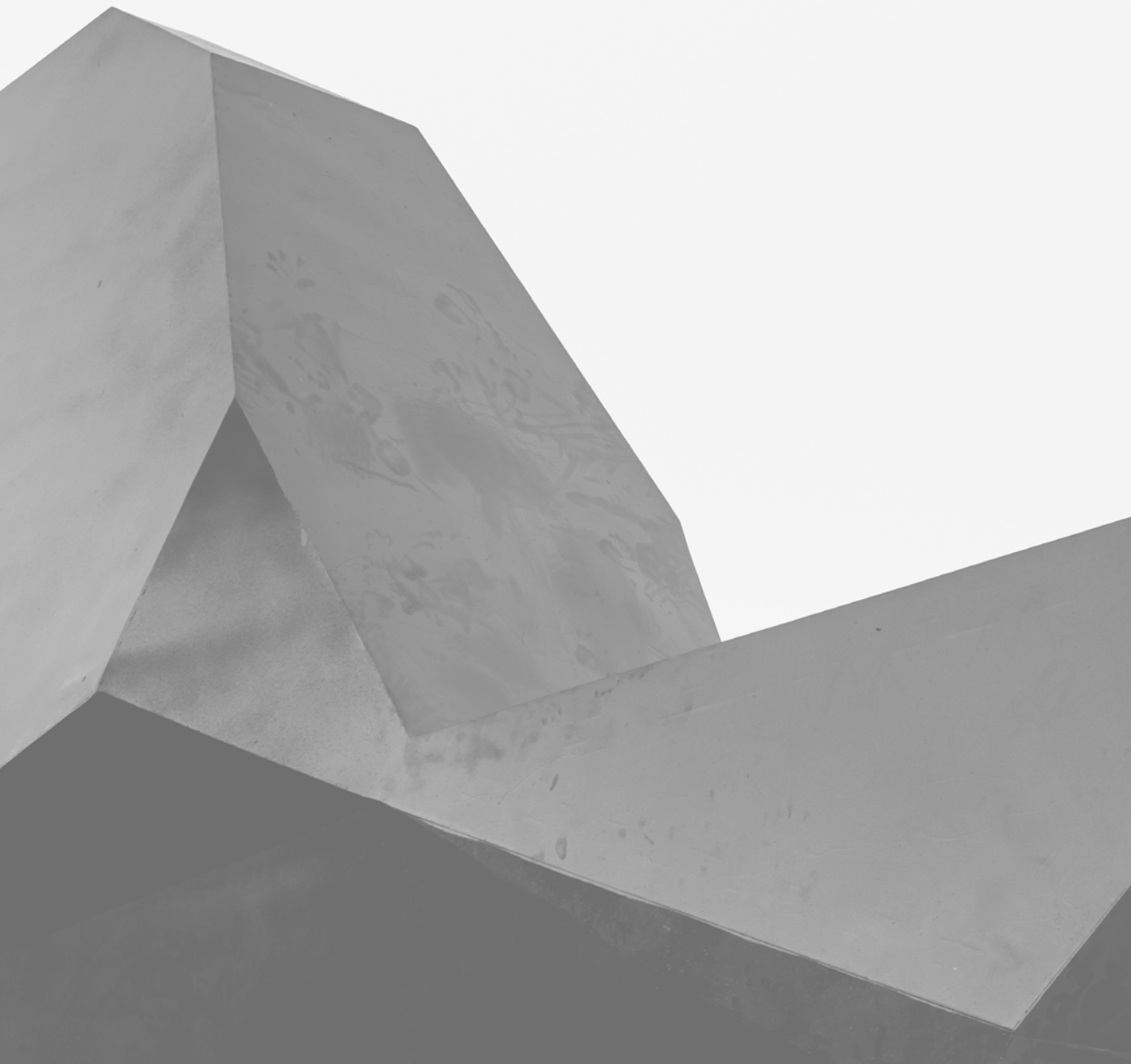
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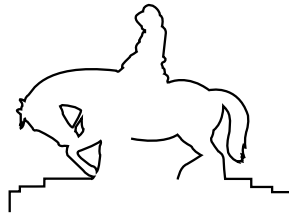


Chapter 4

Troubling statues:

A symptom of a complex heritage complex

Sipokazi Madida



It has become common to ascribe the troubling¹ of South Africa's monumental landscape to the failures of post-apartheid administrations, the government's structural and operational defects, slow transformation and the broader socio-economic issues that continue to scourge the country.² While this approach is valid in many ways, it often neglects or superficially acknowledges the complicated networks of messy operations that produce heritage. The approach focuses much on external factors as enemies of heritage, and fails to see beyond the façade of authority and the impression of a structured, orderly practice that government officials and heritage practitioners often create. Although some policy reviews delve deeper to underscore gaps, contradictions, overlapping mandates and restraining bureaucracies, their recommendations tend to create or normalise simple dichotomies and categories. They tend to pinpoint dominance and authorised discourses,³ which they juxtapose with

1 Troubling is here used to mean disturbed, stirred up or fraught with disorder, as used in the *Holy Bible*, John, chapter 5 verse 7, and a state of dilemma as used by Joseph Diesco in his novel *Troubled Waters*, 1993, which highlights the 'troubles' of black and white individuals as they helplessly strive to alter the apartheid system in which they find themselves.

2 See for example, Van Vuuren, Chisto J. "The intricacy of intangible cultural heritage: some perspectives on Ndebele earthen architecture". *South African Journal of Art History* 23, 2, 2008; King, Tony. & Flynn, M.K. "Heritage and the post-apartheid city: Constitution Hill, Johannesburg." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 18, 1, 2012; Nyamnjoh, Francis B. "Black Pain Matters: Down with Rhodes". *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 3-4, 2015: 74-93; Mbembe, Achille. "Decolonizing knowledge and the question of the archive". Presented at Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2015, Accessed 2 August 2016, <http://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf>

3 The notion of authorised heritage discourse was coined by Laurajane Smith to refer to a discourse of 'experts' and an instrument of political and cultural power, which produces

‘voices from below’, counter-memories and counter-narratives. Since these are generally imagined as distinct and determined, they easily settle with the simplest meanings of, for example, redress, unbundling, delineation, decolonisation and Africanisation. It is important to consider the complexity of the society under study, and the dynamics of its heritage economy. The best start is to acknowledge that taking socio-political struggles to sites of monumentalisation is not a new phenomenon in South Africa, and that the contexts of such occurrences have always been tricky. During apartheid monuments were from time to time rallying points for groups mobilised around particular social or political agendas. In many cases, as it is at present, the subjects of contention were neither directly connected, nor obviously related to the sites ‘under siege’.

To demonstrate the complexity of monumentalisation, and how statues have come to contribute to the complexity of the post-apartheid heritage practice, this chapter begins by historicising the troubling of South Africa’s statues. The aim is to illuminate trends related to contestations of sites of public representation, and perhaps inform the heritage policy reviews currently underway. The chapter invites the reader to pay attention to heritage as an intricate assemblage of institutions, agencies, things and ideas, and to the ambiguities and contradictions in the various contributions and operations of these components within the heritage practice.

Here I examine this complex network through three distinct but interlinking discussions. The first relates to complex transactions through which memories and narratives intersect to produce multifaceted and awkward heritage products (which attract contestations more for their awkwardness than for being one-sided). The second relates to an assemblage of legislations, institutions, and agencies which purport to represent different scopes and frameworks, and to produce different knowledges, experiences, memories,

packages that undermine or constrain alternative views. See, Smith, Laurajane. *Uses of Heritage*. Oxon: Routledge, 2006.

disciplines, practices, and approaches, although these overlap and intersect in complex ways. The third relates to the ambiguities and contradictions of a heritage practice that makes as it unmakes, and opens as it closes. The three discussions interlace with each other through the central argument of this chapter, which is that issues surrounding South Africa's public statues are a symptom of a heritage practice made intricate – not necessarily by bureaucracies, hegemony, dominant ideologies, suppressed voices, counter-narratives and counter-representations, but by disordered intersections of knowledges, meanings, memories and identities.

These troubles are not new

The weeks-long anti-apartheid marches that plagued the city of Pretoria in September 1989 could have come and gone without much drama, if the demonstrators had not climbed up the statue of Paul Kruger in Church Square. The act particularly irked members of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), such that on Sunday 23 September 1989 they came out in retaliation and gathered around the statue for a rally addressed by their leader Eugene Terreblanche. Their cause was to protect the statue “against what the blacks did ... because [it was] a sacred monument, not something for the apes to climb atop of”.⁴ On that day, the immortalised Paul Kruger stood tall as ‘blacks’ and ‘whites’ exchanged blows at his feet for about an hour before the security police ‘intervened’.

The bone of contention was not the statue or figure of Kruger, but what it represented. The statue and others in its category embodied racial exclusivity and white supremacy that fed into the very threads of the system of apartheid.⁵ Such symbols constituted a monumental

4 Wren, Christopher S. “Pretoria Stops Anti-Apartheid March”. *Special to The New York Times*, September 24, 1989. Accessed 10 May 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/09/24/world/pretoria-stops-anti-apartheid-march.html>

5 Buchli, Victor & Gavin Lucas. *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*. London: Routledge, 2001: 90.

complex⁶ mobilised around the concept of *erfenis*,⁷ and produced monumental representations that fostered European identities and celebrated imperialist achievements. By 1989, about 97% of the monuments declared by the Historical Monuments Commission (HMC) and later National Monuments Council (NMC) represented people of European origin and their conquests.⁸ Only 3% represented the art, architecture and artefacts of Africans, who were about 84% of the country's population.⁹ It was indeed a racialised monumental practice. Hence, climbing versus defending statues was for that 23 September 1989 moment the defining factor between 'blacks and whites'.

But the politics of public representation transcended mere racial categories. Monuments had by the late 1980s become rallying sites of venting political rage across and among other groupings. Afrikanerdom, for instance, had by 1989 disintegrated into factions, which Annie Coombes summarised as a prosperous bourgeois sector versus right wing activism.¹⁰ The latter was conspicuous for taking its frustrations with the other faction to monuments. Sites like the Voortrekker Monument and Fort Schanskop were from time to time taken hold of by Afrikaner groups protesting certain views or actions. For example, in May 1990, the Conservative Party 'took hold' of the Voortrekker Monument to demonstrate their stance against political changes such as the beginning of the negotiations between the South African

6 Derived from Tony Bennett's concept of exhibitionary complex, which he uses to illustrate the bringing together different knowledges, disciplines, approaches, and practices into the museum institution resulting in a nexus of forms of knowledge and discursive structures within which power constitutes and manifests itself not in negative coercive force, but in various negotiable, adaptable and substitutable forms of agency. See, Bennett, Tony. "The Exhibitionary Complex." *New Formations*, 4, 1988.

7 A Dutch or Afrikaans word for inheritance.

8 The National Monuments Council established in 1969, replaced the Historical Monuments Commission which was established in 1923, but could only begin its monumentalising work in 1934, due to its limiting earlier framework.

9 Frescura, Franco. "National of Nationalist? A Critique of the National Monuments Council, 1936-1989." In *Proceedings of the National Urban Conservation Symposium*, University of Witwatersrand, 12-14 July 1991, edited by Derek Japha & Vivienne Japha. Cape Town: Oakville Press, 1991.

10 Coombes, Annie E. "Translating the past: apartheid monuments in post-apartheid South Africa." In *Hybridity and its discontents: Politics, Science and Culture*, edited by Avtar Brah & Annie E. Coombes. London: Routledge, 2000.

government and the African National Congress (ANC).¹¹ This must have been sparked by a meeting between some government leaders and ANC leaders on 4 May 1990 at the Groote Schuur presidential residence. In December 1993, the Pretoria East Boere Commando mobilised around a similar stance invaded the Fort Schanskop. The statue of Paul Kruger was at some point a subject of heated debates regarding its value and suitable location. Although commissioned in 1896, the statue changed locations twice before it finally rested at Church Square in 1954.¹²

The troubling of statues associated with frustrations did not perish with apartheid, but gained even greater momentum with the roll-out of post-apartheid monumental projects. Sabine Marschall highlighted this momentum and what appears to be dominant ideologies and official heritage discourses versus vernacular discourses.¹³ In the current era dubbed post-apartheid, society still gets stratified by the climbing versus the defence of statues, although the associations and voices are ambiguous and at times contradictory. Between 1997 and 2015, more than 20 colonial and post-apartheid monuments were contested and defaced. To cite a few examples, the statue of Steve Biko erected in the city of East London in October 1997, was spray-painted with 'AWB' initials less than 24 hours after its unveiling. On 16 December 1998, attendees of the unveiling of the Ncome and Blood River Monument were cautioned not to go near the makeshift bridge 'of reconciliation' that linked the new monument with the old Blood River Memorial on the west side of the Ncome River. There were rumours that 'the Afrikaners' holding their own celebrations on the west side of the river had threatened to blow the bridge up.

In 2003 the City of Johannesburg proudly unveiled the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, and renamed the square of its location Gandhi Square, but the statue was vandalised with paint in April 2015. In September 2005, six

11 Coombes, Annie E. "Translating the past: apartheid monuments in post-apartheid South Africa." In *Hybridity and its discontents: Politics, Science and Culture*, edited by Avtar Brah & Annie E. Coombes. London: Routledge, 2000.

12 The statue was first erected at Prince's Park, and then moved to Pretoria Station.

13 Marschall, Sabine. "Targeting Statues: Monument Vandalism as an Expression of Sociopolitical Protest in South Africa." *African Studies Review*, 60, 3, 2017: 203-219.

days after the unveiling of the statue of King Makhado in Makhado (formerly Louis Trichardt), the statue was defaced with paint in the colours of the former South African flag.¹⁴ Similarly, a monument erected in remembrance of the Duncan Village Massacre, which President Mbeki unveiled in the city of East London in March 2008, was contested and vandalised soon after its erection. A spear was removed from the hand of the African warrior-like sculpture. When the Buffalo City Municipality reacted and fenced the memorial, it was pelted with stones.¹⁵ In 2008, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) constructed a memorial at the grave site of Sara Baartman in Hankey, and then declared it a National Heritage Site.¹⁶ But the grave plaque was vandalised with white paint in April 2015. Before this, the grave in which Sara Baartman's remains were buried on 9 August 2002 had been vandalised several times. Battling to explain the cause Crais and Scully speculated that "the powerful symbolic site offered ritual specialists powerful *muti* (medicine) to cause harm, to ensure benefits or to ward off witchcraft".¹⁷ It was unclear in their speculation why the 'harvesting' of *muti* would involve vandalism. But the splashing of the plaque with paint some thirteen years later, resonated more with the 2015 wave of the troubling of statues.

Again, these violent contestations were not just about balancing lopsided representations or replacing sets of memories and narratives. Deeper investigations into each case could potentially unmasking more than just prominence of dominant or 'official' discourses over 'vernacular', local or popular expressions.¹⁸ Minkley and Mnyaka performed this unmasking in their critical analysis of the case of the Duncan Village

14 Thotse, Mahunele. "Contesting Names and Statues: Battles over the Louis Trichardt and Makhado City-text in Limpopo Province, South Africa." *Kronos* 36, 2010.

15 Minkley, Gary & Mnyaka, Phindezwa. "Seeing Beyond the Official and the Vernacular: The Duncan Village Massacre Memorial and the Politics of Heritage in South Africa". In: Peterson, Derek R., Gavua, Kodzo & Rassool, Ciraj (eds.). *The Politics of Heritage in Africa: Economies, Histories and Infrastructures*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

16 *Government Gazette* No. 30987, 2008.

17 Crais, Clifton & Pamela Scully. *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

18 Marschall, Sabine. "Commemorating the Trojan Horse Massacre in Cape Town: the Tensions between Vernacular and Official Expressions of Memory". *Visual Studies*, 25, 2010.

Massacre Memorial. Their reading of memories, imagery and meanings of the massacre transcended simple categories and dichotomies of good and bad, or hegemonic and counter-hegemonic heritage. The essence of their reading was that the contested warrior-like sculpture was “simultaneously national and particular, exclusive and ‘tribal’, and not simply universal or ‘African’ national.”¹⁹ It is such simultaneity and intricate overlapping of interests of various contributors and role players that continues to render the heritage practice complex. In many cases involving constructions of monuments, consultations (and even lack of) can be considered as producing complex transactions, whereby local and popular memories rely on, borrow from, feed into, and sometimes translate into official, nationalising and universalising ideas, and vice versa. Thus, contestations do not necessarily confirm dominance or subjugation of one discrete and discernible discourse by another. Instead, they respond to medleys of meanings that make up convoluted and often ambiguous and contradictory heritage products.

To explicate the complexity of the post-apartheid heritage practice further, it is necessary to scrutinise role players and their contributions, and to critically study the production processes and products at various stages, including the unintended consequences. However, for the scope of this chapter focus is limited to the complexity created by the overlapping structures and frameworks of heritage institutions and agencies and their intersecting mandates. It is to highlight the inevitable frustrations with a disorderly heritage practice and to demonstrate that there is indeed a correlation between the current climbing and defence of statues and their contexts. Unlike in the late 1980s, the current issues regarding statues are not limited to racial exclusivity and political inclinations. In fact, post-apartheid monumentalisation simultaneously produces exclusivity and inclusivity, and contestations do not always arise along strict political lines. While the post-apartheid monumentalisation purports

19 Minkley, Gary & Mnyaka, Phindezwa. “Seeing Beyond the Official and the Vernacular: The Duncan Village Massacre Memorial and the Politics of Heritage in South Africa”, 2015: 60.

to construct and represent collective memories of a rainbow nation, its anti-colonial orientation juxtaposes blackness with whiteness.

Furthermore, while monuments erected after 1994 can be seen as marking new memorial beginnings, they also symbolise convergences and conclusions of negotiated historical and heritage knowledges and meanings. Each monument immortalises particular streamlined memories and narratives, the custodians of which are heritage practitioners and government officials in charge of 'the nations' arts and culture. Certainly, this seems to render post-apartheid monuments merely official, rigid and subsequently unfulfilling to the 'general public'. Yet, heritage practitioners and government officials often present the same monuments as open invitations to 'the nation' to utilise the spaces for ongoing creative engagements and production of new memories. And through such 'opportunities' interest groups invent themselves as heritage communities and advisers, beneficiaries and custodians of certain heritage processes and products. That too does not guarantee fulfilment. Besides, with heritage interests and groupings mutating every now and then, there is never certainty about who the climbers or attackers and defenders of monuments can be at any given moment.

Complex negotiations and the blurring of official versus counter-narratives, or those involved versus the side-lined, becomes even more prominent during events such as commemoration days, when these generally lifeless monuments get resuscitated to speak to and for 'the nation'. On such occasions, speakers (representing government or communities) often seek relevance by carefully straddling between particularising the monuments to races, ethnicities and groupings, and generalising them to 'the nation' and the universe. Notably, the #RhodesMustFall movement launched another occasion whereby the statue climbers and defenders constructed and disseminated explicit meanings of race, ethnicity and gender, and amplified Rhodes into whiteness, Europeaness, and masculinity, at the same time as they sought to exterminate such generalisations. It is such endings and beginnings, closures and openings, and medleys of voices and

meanings that have come to characterise the post-apartheid heritage. And, it is for such complexity and disorder that the practice has landed itself in a web of socio-political struggles related to slow or lack of transformation and poor service delivery. The troubling of monuments therefore should be viewed through the lens of the kind of critical heritage studies that probes beyond simple binaries.

Theorising the post-apartheid heritage practice

For the scope of this work I consider three approaches to critical heritage studies that continue to write or talk past each other with regard to the troubles unsettling South African monuments. One approach is the dominant ideology thesis, which is concerned with issues of power and dominance in heritage productions and representations.²⁰ It illuminates processes and outcomes that reflect top-down practices (usually by the government), subjugation and counter strategies. Another approach employs the notion of an authorised heritage discourse (AHD), and uses discourse in terms derived from linguistics.²¹ It explicates complex power dynamics in rhetoric, legislation, structures and operations, social and political contexts, the control of people's worlds, and the organising of people into nations, classes and identities. It then approaches this control and ordering as an authorised discourse working against competing discourses. But there is another approach concerned with knowledge production and power relations in heritage. It is closer to the Foucauldian notion of discourse, and draws largely from Tony Bennett's notion of exhibitionary complex.²² It approaches heritage as

20 For example, Van Vuuren, Chisto J. "The intricacy of intangible cultural heritage: some perspectives on Ndebele earthen architecture". *South African Journal of Art History* 23, 2, 2008; Jethro, Duane. "An African story of creation: heritage formation at Freedom Park, South Africa." *Material Religion* 9, 3, 2013; Marschall, Sabine. 2010a. *Landscape of Memory: Commemorating Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-apartheid South Africa*, Leiden: Brill; Marschall, Sabine. "Targeting Statues: Monument Vandalism as an Expression of Sociopolitical Protest in South Africa". *African Studies Review*, 60, 3, 2017, 203-219.

21 Smith, Laurajane. *Uses of Heritage*. Oxon: Routledge, 2006; King, Tony. & Flynn, M.K. "Heritage and the post-apartheid city: Constitution Hill, Johannesburg." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 18, 1, 2012.

22 Discourse according to Michel Foucault, and in simpler terms than he explains it, is not a

a nexus of negotiated meanings and knowledges.²³ Discussions and argument in this chapter are aligned with this last approach.

It is important to note though that for all these approaches, the political transition of the 1990s was one opportunity for rethinking public representations through monuments and statues. The opportunity enabled an extensive body of literature devoted to comparing the ‘before and after’. For example, Franco Frescura explored apartheid and post-apartheid monumentalisation through a persuasive critique of the work of the HMC and NHC, and of monumentalisation as a conservation strategy in general.²⁴ Another critique of the HMC as an institution ‘charged with making a register of monuments which ought to be preserved’ versus the NMC as an institution charged with erecting monuments was offered by Hall and Lillie.²⁵ These contributions were quite successful in highlighting the racial, ethnic and regional disproportions of conservation approaches over years, although Frescura’s contribution was mainly from an architectural point of view.

Subsequently, a number of contributions on the subject emerged, which appraised the post-apartheid memorial ambitions as they painstakingly documented the declarations and erection of monuments and statues

manifestation of thoughts, knowledge and speeches of a particular subject, but a system, a way of organising or structuring, or a formation in which knowledge and meanings are produced or organised by means of power and its effects. In such system knowledge and meanings are produced to form what manifests as meaningful social relations, logics, collective understandings and a set of social facts. See, Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Pantheon Books: New York, 1972: 55 and 117. See also, Bennett, Tony. “The Exhibitionary Complex.” *New Formations*, 4, 1988.

23 See, Minkley, Gary. “A fragile inheritor: The post-apartheid memorial complex, A.C. Jordan and the re-imagining of cultural heritage in the Eastern Cape.” *Kronos* 34, 2008; Witz, Leslie & Rassool, Ciraj. “Making Histories”. *Kronos* 34, 2008; Minkley, Gary & Mnyaka, Phindezwa. “Seeing Beyond the Official and the Vernacular: The Duncan Village Massacre Memorial and the Politics of Heritage in South Africa”, 2015.

24 Frescura, Franco. “National of Nationalist? A Critique of the National Monuments Council, 1936-1989.” In *Proceedings of the National Urban Conservation Symposium*, University of Witwatersrand, 12-14 July 1991, edited by Derek Japha & Vivienne Japha. Cape Town: Oakville Press, 1991; Frescura, Franco. “Who Needs Monuments?” *Juta’s SA Journal of Property* 5, 2, 1989.

25 Hall, Andrew & Ashley Lillie. “The National Monuments Council and a policy for providing protection for the cultural and environmental heritage.” Paper presented at Myths, Monuments, Museums: New Premises Conference. University of the Witwatersrand, history workshop, 16-18 July, 1992.

around the country.²⁶ Marschall and Grudlingh offered compelling critiques of the ‘new monumental premises’ and highlighted some myths and ambiguities embedded in the nationalising ideas and ideals of unity in diversity, reconciliation and social cohesion. Coombes offered a broader and more critical analysis, placing monuments and statues at the centre of intricate public history and memory-making projects fraught with ambiguities, contestations.

Indeed, a few sources highlighted the numerous shortcomings characterising post-apartheid monumentalisation. Buchli and Lucas found monumentalising a heritage of recent political past generally a challenge, since it related to contemporary political issues that remained unresolved.²⁷ Marschall evaluated the whole practice through a dominant ideology thesis. She perceived public monumentalisation in post-apartheid South Africa as manifesting dominant ideologies, and as produced through an official, hegemonic narrative, and as constituted within a discourse authorised, made official and endorsed by ‘agents of state’. Marschall criticised new monumental projects as embodiments of a triumphalist ‘meta-narrative’ of the struggle, and as representing a ‘dominant, authorised version of the past in visualised forms’.²⁸ Similarly, scholars like Duane Jethro singled out ‘legacy projects’ like the Freedom Park to diagnose anatomic issues from conception to the launch.²⁹ Their overall focus was on highlighting successes and failures

26 Marschall, Sabine. “Gestures of compensation: post-apartheid monuments and memorials”. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 55, 2004; Marschall, Sabine. “Reordering the Past: Monuments and Architectural Heritage in Post-Apartheid South Africa”. *Repenser les limites: l’architecture à travers l’espace, le temps et les disciplines*, INHA Paris, 2005; Marschall, Sabine. ‘Struggle Heroes: Constructing a Genealogy for the New South Africa’. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2006; Grudlingh, Albert M. “A cultural conundrum? Old monuments and new regimes: The Voortrekker monument as symbol of Afrikaner power in a postapartheid South Africa”. *Radical History Review* 81, 2001; Coombes, Annie E. “Translating the past: apartheid monuments in post-apartheid South Africa.” In *Hybridity and its discontents: Politics, Science and Culture*, edited by Avtar Brah & Annie E. Coombes. London: Routledge, 2000; Coombes, Annie E. *History after apartheid: visual culture and public memory in a democratic South Africa*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

27 Buchli, Victor & Gavin Lucas. *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*. London: Routledge, 2001.

28 Marschall, Sabine. *Landscape of Memory: Commemorating Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-apartheid South Africa*, Leiden: Brill, 2010.

29 Jethro, Duane. “An African story of creation: heritage formation at Freedom Park, South Africa.” *Material Religion* 9, 3, 2013.

of the post-apartheid state. Jethro also revealed the contradictory nature of gigantic monuments like Freedom Park that have failed to attract visitors although conceived with the grandest ambitions to be the opposite. Some of the arguments made in this chapter about grand plans, chaotic operations, and unfulfilling and banal monumental products are grounded on Jethro's observations. However, beyond centres and directions of power that Jethro has looked at, are some interesting disorderly spaces and processes between what appears as neatly constituted and organised institutions and lines of authority.

In the light of the #RhodesMustFall movement, numerous contributions focused on issues of transformation and related socio-economic conditions.³⁰ Cynthia Kros offered a more detailed analysis exploring the rationale behind the recent call for removal of colonial and apartheid statues and monuments.³¹ However, none of these contributions probed the forms of knowledge informing the ideas and ideals driving the post-apartheid monumentalisation, and the structures within which heritage was produced.

But this chapter is aligned with the deeper probing of these issues, which is prominent in the writings of Witz, Minkley, Rassool and Mnyaka. These scholars have for the past decade consistently analysed the post-apartheid heritage practice through critiques of disciplines and knowledge forms informing public representations. Most persuasive is Minkley and Mnyaka's critical analysis of the memorial complex through a case study of a statue erected in Duncan Village, which highlights not just contestations but the intricacy of power/knowledge relations in post-apartheid heritage.³² Another most

30 Nyamnjoh, Francis B. "Black Pain Matters: Down with Rhodes", *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 3-4, 2015, 74-93; Mbembe, Achille. "Decolonizing knowledge and the question of the archive". Presented at Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2015, Accessed 2 August 2016, <http://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf>; Habib, Adam. "Race, Racism and Memorials", Accessed on 2 August 2016, <https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/general-news/2015/2015-04/race-racism-and-memorials.html>

31 Kros, Cynthia. "Rhodes Must Fall: archives and counter-archives". *Journal of Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 29, 2015.

32 Minkley, Gary & Mnyaka, Phindezwa. "Seeing Beyond the Official and the Vernacular: The

recent contribution to this ‘advanced’ critical heritage scholarship is a collection of essays focused on understanding post-apartheid heritage as a complex.³³ The essays on South Africa successfully steer away from settling with simple notions of heritage as authorised by the state and/or experts, but challenges one to think beyond coercive power. Yet so far, each of the studies of post-apartheid statues and monuments has been insulated and unrelated to the rest under an overarching yet close and critical reading. What remains absent in these studies is an overarching theorisation of the fundamental issues troubling the monumental landscape.

My interpretation primarily draws from the critical heritage scholarship that approaches post-apartheid heritage practice as a complex in order to offer an account of the troubled monumental landscape as both complex (intricate) and a complex (network). It is an account that seeks to highlight fundamental issues not just in the regime, dominant ideologies and ambiguous ideals, or negotiated roles, but the ‘nature’ of the entire complex, the frameworks and scopes of operation. Hence, the troubled statues as subjects of this discussion are situated within what Gary Minkley identifies as ‘post-apartheid memorial complex’, a complex arena of ideas and meanings of ‘the symbolic’ represented discursively and materially.³⁴ The historicising discussion featuring in the previous sections is therefore important in highlighting the genealogy, development and changes of the South African memorial landscape in relation to statues.

Duncan Village Massacre Memorial and the Politics of Heritage in South Africa”, 2015.

33 Rassool, Ciraj. 2015. “Human Remains, the Disciplines of the Dead, and the South African Memorial Complex”. In *The Politics of Heritage in Africa: Economies, Histories and Infrastructures*, edited by Peterson, Derek R., Gavua, Kodzo and Rassool, Ciraj. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

34 Minkley, Gary. “A fragile inheritor: The post-apartheid memorial complex, A.C. Jordan and the re-imagining of cultural heritage in the Eastern Cape.” *Kronos* 34, 2008.

The post-apartheid memorial complex

In his analysis of the work of culture, Tony Bennett considers the material processes through which culture is made as assemblages of networks of relations.³⁵ The processes involve accumulation, classification, codification, and ordering of varied kinds of objects, knowledge, and practices to constitute culture. Bennett likens these processes to, for example, ‘the bringing together of various kinds of writing to form literature, or of painting to constitute art’. Similarly, an assemblage of buildings, sites, objects, cultures, traditions, and knowledge systems that are produced, stored, accumulated, codified, and disseminated by a network of institutions and agencies, constitute post-apartheid heritage. As Bennett demonstrates regarding culture, designating heritage involves setting in place ‘specific relations between objects and practices’, ‘institutionally produced zones of cultural action’, and ‘institutional mechanisms and the forms of expertise’.

Thus, analysing the work of post-apartheid heritage involves attending to the assemblage of legislations and policies that set the work into motion. It involves attending to the varied structures and frameworks of the institutions and agencies established to facilitate the making of heritage. And, it involves attending to the different knowledges and meanings giving rise to differentiated ensembles, such as tangible and intangible heritage. In the gestation of post-apartheid heritage legislation, a heritage definition carried through the arts and culture and heritage commissions, and bills was that of,

*a sum-total of wildlife and scenic parks, sites of scientific and historical importance, national monuments, historic buildings, works of art, literature and music, oral traditions and museum collections and their documentation which provides the basis for a shared culture and creativity in the arts.*³⁶

35 Bennett, Tony. “The Exhibitionary Complex.” *New Formations*, 4, 1988.

36 This definition was adopted from the report by the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) and the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage*, 1996. In November 1994, following the National Museums Workshop in Pretoria where the Museums South Africa (MUSA) report was rejected, the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in the new

The NHRA in particular amalgamates all these into an assemblage called the national estate. It entrusts SAHRA, which replaced the National Monuments Council (NMC), with the mandate to safeguard, protect, preserve, and conserve the national estate. The Act explicates the national estate in sections, which SAHRA has adopted as its structure and operational framework, as follows:

*Section 32 and 33: heritage objects; section 34: structures or built environment; section 35: archaeology, palaeontology and meteorites; section 35: maritime and underwater cultural heritage section, provided that the protection of any wreck in the territorial waters and the maritime cultural zone shall be the responsibility of SAHRA; section 36: burial grounds and graves; section 37: public monuments and memorials; section 39: national inventory; section 13: Centre for Training, Research and Education.*³⁷

A striking feature of the ensemble, particularly as assembled for SAHRA, is the missing category of national monuments, or replacement of the term ‘national monument’ with ‘heritage site’.³⁸ In Section 34, ‘structures or built environment’ is assumed to accommodate monuments such as statues, which upon declaration acquire the term ‘national heritage site’. The development signifies a conceptual deconstruction of the existing marble, concrete, steel and bronze blocks and structures, so that they are thought of as sites. It invokes meanings of openness and versatile utility of an open memorial landscape. The development also signifies an inclination towards a memorial complex of symbolic rather than monumental commemorations.

‘government of national unity’ appointed and commissioned the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG). Its mandate was to review the heritage legislation existing at the time and recommend reforms. In its very first report, ACTAG noted in the National Monuments Act (NMC) and within the work of NMC a “bias” towards conservation of ‘heritage’ associated with European colonists. The group subsequently recommended among other things ‘inclusivity’ to include for example, “graves of all victims of conflict in South Africa, from land struggles to wars and the struggle against apartheid”. The *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage* was a combination of ACTAG’s proposals, investigations by the Department of Arts and Culture, inputs from the writers of the *Draft White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage* and its Reference Group, and the Arts and Culture Ministry’s own views based on its understanding of the workings, possibilities and constraints facing the Government. See, the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG), *Second Draft Report*, May 1995: 80–81, and the *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage*.

37 National Heritage Resources Act No.25 of 1999.

38 National Heritage Resources Act, 1999, S 58 (1) (a).

Besides, as was the case with the NMC, SAHRA is not mandated to declare and erect monuments, but to preserve, conserve, and protect the already declared monuments. Its role is to preserve the already declared monuments dotting the country, and identify, grade, and declare more undeclared monuments deemed of national, provincial, and local significance through a three-tier system.³⁹ It is the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), through the Legacy Projects⁴⁰ under its heritage promotion and preservation programme, that erects new monuments. Some DAC monuments are even erected outside the borders of South Africa.⁴¹ The National Heritage Council (NHC) established by the *National Heritage Council Act* (NHCA) of 1999, to develop, promote and protect the national heritage, and coordinate heritage management, has its contribution in this regard, through projects like the Liberation Heritage Project.⁴² Nonetheless, SAHRA contributes in the post-apartheid monumentalisation through its protection of burial grounds and grave sites, on which SAHRA erects monumental memorials. There is therefore a multiplicity and duplication of outlets at which monuments are conceived and realised.

Moreover, SAHRA's management scope overlaps into the mandate of the NHC in many respects. Just like SAHRA's heritage impact assessments

39 In terms of the *National Heritage Resources Act* the three-tier system is such that Grade I, II and III are sites of national, provincial and local significance respectively. It is the role of provincial heritage authorities to manage Grade II heritage resources, and the role of local heritage authorities to manage grade III heritage resources. Where a provincial or local authority is deemed incompetent, SAHRA must take the responsibility of managing the heritage resources within the ambit of the incompetent authority.

40 In 1996 the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) planned Legacy Projects to 'establish commemorative symbols of South Africa's history and to celebrate its heritage'. In 1998 the Cabinet approved and budgeted some seven million rand for the initial eight projects. These were the Women's Memorial, Ncome/Blood River Project, Samora Machel Monument, Albert Luthuli Museum, the Constitution Hill, the Freedom Park, Nelson Mandela Museum and the Khoisan Heritage Project.

41 These include the Matola Monument in Matola, Mozambique, and memorials on burial sites in Cuito Quanevale in Angola, the Vienna Camp in Angola, the Augustino Netto Memorial in Angola, the Liberation graves in Angola, the Nelson Mandela training Barracks in Ethiopia and Liberation Graves in Tanzania.

42 The NHC launched the Liberation Heritage Route Project as part of a bigger African Liberation Heritage Route project. The South African leg sought to the identify, recognise and develop people, communities, events, places, icons which had a significant impact on the South African struggle for liberation. See, Bialostocka, Olga. "Liberation Heritage Route: Reminiscent of the Painful Past or a Road to the Future?", *Policy Brief*, Africa Institute of South Africa, November 2013: 100.

overlap with the environmental impact assessment systems operated by different government departments, such as the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) which is required in terms of the *National Environmental Management Act*, Act 107 of 1998, or of the *Environment Conservation Act*, Act 73 of 1989 and Environmental Management Plans (EMPs) required by the Department of Minerals and Energy. One notable result of the overlaps, duplication of roles, ambiguities and contradictions between the work of SAHRA, the NHC, DAC and other government departments, is frustrations and inefficiency among these agencies and institutions of heritage governance.⁴³

Nonetheless out of this paradox, effective collaborations have seen new post-apartheid monumental projects, implemented by DAC and declared by SAHRA, or implemented by SAHRA, endorsed by DAC and promoted by the NHC. Another example is the survey of monuments and memorials in public open spaces (squares and parks) in Bloemfontein, Cape Town and Pretoria, which SAHRA undertook, upon the request of DAC in 2003. This saw entry into the inventory of the national estate in the custodianship of SAHRA a few colonial monuments and towns. It is also through such collaborations that the NHC occasionally intervened in the protection of monuments subject to vandalism, as in the case of the Duncan Village Massacre Memorial erected by DAC. The NHC commissioned a study on the matter and held public hearings, albeit in the interest of promoting the liberation struggle.⁴⁴

However, the post-apartheid monumentalising processes are generally protracted, intricate, and involve multi-layered bureaucratic consultative procedures. Where the processes are bottom-up, they involve,

- expression of concerns or interests at the levels of individuals, families, concerned groups, local communities, and local authorities;

43 Manetsi, Thabo. *Can Intangibles be Tangible? Safeguarding Intangible Heritage in the New South Africa: Towards Formulating Policy for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Heritage*. Masters' Thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2007.

44 Minkley, Gary. "A fragile inheritor: The post-apartheid memorial complex, A.C. Jordan and the re-imagining of cultural heritage in the Eastern Cape." *Kronos* 34, 2008.

- the processing of nominations, recommendations and applications by the institutions of heritage governance, including government Arts and Culture ministries, Provincial Heritage Resources Authorities (PHRAs), SAHRA, NHC and their multi-level professionals, experts and consultants;
- research and assessments of significance and state of conservation, consultation of various departments, stakeholders, experts and public participation of not less than 60 days, as required by multiple laws, policies and regulations; and
- multiple stages of planning, designing, procurement, tendering, and back and forth reporting, and implementation by professionals and service providers, followed by other multiple stages of reporting and accounting.⁴⁵

Where the processes are largely top-down as in the case of the Legacy Projects, the same network of applications applies, not in direct reverse but intermittently. Such is the heritage assemblage, structures, and systems, part of which is the monumental work performed and deployed variously by local heritage authorities, PHRAs, SAHRA, NHC, and DAC. Apparently, post-apartheid monumentalising processes primarily empower structured forms of memory and knowledge production, and dismember unstructured creativity and in many instances, counter-hegemony. There is such hierarchisation and prioritisation of selected memories and knowledges that many processes have rendered themselves irrelevant to, for example, those pursuing new socio-economic struggles by means different from the anti-apartheid struggles. It is because of such that the hashtag movement masses were by 2015 increasingly distrustful of, for example, the ‘doctrines and talk of neo-liberal racial democracy’, while public institutions continued to exclude different epistemologies of thought.⁴⁶ Indeed,

45 This is a summary of processes outlined in NHRA, *SAHRA Minimum Standards for Heritage Impact Assessments*, 2007 and *SAHRA Guidelines for Site Management Plans*.

46 Kamanzi, Brian. “Rhodes Must Fall – Decolonisation Symbolism – What is happening at UCT, South Africa?”

The Postcolonialist, 29 March, 2015. Accessed 18 August 2016, <http://postcolonialist.com/civil->

graffiti messages accompanying the troubling of statues such as, 'I stole your land so what?', 'End White Privilege', 'Fuck Rhodes', and 'a black woman raised me' embodied counter-hegemonic discourses. Beyond this interpretation, however, is another interpretation transcending the simple dichotomies that slot these messages and the resisting voices into categories like black, white, poor, privileged, official, and vernacular. To interpret a heritage practice so complex, I prefer this approach as it irradiates those knowledge/power negotiations and dynamics. It acknowledges the agency of the statue-climbing and statue-defending masses as heritage makers and monumentalists in their own regard, rather than simple counter or anti-heritage revolutionists as a wide scholarship and commentary suggest.

Analysing the troubling of statues

The 2015 flurry of defacement of monuments had interesting surprises and unintended consequences for both heritage policy workers and the contenders. It seemed like heritage policy makers and bodies of heritage governance were caught by surprise by the sheer lack of public awareness of how to go about heritage-ising. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NHC, Sonwabile Mancotywa admitted that there was a 'policy vacuum' and lack of public discourse and consultation. At the same time, he relentlessly insinuated his custodianship of some correct versions of pasts and histories, through utterances like 'South Africans need to be taught their history because the history they were taught was distorted'.⁴⁷ But the arguments about 'lack of discourse', 'lack of policy', or 'need for policy review' were tenuous, since some of the contestations affecting monuments arose amidst an abundance of public policy and discourse.

Consider, for example, public policy and discourse before and after the removal of the bust of Hendrik Verwoerd by Midvaal Municipality from the municipal offices in Meyerton. This occurred two weeks

discourse/rhodes-must-fall-decolonisation-symbolism-happening-uct-south-africa/
47 Sosibo, Kwanele. "Heritage Council on back foot as Rhodes falls". *Mail & Guardian Online*, 10 April, 2015. Accessed 12 July 2016, <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-09-statues-you-cant-obliterate-history>

before South Africa's 2011 local government elections, in the spate of the ANC's condemnations of the Democratic Alliance (DA) and its monumentalising tendencies. Two things particularly irritated Pieter Mulder from the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) about the 'untimely' removal of the bust. One was the kind of 'selective removal' that left the statues of Jan Van Riebeeck and Queen Victoria in Cape Town untouched. Another was an attempt to 'make history complete' by removing old statues instead of erecting new ones.⁴⁸

According to media reports the bust was removed for safe-keep/ing by 'its owner', the Kultuurraad vir Klipriviervallei/Cultural Council for Klip River Valley allied to the Afrikaner heritage organisation named Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge (FAK)/Federation of Afrikaner Cultural Organisations.⁴⁹ In that case the removal of the bust was an act of defence and protection from a potential defacement. Even so, the removal was in contravention of Section 27 of the *National Heritage Resources Act* (NHRA), Act No. 25 of 1999, which prevented damaging or unlawful removal of public monuments of any local, provincial or national significance. In terms of Section 8 of NHRA, a permit to remove the bust should have been obtained through due processes from a local or provincial heritage authority. If any of these authorities was incompetent or incapacitated, as assessed by an authority or agent at a higher level, the higher authority such as PRHA-Gauteng in this case or SAHRA, should have regulated the removal or followed through with a penalty, fine or conviction. The process would have lasted at least two months to accommodate the 60-day minimum period required for public participation.

Yet there was a contradiction. As a heritage object, the 'owner' had responsibility to conserve the bust in accordance with Section 32(15) of the same Act.⁵⁰ What's more, according to Section 55, 'no person is liable

48 Mulder, Pieter. *Press statement*. 5 May, 2011. Accessed 12 September 2016, http://www.archivalplatform.org/news/entry/toppling_verwoerd/

49 Moeng, Katlego. "Verwoerd bust gone". *Sowetan Live*, 6 May, 2011. Accessed 12 September 2016, <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2011/05/06/verwoerd-bust-gone>

50 According to NHRA, Section 32, a heritage object could be publicly or privately owned.

in respect of anything done in terms of [NHRA] in good faith and without negligence'. Besides, SAHRA, PHRAs or the nameless local authorities generally exercised their powers as far as establishing principles, advising, assisting, and providing professional expertise, although NHRA empowers them to convict upon contravention. Thus, the removal of Verwoerd's bust was not just subject to different interpretations of the law, it affirmed the complexity of the power/knowledge dynamics playing out in the post-apartheid monumental complex.

In April 2015, in the spur of countrywide #RhodesMustFall protests, the bronze sentries at the feet of the statue of Paul Kruger in Church Square in Pretoria were splashed with green paint. In protest and defence of the statue, singer Sunnetta Bridges and others in the Red October Movement and the *Front Nasionaal* party gathered in Church Square on the morning of 8 April 2015. Bridges chained herself to the statue until the protesters were prevented from 'taking hold' of the statue by a police barricade. As the Red October Movement gained momentum in the rest of the country, its supporters in Cape Town and other groups such as the Boere Krisis Aksie and the Western Cape Action Forum, also gathered in defence of the statue of Jan van Riebeeck. Like Bridges, Johan Willemse of the Western Cape Action Forum chained himself to the statue.

Safeguarding one's heritage in such a manner was also in contravention of NHRA, in the same way as defacing was. Hence, SAHRA responded by warning against contravention of Section 27 of NHRA, while contradictorily choosing to avoid meddling in 'matters with political connotations'.⁵¹ In one of its official statements, SAHRA advised of the bureaucratic processes open to anyone wishing to see changes in the post-apartheid monumental landscape, including adding or removing monuments. The process, as outlined in various policy guidelines, involved submitting notices and applications to 'relevant heritage authorities and stake holders', together with heritage impact

51 Bernado, Carla. "Heritage Agency Condemns Statue Vandals". *Independent Online*, 10 April, 2015. Accessed 13 September 2016, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/heritage-agency-condemns-statue-vandals-1843400>

assessments and ensuring adequate public participation lasting at least 60 days. Heritage impact assessments necessitated attention to technical details, expertise, and time, the pleasure of which many individuals or groups disputing the monumental landscape had not.

Even so, it was not the inhibitive bureaucratic processes, or a heritage constantly barricaded by police that concerned heritage bodies like SAHRA. Their preoccupation was ensuring adherence to rules and achieving change of public attitudes and regulation of behaviours. Much time and resources were spent on carefully crafting regulations, guidelines, codes and procedures, and on parading model post-apartheid memorialisation through grand unveiling ceremonies, launches, commemorations, and award ceremonies. At the same time, the defacing episodes not only violated the rules but illuminated contradictions and ambiguities in the rules, the knowledges informing them, and the structures of their implementation. How then does one avert an easy reading of these events?

In the few examples cited in this chapter, ‘races’ sometimes exchanged places in the show of climbing and defending statues. The 2015 occurrences were often so spontaneous that commentators had a wide range of guesses. The actions were slotted into racial, ethnic or class categories and then packaged as issues specific to a category. As ‘black issues’, they were linked with frustrations over poor service delivery⁵²; a general failure of the government to see to the needs of ‘the people’; a lack of, or insufficient consultation with ‘the people’; opportunism; criminal elements; and even illiteracy.⁵³ As ‘white (specifically Afrikaner) issues’, the occurrences were associated with unwillingness to embrace change; the sore-loser syndrome; disruptive right-wing forces; and the add-on approach and its intrinsic flaws.⁵⁴

52 Kamanzi, Brian. “Rhodes Must Fall – Decolonisation Symbolism – What is happening at UCT, South Africa?” *The Postcolonialist*, 29 March, 2015. Accessed 18 August 2016, <http://postcolonialist.com/civil-discourse/rhodes-must-fall-decolonisation-symbolism-happening-uct-south-africa/>; Nyamnjoh, Francis B. “Black Pain Matters: Down with Rhodes”, *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 3-4, 2015: 74-93.

53 De Villiers, Ockert. “Steve Hofmeyr blames statue defacement on illiteracy”. *Mail & Guardian*, 8 April, 2015.

54 Baines, Gary. “The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa”. In *History*

So convenient were the simple explanations that even the agents of post-apartheid heritage governance took a ride and blamed vandalism of monuments and statues on the overdue heritage policy review and renewal of public participation.⁵⁵ There was a huge banking on heritage policy review and renewing public participation as some holy grail for an impeccable post-apartheid heritage monumentalisation.

Yet, the existing heritage policy emerged out of vigorous processes involving and an overhaul of apartheid policies through public participation, which lasted at least four years from the appointment of the Arts and Culture Task Group by the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in 1995 to the promulgation of NHRA in 1999. The new legislation reflected an obvious departure from many colonial forms of representation. Monuments fell into a body of strategic resources that could be utilised for nation-building and social cohesion. Indeed, the legislation established a practice sustained by the 20 transformation imperatives,⁵⁶ which effectively achieved the ‘othering’ of colonial statues, through its obvious inclination to anti-colonial pasts, histories and memories. Its new monumental projects were a taunting juxtaposition with colonial monuments, as it was the case with the gigantic Freedom Park versus the Voortrekker Monument. The possibilities that SAHRA would ‘identify’ and declare the undeclared colonial monuments as ‘national heritage sites’ were minimal, as the legislation transition had left many of them in the jurisdiction of largely incompetent local authorities, or as mere entries in the registries held by SAHRA.⁵⁷

Making and Present Day Politics: The meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa, edited by Hans Eric Stolten. Uppsala: Nordica Africa Institute, 2006; Baines, Gary. “Site of Struggle: the Freedom Park Fracas and the Divisive Legacy of South Africa’s Border War/Liberation Struggle.” *Social Dynamics* 35, 2: 2009: 330-344.

55 Mancotywa, Sonwabile. *Critical Conversations About Heritage: Popularising Contemporary Heritage Issues*, edited by Denver, Webb A. National Heritage Council, 2014.

56 The transformation imperatives were, human rights, freedom of expression, access, equity, redress, nation-building, multilingualism, diversity, autonomy, arms-length, participation, accountability, transparency, conservation, achievement, innovation, co-operation, exchange, security, and sustainability. See, ACTAG *Final Report*, 1994, *White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage*, 1996 and the *National Heritage Resources Act*, 1999.

57 Interestingly, the NMC had ‘forgotten’ to declare the Voortrekker Monument. It was only in 2011 that SAHRA declared the monument a national heritage site.

Notwithstanding this, Minkley has observed that 22 years into ‘democracy’ ‘the centrifugal heritage claims of diversity and multiculturalism seen reduced by the continuing presence of the real tangible signs of the existing visible built ‘South Africanism’ of the white settler ‘national estate’.⁵⁸ Despite all claims and pageants of newness, there is a taunting presence of the ‘old’ in the monumental landscape. While this is largely due to a ‘strategic’ retention of colonial monuments, it is also because the ‘new’ is to a great degree similar to the settler heritage in form and approach.

Reproducing the ‘old’

To a great extent, post-apartheid memorialisation manifests the ‘old’ ways of knowing and understanding pasts and histories. Firstly, the ‘new’ memorials primarily fail to deconstruct persistent hierarchical binary oppositions based on ideas of racial difference and timeless African cultures and traditions. Persistent utilisation of colonial categories like tribe in the constructions of, for example, monuments to Shaka, Chief Makhado, the Battle of Ncome/Blood River, Duncan Village Massacre Memorial, draws from forms of romance that fed into the settler notions of imperial conquests and *erfenis*. Also, the post-apartheid repatriation of human remains, identification of missing dead bodies, the rehabilitation of heroes’ graves, and the symbolic and physical memorialisations that goes with, are often not critical of knowledge generated by disciplines like forensic anthropology and archaeology. The remains of Sara Baartman and Klaas and Troy Pienaar for instance, although repatriated, reburied, and memorialised through grand ceremonies, were returned to the same categories that in the past rendered them subjects and objects of degrading scrutiny in the name of science.⁵⁹ They were returned as Bushmen and memorialised as such.

58 Minkley, Gary. “A fragile inheritor: The post-apartheid memorial complex, A.C. Jordan and the re-imagining of cultural heritage in the Eastern Cape.” *Kronos* 34, 2008: 24.

59 Rassool, Ciraj. 2015. “Human Remains, the Disciplines of the Dead, and the South African Memorial Complex”. In *The Politics of Heritage in Africa: Economies, Histories and Infrastructures*, edited by Peterson, Derek R., Gavua, Kodzo and Rassool, Ciraj. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015: 145.

Secondly, the practice is ambivalent in the sense that on the one hand, it privileges the so-called living heritage through the superior powers and financial resources vested on the NHC, which include making policy and advising the Minister of Arts and Culture. On the other hand, it strives to catch-up or even supersede the apartheid regime in erecting monuments. As it was for the NMC, 'opportunity for far more creative and productive approach to memorialising cultural significance' is lost to 'costly large impenetrable blocks of black marble, massive concrete or steel structures'.⁶⁰ As seen in the examples cited in this chapter, even the newest and grandest of these could not deter the masses from contesting the monumental landscape.

Thirdly, the practice is more contradictory and productive of contestations than the harmonising unity in diversity it purports. While the post-apartheid heritage practice appears progressive and steering to new directions, its ambivalence in many areas apprehends the functionality of its apparatuses. Baines for example, notes that framing a master-narrative by selecting usable pasts for something called national identity and collective memory, while ignoring sub-national, ethnic, local and even family identities is ambivalent.⁶¹ Another ambivalence to note stems from the permissive nature and outlook of the practice. It is in the 'strategy' of not obscuring, relegating or destroying many features of the 'old' monumental landscape, which effectively renders the modern post-apartheid state and its preferred features visible to its citizenry. Indeed, the features of the 'old' left untouched are – for the benefit of the state – rallying points for a collectivised public to celebrate the defeat of an ugly past. But this also works contrariwise, in that the same symbols become rallying points for expressing discontentment with the state, regarding what some perceived as incomplete or botched transformation, and selective historicisation and heritagisation by the state departments institutions and agents.

60 Buchli, Victor & Gavin Lucas. *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*. London: Routledge, 2001: 90.

61 Baines, Gary. "The politics of public history in post-apartheid South Africa." In *History Making and Present Day Politics: The meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa*, edited by Hans Eric Stolten. Uppsala: Nordica Africa Institute, 2006: 173-176.

It is this progressive, yet regressive approach that artists like Beezy Bailey and Sithembile Msezane have drawn attention to. Bailey's daring refiguring of colonial statues, including dressing and making-up the statue of Louis Botha outside the parliament in Cape Town as a Xhosa male initiate, earned him death threats from 'passing Afrikaners'.⁶² The installation came across as unacceptably progressive for blurring the venerated fixed racial and cultural boundaries, but also unacceptably regressive for invigorating ostracized symbols of colonial domination.⁶³ The question of who was regressive between Bailey and the defenders of Louis Botha's statue is valid, and it highlights the complexity of the statue as a heritage piece. The heated reaction to Bailey's installation is comparable with Maximo Caminero's smashing of a vase displayed by Miami Art Museum, as a protest against 'the museum's failure to display works of local artists'. The act raised valid questions about who the vandal was between Caminero and Ai Weiwei, the artist who had appropriated the Han Dynasty urn and painted on it.⁶⁴

More than 10 years later, another artist Sithembile Msezane attracted both praise, humiliation and for her art performances, which involved dressing up provocatively and standing still for hours on plinths next to some of the highly contested monuments. Msezane turned herself into a living juxtaposition with the contested memorials, as an invitation for people to think about why such monuments had to 'fall'.⁶⁵ While Bailey and Msezane's statue-troubling was of a different kind, their works irradiated a memorial landscape that seemingly opened

62 Mbita, Tarzan. "Artist Beezy threatened over Xhosa Louis Botha". Beezy Bailey Press, 2015. Accessed 19 April 2015, <http://home.intekom.com/beezybailey/new/press/abakw/abakw.htm>

63 Tshabalala, Sibusiso and Botha Nadine. "8 things to do with unwanted statues and monuments". *Cape Town Partnership*, 31 March, 2015. Accessed 19 April 2015, <http://www.capetownpartnership.co.za/2015/03/7-things-to-do-with-unwanted-statues/>

64 See Jones, Jonathan. "Who's the vandal: Ai Weiwei or the man who smashed his Han urn?" *The Guardian*, 18 February 2014. Accessed 23 August 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2014/feb/18/ai-weiwei-han-urn-smash-miami-art>.

65 Sethembile, Msezane. Interview with Buist, Erica. "Sethembile Msezane performs at the fall of the Cecil Rhodes statue". *The Guardian Online*, 19 April, 2015. Accessed 10 August 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/may/15/sethembile-msezane-cecil-rhodes-statue-cape-town-south-africa>

itself to open and ongoing construal, and yet offered an impression of decisiveness to the satisfaction of some.

Lastly, there are striking similarities between apartheid heritage designed to achieve governmentality of citizenry by means of suppressing, taming and othering, which resulted in 'blacks' climbing the statue of Kruger and 'whites' defending it in 1989, and the post-apartheid memorial practices. This is because the latter, corresponds with the former as it contradictorily straddles heritage between on the one hand, democratisation, an exhibitionary kind of open access, and unlimited creativity, and on the other hand, governmentality through regulation. The practice occasionally leans more to the former than the latter, and on other occasions, more of the latter than the former. The product of such ambiguity is therefore no less than another ambiguity such as the masses' occasional outbursts, which at one stage trouble statues to draw attention to the present, and at another stage uphold statues in advancement of selected pasts.

It also suffices to point out that such struggles have such agency as to transcend ordinary classifications as counter, alternative, vernacular, unofficial, or unauthorised. To make heritage is to choose whether or not to preserve, and what and how to preserve. It is in that light that climbing, defending or removing statues can be considered an act of memorialising, similar to constructing or erecting statues. Such acts contribute layers of complexity to the post-apartheid memorial complex. It is these surprises and unintended consequences that constantly prompt institutions of heritage governance and policy makers to want to review heritage legislation and re-design avenues of public consultation and participation.

In conclusion

The post-apartheid heritage practice is complex. Its sphere encompasses a wide range of sites, objects and places, as well as bodies, institutions, processes, practices, disciplines, and approaches. It is

complex in terms of size and gridded structure, and is complex in terms of the sophistication of its processes. With regards to monuments, the broad sphere ostensibly permits and even encourages massive memorialisation, while the bureaucratic structures through which the practice is governed can be considered inhibiting. The purpose of this chapter has been to evaluate the recent troubling of South Africa's statues in relation to the nature of this post-apartheid memorial complex. I have argued that while the monumentalising practice might seem simply hegemonic and driven by dominant ideologies, it is far more complex than a simple matter of hegemony versus alternative discourses, categories and binaries. I have shown that the practice seems well ordered, structured and well managed, yet excessive, contradictory, disorderly and unfulfilling. Heritage products like monuments are visual manifestations of layers of interspersed ideas and meanings. Therefore, their ever so often troubling should draw our attention to these layers and intersections than some imagined entities of absolute power.

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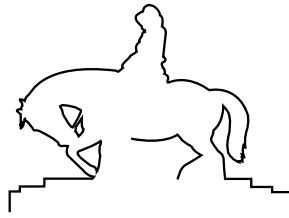
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Chapter 5

Heritage denunciation and heritage enunciation?
A postcolonial discourse on state prioritisation of
heritage in South Africa

Thabo Manetsi



Struggles around culture and difference in South Africa have historically constituted a powerful domain of political resistance, whereby culture or ethnicity was a shorthand for political, social and economic claims...these claims are increasingly being enacted in the sphere of heritage and are themselves underpinned by the state failure over equity, access to resources, and recognition.¹

This article takes its lead from PhD research on ‘State Prioritisation of Heritage: Issues of Governmentality, Heritage Management and the Liberation Heritage Project in the Post-Colonial South Africa’. State Prioritisation of Heritage entails processes of governmentality where certain pasts (heritage) are selected, legitimised and authorised as official heritage of the nation/state in the present.² Similarly the notion of ‘Denunciation and Enunciation of Heritage’, in relation to State Prioritisation of Heritage draws on the discourse of governmentality where select past/s are privileged over others and proclaimed official heritage in the post-colonial South Africa.

Building on Foucault’s thesis on governmentality, in the recent postcolonial writings on the subject matter, Laurajane Smith introduces the term “Authorised Heritage Discourse” to expand the analysis of the various regimes involved in heritage governance. She argues that heritage involves a cultural process of meaning making, mediation, selective amnesia (the politics of forgetting and remembering), expert influence and codification, and a naturalising effect. She elaborates further:

1 See Harry Garuba & Sam Raditlhalo, “Culture”, 37.

2 See Michel Foucault, “On Governmentality”, 5-26; Geoff Danaher, Tony Schirato & Jenn Webb, Understanding Foucault, 12 (xii); Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge.

[H]eritage places ... create, legitimize and disseminate their own particular cultural and social meanings, and are thus themselves part of, and not separate from, the 'heritage process' of meaning making. As heritage sites are managed, the performance of what is chosen to be remembered and forgotten about the past is enacted, and its conservation and presentation to the public will affect "sense of place" and other experiences. However, this process is obscured and redefined as external to the process of heritage because of the way value is assumed as immutable and innate – management and conservation become things that are done to sites and places, but are not seen as organically part of the meaning-making process of heritage itself.³

Both notions, 'governmentality' and 'Authorised Heritage Discourse', provide lenses to probe the extent of state influence and dominance in the formalisation of heritage through policy and institutions to determine the enunciation of 'official' heritage but conversely denunciation of heritage in the present.

The Liberation Heritage Project prioritised heritage in the postcolonial South Africa serves as a reference point to issues of heritage denunciation and enunciation in relation to state intervention in heritage management. In this essay, I will illustrate and interrogate the question of political instrumentality informing the denunciation and enunciation of heritage resources in relation to political uses of heritage as part of the postcolonial discourse on heritage management. Ashworth & Tunbridge have raised some critical questions on the issues of the 'Intrinsic value: the social and political uses of heritage', such as why a particular interpretation of heritage is promoted, whose interests are advanced or retarded, and in what kind of milieu was it conceived and communicated?⁴ It is precisely the purpose of this essay, to further interrogate the rationality and implications of the deployment and mobilisation of political and policy instruments

3 See Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 88.

4 See Gregory John Ashworth & John E. Tunbridge, *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies*, 41.

informing the current approach to heritage management, such as the colonial and apartheid influences on the postcolonial experience of the governance of heritage resources.

Framing political instrumentality: The denunciation and enunciation of heritage resources in postcolonial South Africa

In March–April 2015, the much publicised controversy over the violent destruction and removal of colonial monuments and apartheid statues at various locations in South Africa, sparked by the University of Cape Town’s (UCT) #RhodesMustFall campaign, clearly demonstrated public dissent and denunciation of the colonial past and heritage. This happened in a context of prolonged frustrations about lack of transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. This is not to be confused with media reports about the desecration of colonial monuments linked to elements of criminal and political opportunism by certain factions of society. These violent acts tend to set a precedent of permanent obliteration of history and past for future reference, yet simultaneously underpin the construction of history and heritage in the present. The current state of denunciation of colonial heritage epitomises public dissonance with colonial symbols and what they represent. The kind of reception that a monument and memorial in the public domain receives from its targeted audience is largely dependent upon that audience’s historical and socio-cultural background. A historical and socio-cultural background encompasses lived experiences and behaviours of a people, in this case the unequal distribution of power along the basis of race, gender, class, ethnicity, age and even sexual orientation under apartheid.⁵

5 See Pepi Leistyna, Arlie Woodrum & Stephen A. Sherblom. *Breaking Free: The Transformative Power of Critical Pedagogy*, 3.

Coombes asserts that

*... many of the buildings or other structures that have been proclaimed national monuments by the National Monuments Council have more negative than positive connotations for the majority culture ...what does it mean, for example, to preserve the Cape Dutch architecture and slave quarters of Groot Constantia, built on slave labour and thriving as a profitable vineyard to this day.*⁶

She further argues, that

*... the Voortrekker monument is the Afrikaner nationalist symbol most closely identified with the apartheid regime and remains highly contested in the democratic South Africa... the monument attest to its historical value as a vestige of a separatist system and others argue for its removal...this monument, which represents the former apartheid state and the myth that South Africa belongs to the Voortrekkers and their descendants.*⁷

Following the violent destruction of colonial heritage in 2015 in South Africa, the then Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, held nationwide consultative meetings and public hearings with politicians and civil society organisations on the contestations in the heritage landscape. As an outcome of the consultative meetings, about 20 resolutions were adopted and a 10-member task team was set up to examine the recommendations of the meetings further. The task team has since presented a report of its findings to the Minister but it is still to be made public. However, Minister Mthethwa commented that the majority of respondents were against the vandalism and destruction of statues during the public hearings. Also, there were some examples given of erection and installation of new monuments juxtaposed to 'old and offensive statues'.⁸

6 See Annie E. Coombes, *Symbolic Restitution*, 34.

7 Annie E. Coombes, *Translating the past: apartheid monuments in post-apartheid South Africa*, 173-197.

8 Department of Arts and Culture, *Report on Stakeholder Engagement on reflections by the Minister Nathi Mthethwa*, 11.

Public denunciation of colonial heritage elicits deep-seated questions: What would the ideal heritage symbols that resonate with the aspirations of the present generation look like? A simple response, to a much more complex situation, could be that the popular dissent against colonial and apartheid history inversely justifies the enunciation of the much-celebrated Liberation Heritage Project currently being prioritised in postcolonial South Africa. Heritage denunciation of the colonial and apartheid past further accentuates the politicisation of heritage through ‘heritage erasures’, aptly described by Pikirayi as:

... choices and decisions we make with regards to our own environmental contexts...this includes heritage erasures... [ie]... what we choose to save may be what we value, but it does not necessarily follow that what we destroy or choose not to keep, is valueless ... the current situation in the Middle East is an example ... sustainable heritage is about meeting the needs of the present and the future, not just preserving the past.⁹

Heritage symbols of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle (Legacy Projects such Freedom Park, Robben Island Museum, Mandela Museum and others) are inscribed on the cultural landscape juxtaposed to the colonial and apartheid heritage (Victorian and Dutch Architecture and monuments including the Voortrekker Monument amongst others). The idea of heritage enunciation and denunciation draws heavily on oppositional discourse where the juxta positioning of old (colonial and apartheid heritage) and new (postcolonial heritage) symbols counteract and stand in stark contrast to each other. Also the juxta positioning of old and new symbols along the idea of past-present alignment to achieve diverse cultural representation (social cohesion, national identity and ‘common heritage’) as an integral part of the postcolonial narrative tend to accentuate the notion of co-presence, where old and new symbols appear simultaneously almost in a complementary or oppositional manner within the same context (time and space). The unparalleled co-presence and binary

9 See Innocent Pikirayi, *The Heritage We Want: Development, Sustainability and the Future of Africa* by 2063.

opposition of both the enunciation of the anti-colonial heritage (liberation heritage) and denunciation of colonial heritage mirrors the current political milieu of postcolonial thinking in relation to heritage management in South Africa.

The politics of transforming the heritage landscape in post-1994 South Africa witnessed the emergence of the idea of state prioritisation and enunciation of the liberation heritage as a site of memory, responding to, and confronting the legacy of the former repressive regimes for restorative justice particularly to honour and recognise the legacy of the political struggles for freedom against colonialism and apartheid. It is arguable that the framing of the 'National Liberation Heritage Route' project as state prioritised heritage in postcolonial South Africa serves as a counter-narrative to colonial and apartheid heritage. The most prominent and popular signifiers of the liberation heritage in the democratic South Africa are a plethora of memorials and monuments such as Freedom Park, Robben Island Museum, Luthuli Museum, Nelson Mandela Museum, Ncome, Hector Petersen Memorial, and many others including statues, graves and places named after struggle icons.¹⁰

The introduction of Legacy Projects (post-1994), like some of the aforementioned state projects, are iconic fixtures of the evolving cultural landscape which serve to redress past inequities. The Liberation Heritage Project has also manifested through a spate of media frenzy commemorative national events, festivities and celebrations. In the year 2012 South Africans witnessed the prioritisation of liberation heritage which occurred prominently juxtaposed to the much-profiled centenary celebrations of the formation of the African National Congress (ANC) 100 years ago in 1912 as the oldest liberation movement in Africa. In the celebration of 20 years of democracy in 2014 since the attainment of freedom in 1994, new places and sites of liberation history have been unveiled. Of paramount importance is the passing of former President Nelson Mandela in December 2013 which spurred the abrupt and subsequent unveiling of his towering statue

10 South African Tourism, Tourism Satellite Report for the Financial year 2014/2015, 5-10.

at the Union Buildings in Pretoria and his portrait at Parliament in Cape Town as symbols of honour to the iconic freedom fighter.

All these forms of state prioritisation of the liberation heritage have far reaching implications on the question of state-centric approaches to heritage management at political, policy and administrative levels in South Africa. This relates specifically to the mobilisation and deployment of state resources to advance the consolidation of the National Liberation Heritage Route project, as a flagship project of the post-apartheid and post-liberation South Africa.

The theme, liberation heritage, is a bold political statement which resonates with postcolonial thinking of how the state imagines the memorialisation and commemoration of the anti-colonial struggle in the present. In particular, the National Liberation Heritage Route project is perceived as a befitting memorial and commemorative project, which resonates with the hopes and aspirations of the majority South Africans who suffered under the repressive colonial and apartheid regimes.¹¹ In this regard the National Liberation Heritage Route project is located within the discourse of transformation of the cultural landscape in the new South Africa and attempts to present the alternative history of untold narratives and historically suppressed experiences of the masses of South Africans who suffered under the siege colonial and apartheid regimes. On this point Marschall argues that

*... new monuments and statues are necessary to 'tell the other side of the story'; to expose suppressed histories and preserve narratives of the past previously written out of the official historical record; to counter biased interpretations disseminated through the existing symbolic landscape; to celebrate the identity and achievements of societal groups previously marginalized; and lastly to acknowledge suffering and pay tribute to individuals or groups who lost their lives through acts of resistance.*¹²

11 Department of Arts and Culture, Progress Report on the National Liberation Heritage Route Project, 3-5.

12 Sabine Marschall, *Landscape of Memory: Commemorative Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-Apartheid South*, 16.

For many who have traversed the cultural landscape of South Africa, it is still glaring to note the recurring dominant representations of colonial and apartheid conquest in the public domain which do not reflect the demography and diversity of South Africa. According to the draft National Heritage Transformation Charter “... the disparities amongst the various heritage institutions persist in the distribution and management heritage resources only highlights the perpetuation of the pre-1994 norms and practices privileging certain institutions at the expense of the previously disadvantaged institutions (PDIs) ...”¹³

Similarly, the non-profit organisation (NPO), the ‘Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory’ pointed out:

*... in Cape Town, where there are marks of victory against the native dotting the cultural landscape, there are no marks of victory against colonialism and apartheid...there is a gap in recognising those who fought apartheid in the city’s cultural landscape.*¹⁴

The rationalisation of both the ideological text and physical signifiers of liberation heritage in the public domain does not only reflect systematic curation and mediation of history and past by the state, but also underpins the deliberate inscription and positioning of an anti-colonial legacy in public consciousness and popular culture through the construction of heritage in the present for consumption by the current generation.

In the context of regime change and the politics of transforming the heritage landscape in the postcolonial South Africa, the promotion of liberation heritage is morphed and woven into grand, national narratives such as ‘reconciliation’, ‘social cohesion’, ‘national pride’, ‘national identity’, and ‘nationhood’ of an emerging ‘democratic’ state. For the state, heritage is arguably an opportunistic means to fulfil the social needs of the electorate, while simultaneously fostering the political goals of nation-building, reconciliation and unity, as well as

13 National Heritage Council, Draft National Transformation Heritage Charter, 4.

14 Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory, Policy Dialogue: The Role of the Ex-Combatants in Memorialisation Processes in South Africa, 5-6.

promoting the economic imperatives of development, employment creation and income generation, mostly through tourism.¹⁵ Thus, the impression created is that the National Liberation Heritage Route project serves as a political construction at the service of addressing broad political aspirations and objectives of post-apartheid South Africa. As Negri observed,

*... when culture is closely linked to politics, cultural heritage becomes a vehicle for transformation of society...the political objectives for which the cultural heritage is used differ from one nation to another ...the cultural dimension may thus be used to legitimise political orientations.*¹⁶

In this context, the National Liberation Heritage Route project has become a deliberate attempt to legitimise the recognition of anti-colonial history not only as 'official' heritage of the nation state but to serve as an instrument to entrench political ideals in a transforming state.

Documenting and legitimising liberation heritage in South Africa and Africa

The theme of liberation heritage has often been a site of profound interest and preoccupation in the geo-political space in postcolonial Africa and post-apartheid South Africa in particular. The notion of liberation heritage draws on the history and historiography of postcolonial thinking and writing about the political history of the struggle for emancipation against colonialism in Africa and apartheid in South Africa. Several renowned scholars and intellectuals, especially of African descent, have written extensively on the effects of the political instrumentality of colonial domination, in particular white domination and black subjugation, decolonisation, Pan-Africanism, post-colony, democracy, neoliberalism, social justice, political consciousness, transformation, and

15 Sabine Marschall, *Landscape of Memory: Commemorative Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-Apartheid South*, 14.

16 Vincent Negri, "Introduction to Heritage Law in Africa", 8.

identity politics.¹⁷ These grand themes underpin the struggle discourse of several liberation movements and ambitious attempts aimed to restore and affirm ‘African identity’ in the global context.¹⁸

A substantial part of these postcolonial and post-apartheid writings and studies has been preoccupied with the important task of documentation and analysis of liberation history and theory, especially the interpretation and systematic recording of the memory and narratives of the struggle against the repressive colonial and apartheid orders. The volumes of the publication, *The Roads to Democracy in South Africa* by South African Democratic Education Trust (SADET), under the leadership of Ben Magubane, marks a first series of post-1994 scholarship writing on various topics and epochs of the liberation struggle in South Africa. Similarly, the publication by Ndlovu, the current Director of SADET project entitled, *Heritage routes for the liberated South Africans: using oral history to reconstruct unsung heroes and heroines’ routes into exile in the 1960s*, presents alternative histories of the liberation struggle which have been largely undocumented.¹⁹ The research report entitled *The Liberation Struggle and Liberation Heritage Sites in South Africa*, commissioned by the NHC to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC – 15 November 2013) in South Africa, follows on from the previous works of SADET and also serves the same purpose of documentation of the liberation history in South Africa.

In the SADC region, the Hashim Mbita project regarding the documentation of the liberation history in Southern Africa was approved by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of States and Governments in Botswana in

17 W.E.B Du Bois (1903), Cheikh Anta Diop (1946), Franz Fanon (1968), Amilcar Cabral (1969), Chinua Achebe (1958), Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986), Wole Soyinka (1975), Steve Biko (1977) Mahmood Mamdani (1992), Achille Mbembe (2001) and many others.

18 See Senghor’s *Negritude* (1930), Nkrumah’s idea of the Organisation of African Unity (1961), Nyerere’s *Ujamaa* (1962), and most recently Mbeki’s popularisation of African Renaissance (1998).

19 Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu, “Heritage routes for the liberated South Africans: Using Oral History to Reconstruct Unsung Heroes and Heroines’ Route into Exile in the 1960s”, 3.

August 2005.²⁰ The result was the recent publication (2014) entitled Southern African National Liberation Struggles by Hashim Mbita, a former Brigadier-General and Executive – Secretary (1974-1992) of the Liberation Committee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The publication attempts to document the history of the liberation struggle of the Southern African Region through collection, cataloguing and compiling of oral texts in SADC Member States and outside the region.²¹ The National Liberation Heritage Route Project in South Africa is part of the SADC joint initiative.

In contrast, Saunders has cautioned that, in more recent writings, especially of the more popular kind, one often finds ‘romanticisation and triumphalism’ on the part of those whose movements emerged victorious. He further argues that

*... triumphalist history either ignored or minimised difficult issues in the past, such as the imprisonment and torture of activists in exile...it tends to be uncritical, assuming that criticism would somehow bring the struggle itself into disrepute.*²²

In post-apartheid South Africa, the work by cultural institutions²³ who have taken the task of documenting and safeguarding the history and heritage of the liberation struggles in South Africa, demonstrate the importance of the Liberation Heritage Project as a priority project for the nation state. These institutions have been preoccupied with the theme of the liberation heritage in a bid to transform the heritage landscape by presenting alternative narratives of the resistance struggle to the

20 Report of the African Union, SADC Summit of Heads of States and Governments in Botswana in August 2005, resolved to support and approve the Hashim Mbita project regarding the documentation of the liberation history in Southern Africa.

21 The Hashim Mbita Research Project, Southern African National Liberation Struggles, 2.

22 Nordic African Institute, Workshop report on “Documenting the History and Legacy of the Liberation Struggle in South Africa”, 2, 11.

23 South African History Archive, Center for Popular Memory, National Oral History Project, Department of Arts and Culture, Department of Military Veterans, National Heritage Council, South African Heritage Resources Agency, the Nordic Africa Institute (Sweden), National Archives, National Library, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory, Nelson Mandela Museum. Freedom Park, Chief Albert Luthuli Museum, Mayibuye Archives, District Six Museum, Universities and many others

dominant narrative of the colonial and apartheid orders.²⁴ However, what has been sadly lacking, is state prioritisation of the digitisation and ownership of the digital archive of the liberation heritage archive. It is shocking to note that ownership rights of the digitised material of South Africa's liberation history, especially anti-apartheid records, are not in the custodianship of the state. It appears that the state has not yet prioritised enough resources towards the digitisation of the liberation heritage archive as part of heritage management. Lalu argues that there has been an increase in the digitisation of the liberation history in South Africa by multinational organisations and this has far reaching implications on ownership rights and claims by multinational organisations on South Africa's digital archive.²⁵

In postcolonial states, in Africa and southern Africa in particular, there seems to be a concerted effort and political commitment by the former liberation movements, as the ruling party in government, to legitimize the legacy of the liberation struggle against colonialism as 'official' history and heritage of the nation state. This recurring pattern has been prevalent in several post-colonial states especially in the SADC region and elsewhere. Critics have observed that:

*... former liberation movements, including the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola in Angola, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique in Mozambique, the African National Congress in South Africa, the South West Africa People's Organisation in Namibia and the Chama Cha Mapinduzi in Tanzania at the helm of government in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa and Tanzania, have maintained close ties rooted in common liberation histories and personal connections, and during times of crisis they draw on these linkages and solidarities.*²⁶

24 National Heritage Council, Draft National Transformation Heritage Charter, 4-5.

25 Premesh Lalu, *The virtual stampede for Africa: Digitisation, Postcoloniality and Archives of the Liberation Struggles in Southern Africa*, 4.

26 Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatseni, "Reconstructing the Implication of Liberation Struggle History on SADC Mediation in Zimbabwe", 5.

Strategic political alliances have been established amongst the former dominant liberation movements, which have influence in the SADC region. In each regime and political system it is evident that heritage is used as a rallying point to mobilise society, consolidate political power to advance political interests.

An important summit of the heads of political parties of former liberation movements was held in August 2011, in Namibia, which stressed

... the importance of identification, restoration and preservation of historical sites which are relevant to the liberation struggles' need for promoting the spirit of solidarity and cooperation amongst Africans in the context of the former liberation movements.²⁷

Undoubtedly, the political position and commitment to safeguard the history of the liberation struggle is top on the agenda of former liberation movements in government in the SADC region. However, recurring dissonance and unavoidable disputes occur as a result of the tendency to impose certain histories with a bias towards the dominant narrative of former liberation movements at the helm of Government. Sometimes this dominance and bias of promoting and legitimising certain narratives over others tends to exclude and displace alternative histories, especially narratives of other former liberation movement who are not in the ruling governing party.

Consistent with the notion of the politicisation of heritage through technologies of governance and governmentality, Melber argues that:

... governments formed by the anti-colonial liberation movements, took control of the state machinery and reorganized themselves as political parties...their legitimacy to rule stemmed from their emergence from the decolonization process as representatives acting on behalf of the majority of the people...since then they have been able to strengthen their political dominance and maintain control over the state.²⁸

27 An African National Congress (ANC) communiqué about the meeting of heads of political parties of the former liberation movements, 02.

28 Henning Melber, "Liberation Movements as Government: The Unfinished Business of Decolonisation", 19-31.

In other words, the critical questions of hegemonic politics of domination and the politicisation of heritage, lying behind the ideological construction of the Liberation Heritage Project through state prioritisation of the struggle history, are inevitable. This is especially the case in the context of the ‘dominant ideology thesis’ in political uses of heritage. In particular, which dominant narrative will be privileged and for what purpose, in the context of governmentality and the current political milieu in South Africa?

Governmentality and political enunciation of the liberation heritage

The Liberation Heritage Project has emerged from remnants of the past into the present. A new trajectory has emerged in post-apartheid South Africa, where sharp focus and emphasis is on memorialisation and celebration of the struggle for freedom. Due consideration and attention must be given to Harrison’s claim that

... heritage can both stimulate and act as a symbol of political struggle, and how ownership of heritage objects, places and practices might be considered to give their possessors political power.²⁹

As a politically endorsed and state resourced ‘official’ heritage, the National Liberation Heritage Route project has found meaning and expression through elaborate official enunciations by the state at expedient political moments. Most notably, on four occasions in the successive years, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, former President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, underlined the Liberation Heritage Project and the development of graves and monuments of struggle heroes as priority projects for the nation in his State of the Nation Address (SONA).³⁰ On the occasion of the State of the Nation Address in February 2011, President Jacob Zuma pronounced that

29 Rodney Harrison, *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*, 154.

30 State of the Nation Address by His Excellency Jacob G Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, at the Joint Sitting of Parliament, Cape Town – on the 10 February 2011 and 09 February 2012.

... we [Government] will launch a programme celebrating National Icons and promote a National Liberation Heritage Route, to honour individuals who have made an enormous contribution to the liberation of our country.³¹

In the subsequent year, in 2012, in his State of the Nation Address, the President reiterated that

... as part of the promotion of social cohesion, this year we will undertake and continue many heritage projects ... museums and centers to be unveiled will include the 1980 Matola Raid museum in Maputo, the Ncome museum in Kwa Zulu-Natal, phase 2 of the Freedom Park museum and the Steve Biko heritage centre in Ginsberg in King Williamstown...we have also prioritized the homes and graves of former ANC Presidents and other national heroes including Thomas Maphikela, Lilian Ngoyi, Walter and Albertina Sisulu, Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge, Robert Sobukwe and others.³²

Once again in the State of the Nation Address on 14 February 2013, President Zuma pronounced that

... this year marks the 50th anniversary of the raid on Lilliesleaf Farm, the escape from Marshall Square as well as the start of the Rivonia Trail...A series of events are being planned throughout the year to mark the three events, culminating in a national commemoration on the 11th of July 2013.³³

The authoritarian power of political instrumentality behind such fundamental enunciations by the head of state cannot be underestimated. Critics have observed that such pronouncements by the state about public representations through monuments and the accompanying unparalleled media coverage of these symbols are implicitly informed by the emancipatory postmodern and postcolonial

31 State of the Nation Address by His Excellency Jacob G Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, at the Joint Sitting of Parliament, Cape Town – on the 10 February 2011.

32 State of the Nation Address by His Excellency Jacob G Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, at the Joint Sitting of Parliament, Cape Town – on the 09 February 2012.

33 State of the Nation Address by His Excellency Jacob G Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, at the Joint Sitting of Parliament, Cape Town – on the 14 February 2013.

discourses of the previously oppressed margin as it comes to the fore and expresses its identity.³⁴ It is therefore the mandate and objective of the ANC-led government to deliberately foreground the liberation heritage in the public domain, as this aspect of heritage has been subject to marginalisation during colonialism and apartheid.

Amongst the aforementioned projects, state resources have been allocated towards the implementation and completion of the following projects, namely, the 2nd phase of the Freedom Park Museum, Steve Biko Heritage Centre, Ncome Museum and the 1980 Matola Raid Museum in Mozambique.³⁵ However, the latter project has since been reported to lack governance systems and inadequate management structure to support administrative operations due to insufficient funding.³⁶ Tracking the status and progress of the implementation of these projects is important, as the state has made a pronouncement and pledged resources to support these prioritised projects.

Nonetheless, the political rhetoric by President Zuma not only profiles and positions the Liberation Heritage Project as a tangible construct of political imagination, but demonstrates the extent of political will and power to select and support an aspect of the past in a supposedly politically correct context. It is worth recalling that both the colonial and apartheid states once selected heritage resources that favoured and advanced their political interests in the past.

Another important point to consider is that political enunciations by the President mirror the inherent social compact and relationship involving the mobilisation of power from party politics into state administration (executive authority). This alignment is evident in the conformity of the President's pronouncement (the state) to the ANC's (party politics) position on issues of arts, culture, and heritage that "...

34 Sabine Marschall, *Landscape of Memory*, 16.

35 Department of Arts and Culture Presentation of Progress Report, Legacy Project of State of Nation Address and Liberation Heritage Route, at the Parliamentary Arts and Culture Portfolio Committee meeting, 25 April 2012.

36 Department of Arts and Culture Presentation of Progress Report, Legacy Project of State of Nation Address and Liberation Heritage Route, at the Parliamentary Arts and Culture Portfolio Committee meeting, 25 April 2012.

a national memorial commemorating the liberation struggle will be erected, as it has outlined in the ANC Draft National Cultural Policy ...”³⁷ Even the revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage draws heavily on the ANC’s Draft National Cultural Policy (1994), stating that “... colonialism and apartheid neglected, distorted and suppressed the culture of the majority of South Africans ...”³⁸

This kind of political alignment has attracted criticism amongst other former liberation movement and opposition political formations, such as the sentiment vehemently expressed by Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi (Leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party – IFP and Member of Parliament) that

*... on the surface it would seem that we both have the same interests at heart. He [President Zuma] is a Zulu, I am a Zulu...and he is proud of his cultural heritage...but President Zuma is also the President of the ANC, and he leads a party whose intention has always been to gain political hegemony and total dominance.*³⁹

The issue of political domination and the inherent selective amnesia through privileging certain signifiers of the historic past constitutes an integral aspect of postcolonial discourse around constraints and opportunities of addressing diverse representations. On this point Bhabha argues that

*... postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order.*⁴⁰

This ties in well with Fanon’s reference, ‘The Pitfalls of National Consciousness’, in what he has described as the

... national consciousness, instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead

37 ANC, Draft National Cultural Policy 1994, 2-10.

38 ANC, Draft National Cultural Policy 1994, 2-10.

39 Address by Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi (MP), Inkosi of the Buthelezi Clan and Traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu Monarch and Nation, April 2, 2013.

40 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 171.

*of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, will be in any case be only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been.*⁴¹

In other words, the idea of inclusion and exclusion of others' heritage or culture within the framework of cultural diversity tends to undermine the state's efforts for national unity, where the intention in a typical postcolonial and democratic context such as in post-apartheid South Africa, is to establish signifiers for social cohesion, national identity, national unity and patriotism. To achieve multiculturalism in a political system through state prioritisation of the liberation heritage will require a substantial measure of appreciation and acceptance of political and cultural differences as well as tolerance which tends to be difficult to achieve.

The extent of the influence of politics in shaping the liberation heritage is re-hashed and re-articulated in various public platforms and social contexts. Most notably, the persistent politicisation of heritage and uses of heritage to achieve political goals, which tend to be unavoidable. In one of a series of speeches recorded verbatim in the Limpopo Province Legislature in September 2014, a member of the ANC highlighted:

*... I want to emphasise to myself and all of us here and the public out there that we must start to argue that the African National Congress itself as the political party is the heritage of the South African people and the African struggle [APPLAUSE]...I want to state that the Freedom Charter states that this land belongs to all of us – black and white – and further that the colour of a man's skin is no more significant than the colour of his eyes...we want to argue that apartheid is a legacy, but it is a legacy which we want to forget...we want it to be put in the archives of history and never be re-loaned or introduced to our people except to remind them of the evils of apartheid...the African National Congress' main policy, as the liberation movement and body committed to nation-building, is to redress the imbalances of the past.*⁴²

41 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 148.

42 Recorded verbatim speeches of the Limpopo Legislature Lebowakgomo Legislative

These political sentiments and policy positions are prevalent especially in ANC-led provinces and municipalities, where a set of expectations is created and certain ideas entrenched – that the ANC-led government is a home for all regardless of varying political ideologies and cultural differences. This notion links well with the findings in a publication entitled, *The Patronage Politics Divides Us: A Study of Poverty, Patronage and Inequality in South Africa* by Ncebisi Ndletyana. In this publication Ndletyana shares insights into the unscrupulous extent of hegemonic politics in certain ANC-led municipalities plagued by patronage ties of blind loyalty, nepotism and prejudice, self-enrichment and reciprocal beneficitation. He argues that there is a tendency to pledge political support and allegiance to politicians, regardless of their morals and ethics, in positions of power who are likely to reciprocate the favour by allocating certain privileges and benefits only to those in society who pledged support initially.⁴³

Most importantly, the mobilisation of political instrumentality that underpin the state prioritisation of the National Liberation Heritage Route illustrates the extent to which the power of politics tends to assume a governance position to inform heritage management, far beyond the limitations of structured state policy frameworks.

The notion of state prioritisation of the Liberation Heritage Project, as ‘official’ heritage of the nation state, is not immune from the discourse of contemporary uses of heritage by the state in the political process of nation building and forging a new national identity in South Africa. Political use of heritage is a common fixture of many political systems in nation states, clearly illustrated in the works of Benedict Anderson (1991), Stuart Hall (1998), and many others.

Chamber, Tuesday, 28th September 2010, meeting of the House (14:15).

43 Mcebisi Ndletyana, *Patronage Politics Divide Us: A Study of Patronage, Poverty and Inequality in South Africa*, 7.

Uses of the liberation heritage at expedient political moments

As part of postcolonial discourse of policy reforms for new heritage regimes, the National Heritage Resources Act (1999) has created enabling environment for implementing certain aspects of the liberation heritage. In particular Section 4 (g)(iii) and (g)(iv) of the National Heritage Resources Act (1999) makes specific reference to the declaration of sites “... graves of victims of conflicts and those associated with the liberation struggle ... graves of individuals designated by the Minister by notice in the Gazette.”⁴⁴ Through this piece of legislation the Ministry of Arts and Culture gazetted the declaration of several graves, as national heritage sites, of struggle icons such as Charlotte Maxeke, Helen Joseph and Lillian Ngoyi in 2010 and subsequently, in 2013, the graves of Rev Sefako Makgatho, Mr Josiah Gumede, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Dr Robert Sobukwe, Mr Stephen Biko and Dr Christiaan Beyers-Naude, were declared national heritage sites.⁴⁵ The convenient use of policy to legitimise a select few national monuments and memorials has had far reaching consequences in privileging certain pasts over others. The inherent bias in the declaration of the select legacies of a few struggle icons and the exclusion of others, has attracted criticism broadly especially from opposition political formations such as the Democratic Alliance (DA), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Pan African Congress (PAC) and United Democratic Movement (UDM), against the ruling party – the ANC. This also includes resentment and dissonance expressed by some alliance parties in the ANC, concerning the dominance of the ANC-led Liberation Heritage Project, such as the critique by members of NEUM:

... Well, we need to call a spade a spade: the ruling party looks after its own. Today liberation heritage is by and large a story about ANC icons from the past, with a nod towards Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko, PAC icon, Robert Sobukwe, and one or two indigenes, such

44 National Heritage Resources Act no 25 of 1999.

45 South African Government News Agency, Graves of Struggle Heroines Declared Heritage Sites.

as Klaas and Trooi Pienaar, whose remains were recently repatriated from Austria and reburied at Kuruman in the Northern Cape ... and more of the same is on the way...now, according to Paul Mashatile, the Minister of Arts and Culture, the graves of Charlotte Maxeke, Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, O. R. Tambo, Alfred Xuma, Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Albert Luthuli, among others, are to be upgraded and declared national heritage sites ... in privileging its own, the ruling party has effectively erased that past in which the ANC is not inscribed, and that past in which it was challenged by a rival political tendency, as represented by the NEUM and associated organisations ... but that today's heritage landscape is a biased and exclusionary master-narrative focusing on ANC national heroes shouldn't surprise us, of course, as history, heritage and memory are always controlled and shaped by those in power ... what we have in South Africa is an official national heritage landscape that has been edited by the state through engineered silences and gaps in the liberation story – a deliberate distortion of history by omission.⁴⁶

Similarly Michele Pickover, curator in the Department of Historical Papers at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), writes:

... the state and the ruling party lays claim, ownership and stewardship to South Africa's past and the 'liberation struggle' not under the guise of inclusiveness discourse... It is not about creating a common, inclusive identity but about creating a monolithic lens through which a certain kind of struggle history is given superiority and fostered.⁴⁷

Inevitably the Liberation Heritage Project which is state funded through the ANC-led government will tend to project and profile the political interests of the ruling party in government, much to the dismay and exclusion of the narratives of other former liberation movements and political parties who serve in the government of national unity in South Africa.

46 NEUM report, *Disinherited: Distorting Heritage by Omission*, 11.

47 Pickover, "Disinherited: Distorting heritage by omission," in NEUM report, 12.

The political and policy context that has shaped the emergence of the Liberation Heritage Project, as a flagship project of the nation state, draws its inception from a series of political and official state declarations. In 2012, the Department of Arts and Culture announced a set of key objectives during the staging of Heritage Day celebrations in the Northern Cape Province, under the theme “Celebrating the Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle in South Africa”,⁴⁸ which aimed to:

1. reaffirm and promote the significance of Liberation Heritage as part of the Cultural Heritage of South Africa;
2. use the Liberation Heritage as a vehicle to foster social cohesion, nation building, economic development, inclusive citizenship and an end to xenophobia and homophobia;
3. promote national identity that is self-conscious of its liberation heritage; and
4. promote unity in diversity among all sectors of the South African society.

These official statements of intent clearly not only define the extent of the uses of heritage at the service of contemporary South African politics, but epitomise the fundamental consequences of the expectations of the new political order for heritage management to fulfill certain national priorities of a developing nation. In this regard, the National Heritage Council concedes that “... expectations are high that the Liberation Heritage Route project will promote social and economic progress and that it will provide impetus for the development of cultural industries and cultural tourism.”⁴⁹ According to Ashworth et al (1996)

48 Department of Arts and Culture publication on Heritage Month, Celebrating the Heroes and Heroines of the Liberation Struggle in South Africa, 2-3.

49 National Heritage Council, Presentation of National Liberation Heritage Route project at a Summit in the North West Province, 6.

Heritage is used as a political resource in the creation or support of state at various spatial jurisdictional scales and the legitimation of their governments and governing ideologies.⁵⁰

In this context, the political discourse on contemporary uses of heritage transcends the notion of heritage uses for the sake of conservation purposes only, but also advances the debate on the tendency of state to appropriate heritage for other uses in contemporary politics.

This phenomenon is prevalent in many other political systems and countries. Some African states affirm the pre-eminence of the cultural dimension to establish national identity. Negri observed that

... the acknowledgement of cultural values can thus be effected at the highest level of the legal standards which underpin the creation of the state thus the incorporation of the cultural priorities in the Constitution may correspond to different objectives...it may be from the need to use these foundations to build a national identity common to the different ethnic groups or the need to promote a dominant national culture that will compel recognition among the various communities of the state.⁵¹

The notion of nation building and national identity in democratic South Africa further accentuates heritage uses as a rallying point to mobilise society, consolidate political power and advance political interests. For instance, the uses of heritage to engender a culture of national unity, reconciliation, social cohesion and, most recently, economic and infrastructure development in line with national priorities of a democratic South Africa, are prevalent. According to the proposed amendments in the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage:

Developing an inclusive, cohesive, caring and proud society is pivotal to social transformation ... it requires eradicating all inequalities, exclusions and divisions of the past; and replacing it with a shared South African identity which incorporates diversity in a democratic

50 Gregory John Ashworth and John E. Tunbridge, *Dissonance and the Uses of Heritage*, 34.

51 Vincent Negri, "Introduction to Heritage Law in Africa", 8

*dispensation; by directly translating the rights and responsibilities of both the state and its citizens into social reality.*⁵²

The notion of reconciliation and unity, which follow on from a negotiated settlement during the transition phase in 1994, has been systematically enacted in various state supported high profile events. During a symbolic ceremony in 2013 the former Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Paul Mashatile unveiled a road linking the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park as a gesture of unity and bridging the past (apartheid state) and the present (democratic state).⁵³ Subsequently, in 2014 the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, officiated the unveiling of a bridge linking the Ncome Memorial to the Voortrekker Monument, on Reconciliation Day (16th December 2014) as part of the state socialisation for unity and social cohesion.⁵⁴ In this context, the idea of heritage use to forge and foster a new national identity and unity is consistent with the perceived conditions of a democratic dispensation amid the deeply entrenched and glaring reality of racism, homophobia, and xenophobia in South Africa.

The uses of heritage at national events which are state funded, also play to public consciousness and serve as a political instrument to mobilise support and legitimise the Liberation Heritage Project. Such political instrumentality has been partly realised through established platforms, including the much profiled year-long 2012 centennial celebrations of the formation of the ANC 100 years prior. In 2012, the Liberation Heritage Project featured prominently in the centenary celebrations marking the 100 year anniversary of the ANC as the oldest liberation movement in Africa. The prominent theme of the liberation heritage, which constituted an integral part of the centenary celebration, was carefully orchestrated through a systematic assemblage of public lectures, symbolic torch bearing processions and a myriad of festivities

52 Revised Draft White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 22.

53 Department of Arts and Culture 2013/2014 Budget vote speech by the Minister Paul Mashatile at the National Assembly, 16th May 2013, <http://www.dac.gov.za>

54 Department of Arts and Culture, A Speech delivered by the Minister of Arts and Culture Mr Nathi Mthethwa at the occasion of the 'National Reconciliation Day', 16th December 2014, Ncome Museum (KwaZulu Natal), www.dac.gov.za

across South Africa, in celebration of the oldest liberation movement in Africa and its founding leaders. According to the ANC, the centenary celebrations seeks to

*celebrate our [ANC] proud traditions, values and principles that earned our movement an indelible place in the hearts, psyche and soul of our people...it should reflect the ANC in all its facets and dimensions, for example, mass mobilization, the underground, armed struggle and international solidarity.*⁵⁵

In 2012, the African Union also endorsed the centenary celebrations of the ANC through a 'Decision on the Centenary of the African National Congress' at the General Assembly.⁵⁶ For the past 20 years since the dawn of democracy, the ANC has reinvented itself as a political party rather than a liberation movement. However, the former liberation-movement-turned-ruling-party largely draws on the legacy of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle for credentials in order to socially mobilise the masses in contemporary South African politics. The struggle credentials of the ANC have earned the political party immense support amongst the masses in South Africa, and thus the liberation heritage is a popular choice for many South Africans.

In certain untimely events, such as the passing on of the world iconic leader Nelson Mandela in 2013, the notion of the liberation heritage once again received a substantial measure of prominence and media mileage. This also spurred the proliferation of heritage initiatives associated with Nelson Mandela, such as the unveiling of a towering bronze statue of Madiba (2014) at the Union Building by the Department of Arts and Culture, the grading and declaration of the 'Nelson Mandela Sites of Reconciliation and Memory' (2014) by the National Heritage Council, and most recently the launch of the 'Madiba Journey' mobile application in 2015 by the South African Tourism.

55 ANC, African National Congress:100 Years of Selfless Struggle, 06, [http:// www.anc.org.za/centenary/show](http://www.anc.org.za/centenary/show)

56 African Union, General Assembly /AU/Dec.353 (XVI) (Doc. Assembly/AU/15 (XVI), <http://www.au.org>

Back in the Eastern Cape Province, the birth and burial place of Nelson Mandela, a special Cabinet resolution was taken to honour prominent leaders of the struggle as part of marking the 20 years of democracy and the branding of the province under the banner – ‘Home of the Legends’.⁵⁷ Most notably, the Cabinet resolved to honour Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani and O.R. Tambo amongst great leaders whose birth place is the Eastern Cape Province, as part of the commemorative programme of the liberation heritage and the ‘Home of the Legends’ campaign.⁵⁸ Similar events occurred in various provinces across South Africa. Crucial to note here is not only the scaling up of an important memorial project such as liberation heritage, but the mounting of prominent personalities and icons of the liberation struggle as an embodiment of the political struggle, and thus as being an integral part of the composition of the Liberation Heritage Project.

The framing of the liberation heritage at expedient political moments has also occurred in various other ideological texts and inscriptions on the physical fabric of the cultural landscape. Post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed the politicisation and manifestation of heritage in the naming and renaming of places after struggle icons of the liberation struggle. Several towns, streets, buildings, city-scapes, and municipalities which constitute the cultural landscape attest to an abrupt upsurge of new place names aligned to struggle heroes and heroines. For example the Sol Plaatjie Municipality (Northern Cape province), the Nelson Mandela Museum (Eastern Cape province), Luthuli House (Gauteng province), O.R. Tambo International Airport (Gauteng province), Thabo Mbeki Drive (Limpopo province), Moses Mabhida Stadium (KZN province), Ngaka Modiri Molema Municipality (North West province), Fezile Dabi Municipality (Free State province) – the list is exhaustive.

57 Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature adopted a Cabinet resolution to honour prominent leaders of the struggle as part of marking the 20 years of democracy and the branding of the Province under the banner of the ‘Home of the Legends’ (2014).

58 Cabinet Memorandum presented at the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature for adoption. The Cabinet Memorandum made specific resolutions and recommendations to honour prominent leaders of the struggle as part of marking the 20 years of democracy and the branding of the Province under the banner of the ‘Home of the Legends’ (2014).

These commemorative initiatives of national stature exemplify the political context and conditions in which the Liberation Heritage Project finds profound meaning and prolific expression. Inversely, the legacy of the liberation struggle sets the terms and conditions which inform a particular political context for the celebration of the liberation heritage in the postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa.

Conclusion

Heritage enunciation and denunciation has become a political currency for social mobilisation in postcolonial South Africa. Both the denunciation of colonial and apartheid heritage, as well as the enunciation of liberation heritage shows how heritage has been deployed in ways that challenge common or essentialised understandings of the notion and practice of heritage. As illustrated before, the Liberation Heritage Project is a deliberate attempt to legitimise anti-colonial history as 'official heritage' and a state sanctioned memorial project juxtaposed an assemblage of colonial and apartheid heritage formations in the democratic complex. In essence, the ideological construction of the Liberation Heritage Project places sharp focus on broad questions of political uses of heritage which tend to serve multiple purposes such as reclaiming and unearthing the suppressed histories of the anti-colonial struggle. Simultaneously, political uses of the legacy of the anti-colonial struggle are morphed into formations of a new nation state and national identity.

The far-reaching impact of state prioritisation of the Liberation Heritage Project rests in the state's acceding to the challenge of mastering the representation of diverse pasts and experiences of the struggle(s) against colonialism and apartheid. The consequences of 'selective amnesia' often have far reaching implications on in skewed or biased representations of certain narratives which may diminish the strides by the state – government of national unity – to achieve 'social cohesion' through recognition of diverse representation of broad narratives of the liberation struggle. Therefore, it is inevitable

that in the scheme of power relations and imposition of authority by the state, certain heritages will be privileged over others and/or to the exclusion of still others. The question remains whether liberation heritage in South Africa will transcend traditional racial, ethnic, and economic boundaries, or simply reinforce these categories. Analysing these processes and the differing investments of social groups will allow for a fuller appreciation of the historical consciousness and geographic agency of these groups, including their vested interests in the Liberation Heritage Project.

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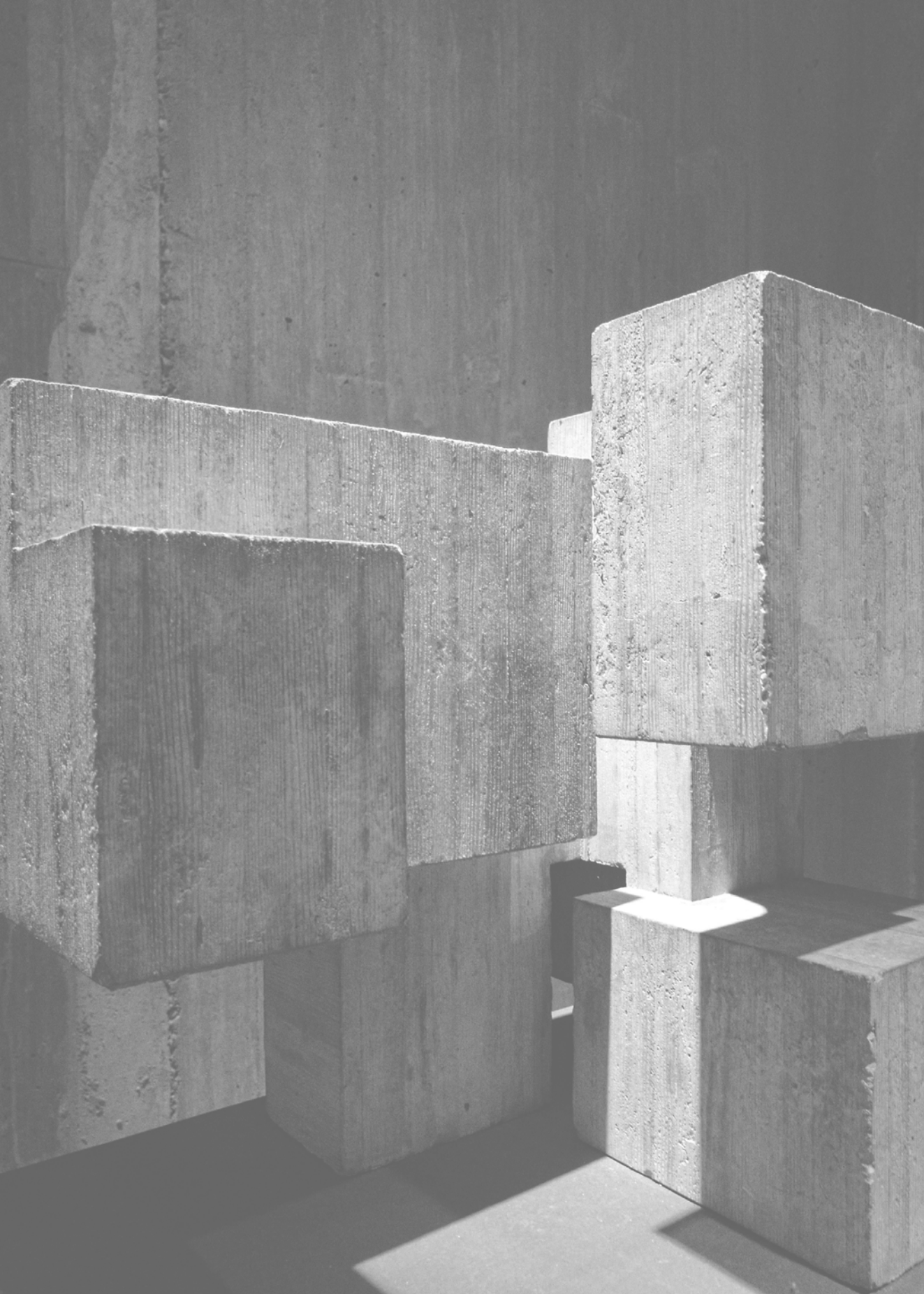
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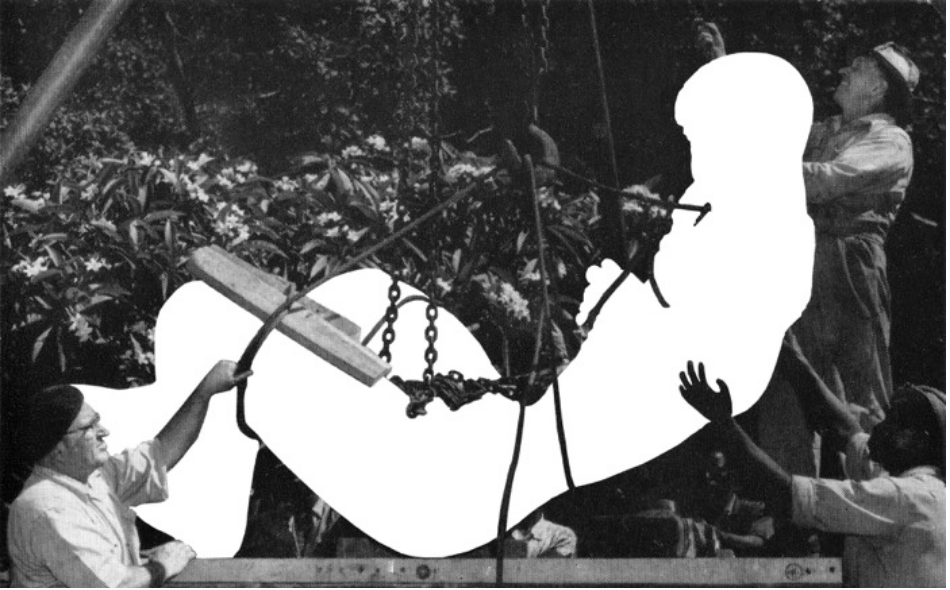
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Chapter 6

Present absence

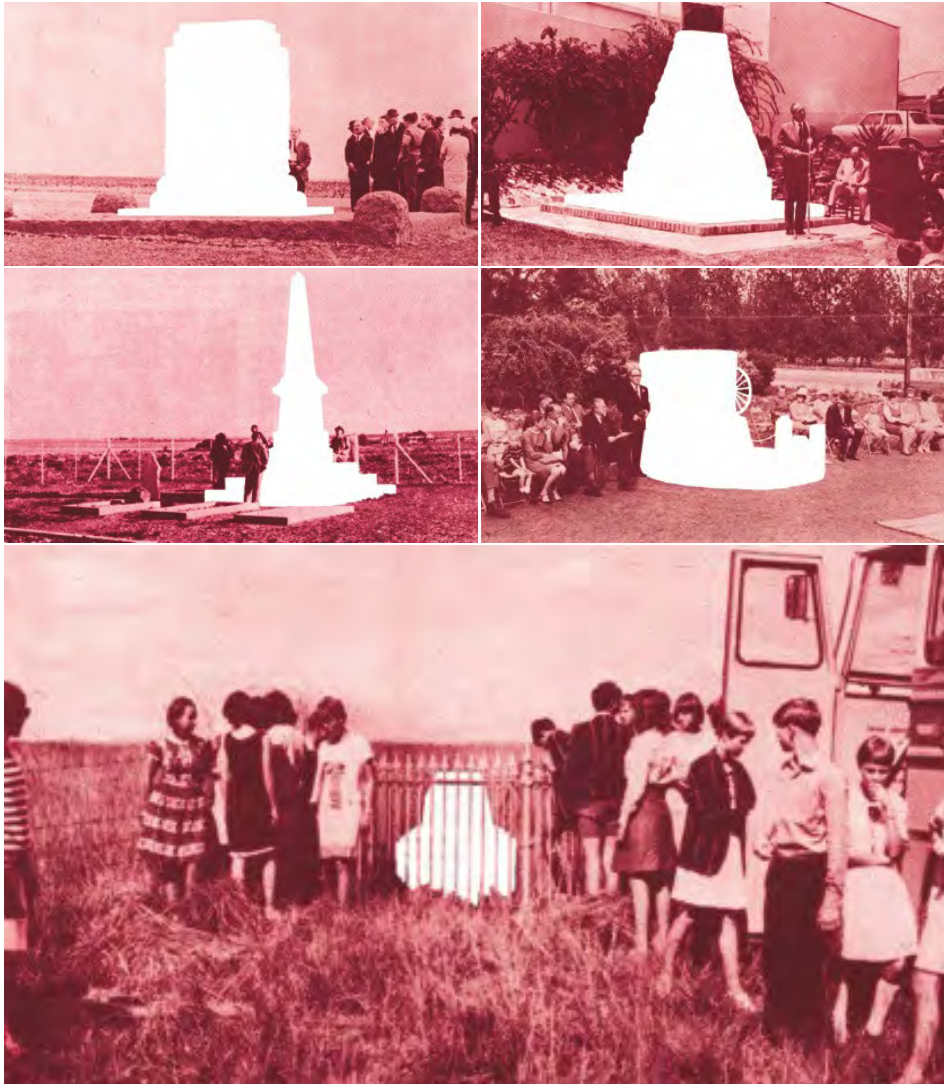
Guy Königstein



137. Vredesmonument (Peace Monument), Vereeniging



12. J. G. Strijdom-Bolybeeld (J. G. Strijdom's Bust), Krugersdorp



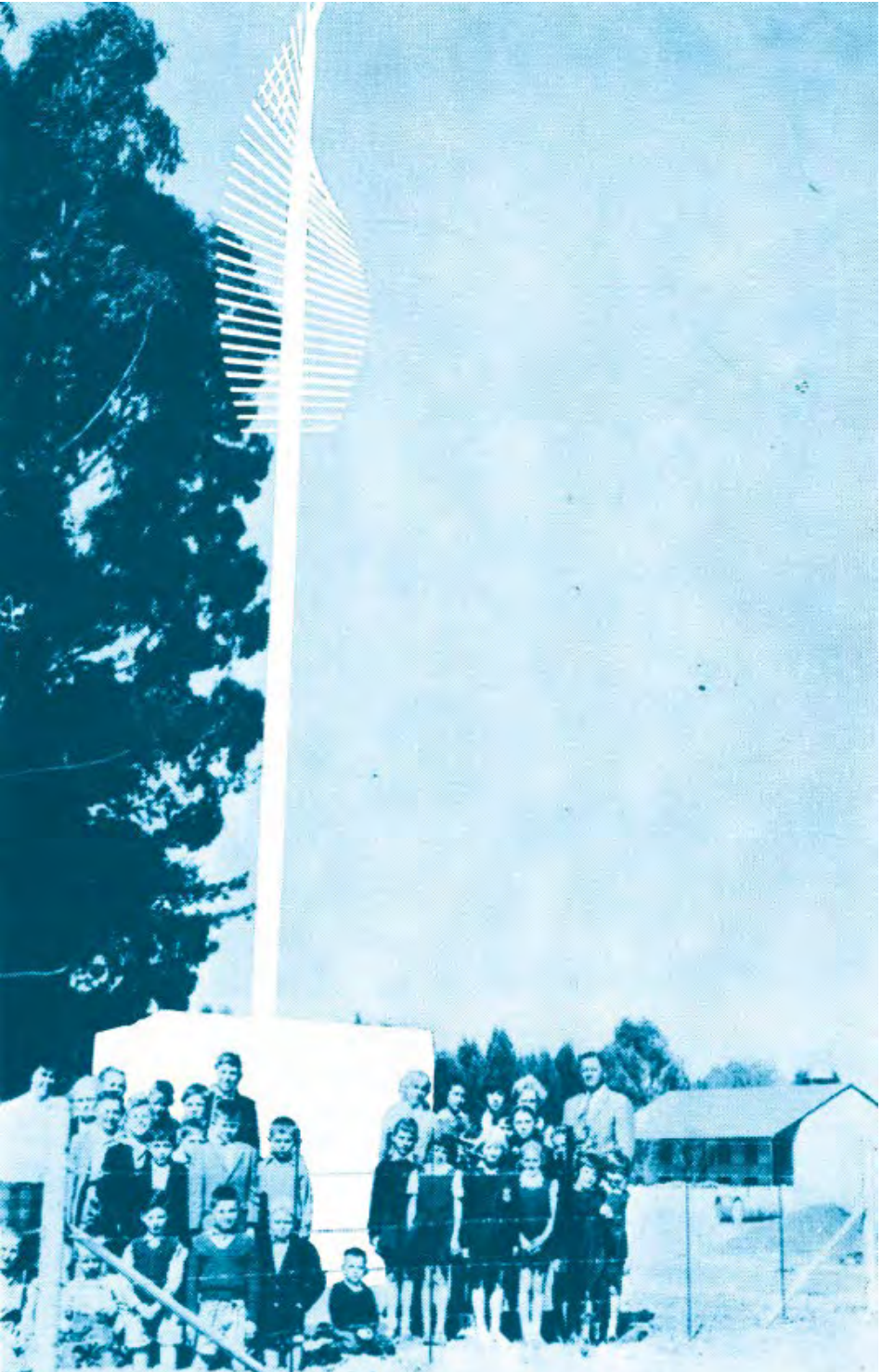
16. Jameson-Gedenkteken (Jameson Memorial), Roodepoort
18. Ossewatrekmonument (Ox-Wagon Trek Monument), Paardekraal School, Krugersdorp
19. Magersfontein-Monument (Magersfontein Monument), Orange Free State
8. Churchill-Gedenkteken (Churchill Memorial), Natal
27. Republiekmonument (Republic Monument), Nooitgedacht School



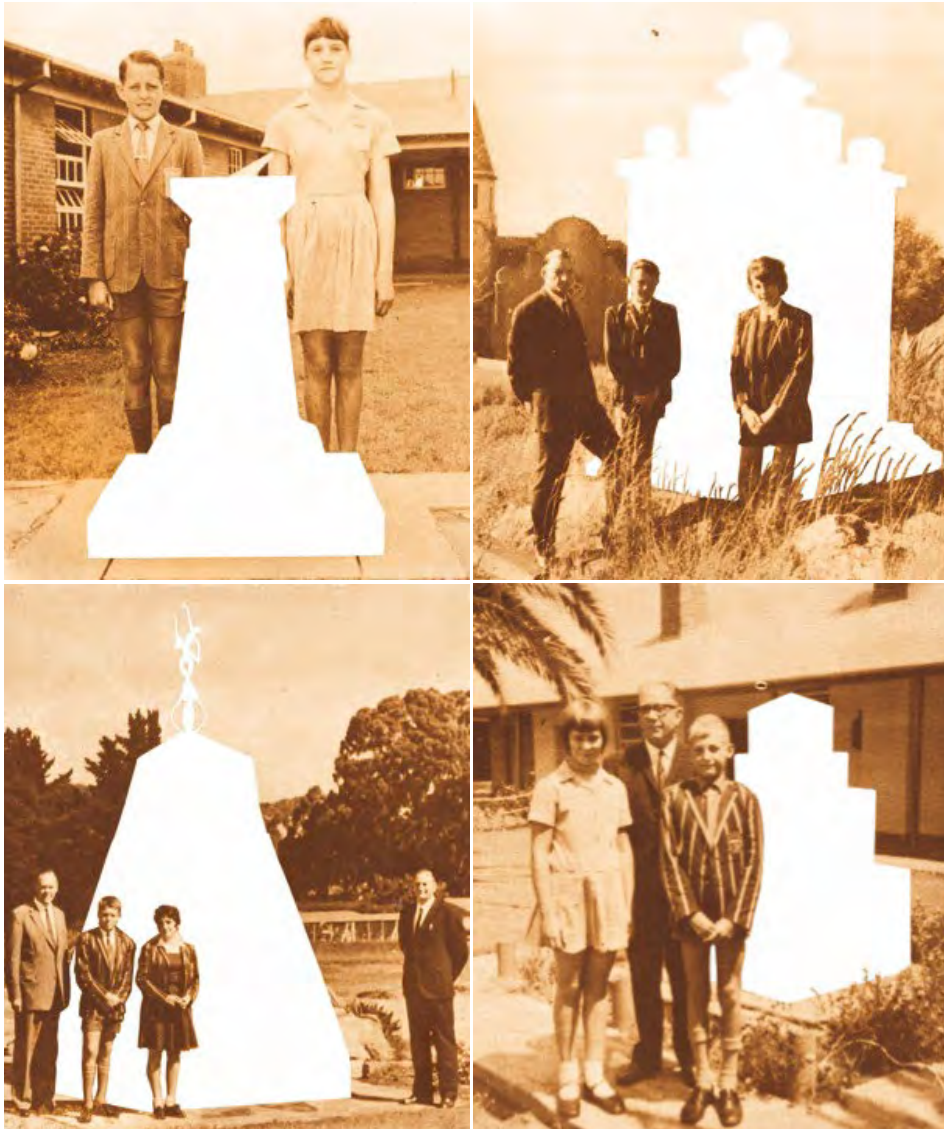
9. President Paul Kruger Standbeeld (President Paul Kruger Statue), Pretoria



14. Verpleegster Henrietta Stockdale-Beeld (Nurse Henrietta Stockdale Statue), Kimberley



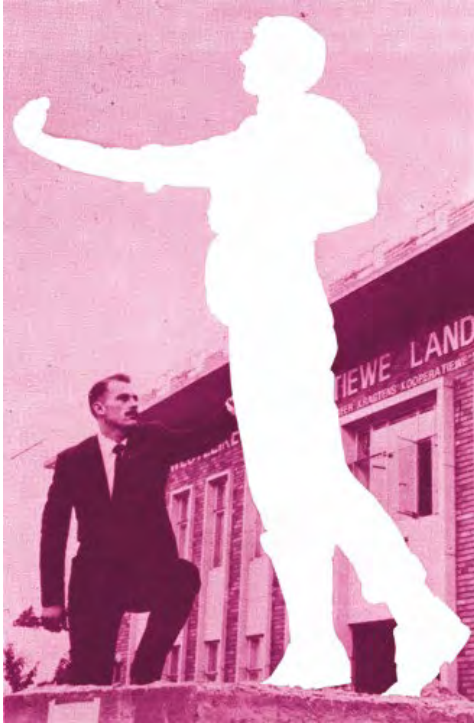
32. Plaasskool-Monument (Farm School Monument), Panfontein School, Vereeniging



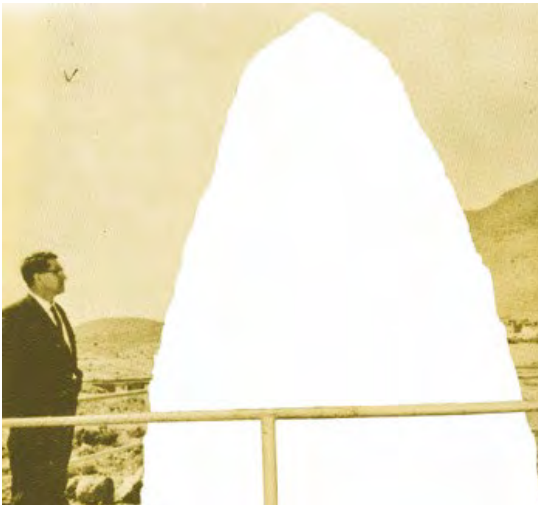
6. Republiekmonument (Republic Monument), Drie Riviere Primary School, Vereeniging
5. Ossewatrekmonument (Ox-Wagon Trek Monument), Cottesloe, Johannesburg
19. Republiekmonument (Republic Monument), Jan de Klerk High School, Krugersdorp
29. 1838-Gedenkteken (1838 Memorial), Nooitgedacht



81. Bloedriviermonument (Blood River Monument)



- 25. Langenhoven-Beeld (Langenhoven Statue), Langenhoven High School, Pretoria
- 21. Die Saaier-Beeld (The Sower Statue), Lichtenburg
- 37. Piet Retief-Monument (Piet Retief Monument), Port Elizabeth



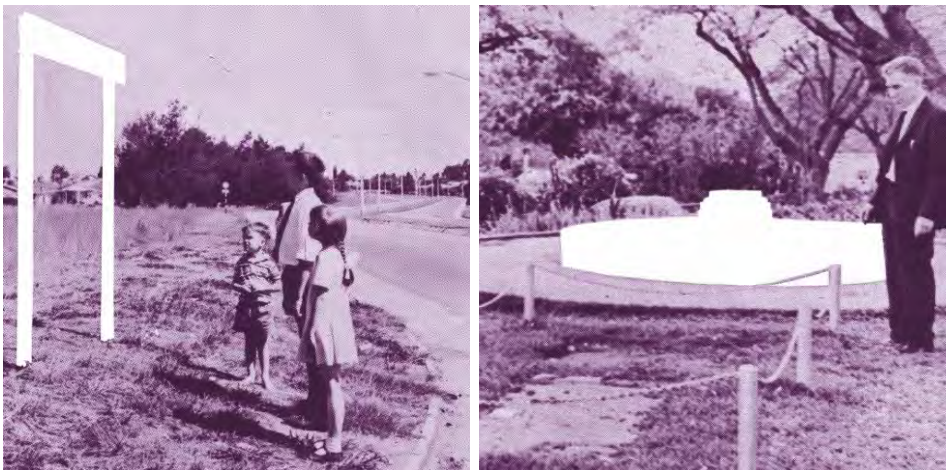
- 30. Piet Retief-Monument (Piet Retief Monument), Dingaansat
- 49. Ossewatrekmonument (Ox-Wagon Trek Monument), Queenstown
- 16. Voortrekker-Monument (Pioneers Monument), Graaff-Reinet



95. Paardekraalmonument (Paardekraal Monument), Krugersdorp



55. Voortrekkerleier Karel Landman-Monument (Pioneer Leader Karel Landman Monument), Alexandria, Cape Province



32. Ossewatrekmonument (Ox-Wagon Trek Monument), Nelspruit

25. Voortrekkerweg (Pioneers Road), Krugersdorp

The work on this visual essay began during an artist residency in Johannesburg in 2016. Hoping to learn about other commemoration practices than the ones I was familiar with from my home country Israel and my place of residence in Western Europe, I embarked southwards, crossed the equator for the first time in my life, and moon landed in South Africa.

The calls and demands of the #RhodesMustFall movement were still echoing in Johannesburg's campuses, and I found myself searching for photographs of monuments in old books at the libraries of the same universities. The original images used here were all scanned from two publications in Afrikaans, edited and published by J.J. Tonder: *Fotobeeld van 300 monumente, standbeelde en gedenktekens langs die pad van Suid-Afrika* (Pictures of 300 monuments, statues and memorials along the path of South Africa) from 1975, and *Veertien Gedenktekens van Suid-Afrika* (Fourteen Memorials of South Africa) from 1961.

The selection contains photographs that depict “human figures” alongside the “sculptural subject”, and thus brings into focus the relationship between man and (absent) object. The sequence begins with the only image I found, in which Black persons are present. It documents the mounting of the Peace Monument by sculptor Coert Steynberg in Vereeniging in 1961. From here onwards the series of retouched and tinted photographs exhibits an imagined narrative: The erection of the monument is followed by a festive inauguration, and later by ceremonies and yearly gatherings as well as school visits. Now the monument is established as a place and may occasionally be emancipated from its original memorial function and transformed into a stage for non-related public events. From a stage it easily shifts into a mere background. But the personal relation to the (absent) object and the memory it comes to eternalise (or silence) persists, and we witness different forms of identification with the two. Here a closer look reveals: the body is initially very close, even touching and imitating, but slowly distances itself. The gaze transforms from sympathy to awe and turns eventually to an inner inquiry.

Not much from my initial motivation to grasp something about the local landscape and culture came about during my three months stay in South Africa. Nonetheless, what I have possibly learned here was actually to feel that I may not grasp. The right to relevance, which has accompanied me hitherto in all my (more or less righteous) undertakings, was cropped off my self-assured way of being; and I have never guessed that this resultant void could possibly involve liberating qualities, next to its terrifying hollowness.



5. Meulsteen (Millstone), Elandsfontein

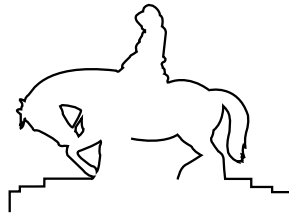


Chapter 7

This fragile present:

Verfremdung as a strategy of memorial in the work of
contemporary South African artists

Nancy Dantas



How soon people become bored with the making and unmaking of history, Grekov thought, remembering the hundreds of thousands who had taken to the streets to watch the first monuments fall.

(Vladislavic 1996)

In their climatic, widely cited visual essay *Statues Also Die*, partly censored until 1968 (Fraiture 2016, 47), auteurs Chris Marker (director and writer), Alain Resnais, (co-director), Ghislain Cloquet (cameraman), and Guy Bernard (composer) juxtapose a striking and haunting array of displaced artifacts in European gardens and museums, developing a shared anti-colonial argument. To them, African art (was) at death's door and its artifacts, arrested in colonial mausoleums, demanded removal from the asphyxiating and deadening site of the colonial museum. Still visually impressive to us today, this stark black-and-white visual essay, composed of jarring still and moving images, begins with a pronouncement written by Marker and delivered by Jean Négroni in his matter-of-fact, staccato radio voice, intonated to command attention and extend authority and finality, veracity and gravitas to the documentary's initial assertion: "when men die, they enter into history. When statues die, they enter art. This botany of death is what we call culture" (Marker & Ashby 2013, 431). It is not this essay's intention to provide a comprehensive reading and analysis of *Les Statues*, but rather to propose this 1953 documentary as an overture to thinking and envisaging how cultural objects can gain a new charge, one of unsettling and upending systems, particularly the systems of colonialism that arguably persist to this day. To those

of us who study museums and curating, *Les Statues* usefully brings the camera into the (ethnographic) museum to analyse how objects are regarded, providing a window of opportunity to discuss how these cultural institutions domesticate time and place at a distance, providing, as Matthias de Groof has written, a “categorization of otherness in order to define the self” (2010, 31).

In *Les Statues*, Marker deplores the manner ‘negro’ artifacts that have been cannibalised by the west to become ‘inauthentic’ objects, constrained “to perform an act they were not meant to be performing” (Fraiture 2016, 48). Although current and acute in advocating the need for repatriation, Marker’s argument is intolerably flawed to us today in its ideal of return to a ‘pure’ signifier called ‘Africa’ – an overly romanticised “country where every form had its signification, where the gracefulness of a curve was a declaration on love to the world” (De Groof 2010, 32) and to a(n) (imaginary) space where people exist in timeless bliss. In so doing, Marker forecloses the possibility of any exchange or dialogue with this place he considers lost to us, and which I would add as a corrective, has historically *never* been cut- off, isolated or without history. In effect Marker, like his antagonist, the ethnographic museum, does little to restore, but rather seems to emphasise impossibility, muteness, loss and death. Graver yet, he denies multivocality and the capacity of discourse to the continent and its production, still speaking with white patriarchal authority, through Négroni, for a mute people, in a mode that is not entirely dissimilar to the one adopted by the Musée de l’Homme, the Museum of the Belgian Congo in Tervuren, the British Museum and the Pitt River Museum and their conservators.

I propound instead that we consider *Les Statues*, and by extension, the displacement of cultural artifacts by way of critical intervention, as productive moments of *verfremdung*, that is, moments where artifacts that seem severed, neutered, resolved, categorised, and “known” become unsettled and highly charged once again. Ernst Bloch tells us that the word *verfremden* (“to estrange”) is not old, but difficult to translate.

Using Grimm as his source, he tentatively states that its first use in literature was in the 1842 novel *Neues Leben* by Bertold Auerbach:

In the novel, the parents feel verfremdet – that is, deeply wounded – because their children speak French, which the parents do not understand, in their presence. Presumably, the parents are being discussed; they feel estranged, treated as if they were not present.
(Bloch 1970, 121)

To this, Bloch adds the concept of *Verfremdungseffect*, which he provides as the displacement or removal of a character or action (or object) out of its usual context, so that the character or action (or object) can no longer be perceived as wholly self-evident.

Through this, the scales fall from one's eyes, unveiling an instance of "*exempla docent*, although only by means of indirection" (ibid., 121). Displacement leads to revelation. To paraphrase Bloch further, the distant, the out-of-way, the displaced into heights reflects back and leads to an understanding of present reality.



Figure 7.1. Still from *Statues Also Die*. [Black and White 35 mm film]. Chris Marker & Alain Resnais. dir. France: Tadié Cinéma. 1953

Art arguably affords us ways of seeing what lies embedded and hidden, of perceiving differently and across time. Through the artist's dysphoric gaze, the previously invisible becomes visible, the absent becomes present, and the normalised, the homogenised, the classified within an existing dominant or hegemonic cultural system becomes displaced, estranged and haunted. This is no alchemy but rather the work of the politicised, cognisant, archaeological, decolonial and arguably depatriarchal approach of some artists. Through their work, and how they engage with “hot” monuments (Bellentani & Panico, 2016), relations of visibility and invisibility, and the voluntary and many

times willed blindspots of history are teased out.¹ In this chapter, I will be looking at how a small number of artists, both contemporary and modern, engage with monuments, employing strategies of *verfremdung* within the built environment, seen by them as personifications or embodiments of the forces that condition and shape our times. These artists, culled from different generations and geographies, are Lungiswa Gqunta, Sikhumbuzo Makandula, Haroon Gunn-Salie and Leonard Tshela Mohapi Matsoso. They work with histories of trauma, albeit from different angles and with different approaches, in specific mediums which help to inform their, and by extension, our thoughts and perceptions of the cultural and lived landscapes we inhabit. The list of artists I have provided is not extensive but illustrative and indicative, in other words, incomplete and speculative. I would like to maintain and honour this open-endedness as it respects the present tide of revision and revulsion, which has not passed, and to which may other artists are likely to contribute. The text that follows is informed by Benjaminian fragmentation, and as such, prioritises and values plurality and rupture. It takes shape as a collection of fragments – a mosaic – and presents itself to readers through a series of interruptions and cinematic jump cuts.

I suggest that we commence with the eldest artist of all, the late Leonard Tshela Mohapi Matsoso, an underexposed champion of South African modernism, celebrated at the Bienal de São Paulo in 1973 with a Ciccillo Matarazzo Award.² Despite this significant recognition, imparted to him at the surprising age of twenty-four by an international jury

1 Federico Bellentani and Mario Panico (2016, 34-35) distinguish between hot and cold monuments. The terms are somewhat self-explanatory. As they write, “in general terms, ‘hot’ monuments can elicit in users uncomfortable or even traumatic emotions. They can stimulate fierce political debates that may result in forms of conflict and resistance at a social level (...). Conversely ‘cold’ monuments convey meanings that have become widely shared by a large part of users (...) Cold monuments are peacefully integrated into the everyday practices of users that perceive them as ordinary built forms. This is the case with monuments that have turned into neutral landmark or mere meeting points.” Originally monuments are not erected as hot or cold: “accepted monuments can turn into sites of resistance as well as controversial monuments can increasingly become accepted and mindlessly experienced during the routine of everyday life.”

2 Readers should note that I have drawn on previously published material. See <http://wrongwrong.net/artigo/the-duty-of-decolonization-or-heeding-the-spectres-in-the-museum-and-as-archive>

comprised of five international critics and museum directors (António Bento, Robert Delavoie, Lu Ke King, Jiri Kotalik, and Donald Baum), Matsoso's career never catapulted as one would expect from such an accolade, stifled by the muting context of apartheid South Africa and its all-too-compliant emissaries, together with the reinforcing perversions of modernism itself which placed 'African', or worse yet, 'Bantu' art at the service of its mostly white, mostly male exponents.

Matsoso, an artist who diligently trained from a schooling age at Polly Street Art Centre (Miles, 2004:73), spent a significant part of his production envisioning the sculptural and monumental form. His work was displayed in groundbreaking exhibitions that have fallen deaf to the ears of history, perhaps due to the fact that they were arranged by the apartheid *dispositif*, being the rather spooky sounding "Cultural Section of the Department of Information" which had no intention of exalting or exhorting Black South African artists, but rather one of boxing, diminishing and thus effectively segregating and belittling their work. A case in point is the group exhibition, held from March 25 to May 16 of 1976 at the Brooklyn Museum and adjoining Brooklyn Public Library, "the first group exhibition in the United States of Black South African artists" (Potgieter 1976, 17). It included Matsoso's work under the broad category "graphic art." According to Stefanie Potgieter, in an article published in the June edition of *Bantu*, a journal expressly meant for a white readership, the "almost eight-week long exhibition of 16 tapestries and 90 graphic works of 10 artists was seen by nearly 250 000 people"³ The article, in true apartheid style, as with all totalitarian memory-controlling regimes, fails to mention the names of these artists, thus excising them from their due place in history.

Possibly owing to the influence of his peers and instructors, particularly Ezrom Legae who succeeded Sydney Kumalo at Polly Street in 1965, a young and one would imagine curious and impressionable Matsoso was

3 According to the editorial of October 1978: "BANTU [which had changed title to Progressus] continued as a publication mainly for White (sic) readers, in both English and Afrikaans." According to this same editorial, as overseas demand for the publication increased, in February of 1962, the two languages were separated and Bantu appeared in English and Afrikaans respectively.

taken by the production happening around him, creating a body of work which would also gravitate to the sculptural and often monumental form, emulating his peers and their interest in three-dimensional work. Although portraiture was a component of the study programme at the Centre as much as life drawing (Miles 2004, 88), the sculptural prevailed amongst its learners (and instructors) and was thus to become a constant in the drawings of Matsoso. “Polly Street Art Centre cultivated an awareness that art was not only mimesis but a tool for expression”, Elza Miles (2004, 10) writes, and in Matsoso’s case, or so I posit, his output of drawings were a *resistive response* to the oppression he was subject to – one need only look at his titles to get a sense of the hardship he and his fellows faced⁴ – but more significantly to us, and within our chosen framework, his work discreetly countered the normalisation of an absence: the denial of the Black monument and Black cultural history in the South African landscape, providing us today with a window to number of blueprints for potential monuments, rendering his production arguably contemporary in its political and conceptual acuity.

Six years after having received an award for his drawings in São Paulo, Matsoso was recruited yet again by the city of São Paulo for an edition of the biennial that is commonly known as the ‘bienal dos prémios’ or biennial of accolades. The idea of the biennial was to provide an overview of the first fourteen editions and showcase work that had been awarded over these successive years. Although Matsoso is listed in the catalogue as a recipient in 1973, and even though he specifically produced a suite of drawings for the biennial in 1979 at the behest of his gallery, in conjunction with the South African government, his work was not exhibited (together with a tapestry by Marguerite Weavind, with visual artist Larry Scully as commissioner), as had originally been planned. “South Africa’s participation in the 1979 Sao Paulo Biennale was cancelled due to political reasons shortly before the exhibition was held” according to the Director General of the Information Service of South Africa, in several letters written to consuls in the United States

4 Titles like *Helpless*, *Helpless*, a drawing from 1972, located in the Constitutional Court art collection, or *Agony*, one of the drawings presented at the Bienal de São Paulo in 1973.

at the request of the National Executive Council of the South African Association of the Arts (heretoforth SAAA) to find alternative venues for the work produced by Matsoso and his fellow exhibitors. Despite the country's repeated attempts at rapprochement, namely in 1982 and 1984, Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Relations, otherwise known as Itamaraty, together with certain countries, in particular India, vetoed all attempts at South African participation and the country would not participate again until 1994.

It is conceivable that the government "acquired" the Matsoso suite of drawings, together with the Marguerite Weavind tapestry⁵ for the Pretoria State Theatre to console the artists, or perhaps itself for this embarrassing diplomatic rebuttal. I am reluctant to state that Matsoso's work was purchased. It was in effect sponsored by the South African Information Service at most. According to the SAAA's expense report, Matsoso received R300 for materials whereas Marguerite Weavind received ten times the amount for the production of her tapestry, paid over to the artist via a state grant managed by the SAAA.

Before finding a permanent home in what is today known as the South African State Theatre, Matsoso and Weavind's work travelled to the United States as a result of much diplomatic maneuvering.⁶ The suite of five drawings he produced for São Paulo, later exhibited in Houston and at the 'Festival of Two Worlds' or Spoleto Festival in South Carolina in 1980, were fierce and magisterial.⁷ Reproduction in

5 This was a 3-metre-high and 7 metre long mohair tapestry, designed by Judith Mason, consisting of five different sections depicting the Garden of Eden with two large angels whose wings, according to the official description, ended in five angel faces. Allegoric forms such as snakes, trees and flowers were included. The work I imagine and admittedly conjecture, by way of its sheer size, would have intentionally been included to overshadow and outshine Matsoso's drawings, indirectly enacting a symbolic battle of faiths and races, between Christian and traditional, colonial and autochthonous, European and African beliefs.

6 Until recently, Matsoso's suite was to be found in the lift foyer. The suite was removed in a general rehang of the collection and is currently in held in the theatre vault.

7 According to Michael Brown (2000), the Spoleto Festival was born in 1958 on the impetus of composer Gian Carlo Menotti and his vision: to unite two cultures and two art worlds, that is, the European and the American. The festival is mostly known for opera and theatre performances. According to correspondence between James T. Kerney, the festival manager in 1979, and the Ambassador of South Africa, Donald B. Sole, artists who participated in past festivals included Alberto Burri, Jean Cocteau, Willem deKooning,

book form betrays their scale and impact. Measuring approximately 166 x 85 cm each, the figures they depict are strikingly monumental. Of the five drawings, three relate directly to the legend of Nongqawuse. For apartheid South Africa, the story of Nongqawuse was dismissed as mere 'foolish folk tale', but for many today, and I would speculate Matsoso too, this real-life event bespeaks of the resoluteness, faith and selfless lengths and sacrifices that the Xhosa people committed to in order to save themselves from colonial expansion.⁸

It was in 1856, three years after bovine pleuropneumonia arrived in the Cape aboard a ship carrying Friesian bulls at Mossel Bay (Peires, 1987:45) with the additional aggravation of a severe drought that Nongqawuse, a young Xhosa girl, had a vision that the ancestors were preparing themselves to return to life, salvaging her ailing population with the offering of new cattle and a revived land (Ashforth 1991, 581). In order to prepare for their coming, this young seer was told all the Xhosa must burn their crops and slaughter their cattle. When the ancestors failed to arrive by the predicted date, despite reluctance in some quarters, most of Nongqawuse's people had decided to destroy their livelihoods to appease the ancestors. An estimated 40 000 people starved to death as a consequence (Peires 1987, 43). The survivors, forced to seek assistance in the British Cape Colony, were driven into the service of the colonialists. Unsurprisingly, under the leadership of Governor Sir George Grey, the colonial administration brutally exploited and capitalised on the situation and vulnerability of the Xhosa people, who saw the power of the chiefs broken and their lands seized for European settlement (Ashforth 1991, 581).

Helen Frakenthaler, David Hockney, Robert Indiana, Robert Motherwell and Andy Warhol.

8 It should be noted that Nongqawuse's prophecy was preceded by that of Nxele, who lived from about 1780 to 1820, at a time when Xhosa society was coming under increasing pressure from within as well as without. According to Jane Hodgson, sometime between 1816 and 1818, Nxele, an *igogo* credited with second sight, offered his people a course of action that was grounded in traditional worldview, yet charged with a new source of power, claiming that he had seen a vision. "Dalidiphu appeared to me and spoke to me saying, 'Tell my people to prepare themselves for action. They must kill all dun-coloured cattle.' He will cause all the dead to rise from their graves. They will come out of the sea, ready and armed to the teeth" (Hodgson 1985, 25).

Although there is much to be said of this complex event which has served different agendas over time, I would argue that Nongqawuse's vision is not located in the past, but in the *future-present*, creating a compelling haunting and stirring amongst her followers – an intertwined dream of becoming, return and regeneration – a decolonial and anti-colonial desire – which Matsoso, with his Brazil suite, wished to tap into and possibly share with his Portuguese-speaking counterparts.



Figure 7.2. Matsoso, Leonard Tshela Mohapi. *Nongqawuse (sic) I, II, III*. [Oil pastel on paper]. 166 x 85 cm each. 1979

Each of Matsoso's panels portrays a monumental Nongqawuse, a seer, liminal being and niece of Mhlakaza, associated with the Xhosa cattle killing in different scenes. In his novel, *The Heart of Redness*, Zakes Mda envisions Nongqawuse as unkempt and with the appearance of a waif. He further adds to his description, "in the manner of all great prophets she seemed confused and disoriented" (2000, 59). Unlike Mda, Matsoso portrays Nongqawuse in the first panel as a grandiose figure, addressing a group of four crouched, grimacing subjects, who like her, are smeared in traditional red ochre. They appear to attentively draw on her words under a crimson, apocalyptic African sun. A long cloud of grey stretches across the sky, possibly caused by the burning fields, which she has called her people to ignite. Nongqawuse's right arm is raised; her fist clenched in colonial-cum-apartheid defiance and leadership as she

addresses her hungry, broken kin. Like others included in the scene, the exposure of the lines of her thoracic cage are exacerbated, alluding not only to the drought of the summer of 1855-1856 (Peires 1987, 45) but also, and more importantly, to the diseased cattle and loss of land brought about by English colonisers. The scene encapsulates the emotion and despair of people whose entire wellbeing rested with its cattle, and who, as Peirce writes, “loved each beast individually”. Thanks to colonial settlers, who brought with them this invisible deadly disease, cattle owners and shepherds were forced to watch their animals putrefy from the inside out (Peires 1987, 47). Moving on to the second scene, Nongqawuse stands erect with another figure, their conjoined bodies indissociable. At their feet lies the carcass of a dead animal. There would have been many more corpses, but Matsoso, I would argue, chose to represent the familial unit and its individual connection to each animal. Nongqawuse touches and is connected to both earth and sky. In this scene, she holds the sun in her hand; a possible representation of the popular expression “ulihambe lingashoni” – to catch or hold the sun in an act of defiance, resilience and glory. In the third and last panel of the triptych, Nongqawuse rests atop of a living Nguni bull. Her back is bent from exhaustion. The skies have cleared, and she is again one with animal. Her partner however is represented divorced from her in the background, pleading to an absent, possibly Christian God. Still within reach, not all has been lost.

In addition to the above triptych, two other works around the veiled theme of colonial-cum-apartheid resistance were included. In the vertical, almost life-size work *Man and Beast*, an amaXhosa man wrestles a giant, toothed monster with a poised, diminutive spear. One might argue that the giant crocodile depicted in the battle alludes to *Die Groot Krokodil* (Afrikaans for The Big Crocodile), a nickname used for P.W. Botha, the then prime minister of South Africa and first executive state president from 1984-1989. In the other horizontal panel, titled *Mabalele*, the crocodile has almost dominated its human prey. Although pinned down and trapped by the reptile’s heavy grey body, this warrior looks death – read the apartheid oppressor – squarely in the face.

It should be noted that Matsoso's technique was eximious for an artist working under dire conditions shared by most Black artists under apartheid. Living and working mostly from Soweto, he did not have access to electricity or a conventional and expansive studio space. This would understandably have conditioned the scale of work he was able to produce. Nevertheless, his workmanship demonstrates the supersession and overcoming of these otherwise impossible working conditions. His drawings deliver exceptionally striking tones and a palette that renders the human form as perennial, colossal and rock-like. If South Africa was void of monuments to the Black individual, Matsoso was defiantly erecting primordial and perennial figures on two-dimensional surfaces, which looked as though, and suggested that they had been designed, and here lies the crux of my argument, to be carved and commemorated in stone. Rather than engage with these works as drawings on paper, I suggest we look at them as blueprints for monuments and imagine ourselves walking and engaging with their presence. I believe this is what Matsoso desired to impress upon his viewers, both then and now, and that this is what renders them fearsome and unsettling, ultimately leading to their removal from the State Theatre walls where they were once hung.

If Matsoso was responding to a void, a wave of young Black artists today are engaging and struggling in various ways with a landscape still populated and dominated by apartheid's wreckage, be this its institutions or monuments; questioning, troubling and estranging their untouched presence, their embedded ideologies and divisive legacy in present-day South Africa. Katharyne Mitchell argues that "traces of memory left in the landscape point to the political, cultural and economic forces which cohered at that moment to produce a vision of the way a (dominant) society perceived itself and represented itself to itself" (2003, 448). She further writes, "during moments of major political disjunctures, when national and individual identity is challenged in fundamental ways", such as in 'post-apartheid' South Africa, "the politics of memory rises to the fore, and (settled) monuments, in particular, become sites of great conflict" (ibid., 448).

The artists I will be looking at from this point on, or so I argue, plant “seeds of difference” (ibid., 451) in these *lieux de mémoire* or sites of memory, underlying the continuities and discontinuities they embody. Pierre Nora (1989, 19) tells us that *lieux de mémoire* are created by a play of memory and history. As I see it, today’s generation, in this fragile present, are productively calling attention and staging the difference and opposition between (Black) memory and (settler) history, in a battle with white settler monuments and their meaning. Memory and history, as Nora (1989, 8) writes, are far from synonymous:

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is the representation of the past. Memory, insofar as affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic.

This generation of emerging artists has taken it upon itself to wrestle with the memories of these places and their *genius loci*, in other words, “the geniuses we locate there” (Mayerfeld Bell 1997, 813). Theirs is a bitter struggle, one that is part and parcel of an informal project of resistance to normative memory production. By way of their counter-practice, these artists refuse to accede to the scripting of history in the format of a once-dominant minority power, creating works which speak to a different interpretation of historical events.



Figure 7.3. Gqunta, Lungiswa. *Horse Memorial I*. [Paper, wheat paste and water]. 2017

Horse Memorial I by Lungiswa Gqunta is a rather inconspicuous intervention considering the artist's remaining expansive production. Somewhat reminiscent of the *décollages* of Wolf Vostell and Jacques Villegle, Gqunta presents a lacerated and gnashed colour print of the contested Horse Memorial, seen in profile from its location in Port Elizabeth. Looking at this modest work of a torn poster-sized image, the indices on the wall are not of careful peeling, but rather represent the desire to rip, peel and tear apart, signalling the determination,

anger and scorn which have fuelled the artist's desire to see this image removed from the wall, and metonymically, from public space and our shared cultural landscape. This life size, 3-ton bronze statue, which is still to be found erect in Port Elizabeth, is dedicated to the thousands of horses that died on active duty in the Second Anglo-Boer War between 1899 and 1902, and depicts a soldier kneeling before his horse, holding a drinking bucket under its muzzle. According to Major Tylden, cited by G.R. Duxbury, the British Army supplied 520 000 horses and 150 000 mules of which 350 000 horses and 50 000 mules perished. The losses of the 'Burgher Forces' were not given, but the total probably exceeded 150 000 (Duxbury 1968, n.p.). In a description dating back to 1964, Richard Buncher states that the statue "has a touchingly tender, dramatic quality" (1967, 139). Sculpted by Joseph Whitehead, Buncher (1967, 139) further adds that its author "worked with inspiration while the citizens of Port Elizabeth, led by Harriet Meyer, contributed considerable concern and much money".

Originally erected in 1905, exactly 110 later, this kneeling soldier was toppled by a group of 30 men dressed in red (Marias & Wilson 2015). Gqunta, I posit, like these unidentified men, wishes to underscore and give voice to the history elided by the monument and its promulgators, affording us a different, decolonial reading of the symbol. In her thesis, she reminds us that with the horses came the Bubonic plague, a disease hitherto unknown to the land, and with it, death and a reason to dislocate and uproot countless Black families.⁹ According to architect Franco Frescura, British military authorities imported large numbers of horses from Argentina to fight the Anglo-Boer

9 In her highly commendable text on the absent history of the ubiquitous horse, social historian Sandra Swart reminds us that the horse (*Equus caballus*) was not indigenous to South Africa, but was introduced by white settlers. Swart traces this long history to Jan Van Riebeeck and his desire to reshape the landscape and change the native ecosystem. In order to remove bushes, plough the soil, cut down shrubs and trees, transport lumber, sand, clay and firewood, horses were much needed for the 'landscaping' that was required. After much arguing with the VOC, they were eventually brought from Java, much to the dissatisfaction of Riebeeck who found the breed (known as the 'South East Asia Pony') to be light and insubstantial (2007, 127). Swart further writes: "The horses - together with a pack of hunting dogs - were imported, to a certain extent to inspire terror in the Khoisan, who were beginning to initiate raids upon the settlements. Van Riebeeck argued that a watch of twenty riders would prove a sufficient deterrent. On 7 June 1660, the settler authorities used horses to display settler ascendancy."

War. With their fodder came infested vermin which carried Bubonic plague (Spinage 2012, 1352). Between 1901 and 1903, most of South Africa's major towns, Port Elizabeth included, recorded outbreaks of the disease. As Frescura in an undated entry on South African postal history writes:

... although its spread affected all sectors of the population, it was the black community who bore the brunt of the Plague Health Regulations. In 1902, most of Port Elizabeth's black suburbs were demolished, the personal belongings of their residents were arbitrarily destroyed, and restrictions were imposed upon inter-town travel.

It was at this time that the racially segregated suburb of New Brighton (Gqunta's hometown) was established, some 8 km from the city centre, to house families that had been displaced during the outbreak. According to John Iliffe (1987, 115), others were forced to settle on other peri-urban freehold land such as Korsten, a suburb named after Frederick Korsten, one of the first traders to settle in Algoa Bay.

To date, little to no interest has been shown by the media in understanding the public contestation or even the possibility that this monument could actually repress a history of hurt and loss, depicting the toppling somewhat blindly as disgraceful and shameful. Dr Beverley Roos Muller, in an online article titled *Horse memorial attack makes no sense*, surprisingly fails to evoke or acknowledge this history, possibly unaware of the connection between the horse, Bubonic plague and the forced and racialised displacement of local populations, which Gqunta seeks to obliquely evoke through her work.¹⁰ As such, rather unsurprisingly, a year after it was dismantled,

10 Professor Myron Echenberg in his treaty *Plague Ports: The Global Impact of Bubonic Plague 1894-1901*, provides an account of the arrival of the plague in Cape Town and posits that it was this epidemic in particular that acted as the catalyst, setting in motion the phenomenon of urban racial segregation which has characterized and defined South Africa to this day. Echenberg points the emergence of these policies to William Simpson, professor of hygiene at Kings College, London, who accompanied the pandemic around the British Empire. Simpson, considered an expert at the time on the disease, happened to be in Cape Town in 1901. Although his purpose was to study typhoid fever among troops fighting in the Transvaal, he availed himself to the Plague Advisory Board. According to Echenberg, "Simpson's so-called expertise in plague matters stemmed essentially from his limited clinical observations and selective reading rather than

undisclosed members of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University sculpture collective trenchantly and stubbornly repaired the soldier, placing it defiantly back, according to *The Herald* (6 May, 2016). The greatest irony is possibly one of the memorial's inscriptions, which reads: "The greatness of a nation consists not so much in the number of its people or the extent of its territory, as in the extent and justice of its compassion." Little compassion, it should be said, has been shown to those living in Korsten or New Brighton and their history of displacement and dispossession, brought on originally by these otherwise innocent beasts and their pest-ridden fodder.

Looking at an old apartheid-era map, one would see the outline of the Ciskei to the East of Port Elizabeth and its Horse Memorial. No longer delineated by cartographers, this place, a former 'Bantustan', is the seat of Sikhumbuzo Makhandula's attention. To be more precise, in his video titled *Isigidimi*, Makandula visits Ntaba kaNdoda, a modernist-inspired monument created by the Honourable Chief Lennox Sebe as part of a grand plan to create a distinct Ciskeian identity which had not existed until then, and one that was needed to legitimate independence in 1981. Franco Frescura, ten years after this date (1992, n.p.) writes:

laboratory research. His few experiences convinced him that in South Asia, barefooted Indians became infected with the plague from contaminated earth" (2007, 281). Simpson's approach to the disease was basically a sanitarian one. He blamed local populations for the spread of the disease, and "showed neither sympathy for nor understanding of the structural causes of overcrowding and squalid housing" (ibid.). In conjunction with Dr Alfred John Gregory, his junior colleague, he advocated the establishment of segregated locations for the poorer class of Europeans and people of colour. "Simpson paternalistically proclaimed the need for 'ethnic zoning' throughout British possessions in Africa and Asia and recommended a neutral belt of open unoccupied country of at least 300 yards in width between the European residences and those of the Asiatic and African" (ibid., 282). Fuelled by Simpson's opinion, Cape Town applied the standard control measures employed in most other sites, with the difference that Black Africans were taken as the major target of these measures, especially vector control or vaccination. Public health officials showed little regard for Black African possessions, ordering most of their goods burned as opposed to sanitized (ibid., 285) when forcefully removing the Black African population, living mostly in District Six and One, to a site in Uitvlugt (today known as Ndabeni). In addition to crippling travel restrictions, Black Africans were forced to take Haffkine's vaccine, which "was said to have been of dubious value and to have caused significant side effects" (ibid., 289). According to a report in the *Cape Times* of April 4, Gregory was asked if it was true that several people who had been inoculated had had to have their arms amputated!

When the Ciskei opted for 'independence' in 1981 under the South African Government's 'Bantustan' policy, it did so with the consent of only a small minority of its population and against the specific recommendations of its appointed consultants. In the process, it inherited a legacy of poverty unequalled in modern-day southern Africa. The Ciskei is also unique among South Africa's rural 'homelands' in that it has absolutely no basis upon which to claim a separate ethnic, cultural or linguistic identity, no separate Ciskeian identity, no separate Ciskeian culture, nor is there a Ciskeian language. Instead its people are intrinsically bound within the larger Xhosa identity.

Ntaba kaNdoda formed part of Sebe's plan to invent that identity which involved the creation of an annual holy day, one which Frescura likens to the Swazi first-fruits celebration. An audience was guaranteed on this day by members of the Ciskeian Civil Service who were obliged to attend under the threat of dismissal. The national shrine cost approximately R860 000 and was funded by compulsory deductions made from the salaries of civil servants. In addition to the phallic monument, conceived by Sebe following a somewhat telling visit to Mount Massada in Israel, a 'Hero's Acre' was incorporated where the bones of Chief Maqoma, a Xhosa leader who opposed white colonial rule, were reinterred after having been 'found' in an unmarked grave on Robben Island.



Figure 7.4. Makhandula, Sikhumbuzo. Still from *Isigidimi (06'02')*. [Short film]. 2016. Photograph: Carlos Marzia Studio.

Over the course of his six-minute video, Makhandula traverses the indoor and outdoor spaces of the hauntingly deserted and divisive Ntaba kaNdoda monument, providing views of this nationalist and fracturing ruin and wound. Throughout, Makhandula personifies a messenger from another world, performing what appears to be a cleansing ritual. Dressed as ‘The Messenger’ in a long tunic and conical-looking hat, he treads carefully, burning incense in a thurible as he traverses the space methodically and rhythmically. Makhandula’s mock performance serves to evoke devotion and sacrifice. The repeated motion of the burner recalls the hypnotisation of the masses, a common denominator amongst nationalist and fracturing monuments worldwide, erected to celebrate the forefathers, pioneers and heroes of the nation. Ntaba kaNdoda, now an abandoned carcass, like those of other monuments of division, still occupies the landscape and the Eastern Cape’s visual horizon, despite the fact that Sebe’s bust has been dethroned. These are the persistent physical marks, etched into the landscape, of a past with no immediate undoing.

Visitors to the South African pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015 would have encountered an anti-monumental work by Haroon

Gunn- Salie. It is no coincidence I have chosen a work from a biennial as the last, for my intention is to also bring this analysis full circle, evoking and summoning the ghost of Matsoso and the parallel history of biennials as one which like the monuments that surround us, remains largely unchanged. But I digress ... The unsuspecting Italian visitor, on entering the first section of the pavilion would have encountered a set of dismembered aged hands, the one clenched, the other holding a walking stick, placed centrally on a high wall, with intent and purpose above eye level. On busy days, foreign and unsuspecting visitors were likely to walk unawares beneath the red (blood soaked) hands of Jan Van Riebeeck, possibly even taking an obligatory selfie shot and posting it to social media. Cast by Haroon Gunn-Salie and Bevan Thornton on Freedom Day in 2015 (Dunbar-Curran 2015), the ghostly amputated hands are a direct impression (from the Latin *imprimire*, to imprint) of the Jan Van Riebeeck statue located in Cape Town's CBD. The slightly outstretched hands as seen on location, proudly and affectedly take in and hold the view of a buzzing Adderley Street and awe-inducing Table Mountain.



Figure 7.5. Gunn-Salie, Haroon & Bevan Thornton. *Soft Vengeance (Jan van Riebeeck)*. [Reinforced urethane cast]. 2015

Unbeknownst to many visitors, the original statue was commissioned by arch-colonialist Cecil John Rhodes in 1896 as a gift to the City of Cape Town. “With his back to the shoreline, left fist clenched in determination, (Riebeeck) stands gazing on Table Mountain as if asserting a claim to the land”, writes Leslie Witz (2003, 43), establishing a significant parallel between the pose witnessed in the statue and a mid-19th century canvas titled *Arrival of Van Riebeeck 1652* by Charles Davidson Bell where Van Riebeeck is portrayed “as part of British colonial identity”. According to Phillida Brooke Simons, this painting is one of several works Bell based on extracts from the journal of Van Riebeeck. According to Brooke Simons (1998, 93), “(i)t shows the Dutch commander with his henchmen, all of them hatted, helmeted and flag-flying, greeting a group of scantily clad Khoikhoi with Devil’s peak in the background”.



Figure 7.6. Bell, Charles. *The Landing of Van Riebeeck, 1652*. [Oil on canvas]. 79,5 x 92 cm. 1850

Witz (2003, 42) tells us that Bell was a draughtsman who arrived in Cape Town from Britain in 1830. He partook in several expeditions to the interior and took up several clerical posts within government, eventually becoming surveyor general. About the aforementioned painting, Witz (42) critically writes:

Bell's painting, particularly of the landing, blends his background of draughtsmanship – the attention to ethnographic detail and the need to pinpoint people into carefully defined locations – with the English picturesque tradition and the Dutch historical movement of the nineteenth century. In the English tradition, broad landscapes were observed from a distance, with an emphasis on re-creating images on the “middle plane,” situated between a shadowy foreground and a background receding in the distance. It is in this middle plane that the historical event is located and Van Riebeeck appears, attired in a long flowing English-style jacket, carrying a walking stick with a large silver top, accompanied by Cromwellian-type soldiers with guns and an enlarged version of the Company flag. Set slightly farther aback, and blending into the background of trees and mountains, are a group of local Khoi inhabitants dressed in what appear to be tattered rags, all but one of them seated as they greet Van Riebeeck and his colleagues. The stark contrast of the apparel, the spatial location of the two parties, and the portly pose of Van Riebeeck as opposed to the almost humble greeting of the Khoi group turn the landing into an archetypical first encounter (...) Van Riebeeck, in his English guise of a rural landlord, is reinforced as the initiator of the civilizing mission in southern Africa.

To this reading, I would add another historical parallel, between Bell and his contemporary Delacroix, namely his *Orpheus Comes to Civilize the Savage Greeks and Teach Them the Arts of Peace*. To my mind, the similarity of the mountain in the backdrop is striking, establishing a bridge that connects the two creations across space, highlighting the colonising and “civilizing” ideology in which they both commune. Both present a balanced group of figures involving a ‘hero’ bathed in light. In the case of Van Riebeeck, not only does the sun shine where he steps, illuminating the path before him, thus suggesting the righteousness of

his mission, but Van Riebeeck's garments and those of the henchmen closest to him, presented as a pyramidal grouping with Van Riebeeck at the summit, radiate a golden, warm light.

John Tweed, the sculptor of the Van Riebeeck statue on Adderley Street, like Bell, appears to have drawn on the same sources and ideology, in his portrayal of a rather contrived and academic rendering of Van Riebeeck. Ironically, Bell, Tweed and others after them, in their making of the myth and topos of the landing and Van Riebeeck as one of the 'first fathers' of the 'nation', were more than likely to have used a portrait from the Rijksmuseum collection, mistakenly identified as being that of Van Riebeeck, but in fact one of another Dutchman, a man presumed to be Bartholomeus Vermuyden.



Figure 7.7. Delacroix, Eugene. *Orpheus Civilizes the Greeks*. [Brush and watercolour and white body colour over graphite]. 1842.
Photograph: Yale University Art Gallery

Despite the irony of this mistaken identity perpetuated through time, of one thing we can be sure, with Van Riebeeck began a long history of theft and land dispossession. According to Petrus Deport and Tshepo Lephakga (2016, n.p.) from the University of South Africa:

Jan van Riebeeck and the Dutch East India Company were not philanthropists out to uplift the indigenous people; they were, like all capitalists and traders, out to make money by whatever means necessary. The VOC was a mercantile capital-driven company, uniting a number of Dutch commercial undertakings, backed by the Dutch government and military that developed into one of the largest and most profitable commercial companies of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Their mercantilist mentality was what characterised this first systematic strategy of accumulation by European powers in South Africa. Accordingly, this mercantilist mentality dictated that the VOC was allowed to trade on the land they occupied and that if their economic interests were threatened by any of the indigenous people, they could use whatever means necessary to protect their interests.

As Lianne van Kralinger (2017, 249) has stated, Van Riebeeck was in fact commanded to annex the best and fattest portions of land for the company: “You shall after landing inspect the most convenient spots for lands and pastures, and erect signs of having taken possession.” It was with Van Riebeeck that a painful and shameful history of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2004) begun and rent on local populations.

But let us return our attention to Gunn-Salie and his Venice installation, now that the ideological, dialogical, and diachronical footing of this monument of discontent has been given. In putting up the severed hands of Van Riebeeck, I posit Gunn-Salie wishes us to consider this monument from the past as still active in the present, and part of what Natalia Kryzanowska (2016, 469), drawing on Gramsci, calls a form and agent of ‘spatial hegemony’ whereby domination and rule are achieved. The Van Riebeeck monument thus becomes, not only for Gunn-Salie, who was born in Cape Town, but many other like-minded individuals, a “key foci of struggle” (Kryzanowska 2016, 469) between a different and opposing interpretation of a past whose elements are embodied in/through the monument itself. Zubeida Jaffer (2015, n.p.), a writer-in-residence based at the University of Free State, in an opportune opinion piece published at the height of the #RhodesMustFall

movement in 2015, offers a counter-narrative to the one provided by the apartheid history text books, which still prevails in certain circles today. Jaffer evokes the counter-memory of Autshumato (from the Goreinghaikona) when recalling the 1652 landing. It was he who encountered the European delegation and led the first of the two Khoi-Dutch wars, together with Gogosa and Doman, leaders of the Gorinhaiqua, aided by the Goranchouqua, “whom the Dutch called the ‘Tobacco Thieves.’” Jaffer (my emphasis) states,

“Van Riebeeck continues to be presented as one whom we should value. His statue occupies centre stage at the foot end of Adderley Street, the main street in our city. He spent eight years of his life on these shores and we hold him up as an example to our children who know nothing about Autshumato, the great KhoiSan leader.”

By presenting Van Riebeeck’s dismembered hands, Gunn-Salie aligns himself with this divergent decoding of the monument, articulating through his installation, in particular the degree of elevation and angle of interaction, how apartheid and settler colonialism continue to manipulate and condition social reality, even though we are led to believe that these colonial corpses are dead. Like these surreal, ghostly hands that eerily reach out to spectators from behind the wall, apartheid too remains undead, conducting and orchestrating reality invisibly, from ‘behind’ the institution’s impeccable white walls.

Undressed, unhealed and largely untouched, South Africa’s wounds remain discernible to the seers of monuments and effigies and the power they silently but effectively wield. This too is the case in Spain, where communities still aspire redress and acknowledgement. Although distinct and distant in many ways, I believe the shared pain and historic trauma inflicted on the peoples of Spain and South Africa – embodied and consistently evoked by ubiquitous monuments – justifies some parallel.

Until March 17, 2005, a seven-metre-tall bronze equestrian statue of General Franco (horses again!) was to be found undisturbed on Juan

de la Cruz Square in Madrid, Spain. This image, like many others commissioned before it formed part of an extensive propaganda machine, “designed and implemented in an effort to legitimize (Franco’s) rule” (Hadzelek, 2012:154). Along with it, newsreels, public displays such as posters, busts, and statues were erected all over Spain from the early days. According to Hadzelek, citing Jesus de Andrés as her source, the first was installed in Salamaca in October 1937. Iconography was a sign of Franco’s obsession with his own image and reflects the cult of the leader essential to fascist ideology. “What sets Spain aside”, she writes, “is the persistence of the iconography in the public sphere for decades after the dictator’s death, as well as its society’s inability or lack of willingness to, until recently, seriously address the human rights human abuses of the Franco era” (Hadzalek 2012, 155).

Following the Spanish Law of Historical Memory passed in 2007, which called for the removal of all Francoist symbols from public buildings and spaces, on the above date, an understated and unpublicised removal of the *caudillo*, mounted on his horse, took place. Hadzelek (2012, 160) relates the event of the toppling as having taken place:

(...) in the early hours of the morning, starting at 2 am, supposedly to avoid disturbing the traffic. To pre-empt confrontation, there was heavy police presence and the spectators were told to disperse. Except for a few shouts and fascist salutes, it was uneventful. Until the next day, that is when people started gathering around the empty pedestal and adorned it with flowers and a Spanish flag, some praying on their knees. A demonstration of protest of the removal, organized by the Spanish fascist party Falange, was attended by approximately 700 people who assembled in front of a large portrait of Franco that had been placed in front of the empty pedestal. One of the iconic images of Franco as crusader was beamed onto the scaffolding that the authorities had placed there, projecting a virtual presence of Franco where the physical monument of him had stood before. This demonstration was reported in major international media outlets,

complete with the image of the fascist salute, and was followed by a heated debate in the Spanish media.

I have intentionally chosen the example of Spain to evoke and establish an analogy with our fragile present in South Africa. Perhaps South Africa, like Spain, will take 32 years or more to pass its own 'Law of Historical Memory', calling for the removal of all settler monuments from public buildings and spaces. Until then, civil society will continue to dispute the overwhelming presence of the patriarchal white pioneer and statesman, and the disavowal this signifies of people's pain and dispossession, glorified on campuses, hilltops, in public gardens and squares. Only when such a law is set in place and enforced will the doors of history be opened. Until then, South Africa, like Spain, will have traded justice, rehabilitation and compensation of victims for the 'spirit of reconciliation' and a 'peaceful' transition. By setting aside the immediate past and moving forward, the Spanish nation has slowly come to see this political and social compromise as a 'pact of forgetting,' associating amnesty laws of the 1970s with amnesia (*amnesia*), silence (*silencio*), forgetting (*olvido*) and disremembering (*desmemoria*) (*ibid.*, 163). The Spanish example, together with the artists analysed, urges South Africans to take a different path, a revolutionary path, the path of remembrance and justice. Until then, history will be lost and occluded, and monuments made markers of untruth.

I end with Jules Michelet's edict, "the Revolution has for her monument: empty space." As I write this, a number of Confederate statues in the US are being removed from their plinths. There is clamour, there is contestation, there is tension, but revolution and the uprising of the dispossessed, the repressed and the invisible can never silent.

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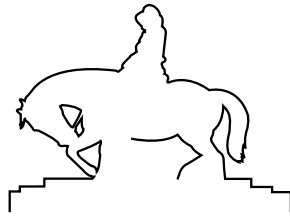
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Chapter 8

Struggle heroes and heroines statues
and monuments in Tshwane, South Africa

Mathias Alubafi Fubah & Catherine Ndinda



In her chapter on *Creating Heritage, Manipulating Tradition: Art and Material Culture in South Africa's Rainbow Nation*, Anitra Nettleton contends,

... in South Africa, with its British colonial and apartheid legacies of not only racial but also ethnic separation of people, language has, for at least the past 100 years, been used to encourage particularist, separate identities, separate imagined communities which not even the protracted liberation struggle managed to eliminate (2008, 108).

As a result, she goes on, “the tactic of the post-apartheid government has been to celebrate various interacting cultures, to embrace the ‘rainbow’ nation concept” (Nettleton 2008, 108). However, recent calls for the removal or demolition of colonial and apartheid statues and monuments, seen as reflecting one of the many cultures on the South African landscape, have challenged and pushed the official narrative about the rainbow nation’s notion of memorialization, heritage preservation, and indeed the state’s reconciliation and social cohesion agenda. In response to the debates around the activities of the recent #RhodesMustFall Movement, Achille Mbembe (2015) observed that “the debate should have never been about whether or not colonial and apartheid monuments should be brought down”. All along, he continues, “the debate should have been about why it took so long to do so”.

My research on the identification and construction of statues and monuments in honour of anti-apartheid struggle heroes and heroines by the African National Congress (ANC), especially those at the

Groenkloof nature reserve in Tshwane, tells another story which seems to be a deliberate attempt to counter colonial statues or pre-1994 imagery.¹ The emerging struggle icons' statues, as well as the era in which they are constructed have given them the appearance of new imageries for the new dispensation, but only to a certain extent. While the statues represent anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines, the imagery is still largely colonial in nature (Gamedze 2015). Here, struggle icons statues are constituted by a group of bronze statues representing anti-colonial and anti-apartheid activists such as Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, as well as Zulu chiefs, and missionaries. The project was conceived and implemented by Dali Tambo, son of struggle icon Oliver Tambo, with the stated aim of reflecting on South Africa's struggle for liberation dating back to the 1600s. The over 70 struggle heroes and heroines statues are intended to tell the story of South Africa's three centuries of colonial domination (1650-1950) and four decades of apartheid rule (1950-1990) through remembering and honouring the many activists who paid a price for the country's freedom.

The example of the newly constructed statues, among others, sends a strong message to heritage practitioners about the present cultural landscape. Indeed, the inventive and innovative reservation of a park for the statues commemorating struggle icons is a good example of shifting nature of cultural heritage resources. It demonstrates that in Africa and South Africa in particular, the imagery of the society is not static (Prashad 2001; Mbembe 2015; Sajjani 2015). It is always changing, especially in response to changes on the socio-cultural and political landscape.

The main argument in this chapter is that the Groenkloof struggle icons' statues provides us with the opportunity to understand the socio-cultural transfigurations that South Africa and Tshwane have been going through since 1994. Put differently, the anti-colonial and

1 Imagery here can be understood as a visually descriptive or figurative language, especially in literary work. It also refers to visual images collectively (cf. Page 1997)

anti-apartheid heroes and heroines statues allow us to comprehend the shifting nature of the imagery of success and power in South Africa. This practice can also be witnessed in willingness of the ruling ANC to construct statues and monuments in different parts of the country in honour of struggle heroes and heroines. More recent examples of some of these statues are those of former President Jacob Zuma at the Groot Marico capture site, in the North West Province, and that of Oliver Tambo at the O.R. Tambo international airport in Johannesburg. As some of my informants note this practice of constructing post-apartheid statues has become one of the most notable means of addressing past cultural imbalances.

This chapter examines the rationale behind the newly constructed anti-colonial and anti-apartheid statues at the Groenkloof nature reserve. In doing this, the chapter aims to show that while the statues are largely a replication of existing colonial imagery, they have become one of the embodiments of the ANC's response to the cultural imbalance on the South African and Tshwane landscape. To unpack this, I divide the chapter into four sections. First, I present a historical background to Pretoria and colonial imagery; second, I highlight the decline of the colonial imagery in Pretoria; third, I examine the emergence of the post-1994 imagery and lastly, I highlight the rationale behind the newly constructed statues.

Pretoria (Tshwane) and colonial statues

For a better understanding of the motivations behind the emergence of struggle heroes and heroine statues at the Groenkloof Nature Reserve, I will begin with a brief history of Pretoria and colonial statues in the city in order to establish a context for my argument.² Pretoria,

2 The Groenkloof Nature Reserve is located adjacent to Fountains Valley at the southern entrance into Tshwane (Pretoria). It was one of the first game sanctuaries in Africa. The reserve of about 600 hectares is managed by the Department of Nature Conservation of the Republic of South Africa. The reserve is home to the newly constructed struggle heroes' and heroines' statues, also known as the National Heritage Monuments (www.nhmsa.gov.za accessed July 2016). The site visit was organised by the author in an attempt to get the public's perceptions about the Groenkloof Nature Reserve's struggle icons

the administrative capital of South Africa was founded in 1855 by Marthinus Pretorius, the then leader of the Voortrekkers who named it after his father Andries Pretorius, and chose a spot on the banks of the Apies River to be the capital of the South African Republic (Raper 1987; Bodel 1989). Prior to this, oral history holds that the area used to be called Tshwane, probably named after a local chief, Tshwane. The meaning of the name Tshwane is not very clear, but it is associated with the term Tswana, which means “we are same” (www.sahistory.org.za.). Other sources (Allen & Hannes 2007) associate the name Tshwane with the colour “black” in Sotho, as in black cow or “Kgomo e Tshwane” while still, others say it means “little Monkey”.

Following the arrival of the Voortrekkers, and successive Europeans, Pretoria slowly but steadily developed to become one of the most important colonial administrative centres in Southern Africa and South Africa, and has maintained its status until present day. The history of colonial statues in Pretoria dates back to the arrival of the Voortrekkers and the establishment of Boer Republics. However, I will start from 1938 with the Voortrekker Monument because of the important place it occupies in South African history. In her study on *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa*, Coombes explains that:

On 16th December 1938, the foundation stone of this central monument to apartheid was laid on a hill outside Pretoria. It was also the occasion of an elaborate reconstruction of the foundational event of Afrikaner nationalism – the Great Trek of 1838. That year, a party of Boer men

statues. It included five postgraduate students currently on internship at the Human Sciences Research Council, two heritage managers from the City of Tshwane as well as three researchers and two members of the public. The age range for the participants was 20-55 years old. Of the 12 participants in the group, seven were women and five were men. In terms of racial composition, 11 of the participants were black South Africans while the remaining one was a white South African. In terms of their professional background, seven were fully employed while the others were either students or private consultants. Most of the visitors were residents of black townships on the outskirts of Pretoria such as Mamelodi and Atteridgeville. The site visit was in addition to several other visits to the site by the author, in which he spent time observing how visitors behave at the site, talking to some of them and also documenting their experiences. However, in 2019, the statues were removed and taken to Maropeng at the Cradle of Humankind in Magaliesberg as there is more room to display what will eventually be about 400 life-sized bronze statues.

and women, and children, (known as the Voortrekkers or Pioneers), dissatisfied with British rule in the Cape and its inconvenience corollary of slave emancipation, set off in a convoy of ox-wagons on a gruelling journey from Cape Town to form independent republics in what were to become the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. One hundred years later, twelve replica ox wagons, complete with costumed Voortrekker families, set out from various parts of the country to restage that fateful journey and finally arrived (nearly four months later) at two of the most historically significant destinations – the city of Pretoria and the site of the battle of Blood River (the Ncome River) (2003, 26).

The laying of the foundation stone of the Voortrekker Monument was preceded by a countrywide symbolic Ox-Wagon Trek, organised by the Afrikaans Language and Cultural Organisation (ATKV) (Peters 2012). The Trek was punctuated by festivals in almost every centre through which the trekkers from Cape Town passed. The story narrated in the Voortrekker Monument starts with the artists who were involved in the sculpture work. It indicates that Hennie Potgieter designed and sculpted the buffalo head above the main entrance as a symbol of protection against enemies. Moreover, a Voortrekker leader is depicted on each side of the four corners of the monument to symbolize guard of honour. In front of the monument, on either side of Anton van Wouw's mother and children statue are four wildebeest mounted on bas relief against the wall to symbolise the danger posed by Africans to the mother and her children (Coombes 2003, 38). Also represented on the monument, is a marble frieze that tells the story of the Great Trek of 1835-1852 in 27 panels. Basically, what is portrayed on the panels is the history and different aspects of the way of life of the trekkers. Coombes argues that:

Historically, then, the Voortrekker Monument is of critical significance for the foundational myths of Afrikaner nationalism – in particular the idea of the Trek as the moment of emergence of the Afrikaner as the founding ethnic group of a new nation, the white tribe, and the divine right of the Trekkers to the land. These myths are embodied through the structure of the monument itself – first through the seductive resolution

provided by the narrative of encounter and conquest represented by the interior frieze, and second through the fact that the edifice houses what amounts to a cenotaph on its lower level, replete with eternal flame to the memory of Trekkers killed en route. (Coombes 2003, 28)

The above extract illustrates the fact that one of the rationales behind the Voortrekker Monuments is the recognition and preservation of the memories of the Voortrekkers. Preservation of the memories of heroes and heroines through statues and monuments was, and still is not unique to South Africa and Pretoria. Colonial statues and monuments were common across Africa during the colonial and apartheid era. As Larsen has noted in the case of Kenya, they were used as cultural tools in the project of colonialism until the achievement of independence in the 1960s (Larsen 2013). In the same vein, this use of symbols continues with the ANC government's position to undermine the power of the dominant class. The Groenkloof nature reserve statues in honour of struggle or anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines must be seen in this context.



Figure 8.1. Voortrekker Monument, Pretoria. Photograph: Mathias A. Fubah, August 2016

I therefore argue that the interest in struggle heroes and heroines statues and monuments by the ANC government is not about reducing the level of domination of the cultural landscape by colonial and apartheid symbols, but rather working to subvert pre-1994 imagery by eliminating any relations of domination that exist between the two symbols – the colonial and apartheid on the one hand, and the post-apartheid on the other hand.¹

At a site visit to the Groenkloof nature reserve struggle heroes and heroines statues in June 2017, some of the discussions between students, heritage practitioners and researchers centred on the question of the iconography of struggle heroes and heroines statues at the park.² Many of the participants agreed that it was important for the statues to be

constructed because they represent the symbols of the new South Africa. Many argued that the symbols of the colonial and apartheid era were no longer needed since the system had collapsed in 1994.

Right from the beginning of the deliberations, there was disagreement between students and heritage practitioners on what constitutes the imagery of the new dispensation. To most of the participants, statues and monuments such as the Voortrekker Monument that have been there since 1949 are largely seen in present day as an extension of the pre-1994 cultural iconography.

Since the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument, various cultural organisations have hosted festivals on the site. In 1959, for example, the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge (FAK) presented “Die Wonder van Afrikaans”, a language festival which was attended by more than 60,000 people (Peters 2012). One of the results of this festival was the creation of the popular film *Doodkry is min*, which portrays the history of the language. Additionally, at the 150th anniversary of the Great Trek in 1988, the FAK and the Afrikanervolkswa organised a small symbolic ox wagon trek during which several small monuments were constructed across the country and various memorabilia were manufactured.



Figure 8.2. Tambo, Dali. Cross-section of struggle heroes and heroines statues installed in 2015 at the Greonkloof nature reserve. Pretoria. Photograph: Mathias A. Fubah, January 2016

This colonial and apartheid notion of statues and monuments created the impression that tangible heritage of European origin was the only acceptable symbol. The acceptable notion of heritage was one that ignored and avoided the history of black South Africans, except to display it as part of archaeological and natural history exhibitions (Kayster 2010). Moreover, the South African Cultural History Museum in Pretoria, for example, exhibited Greek, and Egyptian artefacts, European costumes and silver as well as Japanese ceramics and costumes. The inclusion of Japan pointed to an acceptance by the apartheid regime and other whites that Japan had a higher level of civilisation than the black Africans who were excluded. By doing this, the colonial and apartheid social actors conveyed the message that, culture, art, history and the construction of statues and monuments in honour of heroes and heroines came from Europe (Kayster 2010, 3). In fact, colonial statues and monuments, such as the Voortrekker Monument for example, were presented as more superior to those of the African population (if any), and therefore deserving of a place on the South African cultural landscape (Crooke 2005, 131).

From the 1970s, the separation was marked by “native” section being moved to a cultural village venue near the Pretoria Zoo, and then relocated to the present African Window section.³ By doing this, the colonial and apartheid social actors vividly demonstrated the distinction between what was “perceived as primitive and civilized of culture and nature” (Gore 2005, 75). Similarly, statues and monuments in honour of colonial and apartheid heroes and heroines were presented as progressive in contrast to the differentiated representations of black warriors and clothed Afrikaners. primitive and Seen from the context of the political atmosphere at the time, this practice was interpreted as the expression of colonialism and apartheid where the belief was that high attainment and ability was of European or Western origin, whereas black history was absent and not deserving of any attention on the cultural landscape.

3 Nettleton Anitra, observation, September 2017.



Figure 8.3. Voortrekkers leaving the Cape Colony, Voortrekker Monument, Pretoria, 1835. Photograph: Mathias A. Fubah

The decline of colonial statues and monuments in Pretoria/Tshwane

Following Fanon and Gramsci, we can argue that hegemonic culture such as the colonial and apartheid statues and monuments that were promoted and preserved in South Africa are constituted first and foremost following the values that serve and justify the privileged classes, and they are thus privileged because of their relation to the political system in place (Fanon 1963; Gramsci 1971). When the political system changes, as was the case in South Africa in 1994, fundamental changes occurred in the society, as in the case of the newly constructed cultural heritage resources such as Freedom Park, and the struggle icons statues at the Groenkloof nature reserve in Tshwane. As new cultural heritage resources in honour of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid icons become dominant, new classes are formed, class relations shift, and the new class(es) that rise to power then construct new imageries, aesthetics, values, and ultimately ideology, that justify their hegemony (Prashad 2001; Sajani 2015).

Writing about *Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive*, Achille Mbembe (2015) notes,

... the decolonisation of buildings and public spaces includes a change of those colonial names, iconography, i.e., the economy of symbols whose function, all along, has been to induce and normalize particular states of humiliation based on white supremacist presuppositions.

Such names, images, and symbols, Mbembe (2015) goes on, “have nothing to do on the walls of a public university campus more than 20 years after apartheid”. In his study on *HipHop Origin as Organic Decolonization*, Sajjani (2015) notes that “HipHop culture, at its origins, is an organic decolonization of local urban space by internally colonized people in post-industrial 1970s New York”. Similarly, the newly constructed struggle heroes and heroine statues can be interpreted as an organic decolonisation of the local Tshwane space by the ANC government, except that they have been erected by the privileged class and in memory of members of a largely elite section of the political class. However, while the New York case talks of HipHop culture as a new invention that was meant to subvert the dominant culture at the time, Dali Tambo’s struggle heroes and heroines statues at Groenkloof remain a continuation of the pre-1994 colonial symbols, both in styles and material forms, for example. According to Gamedze (2015), the newly constructed statues are not an act of liberation, but one of assimilation. The use of bronze as was the case with the colonial and apartheid imagery, she continues, does not make much meaning to previously marginalised South Africans. As she maintains:

Bronze symbolises a regime, a triumph over Bronze, of recent, has had a mobilizing effect, it spurs action within people who look at bronze figures and do not see themselves reflected back. Bronze can collect masses, can put institutions at a standstill, bronze can insult a black South Africa which is in a process of trying to re-imagine itself. Bronze has acted as the anti-imagination of a decolonized South

*Africa, and its continued use in the colonial style cannot ever be read as a project that attempts to create a space for all South Africans to memorialize anything whatsoever.*⁴

The above extract elucidates the fact that in trying to remember and preserve the memories of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines, Dali Tambo has directly put them once again under the canopy of the same western artists who denied them the right to cultural representation.³ While most of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines may have lived and died without ever interacting freely with a bronze statue, they are now commemorated using this material that many consider to represent a regime and a triumph over land to the neglect of what they might have used and valued as their own imagery. In a process of decolonisation, Gamedze (2015) notes:

Our imagination of public symbolism surely needs to originate here, using our own image-makers and artists' skill sets and disciplines, in a process that takes as departure point a democratic conceptualisation of who and what needs to be memorialized, and how we would like to see that done.

In essence, while the Groenkloof nature reserve struggle heroes and heroines site might be seen as a step towards addressing cultural imbalance on the South Africa landscape, it remains old-fashioned and repulsive in terms of the imagery since black South Africans to the site are reminded through the bronze statues of a past that they are struggling to forget. According to Dali Tambo, the project initiator, it is a tourist site. Heritage tourism, he continues, “is a massively growing aspect of international tourism, with the educated middle classes seeking otherness ...” (cited in Gamedze 2015). However, the “otherness” that Dali Tambo mentions here only takes the tourist to the pre-1994 gaze.

⁴ While bronze is considered to represent a regime, a triumph over land and is also Western, it should also be noted that bronze is very much African (Cf. Layiwola and Olorunyomi, 2010).

The resources associated with such landscapes enabled white South Africans to enjoy exclusive rights and privileges in such spaces and in the society. A white South African who accompanied the author and a group of students and heritage practitioners to the Groenkloof Nature Reserve recalled with regret the good old days when statues and monuments meant a lot and could attract crowds of people from the population group that they represented. As she explained to us during the discussions at the site, she remarked:

- I feel sorry that even with the huge sum of money that has been invested here, the population is not aware, not many people come to view the statues, yet they are constructed in the name of heroes and heroines of majority of the population. In the past, the colonial and apartheid statues and monuments that some people are calling for their removal meant a lot and I am certain they still do in present day South Africa, especially to those they represent.⁵

What this colleague failed to realize was that, while huge sums of money have been invested in the Groenkloof struggle heroes and heroines statues, the project is largely a process of replicating the pre-1994 iconography because the forms and aesthetics of the statues have not changed much. As one of the students who participated in the trip observed “most of us are happy seeing this, but I am concerned because the statues give only a partial picture of the people they represent.” Apart from their heads that show that this is comrade Mandela, or Mbeki, or Tambo, the rest of the image, is not in any way different from the pre-1994 statues and monuments.⁶

The emerging struggle icons statues and monuments in Pretoria/Tshwane

If in the 1960s, 70s and 80s the apartheid regime portrayed statues and monuments in honour of their heroes and heroines as some of the

5 It is important to note here that artists for the Groenkloof Nature Reserve statues were mostly white South Africans.

6 Margaretta, personal communication. June 2017.

resources that could give status and success to the government, then the 1990s and 2000s were the in which these symbols started to be undermined. Three reasons account for this. The first is that the ideology that presented the apartheid cultural landscape or imagery as ideal was not true.⁴ Second, these colonial and apartheid symbols were considered outdated because they have persisted “well beyond the advent of democracy” (Kros 2015, 151). In fact, similar changes were experienced by most African postcolonial societies in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (Coombes 2011; Larsen 2013; Mbembe 2015; Swartz 2017). For example, Larsen (2013) noted that the lifting of colonial rule in Nairobi (Kenya) was followed by a symbolic restitution of the cultural landscape for the “expression of resistance and the inscription of new voices” (2013).

In Zimbabwe, independence was followed by the removal of the statues of colonial authorities such as Cecil John Rhodes, Alfred Beit and many others, since they were seen as offensive to Africans (Samwanda 2013). Similar observations have been made about colonial statues and monuments in West Africa, most notably, in Mali (Arnoldi 2007). Given this trend, South Africa with a similar colonial history cannot be an exception, even though it achieved its independence 30 years later.

Third, when South Africa achieved its democracy in 1994, social transformation was made one of the priorities of the government. The constitution for example, declared equal rights for all citizens, and one can add equal cultural representation on the landscape. Because the cultural landscape and associated cultural spaces are platforms where national ideals such as those enshrined in the new constitution are given material form, the landscape became a space where the ANC government had to persuade the population to support its policies (Kayster 2010). Accordingly, on Heritage Day 1997, former President Nelson Mandela used the opportunity to criticise the cultural landscape as one which reflected colonial and apartheid points of view (Kayster 2010, 3). In line with the country’s new constitution, Mandela demanded a change of the old iconography. Indeed, he emphasised that the cultural representation had to change in order to reflect the democratic ideals

and experiences of the majority of the population, rather than focusing on a privileged few as had been the case (Kayster 2010, 3).

Early in 1992, the South African History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg held a conference under the theme, “Myths, Monuments, Museums” with the aim of charting the future of historical statues and monuments in the country and Tshwane (Coombes 2003). Some of the debates at the conference centred on whether or not public sculpture set up over the long apartheid years to commemorate key moments and figures in the Afrikaaner nationalist canon should be removed (Coombes 2003, 3). Following the deliberations, it was decided that some statues, such as those of Hendrick Verwoerd, “the man considered by many to be the major architect of apartheid be destroyed, while many of the symbolically laden such as the Voortrekker Monument and the Taalmonument” (Afrikaans Language Monument) outside Paarl in the Western Cape should survive (Coombes 2003, 20).

Despite the above debates, many perceived Nelson Mandela’s Heritage Day pronouncement as a wake-up call and museums and heritage institutions and practitioners noted that what the cultural landscape represented and the way in which it was represented was “opposed to the new human rights culture of the new South Africa” (Dubin 2006). According to Anziske Kayster, President Mandela’s speech showed vividly that the post-apartheid government proposed and desired transformation of the South African cultural landscape. Transformation in this case encompasses “inclusion, assimilation, participation, collaboration and sometimes eradication” (Kayster 2010, 4). It is a process of “constructing new ways of thinking, doing and understanding” (Kayster 2010, 4).

However, the call for transformation of the cultural landscape has less to do with the fascination with the new imagery than with fundamental changes that have been happening in South Africa since the 1990s. Not only have these changes supposedly swept away the colonial and apartheid ideologies that in the past served as cultural

tools for self-confidence and control of the population by the white minority government; it has also greatly hampered the influence these resources had, as many are now openly challenged, destroyed or even removed as in the case of the Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town in 2015. This is how unimportant some colonial and apartheid statues and monuments have become, not only for the previously marginalised who are calling for their complete removal but also for some of the population groups represented by these statues who feel South Africa needs a new cultural identity.

Struggle icons statues and monuments in Pretoria/Tshwane: A new imagery

In present day South Africa and Tshwane, most of the previously marginalised population groups are fascinated, (though with reservations) by the ANC's efforts in remembering and commemorating the lives of struggle heroes and heroines through statues and monuments. Most of the twelve participants that accompanied the author to the Groenkloof nature reserve statues in June feel they relate to the statues in one way or another. Indeed, most of them, and visitors to the site, feel those represented by the statues are role models for most South Africans aspiring to leave a legacy. For instance, in one of the visits to the site, I was astonished by the extent to which the statues have impacted on the lives of black South African visitors. On most occasions, I met visitors, most of them black South Africans who spent many hours not only moving from one statue to the other, but also reading the accompanying literature or explanatory information. In fact, most of those that I spoke to referred me to a Facebook and Instagram page, which I wasted no time subscribing as one of their followers (Figure 8.4).



Figure 8.4. Photograph of a visitor to the Groenkloof National Heritage Monuments Park taken next to one of the statue with an Instagram display

The esteem that most of these participants and visitors showed in the struggle heroes and heroines statues and monuments, was manifested in the type of stories and issues they discussed. For instance, most of them told me that if it were in the 1970s and 1980s, none of them would have come any closer to a statue or monument because the spaces that historical statues and monuments occupy were “no go areas”. Instead, in present day, one of them observed, we are not only viewing statues and chatting in a park without any restrictions, but anyone can kiss and comment about the statues. One of the participants, Tembileli maintains:

Under the pre-1994 system of government, some of us would have only come here as security officers or cleaners. Those are the type of jobs that were designed for black South Africans: to guard and clean the surroundings of Paul Kruger’s statue at Church Square while our bosses drink coffee, smoke cigarette and stroll around. But as you can see, most of these heroes and heroines represented by the statues sacrificed

*their lives so that we can also drink cold drink, smoke cigarette freely and stroll around their own statues not as security guards or cleaners but as professionals in our different fields.*⁷

As a matter of fact, most of the stories narrated by the participants and visitors at the site centred on their achievements resulting from the sacrifices of these icons. This fascination with the new imagery of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines raises a number of questions, the answers to which might help us understand the rationale behind the new cultural representations on the South African and Tshwane landscape. Notable among these questions is, what makes the struggle heroes and heroines statues and monuments at the Groenkloof site attractive to South Africans? And what kind of message does the interest in these struggle heroes and heroines statues and monuments convey? Four suggestions, which are not definitive, attempt to answer these questions.

First, Chief Tshwane, whose statue is constructed at the site, is a famous leader of those who, according to oral history, inhabited the area now known as Tshwane before the Boer trekkers arrived in the mid-1800s (Figure 8.5). According to the explanatory information on the statue, Chief Tshwane was the son of Chief Mushi, a Ndebele king who led his people from Maponong to what later became known as the Transvaal, settling first in the east of the city at the origin of the Moretele River.⁵ It is believed Chief Mushi moved to the region in the early 1800s and first settled at Mokgapane (Mooiplaas, east of Pretoria) before moving to what is now Pretoria and gave an area near the present-day Apies River to his son, Tshwane. Some people therefore believed that the African name for the Apies River is Tshwane River, in honour of Chief Mushi's son. The name Tshwane disappeared from the records following the founding of Pretoria in 1855. Hence, the South African government's move to change the name to Tshwane in 2005 and later to construct statues and monuments in honour of Chief Tshwane remains a fascination for those who believe and appreciate historical facts.

7 Molera Stanle, personal communication, June, 2017.



Figure 8.5. Chief Tshwane. National Heritage Monument Park, Pretoria.
Photograph: Mathias A. Fubah, June 2017

Second, most South Africans are likely to be attracted to the Groenkloof Nature Reserve site because the mere presence of struggle heroes and heroines statues there, is a recognition and preservation

of their memories. But, it also points to the fact that, like the Afrikaners who constructed statues and monuments such as the Voortrekker Monument in honour of their heroes and events in the past, the ANC and most South Africans see the statues and monuments of struggle heroes and heroines as a means of remembering their own past. This is a means of ensuring continuity with both ancestors as well as descendants of these icons and the new dispensation. It builds on and reminds viewers of the significance of the sacrifices and achievements of these struggle icons for present and future generations. As a matter of fact, it is through the construction of statues and monuments especially those of struggle heroes and heroines that the ANC can convince themselves that they are in control, since many South Africans believe one way of achieving symbolic restitution is through such practices (Swartz 2017). As a result of this belief, the notion of statues and monuments in honour of struggle heroes and heroines has become a common practice across South Africa since most people believe they “belong to the people.”⁸ At least, this was the view expressed by one of the visitors that I talked to at the site, who maintained that: “through these statues and monuments, the souls of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines have been resurrected.”

Third, struggle heroes and heroines statues and monuments are also popular in the eyes of the ANC leadership and South Africans because they contribute in giving a voice to the formerly marginalized groups (Sherriff 2014). For example, Gavin Jantjes has written on the one-sidedness of statues and monuments across South Africa during the colonial and apartheid era. In his introduction to the Visual Century project, he describes the evolution of South African art, including statues and monuments from 1907 onwards. He demonstrates how the harsh political circumstances of the 20th century, colonial, union, and apartheid rule often eroded facts and shaped cultural fictions (Jantjes 2011). As a result of these fictions, the majority of South Africans were rendered voiceless until 1994. It is no wonder that efforts towards reversing these fictions have become one of the main preoccupations of the government.

8 Tembileli, Personal communication, Pretoria, June 2017.

Fourth, the ANC leadership and most South Africans see statues and monuments in honour of struggle heroes and heroines as an instrument of defence. For instance, a number of studies on Africa and South Africa have reiterated the fact that the construction of statues and monuments across the country, today, as in the past is essentially a political phenomenon (Dubow 1997; Coombes 2003; Nettleton 2008). This holds true, especially for the struggle icons statues and monuments at the Groenkloof nature reserve, since statues and monuments have formed part of an aesthetic practice that have played a crucial role in defining and shaping South Africa's cultural landscape since the colonial era (Leibhammer & Bila 2011). Leibhammer and Bila have noted that all these were clearly spelt out in the "treaty of Vereening (1902), the proclamation of the Union of South Africa (1910) and the Native Land Act (1913) that saw black South Africans forfeit all their residual (Maylam 2001).

As a result of these restrictive policies by the apartheid government, the ANC regime and many black South Africans see the whole notion of identifying and constructing statues and monuments such as those at the Groenkloof nature reserve as an instrument in the counter-hegemonic project.

Across Tshwane and South Africa, the ANC's interests and obsession with struggle icons statues and monuments fits into the country's mode of symbols as objects of status and prestige for political elites. It also shows the ambition of the ANC to outshine pre-1994 statues and monuments in what Arjun Appadurai calls "the tournament of values" (1996). By tournament of values, we should be understood as referring to the complex ways in which the pre-1994 regimes perceived statues and monuments, and portrayed them as instruments of power and authority, as well as a means of controlling the population. In the same vein, the ANC government sees struggle icons statues and monuments as an opportunity for them to make their voice heard in the wider South African community. As a mark of this tendency, the ANC has taken upon themselves the task of constructing struggle icons statues and monuments not only in Tshwane and South Africa, but also beyond

the country. One notable example of this was in Rhamala, Palestine where the statue of struggle icon and former President Nelson Mandela was recently unveiled by the premier of Gauteng Province. Additionally, there was also the unveiling of the Deville Wood Memorial in Paris in honour of the members of the South Africa Native Labour Corps who died during the First World War in Paris but were never honoured in the same manner as their white colleagues.

Prior to 1994, with the exception of Nelson Mandela, whose statue was installed in London in the 1980s and one recently unveiled, ANC heroes and heroines, whether within or out of the country did not have such privileges. Undoubtedly, by identifying and constructing statues and monuments in honour of struggle icons, the ANC was further extending the pre-1994 practice of obsession with objects of status and prestige. This, however, is not to suggest that statues of status and prestige such as the Benin bronzes, for example) were not part of pre-colonial Africa.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented an overview of the historical and contemporary symbols of status and monuments in South Africa and Tshwane. The chapter has shown that while the colonial and apartheid era statues and monuments were constructed exclusively in honour of heroes and heroines of the time, post-apartheid statues and monuments are also largely in honour of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid heroes and heroines. Using the example of the Vootrekker Monument and the newly constructed Groenkloof nature reserve struggle heroes and heroines statues, the chapter highlights the shifting nature of the imagery of success and power in South Africa and Tshwane. The chapter further shows that, while the Groenkloof nature reserve anti-colonial and anti-apartheid statues are intended to address the issue of cultural imbalance on the South African landscape, the styles and material forms are western, making the statues to look like a replication of the pre-1994 symbols. The fascination with the newly constructed statues and monuments is supported by four major reasons. First, the

fact that the founding chief of Tshwane, chief Tshwane is represented at the new site, thereby disrupting the apartheid founding myth of Pretoria. Second, the fact that the memories of those who fought for South Africa's freedom is recognised and preserved. Third, the fact that struggle heroes and heroines statues and monuments have contributed in giving a voice to the ANC leadership and most South Africans, something that they could only dream of in the past. Fourth, the fact that struggle heroes and heroines statues and monuments present themselves as instruments of defence against the continuous domination of the cultural landscape by pre-1994 symbols.

By constructing statues and monuments in honour of struggle heroes and heroines across South Africa and Tshwane, the ANC leadership is slowly, but steadily disrupting the old symbols, thereby ushering in new classes, new relations, new cultural representations and eventually a new ideology that will help support its leadership and policies. Indeed, through the actions of the ANC and many South Africans, we can ascertain that hegemony is never a permanent state of affairs and it is never uncontested (Gramsci 1971). For example, Stuart Hall, one of the founding figures of cultural studies, has pointed out that “people are simultaneous makers and consumers of culture, participating in that culture according to their place in economic and political structures” (Hall, 1980). And that people, through “processes of encoding and decoding, shape culture and that organisations such as the church, the state,” and we may also say the ANC (in the case of this paper), encode certain ideas in the mass media, which audiences then decode (Hall 1980). To this end, the Groenkloof struggle heroes and heroines statues can be interpreted as both a continuation of the pre-1994 imagery as well as a departure from it in terms of the initiator of the project, the faces and personalities represented and the message that it seeks to promote and preserve.

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