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# Landscape of Memory. Commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary in post-apartheid South-Africa

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**Citation**
Marschall, S. (2010). *Landscape of Memory. Commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary in post-apartheid South-Africa*. Brill, Leiden [etc.]. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/18536

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)
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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

# Landscape of Memory

# ASC Series

*in collaboration with SAVUSA*
*(South Africa – VU University Amsterdam – Strategic Alliances)*

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Volume 15

# Landscape of Memory: Commemorative Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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Brill
2009

Cataloguing data

ISSN
ISBN

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# Acknowledgements

Listing all of the individuals who have assisted me with this project over the past seven years would be an impossible task. I'm grateful to all of those listed under 'personal communications' in the reference section of this book for having given me their time and provided me with information, valuable material and thoughtful insights. I want to acknowledge those numerous anonymous fellow academics from South African universities and international institutions who have engaged in the peer-review of the manuscript and my articles produced in conjunction with this project; their comments and criticisms have directly or indirectly influenced this book in many ways. Furthermore, I owe thanks to various colleagues at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (and the former University of Durban-Westville), who have made useful observations and given helpful advice in formal seminars and informal discussions over the years.

Among those who deserve special mention and my sincerest thanks are Marc H. Ross (Bryn Mawr College, PA) for his constructive input and guidance, and for steering my thinking about monuments in new directions; Anton Jansen (Tshwane Building Heritage Association) for sharing his knowledge, his enthusiasm and his vast collection of material with me; Cynthia Kros (University of Witwatersrand) for providing me with valuable constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript and the articles linked to this project; and Harry Wels and Saskia Stehouwer (SAVUSA, VU University Amsterdam) for their encouragement and support in connection with the actual publication.

I'm indebted to my home institution, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (and the previous University of Durban-Westville) for providing essential logistical support; the National Research Foundation (NRF) for funding this project over a five-year period; Heritage KwaZulu-Natal (Amafa), the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), and the Freedom Park Trust for making crucial archival material available to me, without which this project would not have been possible.

Some members of staff in various libraries and archives went beyond the call of duty to assist me with information and source material. Many thanks to all

of those nameless individuals throughout the country who have often gone out of their way to guide me to sites, alert me to monuments in their area, provide me with information or observations, offer me hospitality or assist me in various other ways. Last but not least I'm grateful to my parents and my friends for their keen interest and all of the support and motivation they have given me over the past years.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| Amafa | Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali (Heritage KwaZulu-Natal) |
| ACSA | Arts and Culture South Africa |
| AICA | African Institute of Contemporary Art |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| ANCYL | African National Congress Youth League |
| AWB | Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging |
| AZAPO | Azanian People's Organisation |
| CCMS | Culture, Communication and Media Studies |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CODESA | Convention for a Democratic South Africa |
| DA | Democratic Alliance |
| DACST | Department of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology |
| DAC | Department of Arts and Culture (previously part of the DACST) |
| DEAT | Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism |
| DG | Director General |
| GNU | Government of National Unity |
| FAK | Federasie van Akrikaanse Kultuurveiniginge |
| FPT | Freedom Park Trust |
| IFP | Inkatha Freedom Party |
| IJR | Institute for Justice and Reconciliation |
| IKS | Indigenous Knowledge Systems |
| JDA | Johannesburg Development Agency |
| FPT | Freedom Park Trust |
| KMC | KwaZulu Monuments Council |
| KZN | KwaZulu-Natal |
| MEC | Member of Executive Council |
| M&G | Mail and Guardian |
| MK | Umkhonto we Sizwe |
| MAHEO | Mamelodi Heritage Forum |
| MPLA | *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |

| | |
|---|---|
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| NHC | National Heritage Council |
| NHRA | National Heritage Resources Act |
| NMA | National Monuments Act |
| NMC | National Monuments Council |
| NMM | Nelson Mandela Metro |
| NNP | New National Party |
| PAC | Pan African Congress |
| PRA | Provincial Heritage Agency |
| R&R | Reparation and Rehabilitation |
| SACP | South African Communist Party |
| SACTU | South African Congress of Trade Unions |
| SADF | South African Defence Force |
| SADET | South African Democracy Education Trust |
| SAHA | South African Historical Association |
| SAHRA | South African Heritage Resources Agency |
| SAMA | Southern African Museums Association |
| SANDF | South African National Defence Force |
| SASO | South African Students' Organisation |
| SHT | Soweto Heritage Trust |
| SMME | Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises |
| SWAPO | South West Africa Peoples' Organisation |
| TRC | Truth and Reconciliation Commission |
| UDF | United Democratic Front |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UIA | Union of International Architects |
| V&A Waterfront | Victoria and Alfred Waterfront |
| VTM | Voortrekker Monument |
| VVM | Vietnam Veterans Memorial |
| ZAR | Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek |

# Introduction

Heritage has become a trendy catchword in South African society, conjuring up a plethora of emotional associations and notions of benefits on multiple levels for different stakeholders and 'communities'. For the previously marginalised black majority, heritage is presumed to signal empowerment: the valorisation and preservation of their cultural beliefs and values; the honouring of their heroes and contributions; the authentication of their neglected stories and memories; the official acknowledgement of their suffering and sacrifices. Members of the white minority, motivated by anxieties over disempowerment and alienation, tend to demonstrate a strong emotional attachment to contested facets of their embattled heritage, even if they no longer identify with the specific symbolic values each of these represent. For the state, heritage is arguably an opportunistic means to fulfill the social needs of the electorate, while simultaneously fostering the political goals of nation-building, reconciliation and unity, as well promoting the economic imperatives of development, employment creation and income generation, mostly through tourism.

Heritage is also a loaded discursive mark of our times, one of the 'keywords' that is now widely understood to define South African society, along with race, culture, gender, tradition, or truth and reconciliation (Shepherd and Robins 2008). Because heritage is a malleable, ambiguous concept, full of paradoxes, it lends itself to be utilized in multifarious ways, supporting sometimes contradictory political, economic, social and cultural agendas. Since 1994 heritage discourse has emerged as one of the principal sites for negotiating issues of culture, identity and citizenship, suggesting what is authentic, what constitutes the deep roots of cultural identity and the essence of a sense of nationality (Shepherd 2008: 124). Heritage is difficult to define not least because it is all-encompassing, containing tangible artefacts and structures of the past, as well as landscapes and intangible aspects of culture, such as traditions, customs and oral memory. Heritage relates both to the past ('history') and the present ('living heritage').

This study focuses on the former aspect, notably the official representation, commemoration and memorialisation of selected persons and 'memorable' episodes of the past. Commemoration manifests itself, among other ways, in the (re)naming of streets, cities, and public buildings; the construction of new museums, documentation and interpretation centres; the reenactment of battles and historical events; the identification and official marking of new heritage sites; and the installation of memorials, monuments and public statuary. The recent flurry of activity in the public heritage sector is propelled by a dual dynamic. A global trend towards commemoration, spurred on by a quest for identity through recourse to public memory, has

been manifesting itself internationally within the last three decades, especially in liberal democracies. In South Africa, this tendency has been reinforced by the fundamental change of the socio-political landscape after the first general democratic elections on 27 April 1994 formally ended apartheid. Under the watchful eye of the international community, the post-apartheid order, established as a result of the much celebrated 'soft revolution' and 'negotiated solution', attempted to engrain new value systems in South African society and forge a new national identity. To ensure a peaceful transition, successful economic development and international recognition, this youthful, still fragile dispensation had constantly to negotiate transformation and progressive change against the resistance of the now marginalized but still powerful conservative forces.

This book investigates how these challenges have manifested themselves in the symbolic realm, namely in commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary as society's most deliberately designed, official, lasting, and emblematic cultural products codifying memory. Their role is to induce purposeful remembrance in the interest of forging a particular historical consciousness and shaping collective memory upon which group identity can be based. It will be shown how new monuments attempt to redefine the nation's existing landscape of memory and condense societal forces around symbolically charged readings of the past, resulting in complex and sometimes contradictory identity discourses. Monuments are public 'institutions' through which selected narratives and associated groups can gain visibility, authority and legitimacy, but they are also sites of contestation where perhaps previously invisible differences can become evident. They are the *loci* of private contemplation and mourning, as well as of public rituals of commemoration and staged performances of paying tribute, hence (in theory) serving as sites of the trans-generational transmission of valued memories. In a tenuous, transforming society, monuments, like other identity symbols, warrant attention owing to their ability to invoke deeply-felt sentiments and moral imperatives, to inflame powerful emotions, and even to lead to violence.

Public pronouncements by government officials about the politics of public representation through monuments and the extensive media coverage of the monument issue are implicitly informed by the emancipatory postmodern and postcolonial discourses of the previously oppressed margin as it comes to the fore and expresses its identity. 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 marginalised; and lastly to acknowledge suffering and pay tribute to individuals or groups who lost their lives through acts of resistance.

Driving the current flurry of activity in the field of public memorialisation is a distinct sense of urgency about the need to counter a long legacy of absence and suppression. Social identities and political positions, expressed in specific memories and treated largely as given and uncontested, must be enshrined in the official heritage landscape for the sake of present and future generations. Public monuments, constituted as discursive formations that pose a direct response and challenge to hegemonic discourses and contested ideologies, are important mechanisms in the project of reshaping public memory and 'rewriting the past'. This book argues that post-apartheid monuments – their very existence, their setting, their content, their design, their intended meaning, their discursive strategies – are intricately bound to and determined by the literal presence, metaphorical power and specific physical properties of the commemorative markers inherited from the old order. New monuments are a way of signifying both rupture from the past (emphasising the novelty and difference of the new order) and continuity with the past (connecting with established systems which may, however, be interrogated and re-evaluated).

This study is focused on newly installed monuments as the least compromised manifestation of official commemorative intentions, but it must be pointed out that the field of public monuments also includes some memorial markers established by previous socio-political orders that have been subjected to a process of re-modelling and re-interpretation under the aegis of the post-apartheid government. The dynamics of power and the discursive manoeuvres are very different in such cases, not least because the modification must be negotiated with communities that remain attached to the monument and sometimes its original intention. As will be discussed later, a change of inscription officially renders a contested monument politically correct – the old text is erased with the disappearance of the hegemonic discourse that created it – but the originally intended meaning of such markers may still linger on. As Mills and Simpson (2003: xxv) cogently put it in the context of contested monuments in the United States, one can see monuments as palimpsests, as slates on which history can be layered: '[t]he old message is not erased, but new language is written over it or beside it'.

The relationship between old and new monuments, the dependency of new on old monuments, is not unique to South Africa. Indeed it has become increasingly common, especially in Western liberal democracies, to acknowledge, rather than deny, burdensome legacies and contentious episodes of the past, and this attitude has affected both the treatment of contested existing monuments and the design of new commemorative markers. But in many countries, monuments representing now reviled ideological positions have already been removed by previous generations (one might think of Nazi symbols in Germany), hence conveniently obliterating the need to 'deal' with them today. In other societies, for instance the United

States, some monuments, despite presumably having offended specific communities for ages, have officially become controversial only relatively recently as a result of demographic trends, shifting socio-political power relations, new discourses about cultural representation and the global trend towards the 'democratization of history' (Nora 2000: 2). Here we can observe – as in South Africa – to some extent the juxtaposition of old monuments with new monuments designed to critically engage with the legacy of the past and open up alternative perspectives.

What makes South Africa's current politics of memory and strategy of public memorialisation in bronze and stone unique in my view is the systematic, self-conscious, deliberate, and methodical manner in which new monuments engage with the legacy of the past. In that sense, the new commemorative markers constitute a tangible manifestation of larger socio-political dynamics and state-promoted strategies of reconciliation and nation-building as they were defined during the immediate post-apartheid period. The monuments featured in this book hence testify to all of those 'good intentions', lofty ideals, and genuine concerns for the representation of the previously neglected, but they also testify to the challenges and contradictions, the hidden political agendas, the power struggles, and the contestations 'from below' that characterise this seminal period in South Africa's history. At the present moment there are indications that the country's political landscape and socio-political climate may undergo some changes in the future, and heritage will no doubt be influenced by this dynamic in due course. Indeed, even some recent monument initiatives could be interpreted to suggest implicit shifts in policy and attitude, but such developments are beyond the scope of this book and will need to be investigated in future research.

## Interdisciplinary perspectives on monuments

The preoccupation with heritage, commemoration and public memory has firmly established itself in academia internationally in the past three decades, often in conjunction with an interest in issues of identity and place. Within South Africa, heritage has become a prominent subject of both academic and public debate only since the late 1980s or early 1990s, mostly as a result of the socio-political changes of the time. Publications in the new academic fields of heritage studies and memory studies include critical engagement with memory-linked identity discourses; the psychological and political aspects of officially endorsed commemorative activity; theoretically grounded distinctions between the terms heritage, historical consciousness, history and memory; and theoretical, sometimes philosophically sustained, differentiations between monuments and memorials. By drawing on an interdisciplinary range of theoretical frameworks this book explores the

multifaceted dimensions of monuments and provides alternative conceptual perspectives for their interpretation. The aim is not to develop a singular new approach to the understanding of monuments, but to promote a more nuanced engagement with these cultural artefacts in a context often dominated by simplistic dichotomous positions. Most importantly, the book aims to tease out the ambiguities and contradictions that characterise the newly emerging memory landscape and illustrate how the symbolic representation of cultural and political values reflects tensions within post-apartheid South African society today.

One of the most frequently cited and influential theoretical analyses of memory in recent years was developed by the French historian, Pierre Nora (1989; 1996; 1997; 1998), who investigated the historical roots of the current fascination with memory and forged the link between memory and place. Nora argues that in European societies before the 19th century, only the aristocracy, the church and the state saw a need for monuments, while for ordinary people memory was a pervasive part of life. They lived in a '*milieu de mémoire*' or 'environment of memory'. Through the process of industrialisation and the associated social changes these *milieux* began to erode, thus necessitating the establishment of '*lieux de mémoire*', memory sites, such as archives and monuments. In Nora's opinion, such memory sites are just 'exterior scaffolding or outward signs' (1989: 13) to cover for the fact that memory is no longer experienced from the inside.[1]

Although Nora's work has not remained without criticism or qualification, especially with respect to its applicability in the non-European context,[2] there are indeed compelling parallels between his analysis of memory in 19th and 20th century European societies and present-day South Africa. Migration, the fragmentation of traditional family units and the destruction of community cohesion as a result of political and socio-economic pressures, as well as more recent social changes induced by the HIV/Aids pandemic, have impacted negatively on the tradition of oral history. John Gillis' (1994: 14) observation that '[g]randparents are no longer doing the memory work they once performed', is particularly pertinent in the South African context, where it is frequently lamented how little youngsters know about significant

---

1 'There are lieux de mémoire, sites of memory, because there are no longer milieux de mémoire, real environments of memory. Consider, for example, the irrevocable break marked by the disappearance of peasant culture, that quintessential repository of collective memory whose recent vogue as an object of historical study coincided with the apogee of industrial growth' (Nora 1989: 7).

2 Lambek and Antze (1996: xv), for instance, doubt that there ever were 'untroubled, homogeneous milieux de mémoire' and point out that 'the European perspective may not fit either the understandings of the life course or the historical experiences of non-European people'. Various contributors to Ben-Amos and Weissberg's (1999) book also contest or qualify Nora's work.

persons and events even from the recent past. Monuments and statues are called upon to fill the gap.

Contrary to Nora's (1989: 22) claim that monuments as *lieux de mémoire* owe their meaning to their intrinsic existence and could easily be relocated without altering their signification, many scholars stress the importance of a site as a contextual factor impacting on the meaning of any commemorative marker (e.g. Johnson 1995). This finding is particularly relevant for the current study, because the physical repositioning of statues and smaller, movable monuments away from highly official, prestigious places (e.g. in front of a city hall) to less prominent locations and 'community spaces' has been recommended (although rarely implemented thus far) as a way of rendering the content of their 'message' less universal, authoritative or offensive. Relocating disputed monuments extends the principle of signalling both a break from and a continuity with the contested past, to the treatment of existing heritage.

From the perspective of a cultural geographer or visual anthropologist, monuments can be understood as articulated spaces, as signifying landmarks which inscribe the surrounding environment and its people with meaning. Especially in the colonial context, monuments were often linked with cartographic practices and notions of mapping, implicitly legitimating claims to ownership of the land or supporting ideologically stereotyped assertions about its native inhabitants. In the South African context, Bunn (1999; 2002) has applied a similar cultural-topographic paradigm to African grave sites and colonial/apartheid era monuments (e.g. settlers' monuments in the Eastern Cape). This approach constitutes an interesting departure point for post-apartheid monuments as strategic measures taken for the reclaiming of space and re-inscribing symbolic identity.

A significant amount of recent international scholarly research focuses on war memorials, notably those dedicated to the victims of the two world wars, and on memorials for the victims of the Holocaust (see for instance anthologies by Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2004); Forty and Küchler (1999); or Young (1994)). These studies are important for this book, because memorials dedicated to the victims of apartheid violence and to those who lost their lives in the liberation struggle can to some extent be compared with war memorials, both in terms of their diverse functions and their visual design. Ashplant, Dawson and Roper (2004:7-14) explain that the study of war memory and commemoration has traditionally been dominated by two main approaches. The first paradigm emphasises the political significance of war memorials as a key element in the symbolic repertoire available to the nation-state to promote processes of collective national identification. The second approach views memorials as psychologically motivated expressions of mourning, a human response to death and suffering. Partly due to disciplinary divisions, analyses tend to be focused on either paradigm –

privileging either politics or death and suffering, either the state or civil society – as if those were largely unrelated alternatives.

Bridging this dichotomy, a third body of scholarly work uses oral-history and life-story methods to investigate the meanings attached to war and its remembrance that individual subjects express in their own words and stories. This 'popular memory approach' entangles public and private memory, positioning personal memory and individual subjectivity in relation to national memory. This is highly significant for the present study in the South African context, where the personal testimonies of victims of apartheid violence presented at the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have become an important alternative source of knowledge about the past (TRC 1998). Officially recorded, widely disseminated through the media, and published in the seven volumes of the TRC report, these oral histories and personal memories have implicitly attained authorisation and they are now further endorsed through the process of their memorialisation.

But no attempt by the state at creating a smooth merger between (selective) private and public memory ever remains completely uncontested. The fluid, multifaceted and unpredictable nature of memory ensures that the more commemorative monuments draw on oral history, victim testimony and popular memory, the more likely the chance that other memories and alternative versions of the past will come to the fore to contest what the state has endorsed and turned into 'history'. As Nora aptly puts it 'memory remembers and history forgets' (2000: 3). Hence the relationship between old and new monuments is rendered more complex on account of its being overlaid by subliminal and sometimes overt tensions within the post-apartheid commemorative project itself. Contesting voices indicate the surfacing of new fault lines and hegemonies, thus reflecting the culturally diverse and ideologically fragmented nature of post-apartheid society, but also perhaps signalling the emergence of public debate and contention in civil society as beacons of a successful democratic order.

Another interesting and highly significant aspect of the popular memory approach must be mentioned here, namely its concern with the ways in which personal experience is often structured and understood in terms of larger cultural (e.g. national) narratives, which in turn are inspired by similar narratives that have gone before. Burke (1989) argues that societies remember in terms of templates or schemata, where new heroes are often re-castings of earlier figures and commemorative practices purposefully relate recent traumatic experiences to historical traumas of the past. The relevance of this position will become evident throughout this book, as post-apartheid commemorative projects are shown to be contingent on existing monuments whose ideological agendas and identity discourses they contest and challenge but also mimic and rework.

An obvious although not prominent approach to the academic study of monuments emanates from the discipline of art history, which considers the artefacts as works of public commemorative art. Fusing aesthetic and discursive practice, art historians understand monuments as visual analogues of culturally specific ideas about nation, human suffering, individual greatness or societal achievement. One of the most useful insights to be gained from Michalski's (1998) seminal survey of public monument projects in the western tradition since the late 19th century pertains to the common trend of recycling the formal vocabulary of monument design across time and space, thus contributing to the conventionality of the genre. While conventionality diminishes the monument in the eyes of art historians and art critics, it may in fact enhance the monument's symbolic power in the eyes of its initiators and many viewers. This can constitute a dilemma for designers of post-apartheid memorial markers, as will be shown, because new commemorative projects must simultaneously be different from and similar to public monuments in the older, Eurocentric tradition.

Another art historical study of tremendous influence on the field is Kirk Savage's (1997) work on monuments dedicated to the American slaves. Savage aptly demonstrates that monuments and public statues are not shaped only according to aesthetic principles, but they are discursive objects, whose design arises out of contests over the meaning of specific past events. Monuments can be representational battlegrounds on which a variety of stakeholders, including artists, initiators, victims, descendents of deceased personalities, leaders and members of local community organisations, political officials, representatives of heritage management structures and even members of tourism boards may contest questions of visual appearance. Discussions about style, architectural and sculptural form, iconography and symbolism, while on the surface concerned with aesthetic issues or matters of personal taste, can in reality reflect deep-seated ideological differences in the interpretation of the past. The monument as visual end result may then reinforce or challenge particular readings of historical events; signal inclusions or exclusions; and represent a propagandistic piece of kitsch or a meaningful heritage asset and unique tourist attraction.

As against earlier studies, which focused on the intrinsic characteristics of monuments, their initiators and their intended meaning, more recent scholarship shifts attention to the viewer and the reception of monuments in different contexts and by different audiences. Monuments and indeed cultural products in general can be subject to a gradual, accidental accretion of meaning over time, and sometimes meanings emerge that nobody could have ever predicted. A monument may be designed as a particular discursive address to an imagined subject, but it is impossible to design any symbol that carries only its originally intended meaning. Especially if the political landscape, cultural norms or societal value systems in which the audience is embedded change over time, the perceived meaning of the monument may

also vary, although the intended interpretation often remains residually present and can be revived in particular circumstances.

To the extent that the viewer is influenced by semiotics and theoretical frameworks derived from media studies, monuments (and other types of heritage 'products') can be viewed as visual signifiers communicating ideologically charged 'messages' to diverse audiences in different contexts. While the process of meaning making can never be fixed, controlled or entirely predicted, Stanley Fish (1980) observed that viewers sharing certain social background characteristics form 'viewing communities' who tend to apply similar 'interpretive strategies' and derive similar interpretive readings of a cultural artifact, heritage display or monument site. In the South African context, Grundlingh's (2001) and Coombes' (2003) historical investigation of the changing symbolic meaning and societal role of the Afrikaner nationalist Voortrekker Monument (VTM) in Pretoria, arguably South Africa's most eminent and contested commemorative structure established by the old order, highlights the propensity of monuments to be appropriated by different constituencies in support of specific ideological agendas.

One aim of this book is to extend this approach to monuments of the post-apartheid era. Monuments and memorials serve important social and psychological needs for individuals and groups (e.g. the need for mourning; or the need for group identification), which are not always compatible with the political needs of the state or the initiators to memorialise persons and events in specific ways. Some societal forces promote monuments as a way of defining 'imagined communities' around newly introduced or authorized discourses and value systems. For the South African government, for instance, monuments are often linchpins in the project of envisioning a unified national identity based on reconciliation, non-racialism and gender equality. But other groups may utilise monuments as framing devices for the expression and even construction of 'community' along racial and ethnic lines, sometimes reinforcing colonial and apartheid-era notions of 'fixed' identity categories. Irrespective of the intended meaning, individual viewers and different audiences may interpret monuments to support their own preferred identity discourses. The reader must keep in mind that the interpretations offered in this book are my own (unless otherwise indicated) and that other viewers might rightfully differ in their reading of the same monuments and their significance.

This book interlinks with Coombes' (2003) seminal *History after apartheid* in the centrality of its focus on representing the past and the controversies surrounding such representation. Coombes investigates a number of specific sites, notably museums, but also intangible or non-visual sites such as the TRC, and highlights their role in the current South African politics of (re)writing history and producing culture, which is characterised by tensions around issues of race and ethnicity, community and nation (Coombes 2003; Okoye 2007: 116). Apart from a brief discussion of the so-

called Mandela Hand proposal, the National Monument for the Women of South Africa in Pretoria, and the Gugu Dlamini memorial in Durban, post-apartheid monument initiatives are excluded from Coombes' book. Hence the present study will take up some of the issues identified by Coombes, but add to them concerns specific to the genre of the public monument.

Although Hewison's (1987) influential and provocative book, *The Heritage Industry*, drew attention to the economic impact of heritage and the rapid development of heritage products for the 'tourist gaze' (Urry 1990), the relationship between monuments and economics through tourism is still a neglected area of research. Yet this perspective is of particular significance in present-day South Africa, where one can hardly find a new memory site that is not expected to attract scores of tourists and bring about a multitude of material benefits and developments for impoverished communities. Perhaps ironically, tourism is also perceived as a life-line for controversial 'white heritage', including Afrikaner Nationalist monuments, some of which – ideologically repositioned as cultural rather than political icons – are indeed thriving as popular tourist spots. Monuments and statues assist in the establishment of a unique marketable identity by symbolically inscribing cultural landscapes with selected meanings that underscore the chosen theme upon which the destination branding is based. Heritage-supported marketing processes often interlink closely with state-directed identity projects and socio-political goals. Because destination branding must be both new (offering ever new reasons to visit) and continuous with the past (building upon the established reputation of the destination), old and new monuments supporting the branding and marketing must once again signal both rupture and continuity.

## Monument and memorial

In South Africa the term 'monument' is often understood to refer to a historical building officially declared a National Monument by conservation authorities in the past on the basis of its age and its architectural merit or cultural significance. Even extraordinary features of nature or prehistoric rock art sites have been declared national monuments. In a different usage of the term, 'monument' refers to all commemorative markers officially erected on public land or by public subscription. These are automatically protected by conservation legislation irrespective of their age. In this book, the term monument does not refer to historical buildings and features of nature declared national monuments.

With regard to monuments as public commemorative markers, the distinction between the terms 'monument' and 'memorial' has elicited some debate both locally and internationally. Consultation of common dictionaries reveals much overlap and no clear boundaries of distinction. The terms tend

to be used interchangeably in South Africa, especially in common language practice and in the media. Internationally, the most frequently cited and most influential definition of the terms was developed by the art historian and philosopher, Arthur Danto, in the context of his discussion of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. Briefly, Danto declares triumphalism and celebration to be key features of monuments, whereas memorials are about healing and reconciliation. 'Monuments make heroes and triumphs, victories and conquests, perpetually present and part of life. The memorial is a special precinct extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honour the dead. With monuments we honour ourselves. (Danto 1987: 112)

This distinction has become very influential in South Africa and multiple variations thereof can be found in local scholarly work. For instance, while acknowledging the virtual interchangeability of the two terms, Dubow (2004) considers memorials to be structures and institutions whose essence is reflective and contemplative, while monuments are historical markers as well as structures that are predominantly celebratory and potentially self-aggrandising. 'Monuments outwardly proclaim something. Memorials invite introspection and interpretation' (ibid.: 375). On the basis of this distinction, many scholars criticize the present development of the commemorative sector in South Africa, arguing that the country needs memorials not monuments (e.g. Dubow 2004; Maré 2002; 2002a; Nettleton 2003).

Although I do not want to contest this position, I qualify it by suggesting that the distinction between monuments and memorials is much more complicated, ambiguous and often impossible to draw. Rowlands' research on nationalist war memorials shows that such markers often turn the memory of traumatic individual deaths into acts of national celebration and heroic assertions of collective values. Most memorials, argues Rowlands (1999: 130), are actually monuments in Danto's sense. Adding the dimension of time to this equation, a historical analysis of the shifting meaning of commemorative markers over longer periods is likely to reveal that many so-called memorials turn into monuments over time in response to processes of appropriation and society's changing socio-political and psychological needs.

I will engage with this question in greater detail in Chapter Four. Throughout this book the terms monument and memorial will be used in accordance with the official names of the respective sites and otherwise largely interchangeably. It is important to keep in mind, though, that some individuals, including scholars, heritage officials, artists, architects, and interested members of the general public hold strong and often divergent views about the distinction between the two terms, and that this fact invariably colours their reading of the respective memory markers and perhaps the current post-apartheid commemorative effort as a whole.

## Structure of this book

The public debate about monuments in South Africa, as it is driven by political officials and reported in the media, is implicitly based on two key assumptions. The first is that people actually care about monuments. However, in many informal conversations with individuals from different backgrounds and discussions with (mostly African and Indian) students over the past years, my experience is that many people don't care in the least about commemorative markers. Some whites often insist that they wouldn't mind at all if some statue in town was removed, whereas others will have never noticed it in the first place. Many black residents, too, evidently don't care – neither about existing monuments installed by the old order, nor about newly designed monuments intended to represent 'their' heritage. Many consider such symbols an unnecessary luxury as long as the basic needs of marginalized communities are far from met.

The second assumption is that monuments inherited from the previous order represent the values of 'the whites', pictured as a homogeneous community, and therefore constitute symbols of oppression, which need to be dealt with in some way. There is a lack of differentiation both of monuments and of people, which is particularly inappropriate in a South African context marked by historic fragmentation and especially opposition between Afrikaans and English speakers. For instance, no recognition is accorded to the fact that many monuments installed by Afrikaner nationalists during the apartheid era would have been reviled by many English-speaking South Africans, as well as some Afrikaners. Hence it is important to point out that when I refer to the existing memory landscape in homogenising terms in certain contexts of the analysis, this is to be understood as representing the perspective of the dominant discourse, and not as a denial or disregard of the real complexities and divided allegiances.

Before delving into the discussion of specific new monuments, this book begins by providing the legal frame work for the conservation and development of heritage, which forms the reference point for all other chapters. Significantly, South Africa has thus far not emulated the example of many other African countries which, following their attainment of independence from colonial rule, immediately proceeded to remove or replace symbolically charged colonial monuments – often in publicly staged acts of triumph and celebration of a new beginning. Chapter One, concentrating on conservation policies and the development of the new national heritage legislation, explains that by and large the presence and integrity of colonial and apartheid-era monuments remain respected and protected. The importance of this continuity cannot be overestimated, because it legitimates the need for new monuments and it crucially impacts on the specific development of the post-apartheid heritage sector, which

defines itself in relation to the existing landscape of public memory by expressing 'difference' and counter-discourses.

While heritage legislation and policies took years to be debated, finalised and implemented, some commemorative initiatives began to emerge spontaneously and modest markers were installed at significant sites even before the formal end of apartheid. The very first public memorials paying tribute to fallen cadres of the liberation forces appeared in the townships in the early 1990s, when fundamental changes of the socio-political order were on the immediate horizon, following the release of Nelson Mandela, the un-banning of the anti-apartheid movements and the repeal of various apartheid laws and regulations. Chapter Two focuses on the Solomon Mahlangu Memorial, a modest yet historically extremely important marker set up by the African National Congress (ANC) in Mamelodi township outside Pretoria in 1991. It serves as a focal point for discussing relations of power not only between the centre and the margin but also between different forces within the margin, itself on the verge of attaining power. I argue that in a context characterized by fierce competition between the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), a public memorial mobilising the memory of the dead, pointing to the sacrifices made in the past and celebrating martyrs who died in the name of an organisation can become a strategic tool to forge group identity and legitimate a claim to power in the embryonic new order.

If the second chapter is therefore concerned largely with political perspectives, in accordance with the predominant approaches to the study of monuments, Chapter Three focuses on the social, psychological and emotional needs that such markers can possibly fulfill, firstly for those directly affected by past suffering and loss and in a wider sense for a community or society which identifies with memories of trauma. 'Trauma' has also become a keyword in contemporary South African society, as well as internationally, and the significance of this discourse in relation to memorialisation will be explored in this chapter. The TRC's recommend-ation that memorials be built as symbolic forms of reparation to the victims of apartheid provides a strong moral imperative for the current proliferation of such markers throughout the country and their significance for the process of individual and societal healing and reconciliation must not be underestimated.

Yet, irrespective of their psychological benefits, I argue that such memorials – their delivery and their specific visual design – are never quite separable from socio-political agendas and strategic appropriation for wider societal and political goals. Resistance against apartheid took place on an infinite variety of fronts, involving manifold strategies and multiple role players who did not necessarily agree with one another's methods, and who did not always work towards a truly common goal. Yet today the school history curriculum, the media and the heritage sector entrench the popular notion of 'the Struggle', a teleological narrative, implying coherence and

unity, a more or less concerted effort towards liberation, led by the ANC and supported by its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), 'Spear of the Nation'. In this context, the memory of some victims is more opportune than others and the post-apartheid process of memorialisation is accompanied by significant silences, the forgetting of uncomfortable memories, and a hierarchial ordering of victims, which continues to divide survivors and communities to the present day.

Chapter Four investigates the increasing trend towards the institutionalisation of traumatic memory and resistance narratives through ever more ambitious heritage developments and the 'upgrading' of earlier memorials, including the one for Solomon Mahlangu discussed in Chapter Two. A detailed analysis of the Hector Pieterson memorial in memory of the June 16 Soweto Uprising illustrates how aesthetic issues such as conceptualisation, design, style, iconography, and symbolism impact on the process of meaning-making, generate empathy and guide the viewer's understanding of the historical event and its symbolic significance. While the state's investment in memorial markers and heritage sites occurs ostensibly for the benefit of 'the people' and the furthering of national goals, such monuments also invariably authorise preferred readings of the past and assert party-political ownership of icons of the Struggle.

This produces critical edges for debate and contestation, sometimes leading to outright rejection and boycott by opposition forces and those supporting alternative narratives of the past. But there is another, not overtly politically motivated dynamic of rejection, which manifests itself in the high level of vandalism, misuse and neglect affecting all types of public memorials and heritage sites in South Africa, including those installed by the post-apartheid government. This type of rejection – not always deliberate and malicious, but sometimes casual and neglectful – is potentially more significant for this study, because it raises critical questions about public identification, community ownership and even notions of citizenship. Indeed, I argue that new monuments, rather than building a shared sense of nation, can become, in unexpected ways, notably in their failure to sustain monumentality, precisely the sites at which the fractures in post-apartheid society perform themselves.

Reconnecting with the legal framework presented at the outset, Chapter Five explores how post-apartheid society has in practice been dealing with the vastly unbalanced commemorative legacy of the past. Although the new heritage legislation emphasises conservation and essentially promotes continuity rather than rupture, the relocation, re-interpretation and (in exceptional cases) removal of selected monuments may be recommended following a process of consultation. Focusing on key examples, I critically discuss the possibilities and limitations of investing existing monuments with newly defined significance. Ultimately, I argue, it is precisely the continued presence of older monuments and the limited effectiveness of the

process of re-interpretation that makes the construction of new monuments necessary in the eyes of those who aim to effect a transformation of the existing memory landscape.

Following this trajectory, Chapter Six concentrates on the National Legacy Project as a strategic intervention in the heritage sector intended to 'redress' existing bias by commemorating neglected or marginalised aspects of the past. The Legacy Project draws it legitimacy from 'below', but is in fact entirely conceptualised, funded and directed from 'above' through the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST). Although a panel of academic experts was 'consulted', it represents the most systematic, institutionalised and politically motivated reconfiguration of the heritage sector in post-apartheid South Africa. Each project considered for or adopted as part of the National Legacy Project – most of which contain monuments – is meant to illustrate key events in a 'shared history' and reflect core values of the new nation. In examining the origins of the Legacy Project I will show that the selection of projects and the framing of their symbolic significance define an officially sanctioned grand-narrative of resistance and ultimate triumph that serves as a foundation myth for the post-apartheid order. Unfortunately, the Legacy Project also represents many lost opportunities and has arguably stifled the emergence of a truly community-driven approach to memorialisation, which could have resulted in a very different kind of memory landscape.

Chapter Seven examines the most ambitious component of the National Legacy Project, namely Freedom Park, which is still under construction at Salvokop, outside Pretoria. Apart from constituting the post-apartheid ideological counterpart of the apartheid era VTM on the opposite hill, it clearly emulates, yet professes its conceptual difference from, the 19th century Eurocentric tradition of the national monument as a pseudo-spiritual site of pilgrimage or 'shrine of the nation', presumed to embody the essence of national identity and symbolic final resting place of the nation's greatest heroes. A careful analysis of the conceptualisation of Freedom Park, its individual structural and symbolic elements and the contestation already surrounding the site provides insight into the state of the nation and the competing imaginings of a new national identity in South Africa today.

The contrasting relationship between the new, inclusive Monument for the Women of South Africa at the Union Buildings in Pretoria (another component of the Legacy Project) and the old, exclusive Afrikaner Nationalist Women's Monument in Bloemfontein echoes in many respects the dichotomous VTM – Freedom Park relationship, but adds an important dimension. In Chapter Eight a detailed examination of the National Monument for the Women of South Africa provides the basis for a critical consideration of gender issues within the larger post-apartheid commemorative project. I maintain that the Women's Monument plays a token role in a national context of memorialisation heavily skewed towards the enshrining

of a patriarchal 'ancestry' and masculine value systems, despite the South African government's professed commitment to gender equality. In the final analysis, the Pretoria Women's Monument constitutes an important yet ambiguous effort which throws doubtful light on the post-apartheid vision of a non-racial and gender-inclusive national identity underpinned by selective remembrance of the past.

While in Chapters Seven and Eight the comparison between the new monuments and the related apartheid era monuments was meant to highlight similarities and crystallise differences, Chapter Nine argues that the conscious juxtaposition of a new commemorative marker with a specific (contested) monument of the previous era has become a popular and increasingly systematic strategy in the state-directed post-apartheid politics of public memory. Starting with a detailed investigation of the genesis of the Ncome/Blood River monument, it will be shown how new monuments are often erected as 'critical responses' to the existing body of monuments, which they complement, interrogate or critique. This strategy is intended to gesture towards dialogue and open up discursive readings of the past, while simultaneously respecting the commemorative integrity of the existing monument upon which the meaning of the new marker is partially contingent.

No discussion of new monuments can ignore their function in the promotion of tourism, because heritage and tourism development go hand in glove in post-apartheid South Africa. The country's new heritage legislation stipulates that the conservation of both natural and cultural heritage must be coupled with tangible benefits and economic empowerment for previously disadvantaged communities, and tourism is perceived as a central mechanism through which this can be accomplished. Chapter Ten explores tourism as a key force impacting on the conceptualisation, positioning and design of monuments. Monuments provide intangible heritage with tangible substance, and satisfy the tourism sector's need for visual experiences and ever new attractions; but – I argue – the reference to economic benefits through tourism also conveniently serves to disguise other motivations and especially political agendas pursued by key supporters of the monument initiative.

Structuring a book into chapters is an artificial device that assists the process of analysis and organisation, but that also impedes an understanding of the full complexity of the potential issues at stake, because specific issues are foregrounded in each chapter. The reader should remember that an important assumption underlying this study is the inextricable nexus between the psychological needs of individuals and communities (notably the need for identity, dignity, mourning and acknowledgement of suffering); the tendency of powerful socio-political agents to appropriate public memory discourses in pursuit of larger societal, political, and sometimes economic goals; and the (sometimes neglected) role of visual signifiers in communicat-

ing discourses of inclusion and exclusion, which invite identification and provoke contestation.

Because I am primarily interested in the public role of monuments and their impact on larger societal processes, this book will not include private commemorative markers initiated by individuals, community organisations or commercial enterprises on their premises. While the distinction can be blurred, I understand public monuments to be more or less authoritative, official objects which are either initiated or endorsed by various agencies of the state and addressed to the general public. The vast majority of them furthermore institutionalise political memory. Although installed in the public arena, notable exclusions from consideration in this book are HIV/Aids memorials (of which only a small number exists), the work of *ad hoc* forums and citizens' groups which may on occasion result in a public memorial,[3] and private sector initiatives, notably the *Sunday Times* Centenary Heritage Project,[4] a unique initiative involving commemorative public art works, which raises a host of new questions and may deserve a separate study when all of the works have been installed. However, the list in the annex to this book, which I hope will become a useful reference for the reader, includes all memorials belonging to the *Sunday Times* project, as well as all other post-apartheid monuments, memorials and statues in South Africa that I was aware of at the time this manuscript was completed.

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[3] Writing not specifically about monuments, but about heritage projects more generally, Shepherd (2008: 122) cites as examples of such groups the District Six Foundation and the Hands Off Prestwich Street Committee in Cape Town, which are concerned to develop more radically inclusive and broadly accountable approaches to public heritage discourse.

[4] The project was initiated by the *Sunday Times* in 2006 to celebrate the centenary of the foundation of the newspaper. The concept is based on commemorating the country's most remarkable newsmakers and stories. The project was officially launched with eight commemorative art works in Johannesburg on 24 September (Heritage Day) 2006. At the time of writing, over 30 projects have been completed in four provinces (Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal), most of which are concentrated in Johannesburg and Cape Town. All projects are eventually supposed to be featured on the project website (http://heritage.thetimes.co.za/). See also Corrigall (2007).

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# Cultural Heritage Conservation and Policy

## Introduction

In November 1497, the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama and his party landed on the South African coast in the area of what is now called Mossel Bay. He immediately erected a monumental memorial cross (*padrone*, *padrão*) following the practice of his predecessor, Bartolomeo Dias, who had established such monuments as symbolic markers of Christian outreach and Portuguese presence and as pragmatic navigational beacons along the West African coastline. This cross was the first monument in the Western sense of the word installed on South African soil and quickly became the symbolic focal point of contestation and conflict. Although the Portuguese had initially established amicable contacts with the indigenous population of Khoekhoen[1] herders, with whom they traded and fraternized, a disagreement broke out short before the Europeans left. As the situation escalated, da Gama's men are reported to have discharged a cannon and the Khoekhoen knocked down the monument in a gesture of defiance (Welsh 2000: 6).

The Khoekoen may not have comprehended the symbolic meaning of the memorial cross as conceived by the Portuguese, but they did understand the massive stone object to be an important symbolic representation of the unwanted Portuguese presence. More than five centuries have passed and public monuments representing contested value systems are once again the object of contention and debate in what is now post-apartheid South Africa. In the urban centres, previously defined as white reserves, now dominated by black visitors and inhabitants, many people arguably don't share a sentimental attachment to the city's colonial architecture: buildings which they were in the past prevented from entering, from which they remember

[1] Also spelled Khoi-Khoi. The term KhoiSan or Khoe-San refers to the indigenous population in Southern Africa, which includes San or 'Bushmen' people who integrated and merged with Khoekhoen herders. Both spellings are used interchangeably in this book, largely in accordance with the respective source text or document under discussion.

repressive administration being dispensed, or which they generally associate with the wealth, taste and values of the white minority. More importantly in terms of this book, the black majority can hardly be expected to identify with the city's accumulated contingent of statues honouring white leader figures; the multitude of war memorials paying tribute to white combatants in various local and international conflicts, and the many public monuments commemorating the heroic victories, events and achievements of white settlers and colonial officials. At the same time, these monuments are perhaps more important than ever to the embattled white minority as general symbolic representations of their cultural heritage and identity, even if the average person hardly knows who these statues represent or which historical events they commemorate.

This chapter focuses on the contested nature of the public memory landscape in a changing South Africa and the development of new policies and legislative frameworks to regulate and guide both the identification of the 'new heritage' and the treatment of the existing heritage. Following a brief consideration of South Africa's history of conservation practices, I investigate the public and political debate around heritage representing the old order during the transition and immediate post-election period. It will become evident that key points of this debate later influenced the formulation of the new national heritage legislation.

I believe that in the fragile context of the South African transition of power, the radical removal of symbols of the 'white heritage' would have been politically and economically unwise, if not impossible. Publicly, however, as reflected in media reports and statements by various officials and community leaders, the decision to preserve colonial and apartheid era monuments was defended primarily on the basis of moral arguments around reconciliation and the need for public reminders of a painful past 'to remember where we are coming from'. Such argumentation assigns agency to the representatives of the new order, concealing hard-core political and economic realities, but it also allowed the emerging government to capture the moral high ground, underscoring nationally and internationally the generous spirit and non-confrontational, forgiving and peaceful nature of Nelson Mandela's 'rainbow nation'.

## Biased heritage landscape

South Africa's cultural heritage conservation legislation dates back to the Bushman Relics Act of 1911, which focused on the protection of archaeological sites and indigenous rock art. Inspired by the Historic Monuments Board in Britain, this early legislation was amended in 1923 to include historical sites and the built environment (Natural and Historical Monuments Act). Increased development during the economic boom period of the 1960s

raised public concern about heritage conservation and the need for extended legislative measures. As a result, the National Monuments Council (NMC) was established in terms of the National Monuments Act (No.28 of 1969), amended in subsequent years to make provision for new categories of protection (Pistorius 1996; Deacon and Pistorius 1996).

By the end of the 20th century, the NMC had declared approximately 3500 sites or buildings throughout the country as National Monuments, most of which included British colonial and Cape Dutch architecture and sites associated with the Afrikaner struggle for self-determination (Hall 2006). According to Frescura's (1992) calculation, in 1992 97 percent of all declared national monuments related to the values and experiences of the white minority. The remaining three percent covered the heritage of all other population groups combined, much of which was taken up by San/Bushmen rock art sites. This imbalance was due to the NMC's prevailing heritage conservation principles which, being rooted in European and specifically British practices, focused primarily on tangible objects of artistic significance and architectural merit.

To this record one must add the vast, as yet uncounted assortment of commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary, much of it erected by public conscription or donation, virtually all of it representing history from the perspective of the white minority. The unmistaken implication of this extremely skewed heritage landscape is that non-white people never produced any material culture of note or worthy of conservation; that they were generally deficient in a record of achievement; and that they have in fact 'no history'. This certainly affirmed racist beliefs about black inferiority and lack of civilization, which were commonly held by whites from the time of their first contact with the indigenous people of South Africa and which became official discourse during the apartheid era, thus justifying discriminatory government legislation. Similar trends and implied value judgements about different cultural groups prevailed in the structure, classificatory systems and strategies of display within the South African museum sector.[2]

Discussions about the need for a radical democratisation and multicultural adjustment of the South African heritage landscape began in the late 1980s and intensified in the early 1990s as a predictable consequence of the

[2] As Rankin and Hamilton (1999: 3) pointed out, museums were based on a classificatory division between cultural history and ethnology/ethnography. While the former dealt with the material culture and progress-oriented history of 'civilised' western societies, the latter focused on the life and customs of the indigenous people, presumed to be primitive and static in their culture and historic development. The contrast between the two (often housed in the same museum on different floors) underscored the level of achievement of the Self in relation to the Other, thus helping to define the identity of the Self as superior.

gradual rejection of apartheid legislation and the impending political changes in South Africa. During the immediate post-election period, reflecting the democratic spirit of the new dispensation, the heritage debate became increasingly public, resulting in a surge of conferences and workshops, articles in newspapers, magazines and academic journals.[3]

Heritage here refers to a variety of genres, sites and cultural practices, including buildings, museums, archives and libraries; language, literature, poetry, and story-telling; art, music and drama; festivals, performances, and rituals; 'living monuments' in the form of named buildings or institutions; names of streets, towns, places and landmarks; and, of course, commemorative monuments, memorials and public statues. Not all of these genres received equal public attention: the push for the renaming of streets and cities, for instance, has only gained serious momentum since the late 1990s and is most topical at the current moment.[4] The issue of monuments, memorials and statues, on the contrary, which included both the call for new commemorative structures and the question about the fate of existing ones, was pursued with a sense of urgency right from the beginning of the debate. In fact, monuments – being the most deliberately erected, purely symbolic, discursive objects – were often central to that debate and, as will become evident, the new socio-political order's treatment of the old order's symbolic landscape and specifically commemorative monuments can be understood as a metaphor of political action.

## Monuments and the 'Soft Revolution'

Like the Khoekoen herders encountered by Da Gama, most contemporary passers-by (both black and white) do not know the (intended) meaning of all

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[3] For instance, the issue of national monuments was central to the 56th annual conference of the Southern African Museums Association (SAMA), held in Durban in 1992. For the first time in the history of the conference, experts from other African countries, notably Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi and Namibia participated to share the experiences of their own countries (Anonymous 1992). In the same year, a history workshop entitled 'Myths, Monuments, Museums. New Premises' was held at the University of Witwatersrand.

[4] The drive for name changes was initially most pronounced in the Northern Province (renamed Limpopo Province), where a considerable number of towns and cities have been renamed (e.g. Pietersburg has become Polokwane, and Messina is now Musina) (see Hooper-Box 2002). The controversial proposed name change of the country's capital from Pretoria to Tshwane has drawn much debate, criticism and legal action since 2005. Most recently (May 2007) the process of renaming streets and landmarks in Durban and the Ethekwini municipality has led to protest action and threats of violence. See also Jenkins (2007).

of the monuments they encounter in the public arena or the specific history and significance of the persons commemorated in bronze statues.[5] Yet many black people, when prompted, will readily express their dislike or demand the removal of 'white monuments', which at best they may feel indifferent about, but which more often than not they tend to negatively associate with white minority domination or think of as symbols of past oppression and humiliation. It is interesting to note that the media on the contrary sometimes report cases of black individuals who raise their voice in support of a monument erected by the previous order.[6] While this constitutes important evidence that not all black South Africans share the same attitude, the fact that the lone voice is reported as newsworthy certainly supports the assumption of majority opposition.

Public opinion tends to construct the presumed target audience of apartheid-era monuments as homogeneous, but many of the so-called 'white monuments' only ever represented one specific group (e.g. Afrikaner nationalists), and – as mentioned earlier – a considerable portion of the white population presumably never identified with these markers. A parallel trend can be noted today, when many conservative whites summarily dismiss the commemorative products of the post-apartheid order as 'black monuments', although many of these are explicitly designed to be inclusive.

In a frequently cited passage, the Russian art critic, Viktor Misiano, claims that '[a]ll successful revolutions end with statues coming down'.[7] Without putting this contention to a methodical test of its truth, one might more correctly say that all successful revolutions end with *some* statues coming down. A cursory glance at the historical evidence suggests that a radical, iconoclastic treatment of inherited public statuary has rarely been applied in a systematic and comprehensive manner. However, one can observe that in the aftermath of both the French and the American Revolutions, for instance, public forms of commemoration expressed a desire to radically break with the past, and to create as great a distance as possible between the new age and the old order (Gillis 1994: 8).

In the nascent post-apartheid South African context the debate about the abundant existing body of commemorative structures and sculptures

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5 This was established, for instance, through community participation conducted by SAHRA in Bloemfontein (see further below) (SAHRA Monuments Project Report 2003, Bloemfontein section).

6 The *Volksblad* (Smith 2003) reported public dissatisfaction from unexpected quarters about the removal of the children's monument at the Sunday School in Bloemfontein: a black viewer had apparently commented that the monument was very nice and it displayed the history of the Voortrekkers. Originally unveiled in 1959, the monument was titled 'The children of South Africa'. It was removed to Oranje Girls High School for safe-keeping in 2003.

7 This statement was made in a film called *Disgraced monuments* (directed by M. Lewis and L. Mulvey) and quoted in Forty and Küchler (1999: 10).

accumulated during the colonial and apartheid eras preceded concrete suggestions for the construction of new monuments – in part, it could be suggested, because it is easier, faster and less costly to 'make a difference' in the monumental record by removing an existing monument than by building a new one. The simplest and for many people perhaps most obvious way of dealing with monuments representing the hated values of the old order would be their destruction or removal – a position that regularly resurfaces in contemporary debate (see e.g. Anonymous 2003).

The fact that the 'new' South Africa was the outcome of a negotiated transition of power, rather than a violent revolution, bore significant consequences for the national and local politics of memory and the (re)shaping of the existing landscape of memory. The historical background to the emergence of the post-apartheid era will be detailed more in subsequent chapters, but I briefly want to sketch some key developments on the political front that refer to the so-called 'negotiated solution'.

From the mid-1980s, preliminary talks took place in secret meetings between the ruling National Party (NP) and the imprisoned Nelson Mandela to discuss the terms of future negotiations. When President P.W. Botha suffered a stroke in 1989, Frederik W. de Klerk became president – an event that turned out to be instrumental in the political transition to majority rule. During a speech on 2 February 1990, De Klerk announced the release of Nelson Mandela (implemented on 11 February), ending his 27-year period of imprisonment, as well as the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Political prisoners were soon released, the safe return of exiles guaranteed, and the remaining restrictions under the five-year state of emergency lifted. In return, Mandela announced an end to the armed struggle in August 1990. A difficult and fragile three-year period of negotiations followed, involving many hurdles and set-backs, against a backdrop of growing community violence (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 559-64; Bauer and Taylor 2005: 245-8).

The official political platform for negotiations was established when the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) was first held from 20-21 December 1991 at Kempton Park, Johannesburg, although not all members of the liberation movements supported this process. The PAC in particular refused to attend, hence rebuffing the ANC's attempts at reconciliation between the two parties. Nevertheless, CODESA brought together representatives of eight mainstream parties and drew up a Declaration of Intent to 'bring about an undivided South Africa with one nation sharing a common citizenship' under a liberal democratic constitution (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 560). De Klerk called for an immediate referendum among white voters in March 1992 to ascertain their support for the CODESA process, thus suggesting that political power was the sole prerogative of white South Africans, an assumption which angered many black South Africans. The referendum yielded a two-thirds majority of white

voters in favour of continuing negotiations towards a transition of power. By the end of 1993, when a draft constitution was agreed upon and the date for the elections was set for 27 April 1994, it was evident that the initially tenuous balance of power had clearly shifted towards the ANC (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 559-69; Bauer and Taylor 2005: 245-8).

While the negotiation process was ostentatiously about the transfer of power from the white minority to the black majority, the violence of the period – described in more detail in the third chapter – testifies to the divisions within the black majority. Different constituencies – partly defined along racial and ethnic lines, more importantly along ideological and political party lines – sometimes shared competing visions about the future and the role they should be playing in the emergent socio-political order.

Different parties and stakeholders also held competing views about the future of the existing heritage landscape. In the summer of 1991, RESTORICA, official journal of the Simon van der Stel Foundation, South Africa's oldest conservation body, asked representatives of the liberation movements and different political bodies about their views and policies regarding the preservation and conservation of the country's heritage. Acknowledging the Eurocentric bias of existing conservation practices, it was evident that the values, priorities and preferences of other cultural groups would have to be taken into consideration in an emerging democratic dispensation in South Africa (Anonymous 1991 (*Restorica*): 8-11), but the overwhelmingly white conservation fraternity addressed by the journal was understandably concerned about the future of monuments and sites protected under the current and past heritage legislation. The ANC reacted cautiously, not revealing any clear position. Oupa Ramachela, media officer in the party's Department of Arts and Culture, explained that the ANC did not yet have a firm cultural policy, but that any such future policy must be informed by democratic, non-sectarian, humanist principles and emerge in discussions with all relevant groups (ibid.: 9).

According to its cultural representative, Fitzroy Ngcukana, the PAC understood 'culture as the ideological reflection of the social, political and economic situation in a country' (ibid.: 8). Any cultural work, including monuments, should therefore be linked to the people's material life and represent the population as a whole, as opposed to a certain section thereof. Nevertheless, the PAC did not intend to demolish existing buildings and monuments, because they were needed 'to show our children how our oppressors lived' (ibid.). Rather, new monuments must be built to 'show our children that we were part of history and not only spectators' (ibid.).

Dr K. Rajoo responded on behalf of the Solidarity Party of South Africa, a party representing South Africans of Indian descent. His party rejected 'any form of iconoclasm' and 'firmly believe[d] in the restoration and conservation of the cultural heritage of all peoples who constitute the permanent population of this land …' (ibid.). Foreseeing the challenges

faced by the Indian minority in the context of future African domination, he added that his party would 'consider it an injustice if, on the national level, the ruling political party imposes its cultural and historical conceptions on the rest of the population' (ibid.). This statement appears uncannily prescient when considering the emerging tendency towards the hegemonic framing of memories and the government-directed institutionalisation of selected narratives.

The only opinion expressing a more radical stance was posited by Tommy Abrahams, MP for Wentworth, a 'coloured' township south of Durban, who responded on behalf of the Minister's Council in the House of Representatives. 'There is no place in a new South Africa for the existing symbols' and there must be 'a total break with the racist past' (ibid.: 9). In a new, non-racial democratic society, explained Abrahams, the hurt felt and offence taken at the veneration of monuments and place names honouring only the role played by whites must be taken into account. He fell short of explicitly stating what should be done with these monuments.

If this early canvassing of policies and opinions about the preservation of symbols of cultural heritage reflects the anxieties of conservation authorities and stakeholder groups, similar fears existed about the conservation of the country's natural heritage. Because the creation of South Africa's game reserves and national parks during the colonial and apartheid eras had often necessitated the removal of people settled on the land or utilising it for farming and hunting, the parks were widely associated with discrimination and dispossession. As the issue of land redistribution was (and still is to the present day) an emotional and hotly debated one, fears emerged that an ANC-dominated government would dismantle the national parks and resettle people on the land (McEachern 2002: 118). This has not occurred, but new conservation policies emphasise the 'use value' of national parks, i.e. the need for natural heritage conservation (like cultural heritage conservation) to be allied to development and/or other tangible benefits for marginalised communities. The parks, like the monuments, remain contested.

During the time of transition and the early years of the new South African dispensation, a significant factor shaping public opinion on the monument issue was that a number of influential personalities among the emergent political elite publicly voiced their opposition to a radical iconoclasm: 'I believe it was wrong and infantile to hurl down and destroy the political symbols of the Soviet Union just as it was wrong for Stalin to destroy the works of those with whom he disagreed', said Mewa Ramgobin, Chairman of the Arts and Culture department of the ANC's southern Natal region, as early as 1992,[8] implying that a new government in South Africa should not

[8] Ramgobin even explicitly defended the preservation of South Africa's most highly politicised and ideologically charged monumental structure, the VTM, 'as a symbol of the white Afrikaner's socio-economic culture' (Leeman 1992).

make the same mistakes. Similarly the then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Lionel Mtshali (1997), explained that the new South Africa was not about rejecting the 'old' and replacing it with the 'new'.[9] Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs (1997) placed the issue in the context of South Africa's long legacy of dispossessing people: '… you don't preserve the heritage of all by destroying the heritage of some. Merely to erase the past of the privileged would leave blank spaces and add one extra dispossession to the historical dispossessions'.[10]

Considering these recurrent conservationist attitudes, it comes as a surprise to note that the ANC as the dominant liberation movement had in fact developed a policy advocating a much more radical treatment of old monuments short before officially coming to power. A year after RESTORICA published its survey, immediately following De Klerk's referendum, the ANC began to develop a policy on issues of arts, culture and heritage. The process started with a workshop held at Maselspoort outside Bloemfontein and ended with the approval of the policy document at a large cultural conference in April 1993 (Hall, personal communication 2006 and 2007).

## Developing conservation policy in a 'new' South Africa

After the seminal 1994 First General Elections and the formation of the GNU, Dr Ben Ngubane, a member of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), became minister of the newly formed DACST. Towards the end of that year Ngubane set up the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG), a widely inclusive team of experts and stakeholders, which was mandated to advise the minister and make recommendations for strategic changes in the fields of arts, culture and heritage. Public meetings were held in all provinces and a large number of written submissions were also received from various stakeholders and members of the public (Hall 2005; Deacon and Pistorius 1996).

In an attempt at being proactive about impending decisions on issues of monuments and cultural heritage conservation, which had the potential to

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[9] 'This concept of the new South Africa means many different things, and it has sometimes been used in ways which suggest that the "old" has to be rejected and replaced by the new. This, surely, is precisely what the concept of a new South Africa does not mean' (Mtshali 1997: opening paragraph).

[10] There are interesting parallels between the debate around monuments as an aspect of cultural heritage and the debate around national parks, as an aspect of natural heritage. 'Precisely because the parks had been associated with discrimination and dispossession under colonial and apartheid rule, there were fears that an ANC dominated government would dismantle them and redistribute the lands' (McEachern 2002: 118).

impact on the core functions or the very *raison d'être* of the NMC, the conservation authority internally engaged in debates and workshops. An official report was submitted to the ACTAG, outlining the NMC's position and recommendations. It cautioned against a process of large-scale deproclamation or re-evaluation of existing national monuments as 'counter-productive' and recommended that rather than 'denuding the cultural landscape' controversial monuments should be re-interpreted by stressing an inclusive reading of the historical facts. This could be achieved over time through an educational process, but also through concrete interventions at specific monument sites. Furthermore, 'the disproportionate bias towards Eurocentric values' should be rectified as soon as possible in a proactive way (Anonymous 1995; Hall, personal communication 2006).

In 1995 ACTAG produced a Green Paper outlining prevailing problems and setting out a vision for the future. This eventually led to the publication of the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage in 1996, while the section on heritage later became the basis of the 1999 National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA). Paralleling these developments, in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) members of the former KwaZulu Monuments Council (KMC) and the Natal Regional Office of the NMC developed their own provincial heritage legislation. The first draft was submitted at the end of 1995, i.e. years before the national heritage legislation came into being. KwaZulu had been the only one of the former 'homelands' with a fully-fledged conservation authority, well supported by the homeland government. Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Leader of the KwaZulu Bantustan, Founder and Chair of the IFP, and related to the Zulu royal house, took a great personal interest in the KMC, which was strongly focused on preserving the cultural heritage of the Zulu people (Deacon and Pistorius 1996; Hall 2005; Hall, personal communication 2006 and 2007; Walker and van Schalkwyk 1996).

Although the GNU was strongly dominated by the ANC, it is interesting to note that the progressive and rather radical stance of the ruling party's own arts and culture policy did not really come to bear on the existing monument landscape in the newly founded post-apartheid South Africa. In fact, it markedly contrasts with the cautious and conservation-oriented practice implemented through the various authorities of the post-apartheid dispensation from national to local levels.[11] Contrary to the common lament of many conservative whites today, the government has always recognised the sensitivity of the issue and has thus far strictly abstained from radical changes to the existing monument landscape. Throughout the country only a

[11] Hall believes that the conservative and conservation-oriented approach towards existing monuments pursued by the DACST during the second half of the 1990s may also have been influenced by the fact that the first two ministers in charge of the DACST – Ben Ngubane, followed by Lionel Mtshali – were both members of the IFP (personal communication 2006 and 2007).

minimal number of public monuments have been removed from their accustomed places, the most notable, well-publicised and controversial example of which is the dismantling of the over life-size bronze statue of Hendrik Verwoerd in Bloemfontein, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

## Respecting the symbolic markers of the old order

In the context of the uncertainties and vulnerability of the new South African dispensation during the transition period, the cautious and conservation-oriented approach towards the symbolic representations of the previous order without doubt eased the process of socio-political transformation. The 'generous' treatment of the existing landscape of memory can be interpreted as a direct reflection of the spirit of inclusiveness, nation-building and racial reconciliation, which characterised many aspects of the new multicultural democracy during the immediate post-election period. This spirit of respect formed the ideological foundation of the much touted 'rainbow nation' during the Nelson Mandela era and may, in fact, to some extent have been influenced by Mandela himself. On many publicly staged occasions, Mandela was seen to extend symbolic gestures of reconciliation to key representatives of the old order and former enemies, as well as express his respect for the Afrikaners, their struggle for freedom, and their contribution to building the country.[12]

Respecting the symbolic markers of the old order can be considered not only a tactical political move by the new dispensation to emphasise the peacefulness of the political transition and gain international respect, but also a wise economic decision to prevent 'rocking the boat' with international investors. These were presumably important factors for consideration at a time when South Africa was politically and economically repositioning itself within the international community of nations. Pierre Bourdieu (1990: 112-21) would call this an attempt by the new order to accumulate 'symbolic capital' by behaving honourably in its dealings with other groups. Symbolic capital, according to Bourdieu, is at least in part a disguised, mystified form

[12] For instance, in March 2002, Mandela unveiled a statue of the Boer fighter Danie Theron at Fort Schanskop, part of the VTM heritage precinct. Speaking in Afrikaans, Mandela expressed his high respect for the Afrikaners and their role in building the country, claiming furthermore that his own formation as a freedom fighter was deeply influenced by his knowledge of the life and work of Afrikaner freedom fighters. Acknowledging the sensitivity of such issues as name changes, he expressed his confidence that South Africans, who have managed to avoid a bloodbath through peaceful negotiation, will also find a way to accommodate each other's aspirations and fears (Rademeyer 2002).

of economic capital and may be 'cashed in' for various sorts of economic credit and assistance, thus literally being converted into material benefits.

The tolerance of commemorative formations representing an old order or contested values is a hallmark of many western democracies. In Germany, for instance, although radical, anti-imperialist forces within the student movement in the 1960s pushed for a drastic elimination of monuments celebrating Germany's brief period of colonial ventures around the turn of the previous century, state policy (especially since the 1980s) favours their conscious conservation as material evidence of an undeniable aspect of the country's past and a reminder of its victims. Equipped with new, critical text panels, the colonial monuments' function is being re-directed towards anti-colonialism.[13] In the United States, Confederate Civil War memorials in the 'Deep South' are as controversial to many sections of the population, especially African-Americans, as are Afrikaner nationalist monuments to black people in South Africa (largely for the same reasons). Yet, despite protests and lawsuits, there has been no systematic effort to remove such objects. 'In modern America, there is, after all, a strong government-supported desire to provide space for groups of many different identities, origins, and ethnicities' (Mills and Simpson 2003: xxv). Even when damaged accidentally, these controversial monuments tend to be repaired if possible and reinstalled.

Closer to home, it is useful to consider the exemplary case of South Africa's neighbour, Namibia, formerly (German) South West Africa, which had gained independence in 1990. After the formal end of the German colonial period (1918), the country was administered by British forces, but was later handed over to South Africa for 'protective administration', becoming essentially a South African colony or province. Many people of German descent had remained in the country throughout this time. Eager to protect their language and customs and nurture their cultural heritage, they took good care of the numerous monuments set up during the colonial period, including the equestrian statue commemorating the German *Schutztruppe* in Windhoek, 'the most aggressive colonial symbol in all of Namibia' (Zeller 2000: 175).[14] They even added more to the record, notably the monument to Adolf Lüderitz (1953) in the coastal town named after him.

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[13] Such re-interpretation/rededication as an anti-colonial monument occurred, for instance, in the case of the colonial monument in Bremen (depicting a large-scale stone elephant). See Zeller (2000: 221-5).

[14] The bronze statue was unveiled in 1912. According to Zeller (2000: 175-7), 'the German committee in charge of creating the monument after the 1904-08 war rejected proposals for statues showing wounded or fallen soldiers, since their aim was to demonstrate triumph and readiness. The statue is located on the site of the first concentration camp created during the German-Ovaherero war of 1904'.

When the country gained independence in 1990, following the election victory of Sam Nujoma of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) in November 1989, the question about the fate of these colonial monuments and the future of heritage conservation in the new nation arose. In contrast to many other African countries, which largely dismantled the insignia of the old order after attaining independence from colonialism, the new Namibian government decided against a radical, iconoclast policy. This was done in the spirit of reconciliation, but also – very importantly – to avoid alienating the economically important white sector of the population. Some streets were renamed, especially in Windhoek, and some colonial monuments were re-interpreted, but by and large, statues and monuments remained untouched. In 1995, new heritage legislation was drafted under the guidance of two UNESCO-sponsored experts, utilizing a process of broad consultation among heritage practitioners and other interested parties, which later became an important reference point for South Africa. Subsequent discussions of the monument issue in parliament advocated not the wholesale destruction or removal of older monuments, but their re-contextualisation and particularly the addition of commentary or explanatory text panels, which would take cognizance of the 'other side of the story' (Zeller 2000; Hall 2005: 37).

As much as the Namibian example was important for the post-apartheid government's politics of commemoration, one must not forget an important precedent within South Africa's own history. When Afrikaner Nationalists came to power in 1948 they carefully refrained from destroying older monuments erected by Anglophone South Africans. In the interest of unity and nation-building, they preferred to add their own monuments to the record, in some cases even showing particular caution not to offend the British (Tomaselli et al. 1996; Tomaselli and Mpofu 1997). Here again, it was political and perhaps economic considerations that contributed to the decision, as the National Party could not afford to further divide the white population minority and ultimately needed the cooperation of British South Africans for the smooth implementation of apartheid policies. In parallel fashion, it appears that the new post-apartheid government needed the cooperation of the white minority for the successful implementation of a peaceful transformation process. Recent proposals for a more radical dealing with the symbolic remnants of the old order might thus suggest that the sense of dependency on such cooperation has diminished, as the new socio-political order has established itself, having gained confidence and international recognition during the course of the past one-and-a-half decades.

## The need for old monuments as points of reference

I have suggested above that there may have been a number of (largely unacknowledged) factors and pressures that ultimately contributed to the decision to preserve colonial and apartheid-era monuments, but high-level officials from political and heritage management circles always stressed one particular view in their public statements about the issue. Older monuments should be retained, albeit depoliticised, recommended André Wessels (1994: 283), for instance, so that they can become 'symbols of a chequered past' and 'the basis for a better common future'. 'We've got to be able to live with our heritage, as bad as it was ...' stated Themba Wakashe (1994: 35), national co-ordinator for Arts and Culture South Africa (ACSA). 'The most crucial reason why we should preserve history, is to avoid memory losses. Through the preservation of our monuments, we ensure that we do not forget the past' (ibid.). These sentiments are echoed by media reports and newspaper headlines such as 'Stuck with apartheid's monuments. Offensive sites should serve as reminders of our turbulent past' (Jordan 1997). Even for members of the international community and foreign tourists it is important to 'see the dark side of our history', argues Jayiya (1999) in the context of Thabo Mbeki's inauguration as president in 1999, when the colonial and apartheid era statues on the grounds of the Union Buildings in Pretoria had been covered up in black cloth for the occasion.[15] 'We will never achieve public closure without recognising our past', said Noziswe Madlala-Routledge (2001), then Deputy Minister of Defence, summing up the debate. In other words, the legacy of the past, its discourses and meta-narratives must be confronted, not erased. Monuments representing the old order should be retained to keep the memory of the past alive – however painful that might be – in order to define the present and the future.

Not only do such arguments legitimate the preservation of existing monuments but, what is more, they encourage the conscious and persistent conjuring up of the past. The memory of oppression presumably triggered by such symbolic objects constitutes an important aspect of nation-building and validates the present socio-political order, especially as such memories are inextricably intertwined with those of resistance. The symbolic representations of the past are thus appropriated for the purposes of the new order. The recent international interest in heritage and the preservation of the past transcends nostalgia, argues Lowenthal (1988 [1985]). It is motivated by the fact that the past provides a 'legion of benefits', the most essential and pervasive of which is to help us make sense of and give meaning to our

[15] Covering up statues of the old regime with dark cloth is a common reaction in times of radical socio-political change. Compare, for instance, the covering of the Marx-Engels Monument behind the Palace of the Republic in Berlin in August 1990 (Koshar 2000: 5).

experience of the present. In short, it is integral to our sense of identity (ibid.: 36, 39, 41).

Lowenthal's writings and those of other prominent scholars in the emergent field of heritage studies are primarily informed by the European context and specifically the British experience of a growing obsession with heritage, or what Hewison (1987) calls the 'heritage industry'. The past referred to in Lowenthal's book is 'a well-loved past' (ibid.: 47), the 'good old times', represented through romanticised images that encourage positive identification, provide enrichment, escape and guidance. But from the perspective of the South African majority, it would appear, the past is instead associated with memories of suffering and humiliation. Paradoxically, in the context of much contemporary talk about moral regeneration, even a tainted past can be invoked as the 'good old times', when brave ordinary people died for their ideals of freedom and human rights at the brutal hand of the state's 'security' forces, as opposed to members of today's morally corrupt society, who die for their cell phones at the hand of unscrupulous criminals.

I want to demonstrate in the following chapters that the conscious conjuring up of the past through various institutionalised forms of public commemoration, the deliberate drawing of attention to existing monuments by juxtaposing them with new ones and the tactical appropriation and recontextualization of older monuments for the purpose of reconciliation and nation-building have all become integral and defining aspects of the current politics of memory in post-apartheid South Africa. As much as heritage tends to be associated with a romanticised, sanitised past, heritage can also prevent us from reliving 'the burdens of history, the atrocities, errors and crimes of the past' (Graham et al. 2000: 40). It could be argued that some of the older monuments have been left unaltered not primarily out of respect for the heritage of a minority group, but to serve as examples representing those 'burdens of history'. They are valued precisely for their 'oppressive associations'. They function as ideologically charged beacons with which new monuments, representing new values, can effectively be juxtaposed.

## New heritage legislation

Inspired by the Namibian experience and assisted by one of the two UNESCO-sponsored experts (Richard Crewdson), a new South African Heritage Resources Bill was drafted in late 1996 and early 1997, using a widely consultative and transparent approach. Hall (2005) provides a detailed account of this process, which involved a series of meetings among several hundred individuals from the heritage sector and other interested parties over a period of several months to discuss the provisions of the draft bill, its structure and specific content. A six-person drafting committee was

appointed, which conducted research, consulted the legislative frameworks of other (especially emerging) countries throughout the English-speaking world, and took into account the close to 1000 submissions solicited from members of the general public and various stakeholders. After an almost two-year period in limbo, the bill was submitted to Parliament in late 1998 and eventually became law in 1999, being gazetted on 28 April as the NHRA. Effectively, the Act was implemented only the following year, when the NMC was dissolved and replaced with a new statutory body, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), on 1 April 2000.

The new Act combines the established framework of previous conservation practice with innovative elements gleaned from the heritage legislation of other countries and some original aspects based on the specific traditions and needs of the local context. In addition to conserving the built environment as provided for in previous conservation practice, the new legislative framework seeks to address the needs of populations whose culture traditionally prioritises orality, ritual performance, ephemeral objects and symbolically charged features of the landscape over solid, built structures. The NHRA's emphasis on 'living heritage' reflects and extends international trends towards the increasing acceptance of 'intangible heritage'. This category refers to aesthetic, spiritual, symbolic or other social values that ordinary people associate with an object or a site as opposed to the expert-defined architectural or historic significance of tangible artefacts.

Section 36 of the NHRA, on burial grounds and graves, is of particular importance for this study. It acknowledges the strong attachment of most African cultures to ancestral burial places. All graves older than sixty years are automatically protected, and consultation and agreement with descendants is required if such graves are affected by development. While the previous legislation protected the graves of military casualties from South Africa's long history of colonial wars, the new Act explicitly includes the graves of the victims of the Liberation Struggle even though they are less than sixty years old (Hall 2005: 38-9; Deacon 2004: 310-11; NHRA 1999).[16]

A politically important aspect of the new NHRA was its decentralisation, relegating control over the identification, conservation and management of

[16] This went hand in glove with a re-orientation of museums throughout the country. Much discussion took place, especially during the 1990s, about the relevance of museums in South Africa under a new dispensation. New priorities, such as serving the needs of previously marginalised communities, catering to a much broadened and more diverse audience, and reflecting the values of different cultural groups, posed major challenges for the country's public museums. These were further aggravated by curtailed state subsidies and the legacy of the past, for instance, major gaps in the collection which had resulted from decades of following an acquisitions policy that reflected the state ideology of that time. See Odendaal (1994); Pauw (1994); Solani and ka Mpumlwana (2001).

heritage to the provinces. This was a strategic political move to allow for a balancing out of specific regional identities. It was intended to prevent the failure of nation-building through its perceived threat to diverging identities (Graham et al. 2000: 122). It was also, to some extent, a concession by the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU) to opposition political forces concentrated in particular regions, notably the IFP in KZN and the New National Party (NNP) in the Western Cape, the only two provinces where the ANC did not attain control after the 1994 General Elections. During the following years, all provinces were supposed to establish their own provincial heritage resources authority (PHRA), while in KZN the regional NMC office formally merged with the KMC to form Amafa aKwaZulu-Natali (Amafa).

Having abolished the previous category of 'national monument', the new Act established an alternative system of formal classification for the protection of the country's cultural heritage assets. In coming years, all existing declared monuments, as well as all newly declared heritage sites, are meant to be classified as belonging to one of three categories. Grade 1 sites are those of national significance, which will be administered by SAHRA. Grade 2 sites are of provincial and Grade 3 sites of local significance, and will fall under the responsibility of the provinces and municipalities respectively. This means that all 'monuments' in the country will, over time, be assessed and possibly reclassified. All National Monuments proclaimed under the previous legislation will automatically be reclassified as Provincial Heritage Sites while National Heritage Sites (with a few exceptions) will have to be motivated afresh. For all listed sites, the outcome of this assessment process and resultant categorisation will form the basis of their future heritage management plan, including recommendations for changes, relocation, or further development (NHRA 1999; Hart and Winter 2001; Itzkin, personal interview 2003; Hall, personal communication 2006).

The most important implication of the new grading system is the complete re-evaluation of the existing heritage landscape according to partially new criteria (some of which are still in the process of being developed), and the reconsideration of the relevance and significance of each heritage site in terms of new political and social value systems and demographic changes. Although continued protection is ensured for all previously declared sites, their potential 'downgrading' will inevitably affect the positioning of their significance in official heritage discourses (from school books to tourism brochures) and the allocation of resources for their upkeep or future development. Combined with the strategic proclamation of new heritage sites, the reclassification will – in the long run – reshape the South African heritage landscape and provide it with a new ideological imprint.

The preservation of heritage is invariably a politicised and culturally biased process, both in terms of which sites and artefacts are preserved,

whose cultural heritage is deemed worthy of preserving for future generations, and in how an object is conserved and presented. Influenced by the Afrikaner nationalism that prevailed during the apartheid period and its focus on commemorating an heroic Afrikaner past, the National Monuments Council declared many sites National Monuments that testify to victorious battles of Afrikaners over indigenous people, as well as to the Afrikaners' suffering at the hands of the British during the Anglo-Boer War (Hall 2006). In the face of the existing evidence, it is rather ironic to note – as Hart and Winter (2001) have done – that the NMC had an official policy not to declare 'directly political' sites to be commemorative monuments or memorials. Although the authors acknowledge that there were some obvious exceptions to the 'directly political' rule (e.g. Dr Verwoerd's holiday cottage at Betty's Bay in the Western Cape) and that the underlying cultural bias of the so-called 'non-political' declarations is unarguable, they maintain that the proclamation criteria of the new NHRA are much more overtly political in comparison (ibid.: 90). Newly declared sites have generally become more contemporary in nature, often associated with the liberation struggle and the recent transformation. They are not necessarily focused on physical objects, but on intangible heritage (notably events and people), posing new challenges for heritage conservation.

As much as one might agree with this assessment, the more contemporary and more overtly political nature of sites nowadays deemed worthy of protection and commemoration is an inevitable result of the focus on resistance and the liberation struggle as the foundation myths of the post-apartheid nation. The key historical events in the Afrikaner 'struggle' – their subjection of the 'natives', the 'grand-narrative' of the Great Trek, and the Anglo-Boer war – simply happen to date further back in history and are not associated with the strategic moves of specific political parties. However, where the new conservation practice clearly differs from the old is that commemorative monuments and memorials can now be included for declaration as national heritage sites, and – what is more – SAHRA, the PHRAs and municipal heritage departments are even involved in constructing such monuments. 'Heritage conservation is clearly moving from the recognition and conservation of artefacts of the past, towards the construction of artefacts in order for the future to remember the present and contemporary past', conclude Hart and Winter (2001: 90).

To the relief of some and the dismay of others, the NHRA ensured the conservation of existing monuments but also mandated SAHRA to formulate and coordinate policy on the transformation and management of heritage resources, which opened the door for future changes in response to specific political directives. This happened as early as September 2000, when Cabinet formally requested the DACST 'to develop a policy document about the replacing of apartheid monuments'. One might interpret this rather radical-sounding brief as an affirmative resurgence of the bold transform-

ative agenda embedded in the ANC's earlier policy on arts and culture. But Sifiso Ndlovu, formerly CEO of SAHRA, insists that – on the contrary – the request for policy guidelines was rather aimed at preventing any hasty decisions, uncontrolled interventions or even destruction of controversial monuments, following the furore caused by the removal of the Verwoerd statue (personal communication 2007). In actual fact, the specific context prompting Cabinet's request appears to have been the perceived need for a reshaping of the identity of the Union Buildings, where Cabinet wanted to see statues and busts of former heads of state replaced with leader figures representing the new democracy (e.g. the removal of the Hertzog statue in the Union Building Gardens and its replacement with one of Lilian Ngoyi). [17]

Be that as it may, the Minister, Dr Ben Ngubane, promptly instructed the chairperson of SAHRA, W. Kuse, 'to compile a register of all apartheid and colonial monuments that inhabit the South African public space' as a matter of urgency and to draft a policy document which 'should motivate for the removal, reconfiguration, and re-interpretation of the colonial-apartheid monuments and should also advise me on the commissioning of new monuments to address historical imbalances'.[18] In response, Kuse sought clarification: '… if I understand your letter correctly, it is not the declared "national monuments" formally protected under the old legislation that is of primary concern to the Cabinet, but rather the many statues and memorials from the colonial and apartheid period that dot the landscape of our country'.[19] He also requested financial assistance from the DACST and an adequate timeframe to complete the task.

Although the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC)[20] eventually allocated a substantial budget to the mammoth task,[21] it was only in 2002-2003 that SAHRA embarked on a pilot project of compiling an inventory of public monuments and memorials, which was limited to a sample of three cities: Bloemfontein, Cape Town and Pretoria, the country's judicial, legislative and administrative capitals respectively. The overall project was

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17 Shaping a new identity for the Union Buildings, Pretoria, Cabinet Memorandum, 14 September 1999, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 4, file 6/16/7.

18 'Notes from Cabinet Committee Meeting of 16 August 2000: DACST to develop a policy document about replacing apartheid monuments', Letter Director-General to Minister, 4 September 2000, DACST, Legacy Project and General, Vol. 7, File 6/16/7. Letter Ngubane to Kuse 7/9/2000.

19 Letter W. Kuse (SAHRA) to Minister Ngubane, Cabinet Directive: The Development of a policy document about replacing apartheid monuments', 28 September 2000. DAC. New Legacy Projects No Vol. #, File 6/16/7.

20 In 2002, the DACST split into two departments, namely the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and the Department of Science and Technology.

21 An amount of R500 000 was mentioned in a letter (fax) from R.M. Adams (DAC) to P. Madiba (SAHRA), undated, 'Policy on Apartheid Monuments', DAC, New Legacy Projects, No Vol. #, File 6/16/7.

headed by Pumla Madiba, CEO of SAHRA and coordinated by Joanna Marx from the SAHRA Head Office in Cape Town, but individual surveys were awarded via public tender to different project teams in each city. The task included the visual documentation and recording of researched base data about each commemorative marker, as well as various processes of community participation and consultation to gauge public opinions about the monuments. The compiled report and policy recommendations were submitted to SAHRA Council in November 2003 and subsequently to the Minister of Arts and Culture (SAHRA Monuments project report 2003; Viney, personal communication 2007; Marx, personal communication 2006).

Significantly, the SAHRA Annual Report (2002-03: 20) describes the purpose of the survey project as seeking

> … to facilitate development of policy for the creation and erection of monuments and memorials in a manner that observes the principles of the Constitution and the White paper entitled All our legacies, our future. The policy will also be in the spirit of the National Heritage Resources Act that, among other things, aims to conserve the heritage of communities, define national cultural identity, affirm cultural diversity, shape national character and build our nation.

There was no mention of a policy aimed at the 'removal and reconfiguration' of apartheid and colonial monuments, as originally requested. On the contrary, each individual report emphasises the importance of conserving the surveyed monuments and statues – all of them – as cultural heritage items and as historical testimony to a chequered past.[22] The installation of new monuments, located in appropriate places, was once again recommended as a key strategy to achieve a more balanced heritage landscape.

Andrew Hall, CEO of SAHRA at the time, recalls the conservation body's reluctance to transform and the impact of staff turnover, where many individuals with visionary approaches left the organisation and their newly-appointed replacements were inducted by remaining staff members into entrenched value systems and established conservation practices. To some extent, he concludes, the vision that had guided the development of the NHRA was corrupted by the processes of its implementation (personal interview 2006). However, one might also see benefits in SAHRA's conservative, conservationist approach, because changes in the heritage landscape that are likely to be permanent should perhaps not be based on emotional decisions made under political pressure 'in the heat of the moment'.

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[22] Only in exceptional cases can one find a cautious suggestion that some action should be taken, notably in the case of the Bloemfontein Children's monument (see next chapter), although it is not clear whether its removal occurred in response to the SAHRA project.

Before engaging (in later chapters) with the application of the new heritage legislation and associated local policies, I now want to take a step back and explore what happened in practice, 'on the ground', in the field of public commemoration during the transition and early post-election period. It will become evident in the following three chapters that concurrently with the process of establishing policy frameworks, various agencies of the state, non-governmental organisations, political parties and individuals began to initiate or support the identification and commemoration of key events and persons through public markers of various kinds. Largely driven by a desire to pay tribute, the increasing material presence of these spontaneous new monuments represented a dynamic of its own, which may implicitly have impacted on the policy development process itself.

Because these early commemorative markers often materialised in a policy vacuum, without substantial funding, artistic expertise and professional heritage management guidance, they were invariably primarily inspired by existing monuments and memorials that ordinary people were familiar with and surrounded by. These early monuments imitate the established vocabulary and time-honoured formulae of public commemoration, but decisively counter the 'message' of the inherited landscape of memory by endorsing new perspectives on a contested past.

# 2

# Paying Tribute: The First Public Memorials to the Victims of the Liberation Movements

## Introduction

Monuments and memorials are not erected for the sake of the dead, who demand our respect, but for the sake of the living, who 'need' such markers for a myriad of psychological, societal and political reasons. A memorial can facilitate the process of mourning and assist the families and friends of the deceased in attaining a sense of healing and closure. For communities a dignified public memorial constitutes a way of honouring those in their midst who made sacrifices for their ideals and a better life for all. Political organisations in whose name the victims fought and lost their lives use memorials to pay tribute to the dead and emphasise the purpose and ultimate societal benefit of the sacrifice. For those in society who are not directly bereaved, notably later generations, the memorial serves as a transmitter of memories and associated value systems, while for outsiders, including tourists, memorials are meant to evoke empathy and instil a sense of respect – both for the victims of the past and by extension for all members of the present society, as descendents of the heroes of the past.

For those who initiate it, a memorial to a departed leader or a select group of victims establishes and publicly advertises a lasting, visible link with the dead they have chosen to honour. In times of political transition, the public commemoration, especially through public monuments and memorials, of deceased heroes, victims or fallen comrades can be a strategic move to legitimise the emergence of a new socio-political order. The recognition of the use value of specific 'dead bodies' (Verdery 1999) is part of a larger process of appropriating the past for the political, social, cultural and even economic purposes of the present – a key characteristic of 'heritage'.

This chapter focuses on the Umkhonto memorial (also called the ANC monument, MK statue or Solomon Mahlangu memorial) in Mamelodi, outside the capital city of Pretoria. Dedicated to the fallen cadres of MK, it was unveiled in what is now called Solomon Mahlangu Square on 6 April

1991. This somewhat make-shift commemorative sculpture is of immense historical importance as it constitutes perhaps the very first such memorial officially erected in a public space by one of the liberation movements. It is a cultural product testifying to a crucial moment in South Africa's history, namely the fragile transition period of the early 1990s, when a fundamental transformation of the socio-political order was in sight, but the apartheid regime's hold on power had not yet ended. It was a time of exceptional tension and political violence and simultaneously a time of negotiation – over a peaceful transfer of power from white minority to black majority rule, but also, I argue, over claims to political power in the new order and over the symbolic power of representing the past.

To this day, the question of who really liberated the country is a contentious matter. Some resent the fact that the contribution of the United Democratic Front (UDF),[1] formed in 1983 as a multiracial federation of anti-apartheid organisations, to the anti-apartheid movement is habitually eclipsed by the prominent (state-endorsed) celebration of the ANC's role. Others maintain that the effort of the non-violent yet persistent pressure exerted by the churches, the unions, and a variety of non-political organisations was far more decisive in the eventual collapse of the apartheid order than the forceful interventions of MK. The most vocal contender to the role of liberator, however, is the PAC, today a minute opposition party scarcely represented in the ANC-dominated parliament, but in the past an attractive option for many young black activists because it was far more 'radical' than the ANC. But the PAC soon developed a poor public profile due to a lack of able leadership and dismally executed operations, which still overshadows its role as a political party today and especially its representation in the heritage sector.

[1] The UDF was founded in 1983 as a 'united front' of various religious and cultural organisations, civic associations, trade unions, and student organisations in the immediate context of the apartheid government's impending introduction of the Tricameral Parliament. The UDF became an extremely important anti-apartheid force within South Africa at a time when the ANC and other liberation movements were banned and forced to operate underground and from exile. The UDF looked in many ways like an internal wing of the ANC, but as opposed to the latter, did not associate with the armed struggle. From the mid-1980s, however, some organisations within the UDF followed a more militant path. The UDF eventually disbanded in 1991, after the ANC had been unbanned and returned to the country (SA History Online, www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/organsations/udf/history.htm, retrieved April 2008).

Photo 2.1 Umkhonto Memorial (also called Solomon Mahlangu memorial), Mamelodi (Tshwane), unveiled 1991.

## Competition ANC – PAC

The ANC was founded in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress to represent the interests of the marginalised African majority. From the late 1940s onwards, tensions and ideological differences within the organisation came to the fore. They were partly the result of the growing acceptance of Marxist ideas in a context of increasing disillusionment with liberal humanist thought among the African elite. Some parts of the membership did not approve of the ANC's proposed move towards multi-racial membership in alliance with the SACP, propagating Africanist or black nationalist values instead. In April 1959 the latter faction seceded from the ANC and formed the PAC under the chairmanship of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe (1924-78), with Potlako Leballo as secretary (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 412; Karis and Gerhart 1997: 46; Mgxashe 2006; Pheko 1994; Terreblanche 2002: 349; Welsh 2000: 454).

For both of the now competing organisations the mass protest action against the pass laws, which led to the fateful shooting incident at Sharpeville in 1960, was a crucial campaign and rallying point, as will be

explained in the next chapter. After the Sharpeville Uprising, both the PAC and the ANC were declared illegal organisations in terms of new Government legislation, forcing them to operate underground. The PAC thus hardly had a year in which to build its organisation before many of its leaders, including Sobukwe, were jailed. Others managed to flee the country. Both the ANC and the PAC established headquarters in London and Dar-es-Salaam, and offices in various other African countries. The ANC together with the Communist Party launched its armed wing, MK, in 1961, while the PAC sponsored the underground movement *Poqo* ('We go it alone'). While the former confined violence to acts of sabotage, the latter was unequivocally engaging in aggressive activities and assassinations, often attracting more militant activists (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 421; Karis and Gerhart 1997: 46).

The rapid growth of the PAC in townships around Pretoria, especially Mamelodi, from the late 1950s to the early 1960s has been attributed to the failure of the ANC to accommodate radical elements and exploit specific campaign opportunities to promote a more militant approach. The local ANC leadership was perceived as old and out of touch, while the PAC leaders were young and aggressive, and therefore attractive to the young. Moreover, gangsterism and a prominent gang-culture, which too attracted the young, prevailed in Mamelodi from early on, imported there through the forced removals. When in December 1962 the PAC leadership issued a directive that by 1963 every PAC branch should have a minimum of 1000 members, Philemon Tefu, promoted from PAC cell leader to Task Force leader in 1962, enthusiastically embarked on a vigorous recruitment drive in Mamelodi. He ensured that the *tsotsies*, gangsters and criminals were brought into the ranks of the PAC, because they were seen as brave and accustomed to killing, and hence well suited to play a leading role in the party's plans for insurrection and violent attacks against the white enemy (SADET 2004: 305-15).

Most of these planned campaigns, which were not confined to Mamelodi, were ill-conceived, erratically planned and disorganised, driven by impatient, poorly trained young radicals motivated by anger and hatred. The ranks of the PAC were also infiltrated by informers, and the security forces usually intervened well before attacks could be carried out. The PAC leadership of Mamelodi, as well as of Atteridgeville, was arrested on the eve of 21 March 1963. Tefu was charged with conspiracy to commit acts of violence and, following a short trial in June of that year, was sent to Robben Island. He was joined by many *Poqo* members from all over South Africa, who were the first apartheid-era political prisoners on the island (SADET 2004: 315-18).

In his recently published autobiography PAC activist Mxolisi 'Bra Ace' Mgxashe (2006) provides insight into the competition between the two

parties from a PAC perspective. Kwesi Kwaa Prah aptly observes in his foreword to Mgxashe's (2006: 15) book that

> … [t]he writing of the PAC's history is very much a poor shadow of the historiography we have seen of the ANC. Too little has been written about the PAC and much of this has to do with the relatively poor profile it has cut in comparison with the ANC.

Although more literature is gradually emerging in this field, notably from the PAC leadership (e.g. Pheko 1994; 2001; 2002), I would argue that the under-representation of the PAC story, both in the 'writing of history' and especially in its public representation through the heritage sector, is partly a reflection of unequal power relations, but more importantly perhaps driven by a desire to protect the inspiring narrative and heroic glory of the liberation struggle as a whole from being tainted or compromised by greater exposure of the PAC's militant stance and especially the terrorist activities of *Poqo*.

For a short while, from 1960-62, the exiled PAC and ANC were able to hold a United Front together, but this soon collapsed due to tensions within South Africa. The rivalry and ideological differences between the two organisations was further entrenched when the PAC, in opposition to the Soviet-supported ANC-Communist Party alliance, issued a pro-Peking statement in 1966 and superficially aligned itself with Maiost China. During the mid-1970s Steve Biko, leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, attempted to reconcile and reunite the PAC and the ANC. In his view differences over ideology and tactics should be set aside in the interest of a unified resistance movement. Despite Robert Sobukwe's initial support for this stance, the rift between the two liberation movements continued to persist and the PAC has remained in opposition to the ANC up to the present day (Karis and Gerhart 1997: 39-40, 94,149; Davenport and Saunders 2000: 421, 448; Omer-Cooper 1994: 246-8).

In the volatile competitive context of the emergent post-apartheid order following the unbanning of the opposition parties and the release of Nelson Mandela, the ANC and the PAC each began to install a public memorial in Mamelodi, dedicated to their respective fallen comrades. It was a way of paying tribute, to show gratitude to those who – through their suffering and sacrifice – had helped bring the new order into being. But with the anti-apartheid conflict virtually over, I argue, the commemorative effort was also a way of 'coming out' for the now unbanned liberation movements, for the establishment of a redefined, visible public profile, as a platform for political action and a legitimate place in the emergent new order.

## Mamelodi township

The area now covered by the township of Mamelodi once belonged to the farm Vlakfontein 329JR. It is located about 12 miles from the city centre of Pretoria in easterly direction, and was subdivided into three parts in 1874. Mamelodi was founded on 30 October 1945 when the Pretoria City Council bought parts two and three from the African and European Investment Company Ltd for the purpose of establishing a black residential area. Vlakfontein ('Vlakke') was officially proclaimed a township in June 1953 and re-named Mamelodi, 'place of joy' in Tswana, in July 1962. When Mamelodi became fully occupied in the late 1950s, additional land was acquired to the east, specifically to house people who had forcibly been removed from Lady Selbourne, which was declared a white group area in 1958 (Walker et al. 1991).

This historical background of forced removals was an important factor to funnel the heat of political activism and resistance in Mamelodi, especially as many former landlords were turned into rent-payers. Philemon Tefu, who later became an important PAC leader in Mamelodi, deeply resented the move, which disrupted his schooling and his social network. According to him, the experience of forced removals played a direct role in the political organisation of Mamelodi residents and in the development of both the ANC and the PAC (SADET 2004: 304-5).

The township was administered by the Mamelodi Town Council, originally established as the Mamelodi Community Council in 1977 (later called Mamelodi City Council). As there were no large taxable businesses in the area, the collection of rents was the only source of income for the council and decisions about rent increases were highly unpopular, often leading to protests and tensions. In the early 1980s the Mamelodi Civic Association was established as part of the greater Civic Association movement that spread throughout South Africa during this period, challenging the legitimacy of black urban councils. The Mamelodi Civic Association to some extent became a party in opposition to the Mamelodi City Council, pushing for the concept of one-city, one tax-base. Residents were encouraged to show solidarity against the council through rent boycotts, and Mamelodi, like other townships, became increasingly run-down as a result.

As in other townships throughout the country, the period of the 1980s was marked by unrest and violence in Mamelodi. In 1985-86 riots broke out over rent increases. On 21 November 1985 a crowd of people gathered outside the Mamelodi Town Council offices with a number of grievances. Shots were fired and thirteen people, including a baby, were killed and many more injured in what became known as the Mamelodi Massacre (Webster 1986). On 9 July 1990 another rent rally was held at the local Pitje Stadium and 230 people were injured when tear gas and rubber bullets were fired. Three Councillors and the mayor, A. Kekana, resigned from the Council in

1985. Eventually all councillors but one in both Mamelodi and Atteridgeville resigned (Walker et al. 1991; Jacobson, personal conversation 2004).

## Umkhonto memorial

Marking an important new trend, the Mamelodi Civic Association decided to memorialise the victory of their organised rally against authorities considered illegitimate to commemorate the fallen cadres of MK. Although the Civic Association was not officially party-affiliated, Pasty Malefo, who was then in the association's public relations office, recalls that all of its members were ANC supporters at the time (personal communication 2004). Local activist Richard Chauke became the chair of the monument committee.[2] The initial plan was to set up a 'proper' monument and money was collected from the residents of Mamelodi, but as there were not enough funds, a local welder was eventually commissioned to make the present statue. Chauke claims he designed the sculpture himself, based on the elements of the ANC logo – the wheel, the shield and the spear, held up high by the stylized figure of a man made of square tubing (personal communication 2007).

Ideologically and visually (in terms of its somewhat make-shift nature), the Umkhonto Memorial can perhaps be seen as a belated culmination point of the 'People's Parks' phenomenon, which manifested itself in the mid-1980s in Mamelodi and several other townships in the region. The short-lived People's Parks were linked to the ANC's 'operation clean-up' campaign and encouraged township residents to actively take charge of the cleaning up and beautification – through creative, artistic statements – of their environment. It was meant to 'conscientise' people with the aims of the liberation movement and reclaim public spaces (Sack 1989).

The significance of this phenomenon must be understood against the background of forced removals and especially the spatial layout of the new townships, which were deliberately designed as dormitory locations without major public spaces, partly because the latter might have encouraged public gatherings, a sense of community, organisation and political activism. Hence Mamelodi has a tradition of reclaiming public space and creatively marking resistance through sculptural productions on public display, which can be read in a wider sense as a way of claiming space in history. Although Richard Chauke was still imprisoned on Robben Island at the time of the

[2] The history of this memorial and the circumstances of its inception appear to be completely undocumented. Apart from Pasty Malefo, I am grateful to Hlomane Khumalo, Chairperson of the current South African Civic Organisation Mamelodi, and Jabu Mailula from the Mamelodi Tourism Committee, who were very helpful in reconstructing some of this history in a personal interview in January 2003.

People's Parks, other committee members had been part of that experience, be it as participants or observers, and may have been influenced by it (personal interview Mailula and Khumalo 2003).

The memorial was set up adjacent to the site where the 'Mamelodi Massacre' had occurred in 1985, thus establishing the symbolic significance of the place, which has recently been powerfully reinforced through the upgrading and additional 'framing' of the site, as will be described in the fourth chapter. The surrounding square was renamed in honour of local activist Solomon Mahlangu, whose body was exhumed from its original burial place in Atteridgeville and reburied in the local Mamelodi cemetery on 6 April 1993, exactly two years after the unveiling of the Umkhonto memorial. Today his grave site there is easily identifiable: a prominent memorial stone topped by a cylindrical marker displaying the ANC logo.

Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu (1956-1979) was born in Mamelodi and became involved in the liberation struggle in the context of the June 1976 Soweto Uprising, which will be discussed later. He joined the ANC and left the country in October 1976 to be trained as a member of MK. In June 1977 he returned to South Africa and was arrested by government authorities following a shooting incident in Johannesburg, in which two whites were killed. Although the court accepted that Mahlangu had not fired a shot, he was sentenced to death on 2 March 1978. On the eve of his hanging in Pretoria Central Prison on 6 April 1979, the United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting to protest the execution and U.S. President Jimmy Carter made a personal appeal for commutation of the sentence. Mahlangu immediately became a martyr to the liberation struggle and an icon of the prevailing injustice. His execution prompted a new wave of international condemnation of the apartheid regime (Uwechue 1991: 431-2; Karis and Gerhart 1997: 282-6).

The Umkhonto memorial was unveiled by Chris Hani, who had just taken over as the new Chief of Staff of MK, and Mahlangu's mother, Martha (Anonymous 1991b), although the plaque mentions only the former. The presence of the mother linked the local hero to the unnamed group of fallen cadres that the memorial is dedicated to. It emphasises the human aspect of the occasion, allowing others to emotionally identify and empathise with the victim(s) through the mother's personal grief. The presence of Hani, a ranking member of both the ANC military wing and the SACP, stressed the organisational aspect: Mahlangu's symbolic significance as a courageous member and martyr of the liberation struggle, and the fact that the memorial is a tribute not only to him as an individual hero but also to all of those who died with him for the cause of liberation. It is a tribute to the ANC as an organisation and liberation movement in alliance with the SACP.

It is worth emphasising that both Solomon Mahlangu and the victims of the Mamelodi Massacre, which provided the immediate context for the installation of the Umhhonto memorial, were fundamentally non-aggressive,

while the symbolism of the memorial clearly relates to the armed struggle and primarily honours MK. This may strike some as contradictory. It certainly underlines the opportunistic appropriation and symbolic coding of popularly rooted and emotionally charged past events and persons for the political needs of the present.

## Contestation

Only days before the unveiling of the memorial, Hani had publicly remarked that a continuation of the ANC ceasefire would depend on 'the behaviour of the regime'. According to a newspaper report in *The Star*, this reinforced 'Hani's image among whites as that of the man to be most feared in the ANC, the dark side of the new South Africa' (Johnson 1991). Hani had replaced Joe Slovo as 'white South Africa's *bête noire*' (ibid.), and indeed Hani was assassinated by white extremists two years later. Only days after its unveiling, the contested nature of the new memorial in Mamelodi, this bold affirmation of black liberation values and tribute to MK, became evident. A newspaper report in the *Sowetan* on 9 April quotes Pasty Malefo as saying that the statue had been removed for 'safe-keeping'.

> He could not, however, confirm reports that the statue was removed following threats by right-wing elements to deface it. Reports circulating in Pretoria yesterday suggested a minibus-load of armed men had gone to the statue. … The men were driven away by residents (Anonymous 1991 (*Sowetan*)).

It is not clear precisely when this happened, but Hlomane Khumalo (ANC), Chairperson of the South African Civic Organisation Mamelodi, explained that short after the unveiling of the memorial a group of opponents clandestinely approached the statue during the night and fixed explosives to its middle section (personal interview 2003). Their presumed intention to blow up or melt down the entire sculpture failed, but the circular hole in its centre remains a lasting testimony to the incident. Although the remarkable regularity of the damage almost suggests that the statue may have originally been cast with the hole in it, early photographs show the statue intact (e.g. those published in the *New Nation* on 12 April and *Beeld* on 10 May 1991). The hole has unintentionally become a powerful signifier in its own right, supporting and dramatising the memorial's implicit narrative. By impressively embellishing the force and extent of opposition, the statue in retrospect becomes a striking assertion of the liberation movement and of 'the people's' fortitude against the violent opposition of a minute but ruthless reactionary minority.

But the Umkhonto memorial was not contested only by real or imagined white right-wingers. *Beeld* published a photograph of the memorial (on 10 May 1991) covered in spray-painted PAC slogans (the incident reportedly

occurred on Workers' Day). An anonymous pamphlet had been distributed in Mamelodi, accusing Richard Chauke of embezzlement in the context of the memorial's installation. Chauke insisted that he did not believe the PAC to be responsible for the vandalism, but rather somebody who intended to cause friction between the ANC and the PAC (Anonymous 1991a). This must be understood in the context of the two organisations' history of competition and sometimes violent outbursts of rivalry, but also in the context of persisting hopes of healing past differences at the dawn of a new era.

Photo 2.2 PAC memorials, Mamelodi Cemetery (Tshwane Municipality), unveiled 1992.

## PAC memorial initiative

The idea for the Umkhonto Memorial may have originated in response to a PAC initiative for a large-scale pyramidal stone memorial set up in a prominent position in the grounds of the Mamelodi Cemetery. Although it was unveiled only on 1 August 1992, more than a year after the unveiling of the Umkhonto memorial, its initiator and builder, Philemon Tefu, had begun to raise funds for this memorial some time after his release from imprisonment on Robben Island in 1986 (Khumalo personal interview 2003). Along with the hard physical labour he had been subjected to on the island, Tefu had acquired some construction skills through his work in the

Building Group. Upon his release, he built the Mamelodi memorial with stones similar to those found on Robben Island (Pheko 2002: 26-31).

Sarah Mandrup (2004) interviewed Tefu (whom she strangely never mentions by name, but only refers to as 'the architect') about the symbolism of the memorial. He explained to her that the pyramid shape was meant as a symbolic link with 'the rest of the African continent' and that he was inspired by the PAC manifesto with its Pan-African references to one African nation stretching from the Cape to Cairo. Some of the roughly hewn stones are apparently consciously positioned to allude to the geographical outline of the African continent. The similarity of the masonry work with that found on Robben Island was meant to establish a symbolic relationship between the forced labour of the political prisoners at Robben Island and the slaves who built the pyramids of Ancient Egypt (2004: 16).

Unveiled by PAC president Mlamli Clarence Makwetu, the memorial is inscribed 'in memory of the Poqo cadres executed by the racist minority regime and to Apla fallen combatants', all of whom are listed by name with the place and date of their death. It is significant to consider, in this context, that the apartheid regime used to withhold the bodies of executed prisoners, and families were often not informed where these were buried (Ali Hlongwane cited in Mandrup 2004: 20). Many hanged PAC/Poqo members are apparently buried in mass graves (and without funerals) at this cemetery in Mamelodi. Tefu's memorial is hence a collective tombstone intended to restore the dignity of the dead. But a memorial of this kind also impressively demonstrated to the families and the general public alike how the PAC as an organisation cared for its comrades and honoured those who sacrificed their lives in the name of the organisation. With plans for such a prominent tribute to PAC members under way, the ANC might have felt the need to similarly honour their fallen combatants. Although Malefo strongly denied that 'the one was put up because of the other' (personal communication 2004), I believe that the history of competition between the ANC and the PAC and the unique historical circumstances of the early 1990s support such speculation.

## Pointing to the dead

Almost two decades have passed since the ANC and PAC memorials were installed in Mamelodi and the socio-political landscape has changed fundamentally. Many new heritage projects have since emerged and the process of commemorating the past through public monuments and memorials is firmly established and institutionalised, but the historical rivalry between the ANC and the PAC still impacts on this process.

When the ambitious new Sharpeville memorial, initiated and funded by the ANC-dominated council of Vereeniging, was unveiled on 21 March

2002 by Deputy President Jacob Zuma (ANC) at a highly publicised function that included Nelson Mandela (ANC) and Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa (SACP) as dignitaries, the PAC was outraged. Since the Sharpeville massacre had resulted entirely from a PAC-organised resistance campaign, for many members of the PAC leadership the new memorial constituted just another incident in a series of attempts by the ANC to appropriate key icons of the liberation struggle. This included the naming of the new public holiday, 21 March, 'Human Rights Day' as opposed to 'Sharpeville Day', as it was known and commemorated by the PAC and many others in the past decades.

PAC leader, Motsoko Pheko, in his publication with the telling title *The True History of Sharpeville Must be Told* (2001), sarcastically expresses his gratitude to the ANC government for building the new memorial 'with the taxpayers monies of this country' (sic), and asserts that the PAC would certainly have built 'an impressive national monument in remembrance of Sharpeville' (ibid.) if, he implies, the party enjoyed an equal chance to help itself to such generous public funds. Pheko emphasises that it is now 'of critical importance' to let the world and the younger generation know the 'true' historical facts about the Sharpeville Uprising, 'because there are political opportunists and mischievous mutilators of history who have a vested interest in the falsification of events …' (2001: 6).[3] In protest against the new memorial, significantly not officially called the Sharpeville memorial but 'Human Rights Precinct', the PAC boycotted the public function and PAC officials unveiled a separate memorial at the local cemetery, where all of the victims of the Sharpeville massacre lie buried (Ngidi, Mntungwa and Sapa 2002).

Verdery (1999), in her insightful book *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, highlights the role of politicised funerals and reburials, the claiming of specific symbolically charged 'dead bodies', as a way of legitimising a new socio-political order. The very concreteness, materiality or corporality of bones and corpses, coffins and cremation urns, she says, plays a crucial role in their effectiveness as political symbols, because they can be moved around, displayed or strategically located in specific places (ibid.: 26).

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[3] The dispute is really about the PAC's perception that the ANC led government is distorting the history of the liberation struggle by not according the Sharpeville Uprising the significant status it deserves. As Pheko (2001: 24) puts it in the concluding sentences of his book, 'when one day the true history of this country is written, the Sharpeville Uprising shall assume the prominence of an historical watershed'. The fact that the younger generation at present has considerable knowledge about June 16 but is only vaguely familiar with the historical events of the Sharpeville Uprising (a fact that I can certainly confirm from observations among my own students) suggests that these young people are acquiring an historical consciousness in which ANC-initiated campaigns loom large, whereas the PAC's contribution is all but negligible.

Parallelling the Mamelodi case and almost suggesting the emergence of a geopolitical pattern of commemoration, the site of each memorial – a centrally located public place versus a cemetery at the periphery – significantly impacts on its visibility and status.

Photo 2.3 Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct (Sharpeville Massacre memorial). Sharpeville, unveiled 2002.

Photo 2.4 PAC Memorial at the grave sites of the Sharpeville victims. Sharpeville cemetery, unveiled 2002.

The ANC-initiated memorials at both Mamelodi and Sharpeville clearly score on this point. As in Mamelodi, the memorial structure at Sharpeville marks the historical site of the massacre and constitutes a focal point within the local urban fabric. The authoritative meaning derived from the significance of the site is furthermore compounded, in both instances, by the ambitious – in the case of Sharpeville – outright monumentality of the commemorative effort. The PAC's memorial, conversely, draws legitimacy from the presence of the actual bodies in the cemetery. As Verdery (1999: 27) points out, the presence or absence of real bodies may play a crucial role in lending authority and authenticity to any memorialisation of the dead. In fact the concreteness, the materiality, or the 'thereness' of actual bodies can be critical to their symbolic efficacy. Although the ANC-initiated memorial is only a symbolic site of commemoration, I suggest in Chapter Three that its design attempts to capture the atmosphere of a cemetery, hence conveying an illusion of the presence of the actual dead.

While at Sharpeville both the ANC and the PAC implicitly lay claim to the same group of victims, at Mamelodi two separate groups of fallen comrades were at stake. By pointing to their respective dead, by parading the sacrifices each organisation had made, both the PAC and the ANC competed for credit in the attainment of freedom and legitimate their stake in a future claim to power. More than ten years after the advent of democracy, the old spirit of competition still persists and credibility is still seen to rest on the sacrifices of the past: "Our guerrillas died more than any other political party during the struggle. There were PAC members in prison long before Nelson Mandela and other ANC members", said Motsoko Pheko, president of the PAC in refuting speculations that the PAC may join the ANC (August 2004). Similarly, much of Mgxashe's (2006) autobiography referred to above reads like a personal tribute to his PAC comrades and their victimisation by the security forces. In his recounting of various PAC campaigns and activities, he places particular emphasis on individually naming those who were executed by the apartheid state justice system. The ideological rift between the ANC and the PAC also still runs deep through the Sharpeville community today and creates animosity whenever the issue is raised, concedes Eric Maringa, education officer at the Sharpeville Exhibition Centre (personal communication 2006).

## Rival stakeholders in the representation of the past

One of the most visible sites, both nationally and internationally, where rivalry and contestation between the two liberation movements manifests itself, is Robben Island. This notorious island off the Cape Town coast, where many political prisoners, most famously Nelson Mandela, were incarcerated for their fight against oppression, is not only acknowledged as

one of the country's most emotionally charged sites and a paramount national symbol of resistance, but its symbolic significance has been regarded as universal since UNESCO accorded it the status of World Heritage Site in December 1999. Yet the representation of the history and significance of the island has remained contested to the present day. The contestation began in the late 1980s when it became clear that the maximum security prison operated on Robben Island since 1961 would be closed (this took place in 1991). Various organisations and 'stakeholder'[4] constituencies began to lay claim to the island and widely differing proposals for future development surfaced, which became a matter of political and later public debate. The island is associated not only with a rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage on account of its long history of multifarious human interaction over many centuries, but its relatively untouched and unique ecology make it significant as a natural heritage site (Coombes 2003; Davison 1998; Deacon 1998 and 2004; Kruger 2000; Pheko 2002; Solani and ka Mpumlwana 2001).

In 1993, Peace Visions commissioned a feasibility study to canvass opinions among various stakeholders and determine options for the future of Robben Island. Although the ANC's and the PAC's respective visions shared commonalities, notably the importance of preserving the history of the island and protecting it from proposed development, the two parties differed on how this history should be interpreted and what was most important about Robben Island and its infamous prison. The PAC was keen to foreground the educational aspect of the prison and wanted it to be known as 'Makhanda University' in memory of the Xhosa leader who was held captive on the island for his leadership role in the 1819 rebellion against the British. Coombes (2003: 58) suggests that the insistence on this name 'is also perhaps an indication of the bitterness that erupted over what many in the PAC regarded as the ANC leadership's wilful amnesia over non-ANC initiated activism in the liberation struggle'.

The Robben Island Museum, the institution now charged with the recording and representation of the island's past, has taken a principled stand that the entire history of the island must be recorded, but the prison period is clearly prioritised, especially in terms of public representation. Since January

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[4] The term 'stakeholder' has been problematised because such actors may have divided allegiances or conflicts of interest in their personal capacity, which implicates their role as mouth pieces of the constituency they supposedly represent. Kim Fortun (2001) prefers the term 'enunciatory groups'. 'Enunciatory groups most often represent positions towards different entities, often enter into connections without sharing the goals of their coalition partners, while their own goals are often contradictory and temporary. This concept takes actual reality into account much more than the static one of stakeholders' (quoted in Kraus 2008: 428).

1997, Robben Island has been open for public visits and important highlights of the standard guided tour include the prison buildings and most notably Mandela's cell, as well as the notorious limestone quarry, where prisoners suffered through forced labour. In comparison, only scant attention is paid to Sobukwe, who was convicted to a three-year incarceration term on Robben Island in 1960 for his role in the pass law defiance campaign that led to the Sharpeville Uprising.[5] In 1963, just the PAC leader was completing his sentence, the apartheid regime legislated a special Act of Parliament, the 'Sobukwe clause', to keep him detained on the island for another six years, during which time he was housed in a specially designated isolation unit (Pheko 1994).

Pheko's (2002) book, *The True History of Robben Island Must be Told. Robben Island Prisoners Speak*, pays tribute to the experience of PAC prisoners who, the author claims, were generally treated more harshly and suffered greater abuse from prison authorities than members of the ANC, because the PAC was considered synonymous with its radical armed wing. According to Pheko (2002) the island became known as 'POQO Prison' and as 'Sobukwe University' from 1963, but these terms (along with Makhanda University) are marginalised or largely omitted in the official narrative of liberation dominated by the experiences and role of those affiliated with the ANC.

The situation is echoed elsewhere in the country, where competing interpretations of the past, promoting different role players among the former opposition forces, crystallise in monuments and heritage projects. In the province of KZN, for instance, which has been politically contested between the ANC and the ethnic Zulu-dominated IFP,[6] heritage is inevitably a battlefield and new monument initiatives tend to be embroiled in political debate and sometimes stalled in resultant bureaucratic processes. In the Port Elizabeth township of New Brighton, the Emlotheni Memorial Park, a heroes' acre built in honour of six ANC-affiliated anti-apartheid cadres executed by the apartheid regime's justice system, is challenged by members of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), whose role in the local struggle for liberation the new memorial implicitly erases (Hansen 2003).

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[5] This may have changed more recently and may also depend on individual tour guides.

[6] The roots of the IFP may be found in a Zulu cultural organisation called Inkatha, founded by the Zulu King Solomon in the 1920s, based upon which Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi, formerly a member of the ANC Youth League, established the Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement in 1975. In 1990 this organisation was formally turned into a political party, the IFP, with Buthelezi as president (IFP official website). The IFP has always been dominated by Zulu speakers and its political agenda has historically tended to emphasise Zulu nationalist values.

Such contestation is not usually part of the official narrative – as relayed in public commemorative addresses, publicity material and presumably many guided tours – which, on the contrary, tends to emphasise the significance of new monuments as symbols of black resistance to white oppression and as symbols of reconciliation and nation-building. But – as this chapter demonstrates – a careful investigation of their genesis, design and reception can reveal much more complex and multilayered readings in which tensions and fissures manifest themselves and the silenced voices of opposition suggest the emergence of new hegemonies in remembering and representing the past.

## Conclusion

I have tried to show how, from the very dawn of the emergent new socio-political era, both the ANC and the PAC have pointed to the dead in enhancing their public profile and legitimising their claims to sacrifices made in their contribution to the freedom struggle. Through the institutionalised remembrance of selected dead martyrs, victims and fallen comrades in the form of memorials, monuments and statues, both organisations not only complement the existing 'white' memory landscape with 'black' commemorative markers, but also engage in a competitive process of using heritage for their own political ends.

This chapter has focused on two memorials erected by political parties in tribute to their members during the final days of the apartheid era. A few years later the ANC became the ruling party in a new, post-apartheid order. A vigorous drive towards establishing commemorative markers and reshaping the country's heritage landscape immediately ensued, in large part initiated, sponsored and directed by the government for 'the people'. Despite the officially proclaimed emphasis on processes of community participation and the inclusiveness of meaning, subsequent chapters will show that the ANC-dominated government consciously or inadvertently shaped the interpretation of historical events to coincide with the party's own preferred reading of specific narratives and the significance of their protagonists.

Crudely put, the ANC carries on building monuments in honour of their own leaders and their contributions, which they declare to be the heritage of the post-apartheid nation, while the PAC – now a minute opposition party within the democratically elected government – lacks the political clout to effectively impact on the physical shaping of the emergent landscape of public memory. The same is true for other minority groups and opposition political parties in different local contexts, who can resist the prevailing hegemonic force only through speeches, publications and performative action, often supported by the media.

The competitive process of taking control of the representation of the past and claiming key symbols, sites and icons associated with the liberation struggle – in short, the struggle over the Struggle – began at the very dawn of the post-apartheid era and has impacted on the shaping of the heritage landscape ever since. In the current South African context it is extremely important to understand the political and emotional significance that communities and political parties attach to specific events and persons associated with resistance against apartheid. Political parties and individual leaders derive legitimacy from their role in the liberation of the country and from their personal or organisational connection with revered iconic leaders of the past, hence fostering their link with the communities who constitute their primary electorate. For such communities and especially the victims of apartheid violence, the representation of the past that so fundamentally shaped their lives is a matter of primary emotional significance, deeply connected with their sense of identity, and not necessarily open to critical historical analysis. Hence, both private/individual and public/institutionalized processes of remembrance involve some level of myth-making, enshrined as heritage, which fulfils specific psychological, political and societal needs and in relation to which academic historical investigation is easily perceived as threatening and counter-productive.

# 3

# Coming to Terms with Trauma: The TRC and Memorials to the Victims of Apartheid Violence

## Introduction

Memorials can be strategic tools in laying claim to symbolically important and potentially contested aspects of the past. Yet this political and functionalist perspective invariably obscures the psychological significance and the emotional fulfillment that many individuals, families, communities and party members may genuinely associate with the presence of a memorial. This chapter therefore starts out by investigating the installation of memorials as part of the personal, family-based, often religiously motivated desire for proper burial and community remembrance of deceased loved-ones. However, beyond the confines of private mourning and community remembrance, public monuments and memorials are always also addressed to a wider audience and become interwoven with larger, public processes of commemoration and societal discourses about the past and its relationship to the present.

While the previous chapter highlighted the potentially divisive effect of public commemorative markers, this chapter affirms the possibility that they may indeed play a role in reconciliation. I will discuss memorials as a public acknowledgement of suffering and loss, which can restore a sense of personal dignity and lead to societal healing. This perspective received potent endorsement through the TRC's recommendation that memorials be built for the victims of apartheid violence as symbolic measures of reparation and to promote national unity and reconciliation.

Despite some criticism, the importance of the TRC – both as a process of historical research, upon which much of our understanding of the apartheid period relies, and as an instrument of healing – can hardly be overestimated, as McEachern's (2002) insightful analysis shows. Like the TRC hearings, memorials to the victims of apartheid violations can be instruments of healing, but they also constitute lasting, tangible public representations of the stories uncovered by the TRC process. Some memorials are joined by an

adjacent museum or interpretation centre, while others are equipped with extensive text plaques or visual images, which provide information but also inevitably an interpretation of events. Often equipped with a catchphrase label – the 'Pebco Three', the 'Cradock Four', the 'Gugulethu[1] Seven', the 'Trojan Horse' incident – some such cases have been brought to much more prominence in the collective memory than others, both through media coverage and especially the establishment of an imposing memorial.

On the one hand, post-apartheid memorials represent a formidable break with the commemorative practices of the previous order, precisely because they are directly inspired by and linked to the hearings of the TRC. They can be interpreted as representing ordinary black people's experiences and acknowledging their suffering. They give a public voice and lasting representation in the official memory landscape to people who have been marginalised and humiliated for most of their lives. But on the other hand, the state-supported process of memorialising the victims of apartheid violence is also propelled by an ideologically-driven political dynamic that involves a hierarchical ranking of victims, the state-endorsed remembrance of certain victims, and the convenient forgetting of others. The practice of selectively remembering victims attests to a continuity with the commemorative pattern of previous South African governments, and is in fact found in most societies as a result of the 'necessity' to celebrate heroes and recount inspiring narratives in support of the nation's myth of origin and newly defined identity discourses. This thought will be pursued further in Chapter Seven.

## Apartheid violence and its victims

I want to begin with a brief historical sketch of the apartheid era, focusing generally on violence and resistance, and specifically on the events that have prompted the installation of memorials and monuments. The reader should recall that this book does not aim to investigate what really happened in the past, but rather how the past is represented and appropriated. In a deeply divided society characterised by the co-existence of different visions, ideologies and nationalisms, both popular perceptions of the past and the academic study and research of history are inevitably divided. During the apartheid period, many historical accounts and attempts at recording, describing and critically analysing past events were influenced by or constructed around the ideological drift of, for instance, white Afrikaner nationalism or a pan-South African black nationalism as the dominant political and ideological forces of the time (Marks and Trapido 1987). This often led to the emergence of polarised, contradictory narratives.

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[1] Sometimes also spelled Guguletu.

Even today, it is a problematic and easily contested undertaking to write '*the* history of South Africa' or even the history of a particular period or event. As the recent media debate around the battle at Cuito Cuanavale in Angola[2] illustrates, it is not only the significance of the event for various stakeholders and the country at large that may be disputed, but even the very 'facts' of what actually happened. Hence, I'm well aware that the mere selection of events reflected in historical background information supplied in this and other chapters construct a specific 'history of South Africa' which some might find completely distorted. Even the choice of certain terms – e.g. 'riot' as against 'uprising' – introduces inflections and foregrounds a particular ideological interpretation.

I have chosen to structure my account of history around events and personalities associated with the memorials discussed in this book. This is a fragmentary and arguably skewed representation of the past, but it mirrors the way in which historical knowledge about the apartheid era and the liberation struggle is increasingly mediated through the products of the heritage sector. Public 'memory' is shaped by the naming and framing of selected events in the official commemorative effort, both for the benefit of the younger generation and increasingly for foreign tourists. On occasion – as in this chapter – historical background information is somewhat expanded for the sake of an international readership less familiar with the local context.

South Africa is internationally celebrated for its 'soft revolution' and its avoidance of violent conflict in favour of a peaceful, negotiated solution, but this perspective diverts attention from the violence of the preceding decades, the human rights abuses and loss of lives associated with the armed Struggle and the township violence, especially during the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s. Resistance against repressive apartheid legislation initially consisted mostly of peaceful protest actions and demonstrations, some of which are now portrayed as milestones in South African history and celebrated through various products of the heritage sector as stepping stones towards the attainment of democracy and liberation. This includes, for instance, the Congress of the People, which led to the adoption of the Freedom Charter on 26 June 1955 at a multiracial mass-gathering on an open piece of land in the centre of Kliptown, a freehold area in the midst of the sprawling Soweto township conglomerate. The 1956 Women's March was another example of such peaceful protest actions, to which the state responded with relentless persecution of the leadership, resorting to increasingly ruthless methods.

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[2] The battle occurred in October 1987 and involved the former South African Defence Force (SADF), who supported Jonas Savimbi's Unita movement, and the Angolan government forces (Fapla) supported by a contingent of troops from Cuba. An example of the media debate around the event is Kasrils (2008).

In present-day South Africa, which is led by the ANC, the Freedom Charter is celebrated as a symbol of multiracial unity and considered the blueprint of the post-apartheid Constitution, as it sets out a vision for a free, non-racial South Africa. An ambitious commemorative monument and urban development project was unveiled in Kliptown in June 2005 at the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter, on the dusty vacant lot identified through research into oral history as the 'Freedom Square', now called Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (Bremner 2004). But for the PAC, the 'Kliptown Charter' or the 'Fools Charter' is reviled as a symbol of betrayal. According to Pheko (1994: 21-3 and 2001: 17), the ANC's adoption of the contested document deceived the African people with respect to the land question and amounted to the ANC's abandonment of the fight for self-determination and national sovereignty. By stating that the country and its wealth belong to all who live in it, the ANC sold out the African people to their 'white exploiter' and 'foreign oppressor' (1994: 23). Many historians hold that the adoption of the controversial charter led to the open manifestation of latently existing ideological differences and eventually a formal split within the ANC. The subsequent opposition and rivalry between the ANC and the PAC have been discussed earlier. Both parties attempted to enhance their profile and increase their membership by organising strategic campaigns, often in direct competition with the planned actions of the other party (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 412; Karis and Gerhart 1997: 46; Terreblanche 2002: 349).

Among the most inflammatory issues at the time was the resistance against the so-called pass laws. The Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act, passed in 1952 and commonly referred to as the 'Natives Act', stipulated that the numerous documents African men had been required to carry (such as residency permits, work permits, special entry permits, etc.) would be replaced by a single consolidated document, the reference book. The 'pass-book' or '*dom pas*', which had to be produced on demand to the police or local authorities at any time and led to high numbers of arrests for failure to do so, curtailed an African's freedom of movement and allowed the authorities to control the presence, movements and activities of the entire African (male) population with the ultimate aim of removing them from the 'white' areas and confining them to designated locations (Schmidt undated).

This was the context for the infamous 'Sharpeville Massacre' on 21 March 1960. The commonly held view, disputed by Pheko (2001: 16), is that at its annual conference in Durban in December 1959, the ANC had decided to organise a mass protest action against the pass laws, along with a national campaign for a minimum wage of £1 a day, to be held on 31 March the following year. The PAC pre-empted this plan by announcing, on 18 March 1960, its own anti-pass law campaign, to be staged on 21 March, along with

a slightly higher wage demand.[3] On this fateful day Sobukwe and other leaders invited arrest by defying the pass law. In townships throughout the country crowds gathered in peaceful demonstrations and police reaction was largely non-violent. However, in Langa outside Cape Town three people were shot and at Sharpeville, a township outside Veereniging in the Transvaal, a massacre ensued when police fired into a dense cluster of protestors.

Frankel's (2001) compelling and nuanced book, initiated in the context of proposals for a more formalised heritage site development at Sharpeville, represents the first carefully researched and detailed account of the historical circumstances that led up to the Sharpeville Uprising and an attempt at objectively reconstructing the precise course of events on that fateful day. Among the large crowd that had gathered in front of the Sharpeville police station that day, some people had arrived without reference books, wanting to be arrested. Others were apparently under the impression that an important announcement about the pass laws would be made. Frankel (2001) found that there was a lack of proper planning and contingency plans on the part of the organisers. The crowd also contained criminals, some of whom had dragged people out of their homes against their will. The police force inside the fenced station premises was likewise improperly prepared for the occasion and largely undisciplined. Apparently no order to shoot was ever given, but when one shot went off the panicked police began frantically firing into the crowd, killing 69 people and injuring 180, many of them hit in the back as they tried to escape the carnage (Frankel 2001; see also Davenport and Saunders 2000: 412-14; Omer-Cooper 1994: 208-09).

The Sharpeville Uprising on 21 March 1960 quickly became – and indeed was purposefully turned into – a national and international icon of the anti-apartheid struggle. The dissemination and strategic use of selected oral accounts and specific photographic imagery which portrayed the local protestors as innocent, passive and ordinary people betrayed by the state galvanised the forces of the anti-apartheid movement and created an almost impenetrable mythology about Sharpeville. But the agents of the state, too, immediately embarked on appropriating the event for their own political purposes, portraying the police action as self-defence in view of the imminent danger posed by a violent, unruly mob. Without being unsympathetic to the victims, Frankel (2001: 12) concludes that both the efforts of the police and the apartheid state on the one hand, and the PAC and liberation forces on the other, to forge a coherent narrative around the

[3] Pheko (2001: 16) claims that the ANC had planned no such campaign and that the PAC had already taken the decision for a campaign against pass laws at its December 1959 conference.

events of the Sharpeville Uprising do not stand the test of objective historical scrutiny.[4]

The complex process of political appropriation and development of diametrically opposed narratives similarly occurred around the Soweto Uprisings and in fact arguably in all other events now celebrated as milestones in the process of liberation. Independent investigation and serious research that might lead to the discovery of historical evidence in contradiction of what various political actors see as useful was long discouraged not only by the agents of the state but also by the anti-apartheid forces. To some extent this attitude prevails today, as various people continue to hold a political or psychological stake in maintaining the mythologised accounts developed in the past. As Frankel shows with respect to the Sharpeville case, even the personal memories of survivors and eye-witness reports of various observers tend to be consciously or unconsciously shaped by the dominant narratives. Any attempts at representing these events today – e.g. by historians, journalists, or the heritage sector – invariably operate within this inherited polarised framework and are overshadowed by new moral imperatives and socio-political agendas. This is precisely what makes the representation of Sharpeville and other iconic events in the history of South Africa in monuments, memorials and museums so problematic and contested.

The violence of the Sharpeville Massacre was widely condemned throughout the world and is considered a major turning point in international attitudes towards the apartheid regime. The Security Council of the United Nations discussed the matter and officially condemned the South African government. Economically, a considerable outflow of capital from the country during this period has been attributed to the Sharpeville incident, eventually prompting the government to enact restrictions on currency movement. Thousands of people were detained under new emergency regulations and, as said earlier, the banning of the ANC and the PAC forced the two liberation movements underground, an act which could be represented as a temporary defeat for resistance (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 412-14; Frankel 2001; Omer-Cooper 1994: 208-09; Pheko 1994: 31-45; Pheko 2001).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Black Consciousness Movement under the able leadership of the young and charismatic Steve

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[4] Neither was the massacre simply a question of the white police 'getting at' the people, as portrayed by the Left, nor was it a matter of the black community 'getting at' the police, as perceived by the Right. 'The Sharpeville massacre typifies the fact that we cannot divide political realities into neat poles – resistors, repressors, the guilty and innocent, the good and evil. My narrative, I hope, brings out the infinite gradations of responsibility, personal weakness and moral ambivalence that are part of the Sharpeville story' (Frankel 2001: 19).

Biko constituted a significant new impulse for the resistance movement, influencing particularly the youth. Biko was born in 1946 in King William's Town, educated at the Catholic mission station at Mariannhill near Durban and enrolled as a medical student at Natal University. Inspired by notions of Black Theology and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the philosophy of Black Consciousness advocated the psychological liberation of black people from generations of conditioning as inferior. The cultural and educational fronts were seen as important sites of struggle for such emancipation and the definition of a positive black identity and associated value systems. Black Consciousness contributed to the emergence of a host of new organisations, including the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), which was an increasingly vocal political vehicle for black students (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 436-54).

SASO's tough language and idealistic principles soon began to influence African high school students who, in 1976, protested against new government legislation designed to make Afrikaans the medium of instruction in some subjects in Bantu Education Department schools. The protest action that led to the Soweto Uprising on 16 June and similar violent clashes in townships throughout the country during subsequent months must also be understood in the context of growing frustration over the inferiority of the Bantu education system, especially in the light of rising unemployment. In addition, young people also began to realise that the impending 'independence' of the Transkei homeland would mean the loss of South African citizenship and the right to work in the Republic for all blacks who had been assigned a homeland citizenship (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 449; Ndlovu, S.M. 1998; Karis and Gerhard 1997: 156-88).

The Soweto Uprising is now institutionalised as another key event in the fight for liberation, with June 16 being declared a public holiday (Youth Day) and the site of the fateful event marked with an ambitious commemorative complex. The course of events on that day will be discussed below, but over 20 students died and many more were wounded when police started shooting at the protestors. The young Hector Pieterson,[5] usually considered the first victim to be shot on that day, quickly became an international icon of youth resistance when Sam Nzima, then a photographer from *The World*, was on the spot to take the legendary photograph showing Mbuyisa Makhubu carrying Hector's limp body away, with his crying sister, Antoinette Sithole, running alongside them.

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[5] Different spellings of this name circulate, including Peterson and Petersen. The family's name was originally Pitso, but they changed it, presumably to attain benefits reserved for 'coloureds'. References to Hector's age also differ. According to his sister, Antoinette Sithole (personal conversation 2003), he was 12 at the time of the Soweto Uprising and would have turned 13 on 14 August 1976.

This emblematic, emotionally charged image – one of a series of six sequential shots – immediately captured the public imagination and became an emblem of the liberation struggle, encapsulating better than 'a thousand words' the oppression wrought by the apartheid regime and 'the people's' determination to achieve freedom. It was adopted by the liberation movements for reproduction on posters, T-shirts, and murals. Taken up by the international media network, it simultaneously entered millions of households around the world via magazines and television. Parallelling the case of Sharpeville, the Soweto Uprising was similarly subjected to a complex process of political appropriation, which began with judicious photo editing in the newspaper's development lab and offices. The conscious selection of this particular photograph and its rapid turning into an icon seems to have dictated how the narrative was told and still sets the tone for how the event should be remembered and understood, as will be shown below.

Although the government decided in early July to drop the Afrikaans requirement, the Soweto Uprising sparked a wave of violent confrontation in Soweto and throughout the country that lasted for almost a year, in which hundreds more lost their lives and probably thousands were wounded.[6] An additional 5980 people were arrested between 16 June 1976 and 28 February 1977 according to police records (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 453). In 1992, the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) placed a red polished granite memorial stone in the area of the Soweto Uprising at Orlando West[7] and in many other townships, Youth Memorials pay tribute to these young victims, the great majority of whom were under 25 years old.

Although this has also been critically interrogated (e.g. Pohlandt-McCormick 2008), the Soweto Uprising is often described as a turning point in the history of the apartheid era. The youth and innocence of the victims immediately turned this event into an icon of anti-apartheid resistance, powerfully symbolising the ruthlessness of the apartheid regime and the determination and bravery of its black victims. For many white South Africans, the Soweto Uprising deepened divisions over how best to defend minority rule and legitimate Afrikaner power. Ultimately the event set the National Party on a course of cautious reforms that eventually led to the collapse of the apartheid system two decades later. For black South Africans, the Soweto Uprising marked the shift from a period of conservative political culture, in which young people had played a subordinate role, to a new era in

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[6] Karis and Gerhard (1997: 168) report that by the end of February 1977, the death toll officially stood at 575, of which 494 were Africans, 75 'coloureds', two whites and one Indian.

[7] On 16 December 1981, the Azanian National Youth Unity, an internal wing of the PAC, had already unveiled a tombstone for Hector Pieterson at Avalon Cemetery in Soweto (Hlongwane 2008: 39).

which the youth, increasingly radicalised, acted as the driving force (Karis and Gerhard 1997: 156).

Having participated in and been politically conscientised by the Soweto Uprising and its subsequent nationwide unrest, many young individuals, such as Solomon Mahlangu, experienced the desire to become activists or to go underground and join the armed struggle. Many clandestinely left the country to receive ideological schooling, military training, and other forms of special preparation abroad, for instance in the Soviet Union, East Germany or at MK training camps in Tanzania, Angola and Zambia. Upon their secret return to South Africa, these young activists played a key role in organising the armed struggle and were relentlessly persecuted as terrorists by the security police.

Many resistance leaders and activists 'disappeared' or died in police custody under mysterious circumstances – according to official records often by 'suicide'. Captured 'terrorists' were habitually tortured and often died as a result of their injuries. Some were assassinated in carefully planned police actions. Their bodily remains, sometimes mutilated, were often discarded in shallow, unmarked graves or even destroyed without leaving a trace. Many family members learnt only through the hearings of the TRC what had happened to their loved ones and where their remains were dumped, sometimes leading to their exhumation, dignified reburial, and official memorialisation.

The documentary film *Amandla: A Harmony in Four Parts* (directed by Lee Hirch, 2003) includes harrowing footage of the excavation of Vuyisile Mini's remains. Mini (1920-1964) was a well-known political activist and composer from Port Elizabeth's township New Brighton, whose music had made an enormous contribution to the resistance movement. Together with five other activists he was hanged by the apartheid state on 6 November 1964, and their remains were discarded.[8] The fact that Mini was later found innocent made his death infinitely more symbolic and all six activists were reburied on 27 June 1998 at the Emlotheni Memorial Park, also called Heroes Acre, in New Brighton.

Tensions remained high at schools throughout the country and conflict would easily erupt. In 1984 class boycotts were staged at Cradock in the Eastern Cape, when Matthew Goniwe, a local teacher and political activist, who drew strong community support, was dismissed over his refusal to be transferred. The following year, Goniwe and three of his comrades – Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mhlauli – were killed by the Security Forces as they were travelling back from a meeting in Port Elizabeth. Their charred bodies, bearing stab-wounds and signs of mutilation, were later

[8] The other five activists were Zinakile Mkaba, Wilson Kayingo, Nolali Mpentse, Daniel Ndongeni and Samuel Jonas. The latter three were executed on 7 July 1965 (Hansen 2003: 44).

found along with Calata's burnt-out car. The funeral of the 'Cradock Four' on 20 July 1985, with numerous busloads of angry mourners and ANC and SACP flags flying defiantly, has been called the beginning of the end of apartheid. In July 2000 a memorial in their honour was erected in a public park in Cradock[9] (Mangxamba 2000; Krog 2002: 37-44; Davenport and Saunders 2000: 490; Nicholson 2004; Catsam 2005).

The 1983 introduction of a new constitutional system based on the Tricameral parliament, which gave Coloureds and Indians a limited form of political representation but left the African majority out completely, prompted widespread protest and unrest in townships throughout the country. The nationwide UDF called for a boycott of the 1984 polls and played a significant role in supporting and organising anti-apartheid resistance. While rioting in the Coloured and Indian areas soon died down, a massive wave of violence swept through the black townships during the mid-1980s, fuelled by economic hardship, growing unemployment and political desperation (Omar-Cooper 1994: 237-9; Davenport and Saunders 2000: 502ff).

The period of the mid-1980s was a particularly tense time. The ANC/ UDF vowed to 'make South Africa ungovernable' and the government called a State of Emergency (in 1985 and again in 1986). As in the case of the Mamelodi Massacre described earlier, protest marches, boycotts and riots occurred in townships throughout the country over various grievances, frequently leading to brutal police reprisals. The Langa Massacre took place on 21 March 1985, the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre, when police shot at a peaceful crowd marching through Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape. The memorial in honour of the 19 killed (some sources say 20) and many wounded demonstrators will be referred to again below. Unlike the Soweto Uprising, these 'township rebellions' involved both the young and adults. Although locally organised, they happened largely in response to the boycott call of the nationwide UDF, and they were able to draw on the organisational resources of the civic associations. Under cover of state of emergency provisions, the government cracked down on the township unrest by arresting thousands of alleged activists, many of them youngsters, many

[9] The new memorial was set up in the immediate vicinity of a small Afrikaner nationalist monument – a miniature version of the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria – which had been erected there in 1988 in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Great Trek. This was roughly the same period during which the four Cradock activists were killed and the presence of their memorial now opens up an uncomfortable new perspective on the public history of this picturesque town. By introducing a discourse that ideologically counters and challenges the hegemony established by the existing memorial marker, it furthermore inclusively claims this public park for a demographically transformed town population.

of whom were held for long periods without trial (Omar-Cooper 1994: 237-9).

Violence and civil strife increased even further during the fragile negotiation period of the early 1990s as the state instigated conflagration within the black community, especially between members of the ANC and the IFP. While the annual deaths from civil strife were estimated at between 600 and 1400 during the period of the late 1980s, in the early 1990s, the figures rose to between 2700 and 3800 (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 562). For instance, in Sebokeng in the Vaal region 47 people were killed during the so-called Nangalembe Night Vigil massacre by unknown gunmen while mourning a fellow comrade. During the night of 17 June 1992 ANC supporters were killed while asleep in their homes by residents of an IFP-dominated hostel at Boipatong near Vanderbijlpark. Suspicion of police involvement placed a serious strain on the CODESA process. In the area of Thokoza on the East Rand approximately 800 people died and about 600 families were displaced, their homes ruined, between 1990 and 1994 as a result of community violence fuelled by the IFP-ANC conflict, overlaid by ethnic tensions between Zulus and Xhosas. The worst battleground was Khumalo Street, which remained a no-go area for some persons even after the official end of the violence (Kgalema 1999; Davenport and Saunders 2000: 562; Chipkin 2007: 123-36). Neighbouring areas on the East Rand experienced similar political violence during this period and similar memorials have since been installed to commemorate the victims, for instance in Katlehong (unveiled on 21 March 1998), Tembisa (16 June 1998) and Sebokeng (Kgalema 1999).

Problems also arose from the unresolved reintegration and ambiguous political positioning of the homelands. On 7 September 1992 the ANC organised what was meant to be a peaceful march across the Ciskei border to hold a rally at the stadium of the homeland capital, Bisho. A clash between what was later found to be irresponsible ANC leaders (notably the ex-MK leader Ronnie Kasrils) and undisciplined Ciskeian troops led to the killing of 29 marchers, with another 200 wounded (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 564-5). A memorial was set up at the edge of the stadium in Bisho in 1997.

Violence during this period emanated also from both black and white extremists. The *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* (AWB) under the leadership of Eugene Terre'blanche, engaged in dramatically staged acts of violent protest and on 10 April 1993 the charismatic young Communist Party leader, Chris Hani, was murdered under the directive of the ultraconservative white Right, as said earlier. Black extremists executed acts of terrorism against white individuals under the slogan 'One Settler, One Bullet'. Their best-known victim became Amy Biehl (1967-93), a white American Fulbright exchange student, who had been working at the University of Western Cape Community Law Centre in preparation for the 1994 Elections. On 25 August 1993, three days before her scheduled return to the United States, she was

beaten and stabbed to death in Gugulethu township, while taking black friends home in her car. The incident shocked the country and created much negative publicity for the 'new' South Africa in the United States and elsewhere, but it also caused considerable controversy in both countries (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 566; Gish 2003).

## Symbolic gestures of reconciliation

Despite this context of extraordinary violence and instability, which lasted throughout the run-up to the elections, and the very real threat of an IFP boycott, South Africa's first general democratic elections went ahead peacefully. Aerial photographs of the endless queues of people who enjoyed the right to vote for the first time in their lives quickly became international icons of the peaceful transition of power and the foundation of the post-apartheid order. Under the so-called sunset clause, the elections brought to power the transitional GNU under the presidency of Nelson Mandela for a fixed period of five years. A new South African constitution was drafted and signed into effect by the President on 10 December 1996 in the symbolically charged township of Sharpeville, where he had unveiled a small memorial two days earlier 'in memory of those who gave their lives for a free and just South Africa'.

The immediate focus of the newly elected government was on taking appropriate measures to secure peace, foster reconciliation and heal the divisions of the past. In the interest of unity and nation-building, inclusiveness was emphasized at every level. It was a time of many iconic moments and powerful publicly staged and widely reported symbolic gestures, for instance Mandela's invitation of some of his former warders at Robben Island to his inauguration as president in April 1994, or his visit with Betsy Verwoerd, widow of the former Prime Minister, Dr Hendrik F. Verwoerd, notorious 'architect of apartheid', in September 1995.

In Katlehong, meanwhile characterized by a climate of relative but fragile peace, political leaders of both the ANC and IFP started visiting 'no-go areas' together, setting a public example of reconciliation and signalling to their respective supporters the end of such zones. In this context, the idea of memorials as lasting symbols of reconciliation and acknowledgement of the victims often emerged in discussions between political leaders and local communities (Kgalema 1999).

In Thokoza plans for some kind of memorial appear to have surfaced as early as 1994, although it is contested who first conceptualized the idea. Different constituencies, including the local branch of the ANC, the Phenduka Displacees Committee and the local Self Defence Units and Self Protection Units seem to have independently thought of a project of this nature. It was only in May 1998 that the Thokoza Monument Foundation

was formally established, bringing together over twenty different organisations (political, cultural, religious, etc) in addition to the two former enemy parties. Fundraising from both the public and private sectors took place and a site along notorious Khumalo Street was chosen as the most symbolically significant place to mark the end of no-go areas, to commemorate its victims and to serve as a symbol of peace and reconciliation (Kgalema 1999; Memela 1998; Memela 1998a).

Photo 3.1 Memorial to the victicms of apartheid violence in Thokoza, East Rand, unveiled 1999.

Ironically, the planning process was marred by quarrels and clashes over various details and especially arguments between the ANC and the IFP about who should be invited for the unveiling ceremony. As a result, the unveiling had to be postponed repeatedly and eventually took place only on 16 October 1999. Nevertheless, as Kgalema's (1999) research established, the inclusive process of working on this memorial initiative contributed to the process of healing and re-establishing trust within the community.

Those involved in the Thokoza project emphasise that it was a community initiative, not a political one; i.e., the memorial does not belong to any political party or organisation but is 'owned' solely by the

community. However, the quarrel between the political parties that led to the long delay in the official unveiling, during which time the community could not even visit the memorial, prompted Kgalema (1999: 9) to ask: 'If the project belonged to the community as all had claimed, it is hard to understand why the process was held at ransom by the absence of political leaders'. The pressure to be all-inclusive and satisfy the needs and interests of the local branches of the two former enemy parties inevitably allowed political agendas to dominate.

A case may be made for the Thokoza project to be referred to as a 'community monument', but most memorials commemorating the victims of township violence are unmistakably initiated, primarily sponsored or crucially driven by a particular political organisation, such as the ANCYL; or the local branch of the dominant political party, usually the ANC; or an enthusiastic individual community leader, often affiliated with a political party organisation; or an agency of the local (sometimes provincial or even national) government dominated by the ANC.

Funding usually originates at least in part from government sources, supplemented by sponsorship from the private sector or non-governmental organisations. Local businesses have an obvious interest in promoting a stable local environment, but may also see their contributions as a welcome opportunity to associate themselves with a highly visible and politically correct initiative. Sometimes a memorial may be initiated by the private sector but end up being appropriated by the public sector, as political officials recognise the opportunities arising from the project for furthering the aims of their office, which is often connected with the interests of a political party.

This is not to suggest that communities do not experience a sense of ownership of the memorials in their midst. At Thokoza, for instance, funds collected from victims' families were used to finance the water tap on the memorial site and as Kgalema (1999: 28-9) reports, for some family members of victims it was very meaningful to have made a small, but tangible contribution. Nevertheless, as will be discussed later, it cannot be denied that by and large a sense of community ownership is still underdeveloped in post-apartheid monument projects, not least as a result of flawed community participation processes. As a result, lack of identification and even vandalism of new memorials remain persistent problems.

## The need for truth and reconciliation

Even before the elections and the formal advent of the post-apartheid order, key legal thinkers within the ANC, influential intellectuals and representatives of religious organisations began discussing the need for a truth commission as a mechanism for administering amnesty. There was broad

consensus that South Africans had to come to terms with the past if they wanted to move forward as a nation, and that reconciliation and forgiveness were contingent on 'uncovering the truth' about what had happened in the past. The TRC was established by the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995 (Republic of South Africa, 1995) and in December of that year the commissioners of the TRC were appointed under the chairmanship of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. On 15 April 1996 the first Human Rights Violations hearings were held in East London. During the following months these public hearings took place in towns and cities around the country (Lodge 2002; Ross, F. 2008; Chipkin 2007).

Much has been written about the TRC process, which the scope of this book does not allow me to engage with, but I want to highlight one important aspect, namely the educational dimension of the TRC hearings. Among the key characteristics that made the South African TRC unique in comparison with international examples was the fact that the hearings were held in public and were accompanied by extensive media coverage. As Lodge (2002) pointed out, the public hearings were less concerned with establishing facts, which had in any case already been deposited in written statements, than with broadly sharing these facts, thereby educating society at large about what happened, especially from the perspective of the victims. As a result the TRC hearings have become an important source of historical knowledge about the apartheid period, often countering established historical discourses and invalidating officially promulgated versions of contested events. For many individual victims the process, indeed the ritual, of testifying before the Commission was not simply a matter of reporting on the past, but a cathartic practice intended to help them deal with the trauma suffered in the past (R&R Committee report, reproduced in Doxtader and Villa-Vicencio 2004: 6). For the public at large, the process of witnessing these victims personally tell their horrific stories was meant to cause empathy with the victim and facilitate a process of communal reconciliation.

Fiona Ross (2008: 236) points out that compared with Truth commissions in other countries, the South African TRC was unusual in linking 'truth' with 'reconciliation', whereby reconciliation was regarded as a necessary basis for overcoming division and creating a new national identity. Chipkin goes further to assert that one of the key tasks of the TRC was to identify and establish the basis for national unity, to provide a principle of commonality that would ground South Africans as a *people*, and suggest a foundation for the new nation (2007: 12, 173). Through the process of truth-telling an exhaustive, new history of apartheid was expected to emerge, commonly shared by all South Africans. This is an important point that we will return to.

While the public hearings came to an end in August 1997, statement-taking from individual victims continued. The research department began analysing the information gathered from victims, and in October 1998 a five-

volume interim report was published. After that the TRC began to disband, although the Amnesty and Reparations committees continued their tasks until the end of 2001. A total of 1167 full amnesties (a further 157 partial amnesties) were granted and some 22000 individuals were identified as victims of gross violations of human rights (Ross, F. 2008: 236). During the course of the TRC process increasing tension manifested itself between the TRC and the ANC and the interim report, which was debated in Parliament in February 1999, brought these to the surface (Lodge 2002). Most importantly for the purposes of this book, decisive fissures developed over the issue of reparations and how apartheid's victims should be acknowledged.

## Material and symbolic reparations

The key aims of the TRC were the granting of amnesty in exchange for full disclosure about gross human rights violations during the apartheid era; the identification and location of victims; and the granting of reparations and other forms of assistance to those victims. Chaired by Dr Wendy Orr, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee (R&R) was charged with investigating and advising the government on measures of rehabilitation and reparation for victims of human rights abuses (Burton 2004). After much discussion and research, also taking into account comparative international models, the Committee tabled its draft policy proposal, the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, in July 1997. In October 1997 the reparation policy was finalised and publicly launched in Cape Town. It stipulated an annual payment to victims (or their dependants if the victims were dead) for a period of six years of an amount of between R21000 and R23000 according to various criteria; an 'Urgent Interim Reparation' payment of R2000 to those on the list who had suffered hardship as a result of violations; symbolic reparations, such as days of remembrance, monuments and places of memory; practical assistance, such as the issuing of death certificates; and lastly community rehabilitation in the form of improved service delivery in the fields of health, education and housing (ibid.: 35).

In its official report in 1998 the R&R Committee argued that apart from legal considerations the state had a moral obligation to acknowledge the victims of apartheid violence through reparation and rehabilitation measures. This obligation flowed directly out of the need 'to counterbalance the amnesty process in South Africa' because, as the Committee's report stated, such granting of amnesty was so generous and comprehensive that equally generous and comprehensive reparation measures had to be offered to the victims of gross human rights violations (R&R report 1998 in Burton 2004:

32-3; see also Lodge 2002).[10] However, the government procrastinated over the paying of individual monetary grants. Many victims soon vented their anger and frustration over the lack of response to their depositions, and the R&R Committee was inundated with letters enquiring about payment. To the dismay of victim support groups, no decision was made on the issue of reparations, when Parliament debated the much awaited TRC Report on 25 February 1999. Many of the speeches even suggested that the notion of individual reparations grants might need to be replaced by collective forms of reparations through redistribution, reconstruction and community development (Burton 2004: 40).

Urgent Interim Reparations of between R2000 and R3000 had been paid out to about 17000 applicants by the end of November 2001, but the issue of individual reparation grants was revisited only in March/April 2003, when the two final volumes of the TRC Report were handed over to President Mbeki and discussed in Parliament (on 15 April 2003).[11] His announcement that there would be a once-off payment of R30 000 as a reparation grant to each victim identified by the TRC, sparked much disappointment among victim communities, causing bitterness about the TRC process as a whole (Burton 2004: 40-1). From November 2003 to July 2007 these lump-sum reparations grants were paid out to 15677 identified victims/survivors; 532 victims had died after receiving the Urgent Interim Reparations, but before payment of their final reparations (Gunn 2007: 72-3). Antje Krog in her award-winning book *Country of my Skull* sums up the situation as follows: '[r]eparation for the trauma of the victims has – by its own admission – been the TRC's single biggest failure' (2002: 290).

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[10] 'It is generally accepted that victims and survivors of terrible atrocities of the past deserve reparation and rehabilitation. The state, as well as the community, owes it to them that adequate measures should be taken to restore their dignity and self-respect. Comprehensive forms of reparation should also be implemented to restore their physical and mental well-being. Without adequate reparation and rehabilitation measures, there can be no reconciliation, either on an individual or community level. Reparation and rehabilitation measures are necessary to counterbalance the amnesty process in South Africa. The granting of amnesty to perpetrators of gross human rights violations is so generous and comprehensive that, without equally generous and comprehensive reparation measures to alleviate the plight of the victims, the process will prove to be extremely one-sided and unfair' (R&R Commission report, quoted in Burton (2004: 32-3)).

[11] The report contained an updated list of recommendations on reparations, which advocated the payment of additional reparations by corporations, banks and parastatals which had benefited in some way from apartheid policies. President Mbeki rejected the suggestion of a wealth tax and criticised efforts by various organisations and foreign lawyers to bring suits against mining companies and corporations for the payment of reparations (Burton 2004: 40/1).

While the issue of individual grants was being debated, various agencies of the state from national to local level immediately began investing in commemorative markers such as memorials, monuments and statues as collective, symbolic forms of reparation. Although the construction of such markers was explicitly recommended by the R&R Committee in addition to, not in *lieu* of, monetary grants for the victims of human rights abuses or their descendants, in reality, I argue, memorials became a kind of compensation for the failure to pay monetary grants. In fact, it appears that the prolonged absence of payments increased the urgency and necessity for the construction of memorials, both from the point of view of the victims, who at least wanted to feel publicly acknowledged, and most notably for the government. Financing, or even better initiating a memorial for the community was a way of politically legitimising government structures from local to national level, to some extent exonerating them and implicitly appeasing those within their constituency who were justifiably angry about the lack of substantive grants.

Photo 3.2 Memorial for the victims of the 'Langa Massacre', KwaNobuhle (Uitenhage), unveiled 2000.

At KwaNobuhle township near Uitenhage a simple memorial had originally been unveiled in 1986 to commemorate victims of the 'Langa Massacre'. By the late 1990s it was felt that a more substantial and dignified memorial was needed to adequately commemorate the event. The Secretary to the Town Council, RD Basson (1998), therefore sent a letter to the NMC stating: 'My Council is of the opinion that the erection of a Memorial for the victims of the "Langa Massacre" will be the greatest form of reparation to the families

of the victims'. The new Langa Massacre Memorial, conceptualized as a viewing platform with a vertical concrete slab punctuated by a circular hole, 'through which one can look at the spot where the Langa shootings took place' (Schoeman 2000), was unveiled in March 2000. I don't want to dispute that the new memorial and the public recognition it conveys may indeed constitute 'the greatest form of reparation' for some individuals of the Langa community, but I cannot help noticing the patronising tone of the letter and the potential political expediency associated with the initiative.

As Kgalema (1999) rightly observes, there is a tendency to exaggerate the importance of monuments and memorials as symbolic forms of reparation by those who apparently want to escape their responsibilities in discharging other forms of reparations. This trend, warns the author, must stop if the process of reconciliation is to proceed. He explains that reconciliation and reparation can never be reduced to collective symbols and refers to the example of an elderly woman who had submitted the names of her two children for inclusion on the Thokoza monument. The mother expressed her appreciation for the monument, but also explained that the death of her children had left her without anyone to assist with paying basic living expenses (1999: 33).

Similarly, even at the momentous occasion of the unveiling of the Sharpeville Memorial with its publicly staged process of communal mourning, some members of the local community registered their disgruntlement over the fact that they had not been consulted or involved in the project and the fact that they were still waiting for any payments of reparations (Khumalo 2001; Magardie 2001). As a local woman, quoted in the *Sowetan*, succinctly put it: 'It [the monument] will soothe our hearts but the Government must move a step further and wipe our tears with reparations' (Nkuta 2002). A similar comment was made more recently at the unveiling of the Gugulethu Seven memorial in Cape Town. Irene Mxinwa, mother of one of the victims, expressed her satisfaction with the new memorial, but then added that the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission had yet to live up to its promises of cash reparations to the youths' families' (Anonymous 2000e). To put these statements in perspective, it must also be acknowledged that the media are quick to jump at an opportunity to criticise the government's investment in commemorative structures, especially when these involve large expenditure. But before I engage with such criticism, it is imperative to elaborate on the important role that memorials and monument can indeed play in the process of individual and societal healing.[12]

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[12] Criticism regularly emerges when new memorials and monuments are associated with substantial costs funded through public coffers. A recent press report, for instance, stated: 'While the Budget was silent on reparations for victims of apartheid, it allocated R 140-million for the construction of Freedom Park …'

## The role of memorials in individual and group mourning

Based on Sigmund Freud's 1920s work on the role of fetishistic objects in the formation of sexual identity, D.W. Winnicott developed the theory of the 'transitional object' – an object that mediates the relationship between the inner psychological world and the outer world. In his early writings Winnicott (1953) relates transitional objects only to the childhood phase, as objects that facilitate the process of separation from the mother. According to later expansions of the concept, transitional objects can also be understood to constitute the link with a deceased loved one and ease the pain of loss. A transitional object facilitating mourning can be a photograph or an item that belonged to the deceased, but also a grave-stone or a memorial. Winter (1995: 113) explains that the touching of war memorials and especially touching the inscribed name of the deceased constitutes an important ritual of separation, an act which can be witnessed in many period photographs of mourners at World War I memorials.

What makes a memorial arguably more powerful than other transitional objects is the combination of the object with the significance of the site. The memorial is a lasting marker of the site and it endows that site with added import. Memorials often serve as destinations of pilgrimage, where personal healing can be attained. They are ritually meaningful as places where people can mourn and be seen to mourn (ibid.: 93). But unlike the countless memorials to the fallen of the First World War, built immediately after the war, when many families were grieving the loss of a loved one, the memorials built in South Africa at present commemorate losses suffered in the past, often many decades ago. Although without doubt some visitors of post-apartheid memorials are descendants or friends of the deceased, most visitors are probably members of the younger generation and even foreign tourists, who have not personally experienced the conflict situation and are not directly bereaved, but rather share in a general, mediated sense of loss.

Volkan (1997) speaks of monuments or memorials as 'linking objects' in group mourning:

> Nevertheless, building monuments after drastic collective losses has its own special place in societal mourning; such actions are almost a psychological necessity. Structures made of stone or metal function as the group's linking objects. Their indestructibility makes them psychological containers that preserve and limit emotions (1997: 40).

They mediate between the daily reality of the present and the memories and internal worlds of those who directly experienced apartheid violence. For the

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(Merten 2003) (Incidentally, this figure has meanwhile increased to over R 800 million, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven).

younger generation, such memorials constitute a link with the past and assist in vicariously sharing the experience of those directly affected. Beyond the immediately affected communities, such memorials are offered to the general public, the nation, and even the international community, as objects and sites of contemplation and identification in a collective process of historical mourning.

In an African context dominated by ancestral beliefs, visiting the grave site of a deceased member of the community is furthermore an important opportunity for communication with the ancestors and requests for guidance and advice. Many African cultures believe that the dead attain ancestral status after the completion of proper funerary rituals and become intermediaries between the living and the Supreme being. The ancestors are in control of the forces of nature and the guardians of the moral and social order; an eternal reciprocal relationship exists between them and their living descendants (Ngubane undated; Bunn 2002; Kgalema 1999). If a person dies an unnatural death, for instance as a result of human disasters, conflict or witchcraft, burial alone will not ensure the resting of the soul, but a special ceremony must be conducted at the place of death and the soul must then be 'taken home' to rest. A memorial and certain ritual actions performed at its unveiling and perhaps on anniversary occasions can be understood as a form of laying the spirits to rest and bringing them home, as Kgalema (1999) shows with respect to the Thokoza Monument.

## Acknowledging loss and suffering

Accepting loss and coming to terms with the past is an important prerequisite for forgiveness and reconciliation. As a family member of one of the victims of the 'Cradock Four' said at the unveiling of the memorial: 'We cried enough but this monument brought hope and removed some of the anger we had from the past' (quoted in Mangxamba 2000). The government promotes the construction of memorials in post-apartheid South Africa because reconciliation is a high-priority national goal and memorials are believed to assist in the process of attaining reconciliation in divided societies.

Cultural symbols such as flags or public monuments and memorials and their associated narratives or ritual actions can play a crucial role in situations of conflict, as can be observed for instance in Israel, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka or Afghanistan, to name but a few countries (Ross 2000; 2002; 2004). Cultural symbols and gestures can aggravate but also calm such situations. This applies particularly to what John Burton (1987; 1990) called 'deep-rooted' conflicts, for instance among 'identity groups' (national, ethnic, racial, etc.) over matters of sovereignty, dignity, autonomy, group security and cultural survival (Avruch 2000: 86). As opposed to violent

competition for scarce resources or material interests, which can be resolved through a process of negotiation and power bargaining, deep-rooted conflicts are more difficult to resolve and require an engagement with their root causes, for instance through problem-solving workshops.

Although the specific conflicts that post-apartheid monuments and memorials relate to – notably resistance against colonial oppression and the anti-apartheid struggle – have been historically concluded, their legacy continues to impact on the present society both in material terms and in terms of identity and consciousness (see e.g. Terreblanche 2002). Below the veneer of politically correct 'rainbowism' and racial unity, another reality characterised by prejudice, resentment, or even hatred still prevails in South Africa and creates fault lines, mostly along racial and ideological lines, as a result of protracted or deep-rooted conflicts.[13]

A psychological and often political prerequisite to conflict resolution and reconciliation is that an official recognition, a public acknowledgement of the pain and losses suffered in the past must take place (Ross 2000; Volkan 1997). Such acknowledgement can take the form of ritual actions, symbolic gestures or monuments and memorials officially and publicly testifying to the suffering of the aggrieved group. There is also a moral obligation within society to acknowledge the suffering of victims of human rights abuses, suggests the Report of the TRC's R&R Committee:

> Although we may currently be experiencing fatigue about the consequences of the past, it remains true that if we do not deal with the past it will haunt and may indeed jeopardise the future. We need to remember that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission … was established in large part because of the dangers of inappropriate forgetting. We acknowledged then and must remember now that moving forward requires acknowledgement of the past, rather than denial. To ignore the suffering of those found by the Commission to be victims would be a particular kind of cruelty (reproduced in Doxtader and Villa-Vicencio 2004: 9).

Post-apartheid memorials dedicated to the victims of township violence or killed liberation movement activists essentially constitute an important aspect of such official recognition.

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[13] As a result of the apartheid regime's successful application of the 'divide and rule' strategy, divisions have been created and carefully fostered among all racial and ethnic groups in South Africa. One example of the persistence of racial stereotypes and bias is the furore created by Mbongeni Ngema's song AmaNdiya, released in May 2002, the lyrics of which supposedly expressed the negative sentiments Africans harbor about Indians. It was temporarily banned by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission for inciting race hatred (Comins 2003).

It is important to remember that the protracted historical conflict between members of the white minority and the black majority in South Africa was not fought over political power and enfranchisement only, but also over basic human rights and issues of identity and dignity. This includes experiences of personal humiliation, racial discrimination in every aspect of life, denigration of culturally specific beliefs, customs and values, and other such forms of abuse and violation.

As the R&R Committee reports:

> There has been a tendency to dismiss those declared as victims by the Commission as an 'elite victim group'. It needs to be borne in mind that, given the systemic abuse committed during the apartheid era, virtually every black South African can be said to be a victim of human rights abuse (reproduced in Doxtader and Villa-Vicencio 2004: 9).

Monuments and memorials can restore dignity and enhance self-esteem by publicly countering the racist discourses of the past. Corresponding with the recognition and promotion of African languages, indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and other aspects of previously marginalised culture, monuments and memorials can be means of validating cultural values and practices, highlighting achievement and celebrating leadership, thereby assisting in reconciliation and restoring harmony in society.[14]

## Dealing with trauma

Colvin (2008) explains that 'trauma' was originally a narrow, technical term within psychiatry, but became widely talked about after 1980 when the diagnostic term Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was introduced. From its initial application to returning war veterans, the term trauma has subsequently been utilised to refer to more and more classes of victims and has increasingly entered popular discourse. In fact, trauma is now part of a global cultural complex and the word is used metaphorically to refer to societies, including South Africa, that have undergone widely shared experiences of extreme suffering, genocide, and other forms of violent conflict. What is of interest to Colvin is not so much the factual question of whether or not South Africa has experienced a traumatic history, but rather what happens when the medical term trauma is used to describe a complex

[14] As King Goodwill Zwelethini put it at the unveiling of the Isandlwana memorial (discussed in Chapter Nine) on 22 January 1999: 'We have had to endure long years of suffering under colonialism and apartheid. These chapters in our history closed with the democratic elections in 1994. We are now faced with the challenges of rebuilding our economy and regaining our dignity' (AMAFA File: 07/2/7).

and variegated past. In other words, what is there to lose or gain when South Africa is said to be a traumatized society, one that has repressed traumatic histories? Such questions, as well as the concept of trauma itself and how to deal with it, are very much part of an ongoing debate which is attracting an increasing number of scholars with different viewpoints. I want to explore a few of these views and consider their impact on the issue of monuments.

Antje Krog (2002: 42) maintains that fixing a traumatic memory in words, or capturing it through language, means taking control over it, asserting mastery. She refers here to the TRC hearings and the healing process that is widely believed to be facilitated by the remembering and narration of a painful story. This position is also contested, as I will discuss below, but for the moment I want to engage with this point and suggest that one might apply the same principle to the 'fixing of traumatic memory' through other systems of representation, including visual images or symbols. In this sense, monuments and memorials – operating with symbolically significant forms and materials, text panels, images, and poetic inscriptions – cast traumatic memories into lasting objects. Assuming that one can indeed infer from individual to collective experiences, public memorial markers can help those affected by apartheid violence to 'assert mastery' over their haunting recollections, hence attaining emotional healing.

The conscious recollection and articulation of traumatic experiences, bolstered by public memory sites, may lead to the collective organising of a group or be employed in constructing a coherent group identity. The inscription of trauma narratives can indeed be pursued as a strategy of identity politics, a compelling means of establishing recognition (Lambek and Antze 1996: xxiv; Ross 2000). Just as the term trauma opens up for individuals 'a way to label and interpret their experiences that was previously unavailable' (Colvin 2008: 225), the trauma discourse can now be mobilised politically and legally for a variety of agendas ranging from the protection of human rights to victim empowerment programmes or reparations. Even the writing of history has been affected by this discourse, observes Colvin (ibid.: 226), as politicians and scholars feel compelled to pay more attention to 'traumatic' events in the country's or community's past. Volkan (1997: 48) uses the term 'chosen trauma'[15] to describe 'the collective memory of a calamity that once befell a group's ancestors' and which now serves as a foundation for group identity.

This often applies in cases of minority groups asserting themselves against the dominant discourses of the majority, but the institutionalised

[15] Volkan (1997) concedes that the term 'chosen trauma' has been criticized, because a group does not choose to be victimized. However, he maintains that 'the word chosen fittingly reflects a large group's unconsciously defining its identity by the transgenerational transmission of injured selves infused with the memory of the ancestor's trauma' (ibid.: 48).

remembrance of traumatic experiences and the associated cultural practices of historical mourning can also serve as a foundation for national identity. As early as 1882 the distinguished French journalist and scholar of religious studies, Ernest Renan, argued that the national remembrance of victims and 'having suffered together' can be more powerful than memories of joy and triumph in unifying a nation.[16] With reference to Germany's recent flurry of activity in commemorating the victims of the Holocaust, Jörg Rüsen points out the parallels between the cathartic effect of mourning for the individual self and the officially endorsed practice of collective mourning, which allows the collective self, the nation, to emerge from its loss as new and changed (in Kirsch 2003: 319).

It has been pointed out that the TRC process in South Africa promoted the inscription of trauma narratives and the definition of a new political identity, 'that of a "national victim", a new South African self which included the dimensions of suffering and oppression' (Lodge 2002: 184). But it is also important to remember that some people refused to testify at the TRC precisely because they did not want to be regarded as victims (Ross, F. 2008: 243) and that both the TRC and especially the state-directed effort of memorialisation stress the importance of transcending trauma and victimhood, for instance by defining an affirmative identity based on resistance. As much as the conscious recollection of traumatic memories and the speaking out in public about past suffering can be personally empowering for the individual victim, the cathartic effect of telling the truth has also been contested (Verbeeck 2007; Ross, F. 2008; Colvin 2008).

Fiona Ross (2008), for instance, critically interrogates the TRC's simplistic assumption that telling is inherently healing (implying that remaining silent is damaging) and alerts us to the complex meanings of silence, as well as the potential costs of speaking out in public. At TRC hearings throughout the country clear age and gender patterns could be observed in speaking out about the experience of violence. Women were far less likely to talk about their own suffering than about that of their sons, their husbands, or other people around them. The strong emphasis of the TRC on documenting events rather than processes, and on gross violations of human rights abuses such as death and torture, rather than systemic relationships, generates a biased account of the past, in which predominantly masculine experiences become normative (ibid.: 239).

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[16] 'I spoke just now of "having suffered together" and, indeed, suffering in common unifies more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort'. These words are part of a now famous lecture that Renan delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1882 (quoted in Bhabha 1990: 19).

At TRC hearings throughout the country women were reluctant to speak about their experiences of violence, especially when this involved sexual violation.

> The women were afraid that deeply hurtful experience might become public and thereby expose them to judgement and censure. In contexts in which young women are often blamed for the harm they experience, especially when that harm is sexual, it ought not to be surprising that many would prefer not to speak (ibid.: 242).

In a patriarchal society women are subjected to strong notions of what constitutes proper behaviour, and female political activists who had experienced detention, rape or torture or who had borne children out of wedlock were especially vulnerable to being shamed, ridiculed, accused of impropriety or otherwise negatively judged. Remaining silent might have been a means of protection, containing harm rather than extending it outwards (ibid.: 243). One can imagine how much more complex this situation would be rendered if the perpetrator of the rape had been one of the woman's own comrades who was widely celebrated for his heroic fight for freedom. Ross argues that the 'truth' is determined not only by factual evidence, but depends on and is shaped by what it is permissible to say within a specific discourse (ibid.: 244). We will see that similar discursive limits apply to commemorative representation.

I quoted the R&R Committee report before with its assertion that the TRC process essentially led to the formation of an elite victim group, who furthermore qualified for reparations payment, whereas the systemic abuse committed during the apartheid era and the damages suffered through sustained repression remain largely unacknowledged. This is precisely where Colvin (2008) sees one of the pitfalls of allowing the trauma discourse to frame our experience of the past and understanding of the present. Because the concept of trauma is an event-centered model of suffering it does not sufficiently acknowledge ongoing forms of stress such as the damaging effect of continued, sustained forms of suffering.

> Those trying to use the idea of trauma to fight apartheid came to realise that many of the violences of apartheid were systematic and structural, lived every day as part of the basic conditions of 'normal' life, rather than as an unusual event that shook one out of daily life (Colvin 2008: 230).

The trauma model also relegates the suffering into the past, whereas many people today are still affected by ongoing forms of torment that could be considered traumatic, such as chronic poverty, sustained police harassment or persistent discrimination (ibid.: 230). The emphasis on a new beginning after 1994 accompanied by the TRC process as a vehicle for coming to terms with and asserting mastery over repressed traumatic memories eclipses the

continuities of suffering experienced by so many South Africans today. Some people's experience that 'nothing has changed' in their lives since the first democratic elections[17] raises critical questions about their identification with public monuments that represent the evil of the past and emphasise how it has been overcome.

With reference to the so-called Trojan Horse memorial in Athlone, I now want to revisit and qualify my earlier suggestion that public commemorative markers can constitute a form of asserting mastery over past traumatic events and hence have an empowering effect on the individual and the community. The Trojan Horse incident or Trojan Horse Massacre occurred in the township of Athlone on the Cape Flats on 15 October 1985 and involved a carefully planned South African security forces ambush in which three young men were killed and 13 children and two adults wounded. The security task team was hidden inside three large wooden crates carried on the back of a railway delivery truck. Variations on this 'Trojan Horse' strategy were repeatedly used on the Cape Flats at the time. A CBS film crew documented the tragic incident in Athlone, which was broadcast internationally the same evening, prompting wide-spread outrage (Khoisan 2001: 63-5; Gunn 2007).

In 1995 a small memorial plaque was unveiled near the site of the shooting in honour of the victims. Five years later the city made a modest budget available and commissioned Tyrone Appollis, a well-known local community painter, sculptor, musician and poet, to design a memorial for the Trojan Horse incident, while one of his friends designed a memorial for the Gugulethu Seven (discussed below). Both memorials – plain and simple artefacts, made of stones and concrete – were unveiled on Human Rights Day, 21 March 2000. But members of the community criticised their lack of monumentality and dignity and considered especially the Gugulethu memorial as meaningless. The city eventually re-invested in both projects, increasing the budget manifold, and two much more monumental commemorative markers were eventually unveiled in both Gugulethu and Athlone in 2005 (Gunn, personal communication 2005; Gunn 2007; Anonymous 2000e; Khoisan 2005; Minnaar 2005; Singh 2000).

The Cape Town-based architectural firm ACG Architects won the design competition for the Trojan Horse memorial organised under the City of Cape Town Memory Project. Participating architect Malcolm Campbell recalls that the visual component of the memorial generated extensive debate during the design process (personal e-mail communication 2009). Shirley Gunn from the Human Rights Media Centre, who closely collaborated with ACG Architects on this project, produced still images from the CBS footage and

[17] Compelling examples of this attitude can for instance be found in detailed interviews with survivors of the 1985 ambush attacks in Athlone and Crossroads (see Gunn 2007).

discussed the usage of specific compelling photographs in the creation of the memorial with the mothers of the three youngsters killed. But the mothers were adamant that they did not approve of a public memorial that would show their sons being shot or dead (Gunn, personal communication 2005).

While I suggested earlier that the fixing of memory – the emotional confrontation with the shocking truth in public memory sites – can help victims (and perhaps society at large) to come to terms with traumatic events, the mothers' rejection of publicly displaying the graphic photographs illustrates that such images can also 'freez[e] memory in ways that constantly recycle and reproduce unbearable pain', as Itzkin puts it in a different context (2006: 14).[18] I still maintain that a public memorial attesting to trauma can assist victims with their psychological healing and even political empowerment, but it seems imperative that such memorials are designed in consultation with the victims. In the Athlone case the wish of the mothers was respected and the ACG Architects designed a figurative visual component that did not represent the actual killing. However, all too often victims are not sufficiently consulted.[19] Even in the case of the Trojan Horse memorial, recalls Campbell, the project team battled to keep city officials at bay, who repeatedly tried to take ownership of the intiative and interfere in the memorial's design process (personal e-mail communication 2009).

In fact, what the families in Athlone wanted most were tombstones for the graves of their sons in the local cemetery, as they had never been able to afford a dignified marker (Gunn, personal communication 2005). The same sentiment was voiced by Tatana Sipho Fatman, uncle of Mabhuti Fatman, who was killed in a very similar ambush killing the following day (16 October 1985) in Crossroads, an African township community not far from Athlone:

> I am an ordinary person. I don't know what memorialisation is, but I would like to be able to point at my nephew's grave and feel proud about him and the cause of his death and say, 'This was my nephew who died for our freedom'. What I would like more than anything for Mabhuti is a tombstone (Tatana Fatman, quoted in Gunn 2007: 113).

This seems to suggest that the concept of public memorialisation, like the idea of trauma and how to treat it, is based on very specific cultural

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[18] Itzkin raises this in the context of his discussion of a controversial proposal for a memorial in honour of those who were tortured and lost their lives while in police custody at the notorious John Vorster Square police station in Johannesburg.

[19] Complaints about lack of consultation occurred, for instance, in the case of the Sharpeville Massacre memorial or the Stanza Bopape memorial in Mamelodi, as will be discussed below.

assumptions which remain foreign to a great many people (Clovin 2008: 231). It also raises the question for whom – if not primarily the victims – these memorials are really installed and for what purpose.

## Discomforting memories

The 'fixing' of memories and their representation in the public memory landscape may be empowering for some, but it can also lead to the disempowerment of others, as selected memories and specific interpretations of the past are sanctioned over others, literally carved in stone for now and the future. Officially endorsed public memory, moulded and interpreted by the forces of political necessity, always withholds recognition from alternative narratives and can contradict private memories, thereby de-authenticating and invalidating them. Such eclipsing of other stories, the silencing of dissenting voices, inevitably nurtures resentment and alienation. It may even cause tension and conflict.

It is of course immensely difficult and challenging to acknowledge the complexities and portray the ambivalences of the past with its manifold categories of victims. Community unease often surrounds the killing of suspected spies; cases of torture suffered in liberation movement camps; civilian victims of MK bomb attacks ('collateral damage'); the sexual abuse of women within the movement, and various other such contested and controversial memories. One of the important principle decisions taken by the commissioners of the TRC was that the suffering of all victims, irrespective of the ideological perspective they represented, was to be of equal moral significance. As Archbishop Tutu put it in response to a white woman's testimony about the killing of her husband by Umkhonto guerillas, it was wonderful 'for the country to experience that – black and white – all feel the same pain'. But audiences often resisted this sentimental equalisation of victims, as seen in other societies marred by conflict (Lodge 2002: 184).

The most significant group of ambivalent victims in South Africa includes those who died through the grisly practice of 'necklacing', the vigilante killing of suspected spies by placing burning tyres around their necks. It is estimated that between 1984 and 1989 approximately 450 people, almost all of them black, were killed in this manner. The brutal lynch justice must be understood in the context of the anti-apartheid conflict at the time, the extreme level of frustration and anger felt especially among the younger township generation, and the prevalence of young, inexperienced or intolerant leaders as a result of the imprisonment of the established leadership. Recent research shows how deeply traumatic this experience was and how many people have been affected by its painful memory, beginning with the surviving parents of victims, who often feel a sense of shame, and

going on to the perpetrators, who were once celebrated as heroes but are now the 'black sheep of the liberation movement', and to the many bystanders who must now come to terms with the fact that they looked on and perhaps clapped and sang. The memory of the necklace has even been observed to crop up in such unlikely places as the games of children far too young to have personally witnessed such scenes, thus suggesting that it has become an unacknowledged part of collective memory (Gobodo-Madikizela 2003 and 2004).

Parents of necklace victims, such as the mother of Nosipho Zamela, who was burnt to death on 8 December 1985 in the centre of Mlungisi township in Queenstown (Eastern Cape), because she was accused of being an informer on the basis of having an affair with a policeman, were even reluctant to testify at the TRC hearings. Necklace cases always evoked strong ambivalence among people attending the TRC, and people like Mrs Zamela often suffer deeply from the lack of community support and their own shame, which prevents them from sharing the same platform as the families of those killed by the security police (Gobodo-Madikizela 2004).

In any society some victims will always be easier to remember than others, and some victims are better not remembered at all. No public memorial has yet been installed or proposed to remember victims of the necklace. This includes even, and perhaps especially, those 'embarrassing', tragic cases in which the victims have later been found innocent, like Maki Skosana, one of the first victims of this practice, who was posthumously rehabilitated during the TRC process (Lodge 2002: 188). With the passage of time, future generations may be able to come to terms with such unpleasant memories and acknowledge the less honourable episodes of the struggle, but at the current moment giving recognition to such 'bad' victims in the official memory landscape is considered counter-productive to the government's goals of attaining reconciliation, unity and nation-building on the basis of pride in a shared history of resistance.

Although a consideration of private memorials generally is not part of this volume, I want to briefly draw attention to one exceptional case, because it illuminates so well the priorities in and absences from the public commemorative effort. In Gugulethu one can encounter two memorials within close proximity of each other along the same street, both testifying to killing incidents that happened on the respective sites within the space of a few years. One is the privately erected memorial for Amy Biehl, the other one the publicly sponsored memorial commemorating the 'Gugulethu Seven'.

Photo 3.3 Memorial for the Gugulethu Seven, Gugulethu (Cape Town), unveiled 2005.

The 'Gugulethu Seven' were a group of seven young local activists – Mandla Mxinwa (Mxinga), Jabulani Miya, Themba Mlifi (Molefi), Christopher Piet, Zola Swelani, Zabonkwe Konile and Zandisile Mjobo – who were ambushed and killed by security police at the corner of NY1 and NY111 in Gugulethu township on 3 March 1986. Although forensic evidence and eyewitness reports confirmed that the seven had been shot at point-blank range, two official inquests in the late 1980s found police not guilty of any wrongdoing. Only the TRC hearings brought to light the fact that the attack had been orchestrated by the state's anti-terrorist unit based at Vlakplaas. The young men, most of them in their early twenties, had been recruited, trained and armed by an informer in January/February 1986, who then lured them into the deadly ambush (TRC report 1998, Vol.3: 451-3).

As stated earlier, a modest memorial was initially erected in honour of the Gugulethu Seven, about which especially the victims' mothers quickly expressed their anger.[20] With the support of the wider community, the family eventually succeeded in motivating for the construction of a more imposing new memorial, unveiled on 21 March 2005 along with the Trojan Horse Memorial. Ntombomzi Piet, the sister of one of the seven activists, told a news reporter that

[20] Notably they claimed that they had not been consulted and that they considered the marker inappropriate and incomprehensible (Coombes 2003: 110).

> ... the men's families were happy that the sacrifice of the seven was finally being recognised with a proper memorial. The monument that used to be here on the spot where they died was not fitting and we as the families were not proud to be associated with it … When we saw monuments of others ... like Hector Pieterson we felt aggrieved because Cape Town's heroes did not have a proper memorial (Mtyala 2005).

Designed by Donovan Ward and Paul Hendricks, the new Gugulethu Seven memorial consists of seven black polished granite slabs, from which stylised life-size silhouettes of the young men are cut out. According to Ward (personal communication 2009), this was inspired by apartheid-era 'protest art', notably the haphazardly stencilled symbols of resistance that cropped up on many walls in townships at the time, but one might also interpret the cut-out shapes as a reference to the absence of the victims and the gap their death has left behind. Each slab furthermore bears a bronze plaque with the name, dates and a photographic likeness of the deceased (the latter not available in all cases at the time of unveiling).

Photo 3.4 Memorial cross in honour of Amy Biehl, Gugulethu (Cape Town), date of installation unknown.

Another bronze plaque contains detailed explanatory text, describing how the attack was planned and carried out and celebrating the memory of the seven young men as brave freedom fighters. A bus parking bay and a small

amphitheatre behind the memorial cater for the needs of large groups of visitors. A few hundred meters down the same road, at the entrance to a petrol station, one can find Amy Biehl's memorial – if one knows where to look. The killing of Amy Biehl, as said earlier, was subject of much discussion at the time, including the question of whether or not a memorial should be built for her and whether or not she deserved such a memorial (Gish 2003). One might consider the Amy Biehl Foundation her memorial, but in terms of commemorative markers in the urban geography of Gugulethu, there is nothing but a small stone cross stuck in the grass, similar to the type set up along highways in memory of road accident victims. A private company, Crosstones, took the initiative to sponsor this modest marker, which is inscribed 'AMY BIEHL MEMORIUM', followed by the sponsor's name and telephone number. The lack of any further explanation, the informality of the marker, as well as its undignified placement, all reinforce the unofficial nature of this memorial tribute to an extraordinary young woman whose tragic death cannot be officially acknowledged in the emergent memory landscape, because it casts a shadow over the inspiring grand-narrative of the liberation struggle endorsed by the state.

The comparison between the commemorative markers for Amy Biehl and the Gugulethu Seven illustrates how the post-apartheid process of memorialisation draws its mandate from the TRC process yet violates one of its most important principles, namely the acknowledgement of all victims. The TRC explicitly emphasised the equal value of the suffering on opposing sides of the ideological divide, considering all of the victims to be victims of an unjust system fought and defended with violence in a larger context of state-incited race hatred. But the government-supported practice of memorialisation is implicitly based on a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' victims, a hierarchical ranking of casualties in terms of their symbolic significance or 'usefulness' to support specific value systems and governmental agendas.

The case of the Gugulethu Seven memorial moreover illustrates the emergence of another type of hierarchy. The families' complaints about the insufficient dignity of the first commemorative marker and the subsequent 'upgrading' of both this and the Trojan Horse memorial indicate the surfacing of a new consciousness, where the purpose and benefits of public memorialisation, the public acknowledgement of being a victim of trauma, are beginning to be clearly understood by some and where, furthermore, the monumentality of the marker is increasingly regarded as a direct reflection of the perceived importance of the victim.

## Conclusion

It is one of the characteristics of the heritage sector – by no means unique to South Africa – that it represents reductionist narratives and reinforces dichotomous categorisations of historical events and persons. The fact that the current South African politics of remembrance is largely based on a careful distinction between 'good' (i.e. useful) and 'bad' (ominous) memories may suggest that the post-apartheid nation still experiences a sense of insecurity and vulnerability, a lack of confidence about its national identity. One might compare this to the case of the United States, where little attempt is made to deny or suppress the shameful history of slavery or the recent discovery that one of the country's greatest national heroes, George Washington, once kept slaves in his residence in Philadelphia. On the contrary, the heritage sector – forever in search of new attractions for commodification – thrives on controversy and sensationalism. But in young, emergent nations such as South Africa, the challenge lies in how such issues of shame can be presented without destroying people's sense of pride in the new nation and without undermining the project of restoring the dignity and self-esteem of those previously declared inferior.

A more serious problem with dichotomized representations of the past in the heritage sector can be inferred from Macdonald's (2002) analysis of the TRC. In the process of the public hearings, a polarised image of the apartheid period emerged, characterised by victims and perpetrators, as a result of which a large category of people have eluded coverage by the work of the TRC. It is the category of white South Africans who were neither victims nor perpetrators but simply beneficiaries or onlookers and who did nothing to question the racial foundations and injustices of the system that secured their privilege and power. As a result, the majority of whites in South Africa today can easily distance themselves from the human rights violations of the past and from sharing a sense of guilt or responsibility. This might explain why so few whites appear to identify with new post-apartheid commemorative markers. Macdonald predicts that if the symbolic representation of South Africa's past – as in monuments, one might suggest – vindicates all those who silently benefited from the system, reconciliation will not be possible (2002: 65-66, 69).

Many people and communities without doubt support the government's initiative in setting up monuments, memorials and related markers of public memory (notably street renaming) as an important official recognition of their historical experiences, which were previously invalidated or written out of the official record. However, the government's embracing of symbolic gestures, indeed its frequent prioritisation of monuments over service delivery or reparations of a more tangible and material kind also fuels criticism and suggests a certain unwillingness or inability to take more substantive steps in the socio-economic transformation of the country and to

address the material needs of its populace in general and victims specifically. Incidentally, in Argentina, where thousands of men, women and children 'disappeared' during the brutal reign of the military dictatorship in the late 1970s, the national government has done a lot to provide financial compensation to the victims, but it has been criticised for its reluctance to establish public memorials that pay homage to the victims and remind society of what happened (Lois and Lacabe 1999: 5).[21]

But the issue is not necessarily one of monetary versus symbolic reparations. In Argentina many descendants of victims reject all types of compensation, because to them accepting money equates to selling out the struggle for truth and justice. They believe that the only possible reparation is justice, which must begin with the state's taking action in the punishment of all human rights violators (Lois and Lacabe 1999: 7-8). Experience from other countries too (e.g. Chile) illustrates that the passage of time does not necessarily lay these contentious matters to rest. Public pressure for just mechanisms to redress the past can resurface after decades (Burton 2004: 42). This will remain one of the key challenges for South Africa. The TRC process is now over, but many issues remain unresolved, most notably the prosecution of human rights violators who were denied amnesty and those who chose not to apply. The South African government's enthusiastic investment in memorials, although pursued with the best intentions, may just not be enough in attaining healing and especially restoring dignity and a sense of justice for the victims of apartheid violence and their descendants.

[21] The Monument to the Victims of State Terrorism in Buenos Aires, a project initiated by the city rather than the national government in 1999, now constitutes the most important public memorial to the victims (Lois and Lacabe 1999: 6). Inspired by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it lists the name of every person who disappeared or was killed. It was in turn clearly one of the sources of inspiration for the Wall of Names at Freedom Park in South Africa discussed in Chapter Seven.

# 4

# Imagining Community through Bereavement: The Institutionalisation of Traumatic Memory

## Introduction

The previous chapter foregrounded the role of memorials in individual healing and community reconciliation, largely ignoring aesthetic aspects of their visual design. Indeed, observation suggests that many viewers do not accord much importance to details of visual appearance. While art critics and interested members of the public may argue over the artistic merit of a new monument – as for instance in the case of the Steve Biko statue in East London – the media reported family members and other sympathisers as expressing their satisfaction about the mere physical presence of the statue.[1] I believe that for many communities affected by township violence, the inscription of all of the victims' names on a new memorial, for instance, may be far more important than its clever conceptualization and aesthetic quality.

But these statements may soon have to be reconsidered as the heritage sector becomes more established and a growing commemorative consciousness tends to manifest itself among communities throughout South Africa. Mimicking the case of the Gugulethu Seven and Trojan Horse memorials, several other commemorative markers have also already been replaced with or accompanied by, other, more ambitious commemorative projects within

[1] The aesthetic merit of the Steve Biko statue quickly became a matter of controversy and extensive public debate. The statue was labelled 'anything from unrealistic, disproportionate and disrespectful, to plain ugly' (Jonker 1997; see also Bentley 1997; Anonymous 1997e). Local artists, academics, and museum professionals deliberated issues of style, whether or not exact likeness was imperative, and whether or not the statue must be a work of art. Foreign critics dismissed the statue's 'colonial style' as an unfitting tribute (Jacobson 1997). Yet when Biko's widow, Nontsikelelo, was asked for her opinion, she expressed her satisfaction with the sculpture and plainly summed up that she was 'glad the statue is there' (Anonymous 1997e).

the last few years. More incidents of such upgrading are likely to follow as funds become available. It appears that an increasing sense of competition is setting in, as communities, supported by political organisations, become aware of heritage projects throughout the country and compare how the memorials to 'their' respective heroes measure up. Solidity and monumentality are promoted as important markers of dignity, which enhance the public recognition and sense of respect paid to those who suffered and lost their lives. In this context, a modest memorial can quickly be perceived as insufficiently dignified, indeed disrespectful, and hence in need of replacement or support through the addition of a more appropriate tribute.

This inflationary process of public commemorative construction is significantly fuelled by the heritage tourism industry, as international visitors especially are flocking to the sites where important historical events took place or apartheid atrocities were committed. In the case of Sharpeville, for instance, Themba Goba, a former apartheid activist, was quoted by the *Pretoria News* as saying that it can be a bit embarrassing when people travel from all over the world to see the site. 'It is like we disregard the people who sacrificed their lives for their country and that is what prompted us to develop the idea of a museum' (Anonymous 2000d). This need to provide appropriately decorous visitor attractions is complemented by the desire of the state to institutionalise the memory of trauma and resistance for the attainment of specific policy goals and national identity discourses.

This chapter investigates three cases of such memorial 'upgrades', namely the Solomon Mahlangu statue in Mamelodi, the Hector Pieterson Memorial in Soweto, and the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct. I focus specifically on their visual appearance and the parameters of their aesthetic design, such as their conceptualisation, scale, style, subject matter, iconography, symbolism and materials. It is through such visual signifiers (and the allied textual inscriptions) that a monument 'speaks' to its viewers, signalling who should feel addressed by it, who is invited to identify with it, and who is excluded. Memorials and monuments are not only beacons of hope and symbolic markers of healing, but also pieces of commemorative public art and architecture which can have a significant visual impact on their environment. Their varied textual and visual signifiers are often strategically employed to make authoritative claims about the past that may affect people in unpredictable ways. As information about the historical past is increasingly mediated through heritage, the conceptualisation and visual design of these commemorative markers, the images they carve in stone, impinge on the ways in which the past is remembered and even 'known'.

## Upgrading Solomon Mahlangu square

Photo 4.1 Bronze statue of Solomon Mahlangu, Mamelodi (Tshwane), unveiled 2005.

Although the Umkhonto memorial in Mamelodi discussed in Chapter One was always associated with Solomon Mahlangu as an extraordinary individual, its visual design based on the ANC logo and its official dedication to the fallen cadres of MK represented a collective form of memorialisation. During the following years, however, the story of Mahlangu as a heroic individual began to assume an increasingly prominent role. The reburial of his bodily remains in the Mamelodi Cemetery has already been referred to. Two years later, in 1995, the Mamelodi Heritage Forum was established and in 1999 the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom Square project was officially launched as part of the general upgrading and development of the area (Shonisani 2001). With the emergence of township tourism, Mamelodi had become a point of attraction with a moderate flow of tourists visiting the area and the existing memorial. The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom Square project was integrated into the Mamelodi Tourist Route and plans for an 'upgrading' of the memorial emerged (Ratlou, personal communication 2003).

On 17 September 2005, an over life-size bronze statue of Solomon Mahlangu (modelled by Angus van Zyl Taylor) on a high plinth was

unveiled in place of the Umkhonto memorial. The new monument, commissioned by the City of Pretoria (the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality) and the Mamelodi community, is dedicated 'to the life of our freedom fighter, Solomon "Kalushi" Mahlangu'. It shows a realistically rendered statue of the young man, dressed in combat fatigues and boots. With both feet planted firmly on the ground and a determined look on its face, the statue resembles that of Steve Biko in East London. In his hands Mahlangu holds a globe which, according to the affixed plaque, symbolises 'a combination of Africa's riches and the world of opportunities now open to us all'.

If one wants to draw a distinction between memorial and monument in Danto's sense, this towering commemorative effort would certainly pass as a monument. It forms the centre piece of the large circular paved Mahlangu square, which visitors approach from the parking area opposite the Municipal Offices via a palm-lined pathway. The approach is a staged experience, a metaphorical journey, which contains symbolic markers representing three significant phases in the recent history of the township and the country. Firstly, there are the remains of the former gate-structure that once allowed security forces to control access to and from the township. These concrete pillars, now supporting text panels with information on the 'Mamelodi Heritage Route', represent the apartheid history of the township and constitute more generally a symbol of oppression. Immediately in front – directly opposite the Mahlangu statue – the old Umkhonto memorial, now freshly repainted, has been re-erected, representing the first official tribute to the fallen liberation fighters and symbolising triumph over oppression. Lastly, the new Solomon Mahlangu statue, in its very monumentality, the predominance and imposing character of its visual appearance, speaks of the confidence and firm establishment of the new order. There are no more references to the names, logos and symbols of specific political parties, although the initiated know that Mahlangu represents the ANC.

The new monument represents a shift from a collective to an elitist approach to commemoration, focused on individual stalwarts or martyrs of the struggle. This reflects a wider trend in post-apartheid South Africa, which manifests itself in the widespread installation of bronze statues of individual leader figures (almost always male) and memorials dedicated to one named person as a representative of an unnamed group. This *pars pro toto* mode of memorialisation – at least in part inspired by the Hector Pieterson memorial – was meant to personalise the struggle for freedom through the example of Solomon Mahlangu and allow ordinary people to relate to it. Moreover, in an attempt at educating or conscientising the younger generation, local children were actively involved in the design of the new monument. Affixed to the base of the statue is a series of six small bronze relief plaques with visual images based on children's drawings. They interpret Mahlangu's (alleged) last words, 'Let my blood nourish the tree

that will bear the fruits of freedom', in the context of the new democracy and its opportunities.[2]

However, these words do not exactly reflect the innermost personal thoughts of the dying Mahlangu, but are instead a quotation from the 19th century Italian Risorgimento leader, Guiseppe Mazzini, which Mahlangu must have memorised, perhaps in the context of his ideological training. Correspondingly, the similarity of the Mahlangu statue to the Biko statue and its iconographic link with the familiar formula of colonial military statuary makes it more of a stereotype than a representation of a particular person. One may doubt that the imposing, over life-size statue elevated far above ground level really allows for personal identification. One might also critically ask, what precisely the youth of Mamelodi today is intended to learn from the example of Mahlangu, what they are invited to identify with, and how that fits into the current post-apartheid context.

It could be argued that the monument as a whole and the relief images in particular are meant to induce children to appreciate, rather than take for granted, what their parents' generation fought for. In this context, the ideological differences of the past, despite being echoed in political opposition in the present, are denied or neglected, superseded as it were by the persuasiveness of the larger liberation narrative. It is important how we remember and represent history, because the present is always seen in a context that is causally connected to events in the past (Connerton 1989: 2). Hence to some extent one can manipulate the younger generation's experience of the present by influencing its knowledge and perception of the past.

The sense of indebtedness that flows from the public invocation of suffering and sacrifices made by dedicated members of the community in the past can be channelled towards an acceptance of a commitment to civic duty for those in the present. It is ostensibly the commitment to the ideals for which others gave their lives, but actually the commitment to the *interpretation* of those ideals by political officials and other stakeholders who engender memories in specific ways and subtly infuse them with ideological messages. A key characteristic and indeed purpose of all public commemoration is the periodic renewal and constant updating of memory and its adaptation to the needs of the present. Public commemorative functions, where the essentially private affair of mourning the dead and remembering the suffering is institutionalised and turned into a public activity, need not only a suitable site, but also a symbolically significant

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[2] The images interpret these words 'in the context of our new democracy and opportunities that can be attained due to this freedom'. Each of the images is explained in a caption, e.g. 'Through the fruits of freedom all people in South Africa are united'; 'Through the fruits of freedom all people can harvest from our land'; 'Through the fruits of freedom education will make us strong'.

time. Public holidays constitute the most pertinent occasion for official processes of remembrance linked to the narrative of the nation and indeed, in South Africa today attendance of commemorative functions on public holidays is increasingly portrayed as a civic duty, a reflection of the individual's commitment to the nation.

## Public holidays and 'shrines of the nation'

In some countries, as Koshar (2000: 289) explains, nationhood is rooted in territorial integrity, political and administrative tradition, and a shared sense of citizenship. In other countries national identity is based on mutual ethno-cultural roots (e.g. Germany; Poland). In other cases religion is the integrating factor (e.g. Israel), and in yet others, identity is based on the celebration of a revolution (e.g. France; United States). The post-apartheid South African nation shares some elements of all or most of the above, but none of these models applies here completely. Although constitutionally enshrined, the 'Rainbow Nation' model of a non-racial, multicultural nation in which every group's culture and heritage are equally valid and important is effectively waning in the face of an increasing African nationalism.

Chapters Six and Seven will engage with issues of national identity, notably the question of who belongs to the nation and how this is manifested in post-apartheid heritage, but at this point I want to focus on the concept of the commemorative monument as a stage for enacting national identity. In the modern world nationality is a universal socio-cultural concept – 'everyone can, should, will "have" a nationality, as he or she "has" a gender', notes Benedict Anderson (1983: 14) in his influential book *Imagined Communities.* Nationality is widely and unquestioningly accepted as natural and given; people feel a strong sense of belonging to their nation and some are prepared to die for it. Yet nations are not necessarily based on deeply rooted bonds, historically shared values and cultural practices (e.g. language, religion, ethnicity), but artificially constructed, even invented, political entities created within specific socio-political contexts, which are subsequently naturalised and mythologised.

Anderson's definition of the nation as an imagined political community implies that mechanisms are required to maintain the idea of the nation and inculcate in the populace a sense of belonging. One such mechanism is public monuments, notably national monuments and most especially cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers, which, Anderson claims, instill a sense of awe and reverence 'precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them' (1983: 17). In their commemoration of historical persons and events deemed significant for the nation, monuments promote the notion of shared historical bonds and provide a stage for ceremonial public reverence that is designed to conjure

up the idea of the imagined community and foster the desire to belong. Indeed, Anderson sees nationalism as a kind of religious practice, which makes the gathering at sites of national memorials and monuments, 'shrines of the nation', comparable with pilgrimages to religious shrines as places of contemplation, where consciousness is shaped and identity performed. Hetherington (1998) nuances (and secularises) this argument by pointing to the link between politics and issues of identity and lifestyle. Identity is in part about spatiality, i.e. identification with particular places that act as sites for the performance of identity. Monuments and memorials are spaces where like-minded people can meet or assemble and engage in a collective remembrance of the past, aimed at a confirmation of identity and sometimes a shift in consciousness.

I now want to focus on the new Hector Pieterson memorial and museum and the new Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct, both of which have been referred to in the media as 'shrines of the nation'. I argue that their layout and architectural design were crucially inspired by the idea of communal gatherings and ritualized acts of commemoration. They are designed to set the stage for the public performance of officially endorsed memory. The need to provide a suitable space for mass gatherings, especially on the relevant public holidays, and a stage for officials to deliver a speech or publicly perform a symbolic act (e.g. laying a wreath) was crucial, because in both cases the site was largely undeveloped. The site of the ANCYL memorial in Orlando West was in the middle of a large traffic island and the modest memorial that Mandela had unveiled at Sharpeville in 1996 – referred to in one newspaper report as 'a small outcrop of rock with a tiny, weather-beaten plaque' (Anonymous 2000d) – was located on the edge of a vacant, unpaved and undeveloped lot.

Unlike many of the country's self-effacing memorials designed and constructed by local builders, both the Sharpeville and Hector Pieterson Memorials are ambitious, monumental, large-scale projects, designed by professional architectural firms. They reflect some conceptual engagement with the perceived role and purpose of a memorial and with the challenge of visualising memories and facilitating healing. Both structures commemorate similar events. They mourn the death of victims of apartheid violence and celebrate the heroism and bravery of peaceful protestors. Both events are well-known internationally and within South Africa, and both events still carry a high degree of emotional charge despite their relative historical distance. In both cases the commemorative structures were built with similar objectives in mind: to serve as national sites of identification and as tourist attractions; to acknowledge loss and restore dignity to affected communities; and to facilitate reconciliation and nation-building for the general public. How successful are the two similar yet different monuments in addressing these wide-ranging expectations? Although it was developed slightly later, I want to begin with a brief discussion of the Sharpeville Human Rights

Precinct (following on from Chapter Two), before engaging in a detailed analysis of the Hector Pieterson Memorial.

## Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct

Ashplant et al. (2004: 52ff.) explain in their discussion of war memorials that the hegemonic framing of memories, in which the nation-state recognises selected war memories for incorporation into the national narrative, begins with the process of naming the respective memories and conflicts. In post-apartheid South Africa, 16 June, formerly referred to as 'Soweto Day' or simply June 16th, has been declared a public holiday, officially called 'Youth Day' in memory of the crucial contribution made by the younger generation to the attainment of liberation. The controversial naming of the public holiday on 21 March has already been mentioned. In both cases, the name of the holiday indicates what is deemed symbolically significant about the day and impacts on the nature of its annual public commemoration.[3]

In the case of Sharpeville, the hegemonic framing of memory through the politics of naming is transferred onto the actual memorial structure, which is officially called 'Human Rights Precinct', although it is popularly known as the Sharpeville Memorial. The site of the shooting had been well-known within the community but not formally marked until 1996. The initiative for a much more prominent memorial marker and the development of the surrounding site arose from two key trajectories. On the one hand there was the government's increasing awareness of the unique symbolic significance of Sharpeville: firstly as the locus of the 1960 massacre, and secondly as the place where Nelson Mandela solemnly signed into effect the new South African Constitution, thus sealing the attainment of liberation over apartheid oppression and violence. On the other hand we find the urgent need for urban design and regeneration of this poverty-stricken, characterless township environment – for the benefit of the local community, but also for the sake of the increasing number of tourists attracted to this emotionally charged place.

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[3] In the context of the Freedom Park project (discussed in Chapter Seven) a public survey was conducted in 2001, which also revealed widespread criticism about the new names, which were generally considered unnecessary and unsuitable. 'June 16 and Sharpeville Day must be restored' was the general sentiment (Survey 2001: 39).

Photo 4.2 Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct (Sharpeville Massacre memorial), Sharpeville, unveiled 2002.

Following an initiative from academics at the University of Witwatersrand for the urban renewal of Sharpeville (among other neglected areas around Johannesburg), Gabriel Greeff, a Pretoria-based architect and urban designer, became involved. Greeff's task was to design an appropriate memorial and heritage site, which would do justice to the increasing public interest in Sharpeville and function as the focal point of a new town centre, the core element that would give definition to future urban development expanding from that point. Apart from a memorial, the plan entailed a large arts and crafts sales outlet, a small amphitheatre, and a museum for human rights in the 'town centre'.

From there a 'Freedom Walk' – lined with text panels, sculptures and other suitable objects – was supposed to link the memorial with the local stadium, where the signing of the Constitution had taken place. No funds were available for the implementation of this elaborate scheme, but the Gauteng Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation offered the relatively modest amount of R1 million to ensure that at least one small component of the project would be realised, namely the adequate commemoration of the massacre through the construction of a dignified

memorial. This was eventually unveiled on 21 March 2002, while the adjacent museum, or rather Exhibition Centre, opened only three years later (21 March 2005), separated from the memorial space through a truncated version of the proposed Freedom Walk (Greeff personal communication 2004).

Photo 4.3 Sharpeville Exhibition Centre, Sharpeville, unveiled 2005.

Greeff recalls struggling to find suitable design precedents drawn from an African cultural context, but then decided to focus on the concept of a wailing wall, stylistically inspired by North African gate structures and similar monumental walls in ancient Egypt (personal communication 2004). Hence the Sharpeville memorial is dominated by a massive red brick wall structure with a small central opening leading into the sacred fenced memorial space behind. The wall was meant to function as a clear definition and boundary, as well as marking the end of the axis that leads to the local church, where the service for victims of the shooting was held in 1960. Very obviously, the wall also defines a public space and a stage – ideal for annual commemorative ceremonies with their official speeches and ritualistic performances, but also possibly suitable for other community functions, notably those that aim to evoke (or appropriate) the memory of the past.

A tall metal fence between buttresses delineates the triangular site of the memorial garden behind the massive gate structure. For Greeff it was most important that the memorial should imbue a sense of respect for the dead, which he tried to achieve through a strong formality of design, a sense of

order contrasting with the informal fabric or 'chaos' that characterises the surroundings (personal communication 2004). In other words, the strong seclusion of the memorial space from the traffic and buzz of its urban environment was to give it an aura of dignity and reverence. The more a monument site is separated from its surroundings, says Zeller (2000: 25), the stronger is its effect as a taboo zone, forcing the visitor into the role of the silent, awe-inspired viewer who feels duty-bound to pay respect.

Although the memorial is located in the middle of the township, its implicit design precedent is a cemetery combined with the concept of a roof-less church. The place of the congregated worshipers – on both sides of the central aisle – is taken up by the symbolic headstones of the 69 individually named victims or martyrs, assembling them for a kind of *sacra conversazione* (the actual bodies, it will be recalled, are buried at the local cemetery). The 'apsis' contains, in *lieu* of the altar, a water feature symbolising that 'the spirit lives on' (Greeff, personal communication 2004) and carrying connotations of peace, renewal, hope and perhaps symbolic resurrection. Like a small chapel or side altar, the older memorial cairn is incorporated on the side. The tall opening in the centre of the monumental gate structure facilitates entry into the sacred precinct (much like the portal of medieval cathedrals) and metaphorical transcendence, which is underscored by its axial alignment with the local church.

Rowlands (1999) argues that in war memorials, the act of transcendence that is needed to break out of the melancholy induced by the identification with the dead is usually achieved through triumphalism – the assertion that the deaths were not in vain, that people had died for a good cause, and that something positive had been achieved. This assertion is accompanied by a suppression of humiliating or guilt-ridden memories. If one considers the Sharpeville memorial in conjunction with the display in the adjacent, recently opened exhibition centre, which illustrates the historical context of the Sharpeville Massacre and details the events of the day, a linear narrative of oppression, suffering, martyrdom and ultimate triumph emerges. It is tempting to draw parallels with eschatological biblical themes, especially because the TRC, too, was strongly mantled in Christian language and dominated by Christian mores, including even the use of certain symbols and ritual practices. This was in large part due to the dominant influence of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whose notions of reconciliation blend Christian religious concepts with aspects of African philosophy (Krog 2002: 109-11, 153; Lodge 2002).

One might question the appropriateness of a secluded, solemn memorial space as a town centre, but as King (1999) points out, the symbolic presence of the deceased in the midst of the community allows the living to commune with the dead and to care for them – much like their ancestors – in private or public acts of reverence. In traditional rural African communities the most important ancestors may be buried in the central cattle kraal, a much

respected space surrounded with taboos and rules of access.[4] In his analysis of First World War memorials in Britain, King observed that there is often a suggestion that the dead are still somehow present: 'A number of contemporary accounts, not only by spiritualists, refer to a sense of their presence at ceremonies or near memorials, but frequently as judges, issuing warning and requirements, rather than as souls at peace' (1999: 156). Whereas King notes the inconsistency of this way of thinking with the traditional Christian conception of resurrection, this is presumably a most common and completely naturalised experience among African traditionalists.

'The way in which people choose to remember an event – indeed how they adjust to it – is as historically important as the event itself', notes Philip Frankel (2001: 17). As mentioned earlier, based on extensive archival and oral history research, he uncovered an array of complexities and contradictions about the Sharpeville Uprising, exposed some highly disturbing aspects of the 'Sharpeville story', and cast some PAC leader figures in an ambivalent light.[5] Echoing my earlier remarks about 'bad victims', the Sharpeville memorial and exhibition centre must suppress such uncomfortable memories because they compromise what is meant to be a tragic but inspiring narrative. Ironically, new heritage sites in South Africa habitually purport to tell the 'truth' about what happened in the past, to reveal the 'people's story', long neglected in official historical discourses. But in reality such sites can rarely afford to expose the infinite gradations, contradictions and ambiguities inherent in historical events and persons, because ultimately they are intended to play a particular societal role, which includes providing moral guidance and achieving specific objectives aligned with national policies and government visions.

In short, commemorative monuments and other products of the heritage sector delivered by the government limit the choices of how we remember the past, leaving little room for divergent memories and alternative interpretations. Not only does the PAC contestation of the Sharpeville

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[4] For the importance on the cattle kraal and generally cattle symbolism in Zulu culture, see Hammond-Tooke (2008).

[5] For instance, Frankel highlights the contentious role of black police officers 'around which a web of silence has been woven to this day' (2001: 138). After the shooting, when the gates of the police station were opened and police fanned out to assess the situation, large numbers of black police apparently worked their way through the bodies and systematically killed those who were still alive. A contingent of five black police from Bez Valley specifically targeted women lying on the ground, using their assegais on the heart, throat or genitals of these victims (2001: 139). This may have been prompted by the outrage black police had experienced, when a group of women protestors close to the fence had raised their skirts and exposed their genitals as a gesture of contempt for the forces of law and order, while simultaneously shouting obscenities in their mother-tongue, targeted at the black police behind the fence (2001: 142).

memorial expose the myth of a unified liberation movement and shared experience of the struggle as a foundation of a unified post-apartheid nation, but contestation also emanated from members of the Sharpeville community, as mentioned in earlier. The fact that the ANC-dominated council of Vereeniging had pushed the project at the expense of actively involving Sharpeville residents and especially without sufficiently consulting victims and families on how they wanted the dead to be memorialised caused resentment that is still palpable within the community today.

## The Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum

Photo 4.4 Hector Pieterson Memorial, Orlando West (Soweto), unveiled 2001.

I now want to examine the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum in Orlando West, designed by the Johannesburg-based architectural firm Mashabane Rose Associates. The site is today one of the country's premier heritage sites associated with the liberation struggle and a major tourist attraction, constituting one of the highlights of a standard Soweto township tour. Although the community has always remembered the events of the Soweto Uprising and its victims, the new heritage development consisting of a memorial and adjacent museum represents a significant shift towards an increasingly formal, imposing, public and 'official' form of commemoration. Tensions had been rising for several months in Soweto in 1976 and from mid-May of that year about a dozen schools went on strike over the Afrikaans language issue and a long list of other grievances. On 16 June

students from three schools – Belle Higher Primary, Phefeni Junior Secondary, and Morris Isaacson High – planned to march to the Orlando Stadium to hold a meeting. Police, who were not specifically prepared for the event, intercepted and confronted one column of the singing, gathering crowd along the way in Vilakazi Street in the morning. Firing tear gas canisters failed to disperse the demonstrators, some of whom responded by throwing stones. The police then fired live ammunition into the crowd, killing 12-year-old Zolile Hector Pieterson and wounding several others. This incident sent the furious marchers on a rampage through the township, smashing windows and setting fire to schools, vehicles and government buildings. By the evening Soweto had turned into a battle zone with police pursuing and shooting at anyone who appeared to be involved in the rioting and destruction of property. The resultant bloodshed shocked communities and fuelled the anger of black youths throughout the country. What was planned as a local one-day protest action escalated into a nationwide revolt, eventually affecting more than 100 urban areas, leading to reprisals and further bloodshed over the course of almost a year (Karis and Gerhart 1997: 167-8; Ndlovu, S.M. 1998; Pohlandt-McCormick 2008).

Hlongwane (2008: 29) shows that the memorialisation of the June 16 Soweto Uprising was an integral part of the unfolding liberation project. Annual commemorations of June 16, organised by the South African Council of Churches, were held at various churches throughout the country from 1978, but particularly at the well-known church of Regina Mundi in Soweto, one of the key sites of anti-apartheid resistance. In 1996, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the event, an exhibition of black and white photographs entitled *Youth Uprising – Point of No Return* was mounted, featuring photographs by Peter Magubane, Alf Khumalo, Sam Nzima and others. Curated by Bongi Dhlomo and Tumelo Mosaka under the auspices of the African Institute of Contemporary Art (AICA), the exhibition was installed in ten recycled shipping containers, which were set up in the vicinity of the ANCLY memorial in Orlando West. The site was locally known as 'Hector Pieterson Square' and had been declared a National Monument on 15 February 1995. The high number of both local and international visitors attracted by the exhibition (initially about 250, later 500 visitors per day), underlined the significance of the 1976 revolt to South Africans and the international community and prompted the decision to extend the exhibition period (Baines 2007; Nieves and Hlongwane 2007; Simbao 2007). Nieves and Hlongwane (2007) provide a valuable insider perspective into the genesis of the June 16 memorial project that emphasises in particular the generally underrepresented participation of the local community and critically examines the role of community-based organisations such as the Ward Committee, the Local Economic Development Forum, the Civic Association, the Unemployed Forum and especially the Soweto Heritage Trust (SHT), which was founded in 1995 to

identify places of historic value and designate them as heritage sites. Conflict erupted between the SHT and the photographers of the exhibited images, when the Trust began to charge an admission fee for the exhibition. The photographers, who had made their work freely available as a service to the community, were incensed about the profit-taking and eventually withdrew their images. This left the site and the existing memorial stone denuded of an important and popular complementary component that could 'tell a story' in compelling visual images. It also left a group of informal traders from the local community, who had become accustomed to selling craft and other merchandise to visitors, without an income (Hlongwane personal communication 2008).

The vendors began to lobby the city for the installation of a permanent exhibition, hence in a sense initiating the idea of a museum. Simultaneously Jeremy Rose from Mashabane Rose Associates (and perhaps others) also conceived of the creation of a formal place of remembrance at Hector Pieterson Square through the construction of a more substantial memorial and a museum. During the course of the following years, this ambitious project – the first of its kind in a South African township – took concrete shape through a multiplicity of contributions and the collaboration of various stakeholders. The city of Johannesburg assigned Ali Hlongwane, a member of the Council, to represent the interests of the city and oversee the establishment of a curatorial team to conduct research and collect material. Mashabane Rose were appointed for the architectural design, and the SHT in conjunction with project architect Jeremy Rose embarked on a two-and-a-half year venture to secure funds from both the public and the private sectors. The architects and the curatorial team collected photographs, archival material and artefacts, and a few members of the community proudly donated items for the emerging museum in their midst, the first such institution in Soweto (Rose, personal communication 2004; Nieves and Hlongwane 2007: 360-1; Hlongwane, personal communication 2008).

## Remembering June 16: *Pars pro toto*

Various aspects of the Soweto Uprising are unknown, contested or sometimes misrepresented. Contrary to popular belief the first victim to be shot on that fateful day was not Hector Pieterson, but Hastings Ndlovu, who is believed to have died a few days later. Hector Pieterson was furthermore not an activist but merely an innocent bystander, drawn to the march mostly through curiosity and then inadvertently caught up in the events that led to his untimely death. Antoinette Sithole insists that her brother, being at primary school, was neither involved in student politics, nor would he even have known what the protest was really about. Although oral history research revealed that the role and contribution of primary school students

has been overlooked and underestimated (Hlongwane, personal communication 2008),[6] Sithole maintains that the younger children (certainly in her brother's school) were not briefed on the campaign and were not supposed to take part in the demonstration (Sithole personal communication 2003; Baines 2007). Nevertheless, the new memorial in Orlando West is dedicated to Hector Pieterson as an internationally known icon of youth resistance and as a personal link with 'all other young heroes and heroines of our struggle who laid down their lives for freedom, peace and democracy', as the dedication reads.

This personalised mode of commemoration accorded more significance to the actual spot where Hector Pieterson was shot, which was identified only during the course of the research project as being at the corner of Moema and Vilakazi Streets, approximately two blocks away from the ANCYL memorial. Because the area surrounding this spot is built up, whereas the site of the ANCLY memorial was largely open for development, the new memorial complex was erected on the latter site. The first phase of the project hence focused on the enlargement and enhancement of this site, which necessitated the re-routing of one of the streets to turn the former traffic island into a larger plot. The commemorative complex comprises the memorial itself, unveiled on 16 June 2001, the museum, unveiled exactly one year later, an official marker on the spot where Hector Pieterson was shot and various visitor amenities, notably parking and a sales arena for craft vendors.

The project's most important financier was the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), which contributed R16.8 million from the Poverty Relief Fund. The City of Johannesburg provided another R7.5 million at a later stage for the interior of the museum, and Standard Bank contributed services, being appointed by the DEAT as the implementing agent for the project (Vester, personal communication 2003; Anonymous 2001). The DEAT's involvement was based on the rationale that the development would create income generation and employment opportunities for the local community. The national and international status of the Soweto Uprising and the close proximity of the site to other places of interest – notably the private homes of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Archbishop Tutu, and the old Mandela family residence (now a museum) in Vilakazi Street – constituted ideal parameters for exploitation as a cultural tourist attraction.[7]

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[6] Since the new language policy was initially supposed to affect only primary schools, it was apparently in some cases the primary school students who played the most active role, while their older brothers and sisters came along only in support (Hlongwane personal communication 2008).

[7] 'The Hector Pieterson Museum is of international interest and is expected to attract many tourists', claimed the Gauteng Tourism Authority in a newsletter

Based on the Hector Pieterson Memorial as precedent, the official remembrance of many unnamed victims through one iconic representative became a popular strategy for other commemorative initiatives. Yet this *pars pro toto* approach is not always acceptable to the families and descendants of the victims, as became painfully evident in the case of the Stanza Bopape memorial in Mamelodi. Bopape was a prominent activist from Mamelodi who had participated in activities of the local civic structure. He disappeared along with 19 other youths who – according to TRC Investigations – had been killed and their bodies fed to the crocodiles of the Komati River in the Komatipoort border of Mozambique in 1986 and 1987.[8] When in 1998 the ANC and the Civic Organisation built the Stanza Bopape memorial to represent all those who died in the Mamelodi struggle against apartheid, the families of the other dead activists were highly offended that they had not been consulted and the memorial did not acknowledge the names of their loved ones. In protest they resolved not to attend the unveiling of the memorial (Kgalema 1999: 20-1).

In the case of the Hector Pieterson heritage site the conflict could be resolved by displaying the names of all of the other victims inside the museum. The memorial's exclusive focus on Hector Pieterson was justified for several reasons: the boy constitutes the epitome of innocence, vulnerability and blamelessness, and he is free from any suggestion of aggression or violence, which might contaminate the story of the protestors' morally elevated cause. But he is also widely known as an icon, based on the international recognition value of the famous photograph by Sam Nzima. A roughly life-size enlargement of the Nzima photograph, screen-printed on metal, was incorporated into the Hector Pieterson memorial, next to the older ANCLY memorial. The photograph forces the viewer to be literally confronted by the tragic group, as if asked to receive the dead body. It prompts visitors to visualize the historical event and appeals to them for identification with the victims. Adapting and modifying the Christian story of salvation, the Hector Pieterson Memorial condenses emotions and projects them onto one person whose suffering represents that of many others.

Photographs often focus on motifs and follow familiar compositional schemata historically developed in the visual arts, especially painting. Nzima's photograph compositionally mimics the entrenched Christian

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(Anonymous 2001). Tourism is expected to bring development and employment into the area, notably through the creation of Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises (SMME), through craft stalls outside the museum building and training programmes run by the museum curator.

8 It is estimated that a total of about 50 activists from Mamelodi died up until 1994. Not all of them disappeared. Some of the bodies were found dumped in the streets (Kgalema 1999: 20-1).

iconographic tradition of the *pietà*, which, in turn, has informed the sculptural conventions of war memorial sculpture all over the western world. It expresses innocence and martyrdom, and implies the notion of ultimate triumph. Its compelling character and high recognition value has prompted numerous artists in South Africa and internationally to appropriate the Nzima photograph. Examples range from Kevin Brand's 1996 work *Pietà*, a plastic tape installation on a wall of the Cape Town Castle, to French artist, Ernest Pignon Ernest, who adapted the famous photograph of the Struggle for Liberation as a compositional reference for his Aids *Pietà* project, the 'new Struggle', in 2002.

Echoing the case of the Hector Pieterson Memorial, a mural was painted on a wall near the entrance to the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct, based on a photograph of the Sharpeville massacre by Drum photographer Ian Berry. Although Berry's photograph is well known and is closely associated with the Sharpeville massacre through frequent reproduction and display, it lacks the compelling, iconic quality of Nzima's image, arguably because it does not include those familiar, time-honoured compositional formulae and iconographic motifs. Testifying to the continued high level of identification with the Nzima photograph, Simbao's (2007) detailed analysis illustrates not only the popularity and endless reproduction of the image, but also its creative re-working in different contexts, even its incarnation through performance. During the commemorative march on 16 June 2006, a group of young people holding up Youth Day posters marched, sang, and danced around the Hector Pieterson Memorial, when a young man spontaneously picked up a young boy and small group re-enacted the scene shown in the photograph as they continued to march (ibid.: 64).

## Design and symbolism of the memorial

On the same occasion, the 30th anniversary of the Uprising, the Minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan, announced that a life-size bronze statue modeled on Sam Nzima's iconic photo would be added to the memorial site. In February the following year the statue, made by artists Kobus Hattingh and Jacob Maponyane, was indeed completed with funds donated from Sweden via the Thanda Foundation (Ryan 2007), but never installed at Hector Pieterson Square. The addition of the proposed statue constitutes a rather ironic development, because from the outset local residents, represented by the ANC Youth League and the Soweto Development Forum, had voiced their desire for a bronze statue of Hector Pieterson. They envisaged the statue as being seven meters tall, according to Jeremy Rose, but the architects persuaded the community to refrain from this idea (personal communication 2004). As Rose put it, 'a story must be told here' and this cannot be achieved by setting up a statue. With the approval and

input of community representatives, the architects then designed the present memorial complex.

An important design consideration was that the new commemorative structures should blend in with the characteristic township environment. The same holds true for Sharpeville, where the reddish colour of the wall finish was chosen to match the brick of the surrounding houses and the grass for the memorial garden was sourced from the nearby river to facilitate a certain sense of rootedness in the local context (Greeff, personal communication 2004). According to Denis Gibbon from Mashabane Rose, the most important sources of inspiration for the formal design of the Hector Pieterson Memorial were the urban environment of the site, the historical narrative of the Uprising, and the notion of a large crowd (personal communication 2003). The texture of the memorial is informed by street imagery such as cobblestones, gravel, slate and curbs. The emphasis was on smallish elements, human scale, and the usage of predominantly natural materials, notably rocks and water. In contrast to the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct, the entire site was deliberately left unfenced and remains accessible from all sides.

Along the north-western boundary of the Hector Pieterson precinct, the 'wall of memory' forms the backdrop for the ANCYL memorial (which was slightly modified and raised) and the Nzima photograph. Built with many small stones – 'symbolizing the crowd' (Gibbon, personal communication 2003) – the wall is not a solid divider but is broken up into uneven blocks or slabs that allow passage or transcendence. Towards the left of the memorial stone is the 'garden of contemplation', a circular patch in the pavement, filled with gravel and surrounded by benches and metal railings. Its depressingly drab appearance inverts all notions associated with the word 'garden'. Extensive inscriptions provide a narrative of the event and its significance, encouraging quiet contemplation. In axial alignment with the memorial stone, a stepped series of shallow water basins extends the memorial in a south-easterly direction. The entire axis is cut into the earth 'like a wound' (Gibbon, personal communication 2003), much like Maya Ying Lin's influential Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., although Gibbon insists that the reference was not conscious. In contrast to the imagery of violence and pain, the pools of water convey a quiet, peaceful, soothing mood and suggest healing and rejuvenation. This expresses two of the key functions of the memorial – remembering the pain, and healing.

Ross (personal communication 2004) observed that much of the power of museums, monuments and memorials rests in how 'generalisable' they are, i.e. how different groups of viewers are able to connect the signifier (whether it is in an image, a piece of writing, or a pile of stones) to a larger process that evokes both feelings and cognition. It is partly for this reason that designers of commemorative monuments make frequent use of images

and iconographic formulae which – through extensive repetition and a long process of cultural diffusion – have become instantly recognisable. Their power and popularity lies in the fact that they appear to trigger similar feelings in people of a wide range of different cultural backgrounds.

The fact that diverse groups of visitors tend to find intense meaning in Maya Lin's abstract, minimalist Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. suggests that there are very simple signifiers that have the power to evoke remarkably similar emotional responses across time, space and culture. The same applies to some natural elements, for instance fire or water, which have extensively been used in monument and memorial design throughout the world. Yet ultimately, it is difficult to determine whether it is the inherent quality of a particular shape or element that has the power to trigger virtually universal feelings, or their mere conventionality, the extensive usage of certain elements in recurring specific contexts that has established a cross-cultural tradition of emotional responses.

Although there are also important differences, memorials to the victims of the freedom struggle in South Africa are comparable with the genre of national war memorials, sharing such key characteristics as the presence of idealism, suffering and death, fighting for a noble cause, defending or bringing about a new political order.[9] Rowlands (1999: 132) reminds us that many memorials encourage remembrance of the dead or the painful event by giving it a narrative form. They largely repeat the visual forms of the past (e.g. the image of a soldier in uniform) in an attempt to encourage the viewer to repeat and then 'live through' the emotional experience. However, as all of us know from experience, such memorials can appear empty and lifeless, especially as their proliferation throughout the world has led to the over-use of *pathos formulae*. The opposite pole is marked by the minimalist solution, which seeks to disturb and encourage the viewer to imagine the experience rather than to visually conjure up a pre-arranged representation of it. Many Holocaust memorials also use an abstract or minimalist formal language in implicit acknowledgment of Theodor Adorno's famous contention that extreme terror and suffering are beyond representation.[10] In fact, Michael Kimmelman (2002) observed in a *New York Times* article that Minimalism has become 'the unofficial language of memorial art' in the United States. A

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[9] Rowlands (1999) highlights the tremendous growth in war memorials both in the West and elsewhere in the world during the past two decades. This suggests, he argues, that 'the need to "find out" what happened, that the process of "coming to terms" is now and probably always has been more complicated than a passive acceptance that "they died for a good cause"' (ibid.:129).

[10] Holocaust memorials have recently become the focus of numerous studies. James Young's (1994) book constitutes a seminal study and in South Africa, Neville Dubow (2002) published a book on the subject.

cursory glance at recent projects in Europe and other parts of the world confirms the wider prevalence of this trend.

Lack of descriptiveness and openness of meaning are often considered the strengths of abstract or minimalist sculptures, but according to Rowlands (1999), minimalist solutions can appear just as lifeless as the literal narrative of old. The Hector Pieterson memorial essentially blends both approaches. The literal repetition of the visual forms of the past is provided through the inclusion of Nzima's photograph, which allows the viewer to travel back in time and participate emotionally in the event. The architectural forms, on the contrary, are highly abstract and ambiguous, provoking the visitor's imagination and allowing for a transcendence of the state of emotional distress, notably through the symbolism of the pools of water. By viewing the memorial in its actual social and environmental context, the visitor is furthermore reminded of what has in fact been achieved through the actions of those who struggled for freedom.

## The Museum

Photo 4.5 Hector Pieterson Museum, Orlando West (Soweto), unveiled 2002.

The museum, whose strangely anthropomorphic 'face' is turned towards the memorial, is an integral part of the commemorative complex. Its red face-brick architecture takes its cue from the surrounding township houses in accordance with the community's request that the new building should as far as possible blend in with its surroundings (Rose, personal communication

2004). Without engaging in a detailed discussion of the museum architecture, it should nevertheless be noted that the Hector Pieterson Museum shows some parallels with the Apartheid Museum at Gold Reef City, in which Mashabane Rose were crucially involved. Both buildings are in turn influenced by two very important international museum buildings of recent date, namely Libeskind's new Jewish Museum in Berlin and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., by James Ingo Freed.

Mahabane Rose's appreciation of these key architectural works and their adaptation to the local South African context is highly significant in view of the fact that they have emerged as one of South Africa's foremost architectural firms specialising in museum and commemorative architecture. There is certainly a high degree of diffusion (locally and internationally) of commemorative formulae and cross-fertilisation within contemporary architectural design generally, and within the sector of commemorative architecture specifically. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the design for the Sharpeville museum, which was developed after the completion of the Hector Pieterson museum, reveals remarkable similarities with the latter, despite the fact that Greeff claims not to have visited it at the time (personal communication 2004).

Both the Sharpeville museum and the Hector Pieterson museum not only provide information about the respective historical events, thereby elucidating and contextualizing the meaning of the memorial outside, but also function as elevated lookout points. At the Hector Pieterson Museum, large 2.5 metre square windows are placed at principal points on the upper level to establish sightlines to significant sites in the surrounding area. These include the Orlando police station, the Orlando Stadium, the long rows of monotonous township houses, and the actual site of the shooting. Text inscribed in the window-glass explains the significance of these sites and turns them into symbolic signifiers in their own right. The memorial complex thereby becomes the nexus of a much larger geographical matrix of significant places. The Sharpeville museum has similar windows, although the concept is less effectively employed there.

This system of reaching out to points of significance and drawing in their symbolic meanings allows the visitor to visualize the course of the events in time and space – the route of the marching crowd, the arriving police force, the shooting, and the subsequent dispersal. Moreover it facilitates an understanding of the broader causes that led to the conflicts, and of the township context in which the 1976 Soweto Uprising is firmly anchored not as an incidental geographical location but as a highly significant site of socio-political control.

## Memorials turned monuments?

Is the June 16 heritage precinct a monument or a memorial? I want to digress briefly, at this point, in order to revisit and critically add to my earlier discussion of the distinction between the two terms, which appears particularly pertinent to the material discussed in this chapter. The state-directed process of institutionalising the memory of resistance, combined with the trend towards more ambitious, 'monumental' commemorative developments, may suggest that memorials are being turned into monuments. Many critics are likely to agree with this observation, yet I want to show that this is too simplistic a viewpoint. Consider the following.

Gibbon insists that the commemorative development in honour of Hector Pieterson and the Soweto youth of 1976 is a memorial, not a monument (personal communication 2003). Likewise, Greeff explains that the local community wrongly refers to the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct as a monument, because it is really a memorial (personal communication 2004). He believes that the structure may one day become a monument, if the government declares it as such. If this implies that for Greeff the term 'monument' signals an honourable status, for Dennis Gibbon it is rather a badge of shame, because a monument, in his understanding, is something 'out of scope', 'larger-than life', and 'cold', while a memorial is 'a living thing', 'something people can relate to' (personal communication 2003). This comparison highlights the common confusion of two completely different dimensions associated with the term monument: the symbolic or philosophical sense (following Danto) and the legal sense, i.e. 'monument' as an indicator of a legal status, the result of an act of official promulgation.

Historically the status of a 'national monument' was conferred on architectural structures and other significant objects by the NMC on the basis of exceptional artistic merit and/or historic importance. The term 'monument' in this sense is a marker of quality and significance – according to the value systems of those empowered to confer such status (and the socio-political order they represent). Neither the old National Monuments Act nor the new NHRA distinguish clearly between a monument and a memorial. Heritage management staff at the SAHRA offices in both Cape Town and Johannesburg confirm the interchangeable usage of both terms in their professional practice.[11]

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[11] The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) frequently refers to monuments and memorials, but does not define either term. When SAHRA issued a file note on the topic 'What the NHRA says about "Public Monuments and Memorials"' in 2002, definitions were spontaneously drawn up on the basis of the New Oxford Dictionary. A memorial was defined as 'something, especially a structure, established to remind people of a person or event', whereas a monument is a 'statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a famous

Even more significant is the new policy document's replacement of the term 'monument' with the term 'heritage site' in an attempt to create a more comprehensive category that can include intangible heritage often associated with previously marginalised groups. In other words, since the new Heritage Act has come into effect in South Africa, the government no longer proclaims anything a 'monument', but rather a 'heritage site'. As Thabo Kgomommu from SAHRA explains, 'the word monument is now limited to those structures that are built to memorialise or commemorate something' (personal communication 2004), paradoxically suggesting that one can build a monument but not declare one.

One might still insist that such legalistic differentiation does not affect the possibility of distinction in the theoretical sense. But there is one important dimension that never seems to enter this debate, namely the translatability of concepts and academic discourses across different languages. If in the human perception reality exists only to the extent that it can be represented through semiotic systems, notably language, it is significant to what extent the terms 'monument' and 'memorial' translate into, or even exist, in other languages. Consultation of common dictionaries reveals that the two English words do not precisely overlap with the denotative and especially not the connotative meaning of, for instance, French, German or Afrikaans terms for different types of commemorative markers. No equivalent distinction between monuments and memorials appears to exist in local African languages, which may account for the common interchangeable usage of the two terms and incidents of 'wrongful' denotation, as reported by Greeff. Moreover, critics may agree with members of the Sharpeville community that the Human Rights Precinct is a monument, but for entirely different reasons. In short, such distinctions are culturally specific and tied up with conventions of culturally distinct memory practices. In a multilingual, multicultural society, any distinction between memorials and monuments in a philosophical sense remains a matter of interpretation, tied to language and cultural conventions.

## Commodification

When the incorporation of the famous Nzima image into the Hector Pieterson memorial was first considered controversy erupted, because Nzima, who had never been paid royalties for the use of his image, demanded R80 000 (some sources say R100 000) after copyrights had at last been awarded to him in 1998. The Pieterson family lambasted Nzima for

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or notable person or event' (SAHRA 2002). This reveals not only the obvious lack of precise distinction between the two terms, but also testifies to a considerable level of confusion.

being 'greedy', various organisations came out against Nzima and the ANCYL refused to pay such 'exorbitant' fees, threatening to drop the idea of including the image (see Mahlangu 2002; Memela 2002). Some argued that the image does not belong to Nzima but to the nation. This raises critical questions about who owns memories of the past and icons of the Struggle, who determines their meaning and representation, and who has direct or indirect rights to their use and commodification.

The latter point is particularly important and controversial, as the process of institutionalisation is driven not only by political forces but increasingly by market forces and the private sector. In fact, the political process of authorising selected memories – involving careful framing, inspired packaging and symbolic branding – conveniently prepares the ground for private enterprise to step in and appropriate such heroes and famous events for commercial exploitation. One can increasingly observe the strategic alignment of private enterprises and commercial zones with highly recognisable icons of the Struggle through the process of naming, the installation of statues, and the sale of branded souvenirs and other merchandise, often directed at tourists. This is particularly evident with respect to the Mandela icon (despite fierce efforts at protecting his image and controlling its representation), and will be discussed in Chapter Ten.

The bronze sculptural group of Hector Pieterson was eventually erected inside Maponya Mall, a large-scale upmarket shopping development opened in Soweto in 2007 (one of the first malls to be built in an African township in South Africa). At heritage sites throughout South Africa it appears that the presence of tourists, especially perhaps foreigners, strongly encourages the commercial exploitation of the commemorated event through the manufacture and sale of post-cards, books, souvenirs, and 'struggle chic'. Hector Pieterson's half-sister, Sina Molefi, in partnership with a clothes designer, recently licensed a range of apparel (T-shirts, caps, takkies, etc.) depicting the Nzima image or text relating to the Uprising (Baines 2007; Simbao 2007).

Although some tourists reject such commercialisation,[12] others are keen to purchase souvenirs that symbolically encapsulate, prolong and preserve their visitor experience, while simultaneously making a contribution to the social welfare of the local community. Simbao (2007) cautions against

[12] While tourists are implicitly expected to assist the government's poverty relief efforts through their purchases, it is often precisely these tourists who scorn victims for their unashamed attempt to make money out of their traumatic experiences. Simbao (2007: 8) reports that Mbuyisa's mother at some stage sold postcards while telling her story on a bench outside the memorial, for which she was criticised by some visitors. Similarly, Antoinette Sithole, while on an overseas trip, was accused of commercialising traumatic memories when she was seen carrying postcards of Hector Pieterson.

wholesale dismissal of such commercial practices in favour of a more careful consideration of how these items are used and what meanings they might carry.[13] In an international context of increasing alliance between heritage, life-style and consumption one can literally buy into a lifestyle based on specific memories and parade one's identification with their associated value systems.

## Party-political appropriation

In 2001 Antoinette Sithole – now employed as a guide in the Hector Pieterson museum – publicly expressed her appreciation that her brother is honoured as an icon of the Soweto Uprising, but simultaneously stressed that this 'does not justify the heroism around him as a martyr'. Hector 'was an ordinary child', she explained, criticising all the 'glamour' now created around his death.[14] In a personal conversation she expressed her disapproval of the politicisation and political party appropriation of the event and specifically her brother: politicians tend to 'categorize these things … like today Hector Pieterson falls into the ANC' (personal communication 2003). Pieterson's mother, Dorothy Molefi, also voiced her grievance that the private memories of her son had not only become public property, but were increasingly exploited to advance an ANC political agenda (Baines 2007).

Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu, himself a participant in the Soweto Uprising, critically observes that '[e]very year, prior to the commemoration of 16 June 1976, one becomes aware of the dogfight between various liberation movements clamouring and posturing for recognition as champions of the uprisings' (1998: 50). The TRC provided a media-effective forum for both the ANC and the PAC to lay claim to the Soweto Uprising and the role they played in mobilising the youths. Yet the TRC report largely dismisses such claims. Although some underground cadres were probably involved, the youths appear to have been mostly inspired by Black Consciousness ideology and motivated by their own grievances, rather than to have been following a directive from the exiled leadership of either of the two parties. Hlongwane adds, moreover, that although there were definitely links with the liberation movements, the oral history research conducted by the curatorial team brought to light various other constitutencies within the

[13] For instance, wearing a Hector Pieterson T-shirt, especially by young South Africans today, must be seen in the context of South Africa's tradition of protest T-shirts and can constitute an important part of the youths' own re-interpretation and creative re-enactments of the past, as illustrated earlier (2007: 66).

[14] This quote by Hector's sister, Antoinette Sithole, adapted from The Sowetan (15 June 2001), is displayed inside the Hector Pieterson Museum.

community, whose contributions were previously unacknowledged or underrepresented (personal communication 2008).[15]

While the extent of involvement of either party remains unclear, the TRC report concludes that the ANC benefited most from the events of 1976 and 77, because 'it was the only liberation movement able to absorb, train, educate and direct the thousands of youth who left South Africa as a direct result of these events' (TRC report quoted in Baines 2007: 293). In the post-apartheid context of competitive claims to the public memory of the Soweto Uprising, it was again the ANC, now the ruling party, that 'was well positioned to fashion a narrative of the uprising in terms of which the community story coincided with its own version', concludes Baines (2007: 299). Certainly the Hector Pieterson memorial can be interpreted (and has been interpreted) as an attempt by the ANC to cement the ruling party's association with this key icon of the liberation struggle.

Hlongwane rejects such claims about ANC appropriation as overly simplistic. He is, after all, a member of the PAC, and he saw his appointment to the position of chief curator of the Hector Pieterson museum as a call to bring a multiplicity of voices and perspectives to the fore (personal communication 2008). As in the Sharpeville museum and other exhibitions dealing with the anti-apartheid struggle, the exhibition at the Hector Pieterson museum relies heavily on photographs, film footage and text panels, although a few artefacts such as T-shirts and posters are also included. The visitor is first invited into the auditorium to view an audio-visual presentation explaining the context and course of the event, then proceeds through the exhibition in roughly circular fashion, and ends up at an extruded memorial space near the foyer, where the names of all those who died are recorded.

Without engaging in a detailed discussion of the exhibition, which has been done by others (e.g. Baines 2007; 2008), it is indeed evident that different perspectives are featured in the museum, for instance through eyewitness accounts, and certain aspects of the Soweto Uprising are somewhat demythologised. This applies notably to the role of Hector Pieterson, which is so strongly affirmed in the memorial space outside the museum. I would argue that any visitor will get a far more nuanced and balanced understanding of the event when visiting the museum, as opposed to viewing the memorial on its own. Unfortunately it appears that many visitors do not avail themselves of this opportunity. But, as Hlongwane acknowledges, any museum suffers from space limitations, the need to

[15] For instance, Hlongwane mentions the Student Action Committee and other groups of activist students who played an important role in terms of coordination, interaction with personalities and leader figures, the production of posters, etc. Certain teachers also contributed crucially in conscientising their students in the classroom (personal communication 2008).

reduce text and the pressure to present a compelling, somewhat simplified narrative (personal communication 2008). The voice of certain interviewees who now occupy prominent roles within the ANC leadership inevitably looms larger and sounds more authoritative than others, especially when their 'memories' tie in with familiar versions of the narrative.

Although the initiative for the construction of the Hector Pieterson memorial complex may have come from the community and the private sector, the ANC dominated national government (in the form of the DEAT) and the ANC dominated local government (the Johannesburg Municipality) eagerly embraced the project. At the official opening of the museum, on 16 June 2002, little mention was made of Standard Bank as a major sponsor[16] and Mashabane Rose was only credited for the architectural design, not as co-initiator of the project.[17]

As in the case of Sharpeville, many members of the local community surely identify with the memorial and appreciate its presence, but others are likely to associate the site primarily with the tourist consumption of a 'famous' event or a politicised stage for government officials pursuing their own agendas. Some individuals who were personally affected by the Soweto Uprising have publicly expressed their dissatisfaction with the representation of the event in the commemorative development. Elizabeth Makhubu, mother of Mbuyisa, who is seen in Nzima's photograph carrying Hector's body, resents the fact that her son was not sufficiently honoured in the memorial (Davie, personal communication 2003). She testified at the TRC that her son was not an activist, but felt forced to flee the country because he was so traumatized through his experience of June 16 and feared for his safety. Police had harassed the family after identifying Mbuyisa in the photograph, who they claimed had posed for the photographs. Like Hector Pieterson, Mbuyisa Makhubu was an accidental martyr of the liberation struggle. Unlike Pieterson, Makhubu is largely forgotten today (Baines 2007: 290-1).

Poppy Buthelezi, one of the survivors of the Soweto Uprising, who has been confined to a wheelchair due to the injuries she sustained on that day, voiced her grievances in a prominent *Mail & Guardian* article with the tell-tale title 'Our leaders forgot us' (Anonymous 2003a). To her, not much has

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[16] The bank did not provide cash, but contributed substantially over the duration of the entire project by donating the services of Bruce Vester, then Senior Manager of the Property Division, for the management of construction and finances, as well as three or four members of administrative support staff. In fact, Vester reports that the Standard Bank was invited to the opening only at the very last minute and that it feels bitter about having received so little acknowledgement for its role in the project (personal communication 2003).

[17] At a visit shortly after the opening of the museum, I found the following 'initiators' acknowledged on a plaque in the foyer (in this order): DEAT, DACST, City of Johannesburg, Standard Bank and Soweto Heritage Trust.

changed in the 'new South Africa' and those who fought for freedom in the past are still forced to struggle today. She resents the manner in which the sad events of June 16 have been turned into an occasion for celebration:

> Since 1994 this noble day has lost its meaning. Instead of being commemorated in a dignified way it has been hailed as a day of celebration. Celebration for what? The present government is simply undermining and insulting our painful history. For us June 16 will always be a solemn day, the day we changed the face of the revolution, a day of courage (Buthelezi quoted in ibid.).

While government officials tend to criticise the general lack of interest in national Youth Day, not only among white, Indian and 'coloured' South Africans, but even among black youths,[18] others – notably members of the older generation – express their dissatisfaction about the way June 16 is 'celebrated' rather than 'commemorated'.[19] Similarly critical voices are frequently heard about the character of the commemoration that takes place annually on 21 March. The PAC and some members of the local community want the day to be a solemn remembrance of those who lost their lives, but the ANC considers the public holiday a joyous occasion for remembering what has been achieved through the loss of life.[20]

In other words, in both cases the ANC-dominated government determined that the symbolic significance of the Soweto Uprising and the Sharpeville Massacre and their respective associated public holidays lies in the ultimate triumphal outcome of a tragic narrative. This interpretation parallels the framing of the past in most other new heritage developments and links with the foundation myth of the post-apartheid nation. Its best-known and most visible example is the branding – both in a symbolic and a

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[18] In 2002, Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa bemoaned the lack of interest among whites, Indians and 'coloureds' in national celebrations of Youth Day. 'But even the youthful crowd he addressed in a half-full Orlando stadium yesterday was largely uninterested. They came alive only when the kwaito sounds of Mandoza's Godoba blasted from the loudspeakers. "We need to ask ourselves: What can we do to ensure that all races celebrate with us? We can organise marathons, athletics and kwaito competitions, which are other ways to celebrate Youth Day"' (Tabane and SAPA 2002). See also Baines (2007).

[19] Simbao observed in the context of the 30th anniversary of June 16 in 2006 that many members of the Soweto community appeared reserved about the official commemorations staged at the Hector Pieterson Memorial and made a point of not attending the large commemorative concert at the FNB stadium, which took place afterwards (personal communication 2007).

[20] For instance, on 22 March 2002, PAC secretary general Thami ka Plaatje was quoted as saying, 'The ANC has chosen to celebrate Sharpeville by turning it into a social jamboree that involves playing gangster rap and kwaito. We think Sharpeville should be commemorated in a solemn, dignified manner in remembrance of our fallen heroes' (Ngidi, Mntungwa and Sapa 2002).

commercial sense – of Robben Island as a monument not to suffering and hardship (as the PAC leadership would interpret it), but to the triumph of overcoming such suffering. This was eloquently expressed by Ahmed Kathrada's now famous statement:

> While we will not forget the brutality of Apartheid we will not want Robben Island to be a monument of our hardship and suffering. We would want it to be a triumph of the human spirit against the forces of evil; a triumph of wisdom and largeness of spirit against small minds and pettiness; a triumph of courage and determination over human frailty and weakness.[21]

The establishment and consolidation of this branding influences every aspect of the work of the Robben Island Museum, including educational messages and research, and not least the public representation of the island to visitors. When I first visited the island short after its official opening for tourists in January 1997, the guided tour – conducted by ex-prisoners and ex-warders – was still strongly influenced by the guide's personal memories and subjective perceptions of life on the island, but on subsequent visits the narrative appeared considerably more standardised and scripted – an observation shared by other scholars (e.g. Kruger 2000; Coombes 2003). Deacon (2004: 315) observed that even the personal stories offered by tour-guides are influenced by the triumph narrative. At Robben Island and elsewhere, this interpretation may contradict the sentiments of many individuals who were personally affected by or involved in the events of the past.

This is to suggest that below the surface celebrated in the inspiring speeches of public officials, the hyperbolic tourism marketing literature and the exciting tour guide narratives presented to visitors, ordinary people and particularly the victims and active participants in the historical events do not necessarily share the government-sanctioned version of 'their' history, experience and identity. The appropriation of their stories is particularly

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[21] This statement and its paraphrases have been published in various forms by the Robben Island Museum, including on the home page of the Robben Island website (www.robben-island.org.za), and on the cover of folders and other promotional material. According to Coombes (2003) the statement actually formed part of the PAC's response to a study conducted by Peace Visions in 1993/4 about the future of Robben Island: 'For the PAC the significance of Robben Island lies in the triumph of the human spirit over the numerous obstacles placed by human beings upon human beings. The history of Robben Island shows that human beings have the capacity, individually and collectively, to overcome huge obstacles. While the island is not a main priority at this time the PAC places emphasis on the history of the island and the contribution it made to the development of the PAC's understanding of non-racialism' (ibid.: 57/8).

likely to be contested when the narratives of nation overlap with the narratives of the ANC to the exclusion of the contributions and experiences of other participants and organisations in the historical processes at stake.[22] Cynics may argue that the ANC is abusing its power within the democratically elected government to enshrine its own preferred version of the historical past in the official memory landscape and shape the historical consciousness of the present citizenry and especially the new generation before potential future changes in the political playing field might favour different interpretations of the past.

To put this attitude in perspective, it must be remembered that in any nation, including western democracies, monuments reflect dominant ideologies and the heritage field is always gradually reshaped in accordance with policies and values upheld by the government elected by the majority. Azaryahu's (2003) work on the politics of memory demonstrates that the memorialisation of the concentration camp of Buchenwald near Weimar in Germany is an excellent example.[23] Heritage is always subjective and tied to prevailing power relations. As Linenthal (personal communication 2005) aptly put it: there is no point in saying that heritage is biased, because bias is the whole point of heritage. Having said this, there can be no doubt that the more the state gets involved in heritage, the stronger looms the danger of a state-monopoly on public memory and the potential reduction of the people to mere spectators of 'their own' heritage landscape. Ultimately the question arises for whose sake these sites are primarily installed and at whom their 'message' is addressed.

## Community identification with newly installed heritage

The replacement of the term 'monument' – historically associated with elitist, Eurocentric notions of memorialization – with the all-inclusive term 'heritage' was not only intended to acknowledge and celebrate previously neglected facets of the past as valid and valuable, but also, implicitly, to increase community interest and identification with cultural heritage

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[22] Ironically, in line with government policy and in contradistinction to top-down approaches followed by the past regime, all new heritage developments involve processes of community participation, as said in Chapter One. However, it may be suspected that certain agendas introduced by government representatives tend to become imperatives that supersede dissenting variations.

[23] Azaryahu (2003) first discusses the contrasting ways in which Buchenwald was previously commemorated in the former West German and East German state. After reunification the government commissioned a group of heritage experts to develop a new interpretation and turn Buchenwald into a memorial site of the reunited Germany. Not surprisingly, the end result is far closer to the former West German paradigm of remembrance than the former East German one.

conservation. Public officials and the media regularly emphasize how much communities value the new museums and symbolic markers constructed in their midst, but in reality people's sense of ownership may be far more limited. This is supported, for instance, by museum visitor patterns dominated by school groups and foreign tourists, but rarely local communities, and by the high level of vandalism, misuse and neglect, which, ironically, affects newly installed monuments to a greater degree than the politically contested monuments of 'the oppressor'.

Photo 4.6 Vandalism at Emlotheni Park (Vuyisile Mini Heroes Acre), New Brighton (Nelson Mandela Metro), photographed June 2009.

On a recent visit to the Eastern Cape, I was shocked to witness the state of deterioration that had affected the Emlotheni Park Heroes Acre in New Brighton since my last visit a few years ago: light fixtures had been stolen, metal parts of various kinds removed, and paving bricks ripped up. Sporadic visitors may not realize the extent of the vandalism that has afflicted heritage installations country-wide, because its traces are sometimes more quickly removed than at Emlotheni. Needless to say, this work is done at considerable expense to already overstretched public maintenance budgets. Based on sources such as media reports, municipal records and oral testimony of stakeholders and local residents, I venture to claim that almost all monuments, memorials and statues installed since 1994 have suffered either damage due to neglect or deliberate defacement of some kind or another at some stage. The only exceptions seem to be monuments located in highly

secured areas, such as the publicly inaccessible National Monument to the Women of South Africa in Pretoria or the seated bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Chatsworth, prudently placed in a lake.

The threat of vandalism has become so prevalent and the type of vandalism so predictable that it poses considerable constraints on the design process and exerts a tangible influence on the aesthetic language, choice of materials and positioning of new commemorative markers. Authorities are increasingly resorting to building high fences around the new monument to keep people out. At Sharpeville, as explained above, the sturdy high fence was integrated into the design of the memorial from the start. The single entrance gate is securely locked at night and during the day staff from the adjacent exhibition centre provide some protection. At the Hector Pieterson site, a conscious decision was taken against a fence, but here the craft vendors have played a pivotal role in watching over the memorial that has become the source of their livelihood (Hlongwane, personal communication 2008).

The extent to which monuments and other public facilities have been subjected to defacement and deterioration can be considered one of the most remarkable and distinctive characteristics of post-apartheid heritage development, but the real question is what exactly this observation means. Some may be quick to conclude that the vandalism is clear evidence of a broadly lacking sense of community identification with the type of heritage products commonly installed, but I do not agree with such wholesale judgment. The issue deserves more nuanced consideration.

One might see the maltreatment of new commemorative markers in the context of community disgruntlement over lack of consultation and party-political appropriation of their memories. Resentment on the part of victims and their families who find their loved-ones inadequately memorialized can be found not only at Sharpeville and Orlando West, but at many newly developed heritage sites. It can certainly be assumed that people who hold such sentiments are unlikely to identify with and care for the respective monument. But the mothers of victims and other immediately affected stakeholders are not likely to be the perpetrators of physical violence against symbolic markers in their midst; they presumably express their anger verbally or perhaps through boycotting of official commemorative functions. In fact, the type of violation meted out at new monuments and memorials is almost never committed to convey some kind of calculated ‘message’ of dissatisfaction. The only exceptions are a few examples of clearly politically motivated acts of defacement ostentatiously committed by ultraconservative white extremists, who sometimes spray-paint statues of black heroes with Afrikaner nationalist symbols.[24] It is only in those cases that one can safely

[24] For example, the Tshwane statue in Pretoria, the Biko statue in East London and the Makhado statue in Makhado (formerly Louis Trichardt) have been defaced

interpret the defacement as an expression of a shared sentiment of rejection among members of that particular community.

The type of maltreatment that post-apartheid monuments are most commonly subjected to is not specific to monuments at all, but similar to the kind of vandalism meted out at public property of all sorts (as well as old commemorative markers as will be discussed in the next chapter). Much of it is economically motivated, involving the theft of 'useful' components, such as the light fittings at Emlotheni, or valuable metal parts, especially bronze.[25] The life-size bronze statue group of Robert Waterwitch and Coline Williams in Athlone, installed in 2005 at a cost of around R330 000, was completely removed and carted off to a scrap metal dealer, where the thieves were allegedly paid R9000 for the bronze (Minnar 2009). The sculpture was later recovered and re-installed. The phenomenon of bronze theft has become so common that replacements of stolen statues or plaques are now sometimes fashioned in bronze look-alike fibre-glass[26] although in at least one case, thieves even stole the fibre-glass copy.[27]

As opposed to the theft of bronze, which receives a fair amount of media attention, the general level of misuse, neglect and degradation of heritage installations tends to be underreported. Litter can frequently be found in heritage spaces; water features are routinely used for laundry and ablutions; monuments with seating areas or quiet spaces become favorite hang-outs for vagrants and drunkards. The square polished granite blocks that comprise the new Slave Memorial in the city centre of Cape Town were immediately appropriated as seating opportunities, as tables for the display of merchandise or as a convenient stands for the placement of advertisement.[28] Although such treatment speaks of a lack of respect and probably lack of understanding of heritage and its purpose, such type of abuse is not

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with spraypainted references to ultraconservative Afrikaner political symbols, notably the old Oranje flag (see chapter 10).

[25] See Chapter Five for examples.

[26] A case in point is the monument of the SS Mendi in Ga-Mothakga-resort in Atteridgeville, unveiled in March 1998 in honour of the black South Africans who lost their lives when the SS Mendi sank in the English Channel in 1917. The bronze sculpture on top of the high plinth was stolen soon after the unveiling; it has meanwhile been replaced with a fibre glass copy.

[27] The stolen bronze eagle on top of the Sir Pierre van Ryneveld monument on the ground of Pretoria University was replaced with a fibre glass copy, but in December 2006, the *Volksblad* reported that thieves had removed the sculpture again (Fourie 2006).

[28] Monuments tend to be located in parks and grassy environs, which serve the homeless as a place of rest. In the case of the Resistance Park in Durban, unveiled in 2002, the problem of drunkards misusing the monument was facilitated by the presence of a liquor store across the road. The municipality was eventually forced to fence the monument in.

necessarily committed with malicious intent. In some cases it is motivated by the plight of vagrants and people who have no access to proper facilities; more broadly speaking it reflects a widely prevailing utilitarian mindset constantly on the look-out for the practical use-value of facilities in the public domain. The more extreme face of this mindset is an attitude of complete carelessness that considers public property simply as free for the taking. This can easily lead to the most worrying type of vandalism, namely completely wanton, senseless destruction, committed without any specific purpose, perhaps in anger, frustration, in a drunken stupor or out of sheer boredom.

Importantly, as Wilma Cruise, co-designer of the Slave Memorial, aptly observed, it is not only vagrants and ordinary people who neglect and deface monuments, but city officials and municipal authorities bear their share of responsibility (Cruise, oral contribution to discussion 2009). Once unveiled, often with great fanfare, new monuments tend to be left without further care or maintenance, on some occasions even without proper completion of the initial construction. Almost a year after the unveiling of the Slave Memorial, for instance, the city of Cape Town has not yet lived up to its promise to install the interpretive plaque, yet they are already occupied with the planning of other memorials. Poor workmanship and the use of less durable or lower cost materials further contribute to the quick deterioration of post-1994 monuments.[29]

Poverty, poor education and a historical lack of exposure to and involvement in (western forms of) heritage conservation are undoubtedly important factors, but they can ultimately not explain the extent of vandalism and general degradation. As Shepherd aptly observes, one of the paradoxical aspects of heritage is that it hovers between individual consciousness and the collective; it exists fundamentally as corporate entity, a set of values and objects held in common, but it is always experienced from an individual standpoint (2008: 117). This includes the possibility that some individuals have no experience whatsoever: they neither support nor reject the heritage development; they simply have no opinion and can't be bothered at all. The

[29] Clearly there is often more interest in making a highly publicized statement than a sustained intervention in the heritage landscape. In my experience, a familiar pattern is emerging, whereby the construction process of a new monument / heritage site is delayed for various reasons; this results in a great rush to complete the structure in time for the unveiling ceremony, the date of which is usually tied to anniversaries or other symbolically important occasions; the rush leaves no time for finishing touches and after the great day of the unveiling, interest in actually completing the monument drops dramatically. On several occasions, I have witnessed monuments that were left incomplete even years after the unveiling; in some cases, the last piles of building rubble had never been removed; in other cases, the first signs of vandalism and natural deterioration began to occur before the monument was actually completed.

lack of care for heritage installations and indeed, the lack of respect for public property and public spaces more generally suggest a failure to share in a sense of citizenship that involves pride in liberation or in nation. One must acknowledge the existence of subaltern groups, which may include the earlier mentioned vandals and vagrants, who are completely alienated from society and who do not feel part of any community.

Chipkin (2007: 156-7) writes about the emergence, during the mid-1980s, of a new conception of the democratic space – not simply as political protest, but as the pursuit of political ends through demands for service delivery. The sense of being part of that democratic space, being a citizen of the democratic nation, is hence connected to one's perception of the state's engagement in service delivery. Those who experience themselves excluded from the state's public services, those who feel that the state has failed them, may express themselves through refusal to participate in public discourses and respect for public spaces. From their perspective, a monument that implicitly celebrates the overcoming of oppression and the achievements of the newly democratic order in which all people are valued equally, may not only be perceived as meaningless but as an insult.

Having said this, a few important points must be acknowledged in the final analysis with respect to the issue of vandalism and community identification. Firstly, although little is known about the perpetrators and their motivations, it can be assumed that acts of vandalism are usually committed by individuals. Hence I maintain that the defacement of a monument does not necessarily allow us to conclude that the broader community does not identify with the monument. Many members of the community – if asked for their opinion – would probably severely condemn the defacement. Secondly, a monument is meant to fulfill multiple purposes and is addressed at diverse audiences; while it may be completely pointless and even offensive to some, it can simultaneously be deeply meaningful, significant and authentic to others. Thirdly, a targeted effort at more education, consultation and awareness creation could be very effective in enhancing the level of community ownership, identification and respect for heritage installations. This is a priority area of concern for the National Heritage Council (NHC), which was established in 2004 to attempt a more effective transformation of the heritage sector through the development of strategic policy and more community engagement.[30]

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[30] The (NHC) is a public entity established through the Act of Parliament (NHC Act 11 of 1999) and came into being in February 2004 with Advocate Sonwabile Mancotywa as CEO. Its functions are to protect and preserve heritage in South Africa, raise awareness about heritage matters, conduct broad-based consultation on heritage matters, provide funding for community-based heritage initiatives and advise on policy (NHC website 2009; see also Wells 2004; 2007; 2008).

## Conclusion

The upgrading of the Solomon Mahlangu Square, the Sharpeville Massacre Memorial, the Hector Pieterson memorial and other memory sites throughout the country indicates how, within the space of a few years, the post-apartheid government has assumed an increasingly active and powerful role within the heritage sector and in the metaphorical and literal construction of the new memory landscape. Throughout the nation, the state invests in selected historical moments, victims' stories and struggle heroes, and turns them into heritage. The memory sites are marked by ever more ambitious commemorative initiatives, whereby the significance of the event and the greatness of the person are increasingly seen in linear relation to the portentousness of the monument. The associated narratives are carefully crafted to foster national unity, reconciliation and social cohesion, but also to entrench preferred readings of the past and portray a new national identity.

This is part of a much larger dynamic of developing and institutionalising a new public culture and shaping a new historical consciousness, which involves the media, the school history curriculum, and indirectly (I would argue) even publicly funded academic research. Lawrence (2002) considers how Sharpeville is taught in schools today and suggests that the strong emphasis on specific outcomes in terms of the viewpoints, attitudes and values stipulated by the Revised National Curriculum for Social Sciences is potentially dangerous. Rather than developing autonomous, critically thinking citizens, this approach to history, argues Lawrence, can lead to the manipulation of memory and indoctrination, not unlike the history textbooks of old (Lawrence 2002: 4, 6).[31]

Based on the TRC hearings and oral history research, the post-apartheid monuments no doubt contribute to making visible and lending legitimacy to previously denied facets of the past, which are of deep emotional significance to the affected communities and beyond. But the implicit authenticating of some interpretations over others also encourages a new process of mythologising and alienates those who hold alternative memories. As much as some may feel honoured by an ambitious monument in tribute to their heroes and experiences, others may instead resent the fact that their

[31] Mirna Lawrence's (2004) excellent research report – accompanied by a learning programme in the form of an open-ended, non-prescriptive Teacher's Guide – focuses on how Sharpeville is publicly remembered and especially how this iconic event and its significance are taught in schools. The Revised National Curriculum for Social Sciences stipulates that history teaching in South African schools should encourage a critical analysis of complex historical events, but should also develop an appreciation of the country's heritage and constitutional values.

accustomed community spaces and humble symbolic markers have been turned into ostentatious monuments and tourist attractions.

Monuments often become focal points of contestation and public debate, grinding stones of public opinion, against which divergent ideological positions or identity discourses are played out, sometimes accompanied by powerful public gestures that can involve violence against the monument. Such engagement marks the division between those who identify with the government-supported narrative of nation and those who actively oppose it. But I have suggested that the type of vandalism and degradation that South African heritage installations are predominantly subjected to speaks precisely of a lack of participation and engagement, a lack of interest in public debate and alienation from the democratic space. While it is important to highlight how much memorials and monuments can mean to some, it is equally important to point out that for others, the newly installed heritage sites are markers of a fractured society. They not only fail to meaningfully articulate the notion of a shared past, but they also fail to articulate a sense of present citizenship.

# 5

# Dealing with the Commemorative Legacy of the Past

## Introduction

Previous chapters have illustrated that changes to the public landscape of memory began manifesting themselves almost immediately after the end of apartheid, while simultaneously the administrative restructuring of the heritage management sector was under way and the formulation of policies about heritage and public monuments slowly proceeded at national and local levels. In comparison with many international contexts, for instance post-soviet societies, South Africa did not experience incidents of mob violence against monuments representing the old regime, but a few markers were indeed destroyed, deliberately or inadvertently; some statues and especially busts were removed; some monuments were relocated; and others were re-interpreted or re-contextualized. Sometimes the need for a clear policy on such matters of symbolic representation was prioritised only after a *de facto* alteration of the heritage landscape had caused dissent.

Discussing key examples as case studies, this chapter examines new challenges affecting symbolic markers representing the old guard and how the latter have been adapted to the needs of a new socio-political order. I will trace the fate of specific contested monuments and engage with the processes and discourses that shaped the remoulding of their meaning and sometimes their physical appearance. It will become evident, once again, that the treatment of existing memory sites involves a delicate balancing act between signalling continuity in the interest of reconciliation and rupture in the interest of defining a new beginning. The chapter is structured along the lines of the different options that present themselves for dealing with contested heritage, which can broadly be categorised as removal, relocation and re-interpretation. I argue that the effectiveness of re-interpretation in rendering a contested monument acceptable to the majority is often doubtful, and furthermore that the modification of the originally intended meaning in the name of political correctness is often unacceptable to the minority who

identify with these markers. The obvious solution, then, is to build new monuments complementing existing heritage.

## Destruction, damage and vandalism

Photo 5.1 Empty plinth following theft of bronze sculpture, Beyers Naudé Square, Johannesburg.

In broad daylight during the afternoon of Thursday, 18th September 2003, thieves removed a large bronze sculptural group from Beyers Naudé square in front of the Municipal Library in the city centre of Johannesburg. The sculpture was called 'Family group', created by Ernst Ullmann, and given to the City by *The Star* on 6 May 1968. Amazingly the theft of this massive sculptural piece took less than two minutes and was precisely timed between 3:10 pm and 3:12 pm to elude the rotating security camera. Nobody saw the incident (Basson 2003). The whereabouts of the bronze group remains unknown. Most likely it was sold to a private art collector, but it may also have landed at a scrap metal dealer's to be melted down.

Countless monuments have suffered from the removal of bronze plaques or the sawing off of protruding sections of the sculpture.[1] As said earlier, the

[1] One example is Anton van Wouw's well-known Kruger monument in Church Square in Pretoria. The Daily News reported on 23 January 1996 that vandals had sawn off the barrel of a Martini Henry rifle held by one of the Burgher

scourge of this type of vandalism affects by no means only or even predominantly 'white heritage', but there are some forms of defacement that are particularly tragic with respect to these older memory sites, for example the fact that Anglo-Boer War memorials and grave sites are regularly looted by treasure hunters (de Bruin 2002). There are also isolated incidents of accidental damage as well as the more or less deliberate destruction of smaller monuments in the context of development projects.[2] It is highly regrettable that no comprehensive database has yet been compiled for future reference, recording the destruction of these symbolic markers or systematically capturing their inscriptions to facilitate the replacement of stolen plaques at a future date.

Although some of the perpetrators may find the old statues expendable or undesirable, there is little evidence to suggest that any of these acts of vandalism are politically motivated. Initially, a political motive was suspected when the portentous monument on Strijdom Square in Pretoria – a gigantic head of former prime-minister, J.G. Strijdom,[3] shaded by a billowing concrete dome – collapsed on 1 June 2001, exactly 29 years after its unveiling and 40 years after South Africa became a republic under the National Party regime. The gigantic head had suddenly tumbled off its pedestal and the monumental structure imploded, leaving a chaotic site of destruction right in the heart of Pretoria and causing much debate. Yet, no evidence of wilful destruction was ever found (Anonymous 2001c; Anonymous 2001e; Stiehler 2001).

No 'white' monument has been as deliberately and violently destroyed as the 'black' memory site of Ntaba ka Ndoda in the Eastern Cape, formerly the Ciskei 'homeland'. The imposing architectural structure, commandingly situated on the sacred hill of Ntaba ka Ndoda, was built in 1981 by Ciskei 'homeland' leader, Chief Lennox Sebe, as a spiritual place of identification with a Ciskeian national identity. Sebe had reportedly been inspired by a visit to Masada in Israel and used the monument to stage 'national' celebrations which the people were forced to attend. After a military coup in the Ciskei, Brigadier Oupa Gqozo turned the monument into a military base, but when the military was withdrawn early in 1994 and the formal end of the homeland was declared, the community went on an aggressive rampage to destroy the much-hated monument. Sebe's bronze statue in the Ciskei capital

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statues. Pretoria sculptor Phil Minnaar was commissioned to repair the damage (Anonymous 1996).

2 In February 2004 a Voortrekker monument in the Great Trek Park in Vereeniging, originally set up in 1988, was knocked over and destroyed by construction machinery after the land had been sold to a developer. The inconspicuous monument was supposed to have been transferred to a local museum in Vereeniging (Tempelhoff 2004).

3 J.G. Strijdom was Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1954-58.

of Bisho was also removed, albeit less violently. There are plans to turn the ruins of Ntaba ka Ndoda into a cultural tourist attraction, but when I saw it in 2003 the site was visited only by herds of cattle, which had deposited a thick carpet of dung inside the rooms (Bunn 1999; Grant 1995).

## The removal of Verwoerd statues and busts

Contrary to the common lament by conservative Afrikaners, to the present date the only noteworthy, high-profile case of iconoclasm targeted at an Afrikaner nationalist monument under the post-apartheid government was the removal of the Verwoerd statue in Bloemfontein.[4] More than any other political figure of the past, Hendrik F. Verwoerd (1901-1966) is widely perceived as a symbol of apartheid. Born in Holland but educated in South Africa, Verwoerd worked as a newspaper editor and held the position of professor of social psychology at Stellenbosch University before embarking on a political career. By 1955 he was the dominant force in the National Party cabinet with strong support from Prime Minister JG Strijdom. He made his mark as Minister of Native Affairs and then became Prime Minister following Strijdom's death in office in August 1958. From the outset of his tenure, Verwoerd advocated the concept of a republic as a rallying point for Afrikaners and pursued a political programme based on coercive social engineering to maintain the migrant labour system and control of the urban African workforce. He laid the foundations for the systematic racial segregation of all spheres of life and introduced a large quantity of repressive apartheid legislation (e.g. the much-hated pass laws, the Group Areas Act and the Bantu Education Act) that prompted a new wave of protest and resistance (SADET 2004: 16, 20-1; Davenport and Saunders 2000: 390ff.).

The fact that the memory of Verwoerd is therefore extremely offensive to the majority of the population prompted the newly-elected ANC-dominated (Orange) Free State Legislature to vote for the removal of the statue, as well as the renaming of the Verwoerd building, the prominent government administration high-rise, in front of which the statue was enthroned on a high plinth. On 9 September 1994 a work crew removed the letters from the façade of the building and the statue from its pedestal. The photograph of the colossal 4 m statue lying on its back quickly became one of the icons of change at the beginning of the post-apartheid era, but the manoeuvre incited heated emotional reactions on both sides of the racial and socio-political divide. Black onlookers witnessed the process with cheers and joyful toy-toying. One individual was reported as climbing on the empty pedestal and

[4] The statue was made by Gerard de Leeuw and originally unveiled by Betsie Verwoerd on 17 October 1969.

jokingly assuming the well-known pose of the Verwoerd statue. A few individuals trampled on and danced on the toppled statue (Anonymous 1994 a; b; c; d; e; f; g; h).

Many white residents of Bloemfontein and conservative Afrikaners throughout the country were outraged – not only by the fact that the statue had been removed but also by the disgraceful manner in which this had occurred. The Freedom Front, the Conservative Party and the AWB firmly condemned the move and the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK), the most important Afrikaner cultural organisation, warned that the elimination of such symbols could lead to violence. Angry protests of individuals, reflected in a deluge of letters and articles in the Afrikaans news media, testified to the fear of many Afrikaners that the statue's removal signalled the beginning of the wholesale destruction of their culture and heritage (Anonymous 1994 a; b; c; d; e; f; g; h; August 1994).

However, the new Free State premier, Patrick Lekota, quickly moved to allay such fears by asserting that statues and other cultural heritage items would not be indiscriminately removed. At national level, Deputy President F.W. De Klerk reassured the public that the cabinet would propose 'guidelines' for dealing with the issue (Anonymous 1994g) and President Nelson Mandela himself publicly criticised the insensitive way in which the dismantling of the Verwoerd statue had been handled. A newspaper report quoted him as saying the ANC must be 'particularly careful because we have the massive majority and the world and the country are watching us' (Anonymous 1994d).

In retrospect the hysteria appears ironic and completely unwarranted, as virtually no more changes were made to the monumental reminders of the old order in Bloemfontein[5] or anywhere else for the next decade. Only inside public institutions – schools, libraries, hospitals, and government administration buildings – busts of Verwoerd and other controversial figures were removed fairly systematically (although not without exception)[6] from foyers and assembly halls, usually quietly and without much ado. Among the exceptional cases where such action caused public debate and protest from conservative minorities was the removal of a Verwoerd bust from the entrance to the Pretoria Academic Hospital (also previously named after Verwoerd) in April 1997. A group of white right-wingers gathered in a solemn congregation, deferentially paying tribute to their hero in a public show of reverence (Anonymous 1997b).

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[5] Among the very few exceptions is the removal of the Children's Monument mentioned further below.

[6] For instance, in March 2003 the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, was reported to be offended by the fact that a bust of Verwoerd at the Hendrik Verwoerd High School in Pretoria had not yet been removed despite the successful integration of the school (Louw 2003).

While one might dismiss such performances as isolated interventions by fundamentalists and extremists, the fact remains that the majority of the white community in South Africa, including liberal and progressive-minded individuals, tends to be defensive about and emotionally attached to the symbolic markers of their past. This is not necessarily because they identify (or ever have identified) with the role models, values and intended 'message' each of these monuments conveys, but because they have an increasing sense of alienation, and anxieties over black domination and perceived threats to their sense of cultural identity and their future role in the country. Hence, any proposal to change or remove commemorative monuments or other aspects of 'white heritage' (notably name changes) regularly provokes public outcries and protests. A monument that nobody seemed to care about for decades can suddenly become a matter of heated debate and turn into a rallying point for a defensive community.

Although some removed busts and statues end up in storage rooms and quickly slip into oblivion, others are by no means erased from public memory. In fact, some statues have been leading an animated afterlife, passing through new symbolic and economic markets that emerge in the process of transition from one political order to another. When Verwoerd's widow, Betsy, passed away in 2000, her modest house in the Northern Cape town of Orania was turned into a Verwoerd museum, serving as a new home for many Verwoerd busts 'donated' from all over the country.

Orania, often referred to as the 'Afrikaner homeland' or the 'last bastion of the Afrikaner nation', consists of a thriving farm and a small settlement privately owned by an ultra-conservative Afrikaner community who reject racially integrated development and fiercely defend the traditional cultural and religious values they cherish as integral to their understanding of Afrikaner identity. Towering above the town on a small hillock, the community erected the orange and blue Orania flag and a miniature statue of Verwoerd. For several years Verwoerd's daughter, Anna Boshoff, and other residents attempted to have the disgraced Bloemfontein Verwoerd statue (stored in a government warehouse since its removal) shipped to Orania, either to replace the rather pathetic-looking miniature or to be established in another appropriate place of honour. Instead, the statue was transferred to the VTM in Pretoria, which has emerged as a suitable holding facility for a number of busts and paintings no longer wanted in their familiar places. At a visit in 2007, the Verwoerd statue was still wrapped up in a 'body bag' awaiting storage or even its possible future resurrection in an appropriate heritage space on the grounds of the VTM.

Photo 5.2 Miniature bronze statue of Hendrik F.Verwoerd, Orania, Northern Cape.

It is important to emphasize that the sneering and disdainful treatment meted out to this contentious statue on the occasion of its toppling has remained an isolated incident. To my knowledge, no comparable deliberate physical abuse and subsequent public outrage have accompanied any other of the isolated cases in which colonial or apartheid-era monuments were removed or relocated. It appears that these objects are still to some extent sacrosanct and treated with a sense of respect, even if unceremoniously placed in municipal depots or hidden from public view in other storage facilities. To my knowledge, there has also to date not been a single incident of a 'surplus' Afrikaner Nationalist statue or bust being turned into a quaint apartheid artefact, an object of amusement, or a unique commodity. No such statue has been incorporated, for instance, into the décor of a new restaurant or township tavern, as imagined by South African writer Ivan Vladislavić in his fictional story about the fate of a discarded Lenin statue (Vladislavić 1996; Popescu 2003). In the current South African situation, I believe, even the most enterprising and callous businessman would consider violating such taboos to be in bad taste.

## Relocating monuments

It is telling that despite Ngubane's explicit request more than a decade ago, no concrete guidelines or criteria have as yet been developed to facilitate the

removal of selected colonial and apartheid-era monuments. The process of removal is acknowledged as being contentious and divisive, whereas the installation of new monuments is presented as an inclusive, unifying act, conducive to nation-building and reconciliation. Not only is this rationale often questionable, but I argue that it is in fact politically more opportune to erect new monuments as a mechanism for the inscription of new ideological values and a preferred reading of the past than to remove existing ones. Moving from such general statements to specific contexts, it must be considered that not every provincial government, city council and rural town community considered the transformation of the existing array of monuments to be equally urgent. Priorities depended largely on specific local parameters, such as the availability of resources, the perceived urgency of basic service delivery, demographic factors, political power relations and, perhaps most importantly, the presence of an influential government official with a strong vision and drive to keep the issue of symbolic markers on the agenda (e.g. the former mayor of the Nelson Mandela Metro, Nceba Faku).

Attesting to the link between heritage and political power, very little activity occurred in terms of democratically adjusting the memory landscape in the Western Cape and notably Cape Town before the 1999 elections. Only after the ANC gained a substantial share in the provincial government and Cape Town elected an ANC mayor was the heritage of previously neglected groups afforded more serious attention and a few new commemorative projects emerged in the townships. It was only in 2004/05 that the office of the UniCity Mayor, NomaIndia Mfeketho, initiated the 'Memory Project' in collaboration with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), an NGO set up to pursue aspects of the unfinished work of the TRC. Geared towards 'community healing', the purpose of this flagship project is to transform Cape Town's symbolic markers, physical environment and cultural life.[7]

There is, however, another factor that may explain the slow pace of interventions in the memory landscape in Cape Town and perhaps elsewhere. The implementation of the new heritage legislation with its three-tiered management system created confusion about which authority is ultimately responsible for decisions about the possible removal, relocation or re-interpretation of existing monuments and the addition of new

[7] Christian Ernsten (2006: 75), who was involved in the project while serving an internship at the City's Department of Urban Design, writes critically about the official three-page document introducing the Memory Project: 'In reading the text, I was struck by the absence of historical analysis or reflection (besides a single sentence in the introduction referring to the colonial and apartheid past), and by the fact that the authors of this document had not used notions such as identity, culture, or heritage. The City and the IJR seemed to attempt to create memory objects without a narrative'.

commemorative objects.[8] As much as the decentralised structure of the new heritage legislation system was meant to federalise and democratise heritage management, it must be acknowledged that it also burdened municipalities with a new set of responsibilities and challenges. Heritage impact assessments (along with an environmental impact assessment) are now required prior to any new development. Some municipalities were compelled to devise heritage management plans, develop a heritage policy[9] or guidelines on the interpretation of the NHRA, compile inventories of local monuments, or set in motion processes for public participation. Some municipalities established heritage departments or heritage units within other departments (e.g. Architecture, Urban Planning or Environmental Management) to deal more effectively with issues of heritage.

In Durban, for instance, the municipality's 'heritage department' organised a workshop on monuments and memorials in 2000, attended by various stakeholders within the heritage sector, representatives of local communities and interested parties from the general public. One of the measures recommended on this occasion in dealing with the commemorative legacy of the past was the physical repositioning of statues and smaller, movable objects away from highly official, prestigious places (e.g. in front of the city hall) to less prominent locations and 'community spaces'.[10] Such

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[8] The SAHRA report (2003: 29) points out for Cape Town: 'In terms of the three-tier heritage management system outlined in the NHR Act, most of the memorials within the study area should be regarded as local or Grade 3 heritage resources and thus they should ultimately fall under the decision-making responsibility of the local authority, namely the Heritage Resources Section of the Environmental Management Unit or the City of Cape Town Municipality. However, at present, interventions affecting all objects older then 60 years remain the decision-making responsibility of the provincial heritage authority, i.e. HWC, until such time as this heritage management responsibility is delegated to the local authority. However, there are no procedures in place to delegate responsibilities … There is at present no coherent policy relating to the repair, maintenance, adaptation and interpretation for existing memorials or for new additions. Within the three-tier management system for heritage resources SAHRA is responsible for developing overarching policies and principles for the national collection of memorials and issues relating to memorialisation. However, these policies and principles still need to be interpreted at a provincial and local level before any specific interventions are implemented'.

[9] The Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council, for instance, commissioned a private heritage management company, CULTMATRIX, to develop a proposal for a Heritage Policy, Strategy and Action Plans in 1998 (GPMC Minutes, 7 May 1998).

[10] Kearney (2000) has outlined this as one of the preferred options for colonial and apartheid era monuments in Durban. 'Examine each monument, memorial or object in relation to its origin, meaning and context. Find new homes and situations for them. Shift their spatial dominance from the city centre. But find

relocation has been mooted elsewhere as a compromise solution that ensures the conservation of existing monuments whilst simultaneously rendering the content of their 'message' less universal, authoritative or offensive.[11]

In practice, very few public monuments have thus far been relocated. A representative random example would be the so-called Children's Monument in Bloemfontein, a bronze group representing 'The children of South Africa', which was originally unveiled in 1959 and consisted exclusively of white youngsters in Voortrekker garb. In 2003 the sculpture was moved 'for sake-keeping' from its original location in the Sunday School building to the Oranje Girls High School a few streets away, where it was unveiled on 2 October 2005 (Smith 2003; Dressel 2006). In some cases the relocation or realignment of monuments was not politically motivated but merely the pragmatic result of local town planning measures and it would be mistaken to assume that every such move invariably leads to a deflation of the monument's significance or symbolic authority. In Durban, for instance, a monument to the 15th century Portuguese explorer, Bartolomeo Diaz, originally erected by the Portuguese community in 1988, was transferred from its previous site on the Marine Parade pedestrian walkway along the beach-front to a newly designed small park in the harbour. Although now perhaps exposed to a smaller audience, one might argue that the monument of the famous navigator has in fact accrued significance through this shift, as it now forms the focal point of a park named in his honour.

## Dealing with soviet-era statues in post-communist societies

As opposed to Eastern Europe, where 'an upsurge of humour, irony and deprecating imagery swept away the symbolic remains of communism' (Popescu 2003: 420), South Africa still treats the past and its symbolic reminders with respect. It is interesting to digress, for a moment, to Russia and other countries under the tutelage of the former Soviet Union, to observe how these societies have dealt with the heritage and specifically the monuments representing a now widely discredited and often vehemently hated communist past. After the collapse of the Soviet Union many statues were removed from their accustomed places in the Russian capital, although there was by no means a systematic attempt at the wholesale clearance of monuments imposed on the citizens by the Soviet order. Up to the present day one can find statues of Marx, Lenin and other leaders of the working-

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new locations for them in meaningful spaces and places', recommends Kearney (ibid.: 9).

[11] See for instance the section on recommendations in the SAHRA Monuments Project Report 2003 for each of the three cities surveyed.

class movement (although not Stalin), some of which were perhaps too large or otherwise impractical to dismantle. While some dismantled statues may been destroyed, a good number appear to have been conserved through relocation to a park at the State Tretyakov Gallery.

Photo 5.3 Relocated soviet-era statues in the State Tretyakov Gallery Park, Moscow, photographed in 2003.

The Tretyakov is the National Museum of Russian Fine Art and the adjacent park is an outdoor extension of the museum space for the purpose of exhibiting large-scale sculptures. To some extent, this context allows the political statues, intermingled with the art pieces, to be appreciated as works of public commemorative art, but on the whole the statues, usually deposed from their plinths, appear simply to have been dumped there for want of a better place.

In the Hungarian capital, the General Assembly of Budapest, a body predominantly controlled by the Alliance of Free Democrats, decided in December 1991 to remove the city's symbolic reminders of Communism and establish a purpose-built heritage park or open-air museum as a publicly accessible repository of the dismantled statues (James 1999: 300). Since such statue parks are also sometimes suggested as a 'solution' for the South African statue 'problem', it is worthwhile taking a closer look at two overseas examples.

The Budapest Statue Park Museum was opened on the outskirts of the city in 1993 with about 40 artifacts, including full-length statues, busts,

reliefs and plaques, arranged into three sections.[12] The park's designer, Ákos Eleöd, was reportedly keen to avoid creating a 'counter-propaganda park' by providing evaluative, explanatory text messages that would guide visitors towards a pre-determined interpretation. Rather, his intention was not to pass judgement on the statues (and especially the artists who created them) and to contextualize them in ways that respected the diverse memories and experiences of different visitors and encouraged an openness of meaning (James 1999: 296, 304).

Although it has become a must-see tourist attraction, the statue park has also been widely cricitised. Many local residents considered the removal of the statues and the construction of the park a waste of scarce public funds. They would have preferred the familiar landmarks to have remained in their accustomed places, albeit perhaps officially re-interpreted. Politically, the establishment of the park was perceived as a matter of partisan politics in a context where various factions sought to appropriate important memories and establish their anti-communist credentials. Aesthetically, many people objected to the undiscerning selection of artefacts on display and the government's failure to distinguish between communist kitsch and genuine works of art (ibid.: 306-07).

As opposed to the government-initiated and funded Budapest Statue Park, the Soviet Sculpture Garden at Grutas Park (Gruto parkas) in Lithuania, by far the largest Soviet era statue park in Europe, is entirely a private-sector operation. Following the attainment of their independence in 1991, the three Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – immediately embarked on an iconoclastic onslaught on the symbolic reminders of the widely detested Soviet occupation. In Estonia and Latvia bronze statues and other types of commemorative monuments were quickly destroyed, but in Lithuania the state invited constructive proposals from the general public for the destiny of the deposed relics in the interest of conservation and education. Viliumas Malinauskas, a successful business magnate in the mushroom industry, won the tender, mostly on the grounds that he did not request any public funding for his proposed Soviet era heritage park. The tourism potential of Grutas Park, nicknamed 'Stalin World', and its establishment in a rural area much in need of development (the park is located next to the village of Gruto, ca 130 kilometres southwest of the Lithuanian capital Vilnius) were additional strong points.

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[12] The first one is dedicated to monuments commemorating the liberation of Hungary from Nazi Germany and the enduring friendship between Hungary and the Soviet Union. The second section contains monuments dedicated to individual Hungarian activists in the working-class movement, while the third houses monuments to various working-class episodes and ideals (James 1999: 294-5).

Photo 5.4 Soviet Sculpture Garden at Grutas Park, Lithuania, opened in 2001.

Malinauskas invested about two million Euro to create this unique heritage establishment, which included extensive drainage of ca 20-30 hectares of wetlands, the transport and sometimes purchase of statues and relics (most were donated), the construction of various buildings, as well as a playground and mini-zoo for the entertainment of small children. Grutas Park officially opened in 2001. It holds over 80 statues in a landscaped setting and a total of about 1.5 million artefacts, including paintings, posters, photographs, uniforms, and pins, many of which are exhibited in wooden buildings that reconstruct typical soviet-era institutional establishments (Malinauskas personal communication 2007). Along the edge of the park, barbed wire and watch towers with attached megaphones recreate the atmosphere of concentration camps and the Soviet Gulag prisons.

Although the representation of the past at Grutas Park conveys a clear attitude towards Soviet ideology and neglects any positive aspects of the Soviet era, Grutas Park aspires to be a serious educative (as well as entertainment) site, which does not intend to overtly denigrate or ridicule the country's Soviet heritage and cause offence to sympathetic Russian visitors. Each statue is accompanied by a plaque with well-researched historical information in Lithuanian and English, as well as – in many cases – a photograph of the statue in its original setting. Likewise, inside the museum buildings text panels and an optional audio guide available in different languages provide detailed information. The site is regularly visited by

school groups and is popular with local residents and foreign tourists alike, the vast majority of whom have welcomed the existence of the park and have expressed positive reactions to its displays (Malinauskas personal communication 2007; Bark, personal communication 2007l; Coulaloglou 2006; Grutas Park 2004; Anonymous undated).

But Grutas Park, like the Budapest Statue Park Museum, has also been criticised, albeit on different grounds. The main objection appears to be the theme-park nature of the park, its commercial basis and tourist orientation, which some perceive as inappropriate and insensitive to the suffering of the Lithuanian victims of the Soviet occupation. Some critics even object to the mere fact that the park conserves monuments of 'killers' and 'tyrants', pointing out that no comparable monuments to Hitler or Goebbels have been deemed worthy of preservation and public display (Anonymous undated). Closer examination of the statues and the individual personalities they represent moreover reveals some ambiguous or contradictory cases that raise questions about selection and interpretation.[13] The fact that a particular statue is displayed in this themed heritage space in the company of other specific statues prompts a particular reading of its meaning which the statue's original context may not have suggested or intended. Consultants from relevant national authorities (e.g. the Arts Council) were involved in the establishment of Grutas Park and – according to Malinauskas (personal communication 2007) – regularly monitor the representation and interpretation of its monuments and artefacts, but it is nevertheless extraordinary that the conservation of the country's most significant period in recent history rests so prominently in the hands of a private investor.

Soviet-era heritage parks can be credited with rescuing discredited public statuary from destruction, hence perhaps conciliating iconoclast and conservationist forces, but their relocation from their accustomed public sites into the new context of a themed heritage space, subjected to the tourist gaze, inevitably changes their symbolic meaning (Johnson 1995). However, it is now widely acknowledged that the ideological significance of these statues has never been stable. How widely the official meaning of these monuments and related political symbols was ever shared by the general

[13] The most striking example is that of a young woman, Adele Siauciunaite, whom the audio guide introduced as 'an example of a destiny destroyed by Communism'. The young woman had contributed her services to the Soviet cause during the interwar period, but pursued certain interests of her own that brought her into conflict with the authorities. She was killed in 1938 at the age of 24, allegedly by Soviet authorities. Asked about the rationale behind including this ostensible 'victim' among the indisputable 'villains' of Communism, Malinauskas laconically responded that 'all these people did something bad' (personal communication 2007) and explained that Siauciunaite's statue is set up in the section of the park that focuses on collaborators, not the worst perpetrators.

populace, and what alternative readings individuals developed and disseminated within private circles, while publicly paying lip service to the official version, may never be known. It is likely that many statues had lost their originally-intended meaning years before they were moved to the statue park, as James (1999) points out with respect to the case of Budapest.

Levinson (1998: 73) asks whether we would have

> … found the Budapest solution acceptable in Germany and Japan following their defeats in World War II? Surely most of us would have been profoundly dissatisfied had the successor regimes moved any public statuary of Hitler, Tojo, and their minions to the carefully tended grounds of a state museum where they would stand, without further adornment or explanation, for the presumed edification of onlookers.

He suggests that the horror of Nazism is still regarded in a category of its own and considered out of bounds for irony and display in playful heritage contexts. Yet it is striking to note that at heritage sites and museums in both Lithuania and Hungary, the sense of injury resulting from the Soviet occupation seems to far outweigh that of the Nazi crimes in the current socio-political climate.[14] What is far more important here is not the content of the statue park, i.e. which tyrants and disgraced leaders can or cannot be exhibited, but rather the very concept of such a site. It is the predominant contemporary climate influenced by postmodernism, with its penchant for irony, eclecticism, the juxtapositioning of sometimes incongruous elements, and the creation of polysemic collages inviting multiple readings that made such ventures possible at the turn of the 21st century – although not in all societies.

## The concept of statue parks in post-apartheid South Africa

In South Africa, postmodernism has arguably never had quite the same impact or especially the wide societal reach that can be observed in many Western countries. In the current post-apartheid climate, the issue of political symbolism and group identity symbols appears to be too sensitive and taken

[14] The Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius, established in the former headquarters of the KGB, barely features the crimes committed during Lithuania's Nazi occupation period. A similar bias has been observed about the House of Terror in Budapest, which officially commemorates the victims of terror in general and those of Nazism and Communism in particular. The controversial museum was opened in 2002 inside a symbolically significant building in 60 Andrássy Avenue. In the early 1940s the building housed the Nazi-affiliated Arrow Cross party, which used the facility as a prison and torture centre. After 1945 it was taken over by the Communist Secret Police and was used as an interrogation centre until 1956 (Rátz 2006).

too seriously to allow for anything more 'playful' than a political cartoon. Heritage officials in particular are well aware of the great importance communities in South Africa across the racial and ideological spectrum attach to their political icons and the heritage sector would hardly dare engaging in ventures that might undermine its widely perceived role as contributing to morally elevated societal goals, such as community empowerment, reconciliation, education and nation-building.

Although sometimes suggested as a solution to the 'problem' of unwanted bronze effigies of discredited heroes,[15] no concrete proposal for a colonial and/or apartheid-era statue park has ever been seriously considered in South Africa. Such a proposal would presumably be unacceptable both to most white and probably many black residents. Some would object to the theme-park nature of the site; others to the fact that such a move would unmistakably result in the wholesale symbolic devaluation of 'white heritage'; and others to the fact that such clearance of the symbolic representations of the past order would be an attempt to erase memories and sanitise the country's painful history. As I argue in Chapter Nine, the prevalence of the dialogic approach to adjusting the monument landscape in post-apartheid South Africa is crucially dependent on the continued presence of the symbolic reminders of the past in their accustomed places.

Nevertheless, what has been mooted in several South African cities over the past one-and-a-half decades of democracy is the establishment of designated commemorative spaces where relocated monuments of the past would be joined by new monuments dedicated to the heroes of the present order. Unlike the post-soviet examples, these spaces have not been envisaged as disguised 'dumping grounds' for unwanted statues but conceptualised as inclusive, genuine places of remembrance and serious contemplation. The proposed Durban Heroes Monument constitutes a case in point, simultaneously illustrating the complex array of emotional reservations held by various stakeholders and the ideological problems associated with such a project.

In 2000 an open competition was held to elicit proposals for the Durban Heroes Monument in honour of 'men and women of extraordinary courage, vision and enterprise who had made their mark in the city's eventful history, many of whom remained as yet unrecognized'.[16] The monument was supposed to be erected in Botha's Garden, a small park on the fringe of the city's Central Business District, and the competition brief requested contest-

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[15] See for example the recommendations of the academic panel in the context of the Legacy Project (Chapter Six). In my own experience of discussing the issue with students of Cultural and Heritage Tourism, a statue park is often the first suggestion that comes to mind.

[16] City of Durban. Metropolitan, North and South Central Councils. Heroes Monument. Competition Briefing Document (2000).

ants to include in their design a recommendation for the future of the park's current focal point, the statue of General Louis Botha designed by Anton van Wouw (unveiled in 1921). Louis Botha (1862-1919) was an important Boer general in the South African Anglo-Boer War and in 1910 became the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.

The winning design by the Durban-based firm Architects Collaborative (Paul Mikula) proposed that the Botha statue be retained and joined by other statues of 'the old guard'. They were to be moved to the park from various sites in the city to co-exist peacefully with new statues celebrating liberation heroes and other leader figures of significance to 'the people' in post-apartheid South Africa. Mimicking the Moscow example, the plan was that all relocated statues were to be taken off their pedestals and lowered to the ground to stand on their feet. While literally and metaphorically signifying a 'deposing' of these grand leaders of the past, this measure would simultaneously render them more human, allowing people to confront them face to face and 'look them in the eye' (Mikula quoted in Peters 2001 and personal communication 2002).

As stated earlier, public commemorative monuments are automatically protected in terms of heritage conservation legislation at the same level as registered sites. Anyone intending to remove or modify a monument must apply to the responsible heritage authority, which will subsequently notify potential stakeholders, who can in turn lodge their complaints, mobilise public opinion or make constructive recommendations (Hall, personal interview 2006). No objections were raised when Architects Collaborative presented their winning design to the City Council. However, upon its publication in the *KZN Institute of Architects Journal*, a letter by the South African architect, Hans Hallen, promptly arrived from his new home in Australia, ridiculing the proposal and specifically opposing the idea of lowering the Botha statue (Hallen 2001).

Hallen argued that van Wouw would have conceptualised the over-life size statue with the high pedestal in mind, compensating for the foreshortening, which would make the lowered statue appear top-heavy. This is probably correct, although statues in Moscow on pedestals of similar size do not appear to have suffered unacceptably from the removal of their support, following their relocation to the sculpture park. One might speculate that Hallen's aesthetic argument disguises his emotionally and politically motivated opposition to the thought of 'deposing' Botha and other symbolic representatives of the colonial and apartheid era. Hallen himself, it must be remembered, was closely associated with the commemorative endeavours of the Afrikaner Nationalists during the heyday of apartheid, notably through his design of the VTM at Winburg.[17] Amafa subsequently refused per-

[17] Hans Hallen and Maurice Dibb jointly won the design competition for the monument, administered by the FAK in 1965. See Bunn (1999: 105).

mission to alter the Botha statue or any other statue envisaged for relocation. The entire Heroes Monument proposal died a slow death in the corridors of the local bureaucracy and was eventually officially abandoned, when the new Premier, S'bu Ndebele, embraced the idea of confronting the Botha statue with a new statue of King Dinizulu, as will be discussed later.

In Cape Town, similar proposals of uniting statues of old heroes and of those who served the people and the freedom struggle emerged during a public debate on 'Old Memorials in New Times' (SAHRA 2002a). The Castle was suggested as a possible site for such a venture, but no serious steps were ever taken to implement the idea. As early as 1992, Mewa Ramgobin had publicly raised the idea of creating a 'Heroes' Square' somewhere in South Africa. In a *Sunday Tribune* article he wrote:

> It will be to our credit and a source of inspiration for those who follow us if we were to: Interface the statues of Louis Botha and Jan Smuts with those of Albert Luthuli and Mahatma Gandhi; Create a 'Heroes' Square' in South Africa where the remains of the late Johnny Makatini, Braam Fischer, Yusuf Dadoo and the hundreds of other fallen heroes of the resistance movement could be recognised and honoured. (Ramgobin 1992).[18]

In 1994, long before the collapse of the Strijdom monument, discussions were held in Pretoria about a possible renaming of Strijdom square 'to honour all freedom fighters including Boer soldiers from South Africa's past' and to possibly erect busts, 'smaller than that of Strijdom for aesthetic reasons', of a number of freedom fighters (Anonymous 1994). Nothing came of these proposals. Meanwhile the Tshwane Building Heritage Association resuscitated an interesting proposal that Herbert Baker, architect of the Union Buildings, had developed at the beginning of the 20th century. Inspired by the model of Rome, Baker had envisaged a *Via Sacra* in Pretoria, a road to be built behind the Union Buildings, lined with commemorative statues of prominent leader figures. In a submission to the Pretoria Public Works department, the Heritage Association motivated for the implementation of this pertinent proposal to create a place of honour for all relocated existing statues or busts (of which there are many in this capital city) combined with new sculptures dedicated to liberation fighters and other heroes of the post-apartheid order (Anton Jansen, personal conversation, 2002 and 2007).

A comparison with the much debated and publicised American case of Monument Ave in Richmond, Virginia, may come to mind, as in fact many aspects of South African history and its commemoration mirror examples in

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[18] The fact that not a single woman is included in this list of new heroes suggests that gender bias was part of the public debate around new monuments and the commemoration of new heroes from the very beginning. This will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

the United States. But the important difference is that here the intervention amounted only to an 'invasion' of an established exclusive commemorative space to render it more inclusive. The eminent boulevard of Monument Ave was laid out in the Confederate capital during the same period when Baker conceived of the *Via Sacra* for Pretoria, lining up equestrian statues and other types of monuments in honour of major leaders of the Confederate army. Controversy first erupted in the late 1960s, when the increasingly vocal African American community officially began to question the selection of 'heroes' and the ideological discourses they publicly represented. Yet it was not before the early 1990s that the City Council seriously considered adding a black leader figure to this prominent and elitist site of commemoration. Against persisting vestiges of resistance, a statue of black tennis champion Arthur Ashe (who was from Richmond) was eventually unveiled in 1995 (Black and Varley 2003; Wilson 2003; Savage 1997). Savage (1997) demonstrates that this strategic addition has fundamentally transformed the existing commemorative space by turning it into an inclusive site of remembrance and opening up discursive perspectives on a contested past.

The strategy of adding a black leader figures to assemblies of white statuary is becoming increasingly popular in South Africa, but no proposals for relocating 'white statues' and joining them with monuments to black leaders have been – or are likely to be – implemented. Resistance towards a designated, shared place of honour for old and new heroes prevails not only on the part of people who identify with the 'old guard' but also on the part of those who identify with the new order, because the commemoration of their leaders is perceived to be neutralised, rendered ambiguous or even 'contaminated' through the presence of 'enemy' heroes.

## Re-interpretation

Even with political will and financial resources in place, physical relocation is not a viable option for some public monuments, either on account of their size or their fragility or other factors that render them unsuitable for a move. In such cases a monument can be re-interpreted or re-contextualized through small modifications to the structure itself; through the wording of its inscription; through renaming; or simply through official, media-supported efforts at redefining its meaning and significance. Public monuments throughout the world are prone to be affected by the passage of time and associated changes in cultural patterns and societal climates. The process of re-interpreting the meaning of monuments is as old as the tradition of installing such structures in the public arena. Historically, re-interpretation sometimes occurred actively and deliberately, perhaps officially decreed by political or religious authorities for ideological reasons. Sometimes, it may

have emerged gradually, unofficially, perhaps as a matter of growing community consensus in contestation of the official reading.[19]

What is (relatively) new, both in scholarly research and popular perspectives, is the widespread recognition of the instability of the meaning of cultural products in general and monuments in particular (e.g. Mills and Simpson 2003; Coombes 2003; Savage 1997). There is much conscious awareness today that the interpretive meaning of monuments can shift between different viewers or periods of time; that there is potential divergence between intended and received meaning(s); that it is impossible to design a symbol that carries only the meaning that it was meant to carry; that meaning can be actively manipulated; and indeed that sometimes completely unpredictable meanings may emerge.

Thelen believes these views to be in alignment with postmodernist thought: monuments and memorial have become 'not markers with single meanings from and about the past but objects for "dialogue" or "negotiation" ...' (1993: 128). There have been fundamental shifts in the understanding of history itself. In international scholarship historical knowledge is no longer understood as a series of objective facts uncovered by historians, but as meanings discursively constructed, subjectively shaped by specific needs and processes, and determined by prevailing power relations. Foucault's seminal writings demonstrate that representation must always be considered in relation to the motivations and ideological agendas of those who have the power to 'speak' – about themselves and more importantly about others. Historical narratives are produced in complex ways by competing groups and individuals who make uneven contributions and who have unequal access to the means of such production. Trouillot (1995: xix) aptly observes that power is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous. The challenge for historians today lies in exposing its roots, thereby explaining the predominance and acceptance as historical fact of some narratives rather than others (which are then often declared to be fictive).

In South Africa the impact of these intellectual currents and the associated fundamental challenges for the discipline of history were somewhat muted by the permeating 'struggle paradigm' during the 1970s and 80s, but have since been much debated (Nuttall and Wright 2000: 36; see also Rassool 2001; Nuttall and Wright 1998). Significantly, while

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[19] Then there were of course cases of re-interpretation as a result of mistaken identity. The ancient equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (AD 166-80, Capitoline Hill, Rome), for instance, survived the medieval iconoclasm targeted at pagan monuments only because it was believed to represent the Christian emperor Constantine the Great. Closer to home in place and time, the statue of Queen Victoria in the city centre of Nairobi is widely believed to represent the Virgin Mary (Larsen personal communication 2006) and many people would probably strongly object to its removal.

notions of historical 'fact', 'truth' and 'reality' are questioned by academic historians and presented as social constructs relative to specific times and places, statements by political officials and representatives of the heritage sector are frequently based on the assumption that the past is a known entity, which needs only to be 'objectively' represented or officially told for the first time. New museums, monuments and heritage sites are needed to tell the 'true history', as opposed to the biased official record disseminated by the previous order. Colonial and apartheid era monuments as public symbols of that biased history should be re-interpreted to 'correct the past'.

## Case study: the Terrorism Memorial in Pretoria

Photo 5.5 Memorial for the victims of terrorism, Pretoria city centre, originally unveiled 1988, re-dedicated 1994.

Even if some colonial and apartheid era monuments may today be spontaneously 'updated' in meaning – for instance when tour guides narrate local history to tourists, or when school teachers on field trips present new historical perspectives to their learners, or when city officials and allied publicity media endorse the multifaceted cultural heritage attractions of the urban environment – very few such monuments have thus far been officially re-interpreted through changes in their inscriptions, their iconography or

other aspects of their physical appearance. The most frequent examples are World War I and II memorials, as well as South African Anglo-Boer War memorials, which have sometimes been re-dedicated to acknowledge the role of black participants and victims in these conflicts.

One important case of an official re-interpretation is the so-called 'Terrorism memorial' in Pretoria. It was originally set up at the entrance to Munitoria (corner of Van der Walt and Vermeulen Streets) in 1988 to honour 'residents of Pretoria who lost their lives as a result of acts of terrorism, or in preventing or combating terrorism', as the official City Council Newsletter announced at the time (Anonymous 1988). The symbolism of all of the individual elements of the memorial was explained in both Afrikaans and English on an attached plaque. Mounted on a rock symbolizing 'the infallibility of God's Word' is a tall arch made of stainless steel, which 'denotes the triumph of a people living by God's principles'. The arch is broken at the apex as a reference to 'the untimely death of the victims of terrorism'. The structure was originally surrounded by a water feature symbolizing 'calmness and reflection' and equipped with an inscription from the Bible, 'Vengeance is mine: I will repay' (Romans 12:19), as well as the dedication 'To our victims of terrorism'.

Only months after the first universal franchise elections, in September 1994, the ANC-dominated Pretoria city council decided that the wording on this memorial had become intolerable (Stapelberg and Uys 1994). The 'message' of the entire structure, the vengeful biblical quote and especially the reference to 'terrorists' were extremely offensive to the majority, who identified with those who had suffered, sacrificed and often lost their lives in the fight for freedom, democracy and human rights. After heated debate, in which Conservative Party councillors voiced their strong objection, it was resolved to re-dedicate the memorial to 'all' instead of 'our' victims of terrorism and to remove the biblical quote. The change of one single three-letter word now theoretically renders the previously exclusive memorial inclusive, depoliticised and ideologically neutral.

This technocratic solution to a 'problematic' memorial is indicative of the way government officials in South Africa deal with questions of cultural heritage. Where decision-makers often lack professional training and expertise in the field of museums and heritage studies, little awareness exists about the complexities of interpretation and the semiotic processes of meaning-making. Assuming that the change to the inscription is even noticed, many local residents and passers-by will still remember the original text and retain their erstwhile emotional or ideological associations with this memorial (provided they ever took active notice in the first place). One might think, in comparison, of the way in which old names of streets and landmarks linger on in popular currency long after any signs of those names have been removed, and how prejudices against once reviled institutions and buildings can overshadow their new usages. Long gone features of the urban

geography such as separate facilities for different race groups or previously existing buffer zones between racially divided residential zones may still be deeply rooted in oral memory and may affect the attitudes and emotional responses of local communities or individuals.

If this expresses doubt about the effectiveness of the politically correct adjustment of a memorial whose originally intended signification is deemed no longer acceptable, it must be remembered that the erstwhile meaning of this memory site was also never monolithic, and readings of its meaning would certainly have diverged even among those whom the memorial primarily addressed. 'In the same way that myths are flexible discursive forms, symbolic places are "condensation sites", replete with polysemic interpretations', states Edensor (1997: 176) in the context of his discussion of the heroic Wallace Monument in Stirling, Scotland. Viewers who chose to actively engage with the memorial will invariably fuse its intended meaning with their own personal experiences and their understanding of the larger context in which it exists.

To some extent, the well-intentioned inclusive rededication has rendered the Terrorism memorial less meaningful altogether, as it has in effect lost its reference to the specific South African context. One might remember Patricia Phillip's (1989) scathing critique of public art in the urban environment: public art tries so hard to be accessible and pleasing to everyone that it becomes utterly meaningless to anyone, she argues. On the other hand, the Terrorism memorial excels as an example of the unexpected surfacing and unforeseen accrual of meaning of a commemorative object. In the context of the recent spate of terrorist attacks around the world, this memorial, dedicated to all victims of terrorism, can be interpreted as an expression of South Africa's empathy within an international community of nations.

## Recasting personalities

An effective and yet 'non-invasive' way of re-interpreting commemorative monuments dedicated to specific leader figures, notably statues, can be achieved by recasting the symbolic identity of the person concerned. As Popescu (2003: 419) shows with respect to Lenin, the same person, and implicitly the statue as his/her symbolic representation, can be perceived from different historical vantage points and integrated into different types of narratives. This may involve the re-positioning of the person's life and work in a specific historical perspective; an 'explanation' of controversial decisions through contextualisation in a particular ideological framework; and thus an inflection or re-inscription of the person's symbolic significance. Such re-interpretation must be introduced or reinforced through the official education system, notably in schools and museums, and supported by popular media campaigns (e.g. feature stories in newspapers, magazines, or

on TV). If sufficiently entrenched, such recasting may even make changes to the inscription of a statue or memorial obsolete. Entire groups of once despised or controversial personalities can be 'rehabilitated' all at one time, as happened, for instance, in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR, i.e. East Germany) during the period of the 1970s and 1980s as a result of a conscious re-definition of the prevailing national identity. A famous statue of Frederick the Great in Berlin, which had been dismantled in 1950, was even re-erected in 1980 in its original spot, because its symbolic meaning had suddenly changed and become acceptable through this state-directed shift in identity construction.[20]

During times of socio-political upheaval and change, when individual and group identities are in a state of flux and uncertainty, when established identity categories are increasingly questioned or dismantled, appropriating prominent leader figures of the past and interpreting their significance in new ways can assist in redefining personal and community identity. In 1996 a 'coloured' woman, Luella Chequenton, from Eldorado Park (Johannesburg), unexpectedly defended the Paul Kruger statue in Pretoria – commonly assumed to be associated by black communities with colonialism and Afrikaner nationalist values. Claiming Kruger as part of her heritage, she proudly announced herself to be one of 'Oom Paul's' many mixed race descendents and expressed outrage at the government's habit of mentioning Kruger's name in the same breath as apartheid (Kelly 1996). While she sympathised with the government's drive to remove monuments to Verwoerd and other controversial personalities, she advocated that the statue of Paul Kruger should be re-dedicated (and ideologically neutralised): 'Not as a symbol of Afrikanerdom as was originally intended, but rather [dedicated] to a quite amazing figure in our history' (ibid.). By re-interpreting the symbolic meaning of Paul Kruger, she implicitly negotiated and repositioned her own identity.

An interesting case (and thus far a lost opportunity) is the over-life size bronze statue of John Ross in Durban (created by Mary Stainbank in the 1970s), which stands, unobtrusively and somewhat hidden by vegetation, in front of an office block to this date named after Ross along the Victoria

[20] It was from the 1970s that the Government began to embrace German history and heritage in its entirety, departing from the earlier tradition of exclusively focussing on aspects relating to the worker's struggle. This was done in order to define a broader-based identity for the socialist German state, which was now considered a fulfilled national entity, instead of merely a stepping stone towards a unified socialist Germany. As a result, many historical personalities, such as Martin Luther or the Prussian kings, were re-interpreted and rehabilitated. A famous statue of Frederick the Great in Berlin, which had been dismantled in 1950, was re-erected in 1980 in its traditional spot. The symbolic meaning of this and other statues had suddenly changed through a shift in the construct that is national identity (Koshar 2000: 268-9).

Embankment (now the Margaret Mncadi Ave). Nobody has yet come forward with a proposal to re-interpret this statue by recasting the identity of this amazing historical figure. Charles Rawden Maclean (1812 or 1815[21]-1880), who allegedly became known as John Ross on account of his red hair, was only a boy when he arrived at Port Natal, the site of the current city of Durban, on board the stranded Brig *Mary*, among a party of British pioneers primarily interesting in ivory hunting.

Photo 5.6 Bronze statue of John Ross, Durban, undated (1970s).

Maclean himself has produced a body of writings about the three years he spent in Natal and Zululand, accessible in published form since 1992 (Maclean 1992, edited by Stephen Gray). A particular interpretation of his life story was popularised through a TV series broadcast in South Africa in 1986 (John Ross, An African Adventure), following the success of the series on Shaka Zulu.[22] A year later South African writer, Stephen Gray (1987), published his historical novel *John Ross, the True Story* partly in response to the distortions presented in the TV series. The statue dedicated to the memory of John Ross portrays the teenager as an adventurous young British

[21] According to Stephen Gray's research, Maclean was born on 17 August 1815 in Fraserburgh, Scotland (Maclean 1992: 2), but his birth date is frequently cited as 1812.

[22] For a critical analysis of the TV series on Shaka Zulu, see Hamilton (1998).

hero in somewhat tattered Western clothes. The text plaque mounted on the façade of the office block (in 1974) explains that 'In 1827, at the age of 15 years, he walked to Delagoa Bay and back, to obtain urgently needed medical supplies for the new settlement at Port Natal. The Zulu King, Shaka, provided him with an escort of warriors to accompany him during the journey'.

The current inscription focuses on the lad's heroic deed as perceived from the British perspective, namely the invaluable service he rendered to the tiny British contingent at Port Natal, saving them from annihilation. In the settler legends of Natal, the story of John Ross is implicitly linked with the foundation myth of the British colony. But other aspects of Maclean's fascinating experiences could be foregrounded as more relevant in the current socio-political context. According to Maclean's own account, he had become a great friend and admirer of the Zulu people and was much liked by King Shaka, who reportedly adopted him as his son. Ross in fact lived with the Zulus at Shaka's settlement at KwaDukuza for some time. He learnt the Zulu language, dressed in Zulu attire and generally absorbed Zulu culture. He became the first 'white Zulu'. In later years Maclean became a sea-captain in the British merchant marine in the Caribbean and a spokesperson for human rights and democratic values (Maclean 1992).

The 'official' history of the 'old' South Africa largely covered up the extraordinary relationship between John Ross, the white settler hero, and King Shaka and the Zulu people (Lebdal 2004: 121). The prevailing historiography of the time often underscored the apartheid ideology of separate development by focusing on historical narratives of hostility and 'difference' between various racial and ethnic groups in society. The academic climate of the 'new' South Africa, on the contrary, influenced by societal trends and political prerogatives, encourages historical perspectives that speak of amicable relations and productive contact between blacks and whites. The frequently invoked spirit of *ubuntu* refers to the common humanity that is promoted to serve as the foundation of the new non-racial nation, in which people are meant to focus on the fundamental similarities they share below the surface of superficial differences in physical appearance and culture. Based on a revision of the historical data and official repositioning of his identity and historical significance, John Ross could emerge as the incarnation of the ideal 'rainbow nation citizen'. His statue could be interpreted as an inspiring, highly appropriate symbol of cross-cultural understanding and respect, interracial dialogue, and in fact of *ubuntu* (Lebdal 2004).

## Re-positioning the VTM

Photo 5.7 Voortrekker Monument, Pretoria, unveiled 1949.

The most prominent (and therefore now most contested) commemorative structure of the apartheid era in South Africa is the VTM outside Pretoria, the penultimate icon of Afrikaner nationalism and for many a prime symbol of apartheid oppression.[23] Its unveiling in 1949, one year after the National Party came to power, was a triumphant event for the Afrikaner cause. The foundation stone of the VTM was laid in 1938 on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the 'Great Trek', the historical exodus of the 'Voortrekkers' from the British Cape Colony in search of new lands and independence, mythologised as the move of 'God's chosen people' to the 'promised land'. Demonstrating the relationship between historical and national consciousness, Van Jaarsveld (1988) explains how the Great Trek became a key symbol of the Afrikaner foundation myth, its significance reinforced and publicly called to mind through annual ritual observance, especially on 16 December, the 'Day of the Vow' (this is discussed in the next chapter). It legitimized Afrikaner existence, culture and policy, supported their sense of identity as a people, and provided them with an orientation in South Africa and in the world (1988: 11).

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[23] Although some black South Africans now have a more positive attitude towards the monument, many still view it as a symbol of their oppression (see e.g. Matshikiza 2002).

Many of the actual facts of the Great Trek are uncertain or contested, and historical evidence suggests that the Voortrekkers were a much more diverse and heterogeneous group of people with different socio-cultural and linguistic roots than commonly portrayed (e.g. Welsh 2000). It was primarily in the context of the Centenary celebrations of 1938 and the period leading up to these events that a systematic process of selective remembering, intended to define the Afrikaner nation, took place.[24] Its key event was the re-enactment of the famed ox-wagon journey, officially memorialised to this day by countless commemorative monuments in towns along the route and culminating in the laying of the foundation stone for the VTM. The highly exclusive nature of this event – and the group identity it helped to forge – was brilliantly captured by the acclaimed South African author, Alan Paton (1980), himself an enthusiastic but quickly alienated and disillusioned participant in the 1949 celebrations.[25]

Delmont's (1993) careful analysis of the conceptualisation of the monument, its architectural and sculptural elements, its real and imagined precedents, illustrates how the monument translates the foundation myths and ideological tenets of emergent Afrikaner nationalism into visual form. This 'shrine for Afrikanerdom', intended to last eternally, was designed by Gerhard Moerdijk, an architect well suited for this eminent task, as he had experience with large government commissions and the design of religious buildings. He also had international training and was well known for fiercely promoting the Afrikaner cause (Delmont 1993: 80). His obvious yet unacknowledged source of inspiration for the layout and many architectural and sculptural details was the late 19th century German Völkerschlacht-denkmal in Leipzig designed by Bruno Schmidt.

The structure of the VTM is meant to be understood as a series of protective layers radiating out from the innermost core, the cenotaph of Piet Retief in the crypt below the 'hall of heroes'. Accompanied by an eternal flame, this symbolic altar dedicated to Retief and his fellow heroes constitutes the ultimate 'symbol of sacrifice' (Moerdijk) in the narrative of the Afrikaner nation. The great marble frieze that encircles the walls of the

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[24] For the following see Bunn (1999), Coombes (2000; 2003) and Graham et al. (2000).

[25] In his autobiography *Towards the Mountain*, Paton describes how he – as a liberal and open-minded South African of British descent – was excited about attending the Great Trek centenary celebrations. He even grew a beard for the occasion, dressed up in 'Voortrekker' clothes and stocked up on boerewors and sosaties. Yet when he realized the highly exclusive nature of the event and the Afrikaner nationalist, anti-British fervour of many participants, he was deeply disappointed, leaving the scene with a profound sense of alienation and disillusionment. Paton describes this experience as a turning point in his attitude towards Afrikanerdom.

domed ‘hall of heroes’ visually details the story of the ‘Great Trek’ from an Afrikaner nationalist perspective.

Photo 5.8 Voortrekker Monument, Pretoria, Hall of Heroes.

In conjunction with the architecture, it serves to reinforce the central myths of Afrikaner history, notably the construct of the Voortrekkers as a ‘nation’, the connection between the Trekkers and the land, and the notion that Afrikaners are God’s chosen people.

The VTM was officially positioned as hallowed ground, a sacred symbol of Afrikanerdom, a place of pilgrimage for many Afrikaners and their children, while blacks were barred from entry. Although by the end of the apartheid era a significant portion of the white Afrikaans-speaking population no longer identified with the monument’s originally intended symbolism, aligned as it was with early Afrikaner nationalism, ethnic myth-making and apartheid, the destruction or significant physical alteration of the VTM would nevertheless have raised alarm among many whites and would have been completely unacceptable to a small but still influential minority of conservative Afrikaners. The question of how to deal with this ideologically charged structure, this virulently contested identity symbol, posed unique challenges for the newly elected ANC-led GNU and occupied public debate even before the official beginning of the post-apartheid era .

Simon Harrison (1995: 255) maintains that ‘[c]ompetition for power, wealth, prestige, legitimacy or other political resources seems always to be accompanied by conflict over important symbols, by struggles to control or manipulate such symbols in some vital way’. He calls this behaviour

'symbolic conflict' and distinguishes four prototypical forms, all of which I will refer to again later.

'Proprietary contests' relate to a struggle for the monopoly or control of some collective symbol, the importance and prestige value of which is agreed upon by the rival groups. This type of contest is essentially about laying claim to ownership of significant symbols or appropriating significant icons to enhance one group's status, authority or legitimacy. Its relevance in the South African context is most obvious in the struggle over the icons of the Struggle discussed in Chapters One and Three.

In an 'expansionary contest' one group in society tries to displace the symbols of a competing group's identity with its own symbols. This can result in the disappearance of the defeated side's identity symbols, not necessarily in the sense of their physical destruction, but in the sense that they are no longer used to represent the identity of the group. The aim of suppressing the rival group's identity symbols is not to leave that group in some sense devoid of an identity, but 'to integrate or absorb the group by supplanting its symbols of identity with one's own' (Harrison 1995: 265). This will be discussed further in Chapter Nine.

'Innovation contests' involve the invention or competitive creation of traditions and symbolic forms by one societal group in order to establish and symbolically represent a separate identity from other groups. While this concept often concerns ethnic minority groups seeking to assert themselves in the face of the dominant power, it can easily be applied in present-day South Africa, where the previously marginalised African majority is striving to symbolically represent itself (e.g. through monuments) in competition with the existing bulk of representations inherited from the previous order, as will be explained in Chapter Nine.

Most relevant for my discussion of the VTM are 'valuation contests', which involve the ranking – according to some criterion of worth such as prestige, legitimacy or sacredness – of identity symbols (such as monuments) of competing societal groups (ibid.: 256). The result of a valuation contest is not the destruction or alteration of the symbol, nor its replacement with a new symbol, but merely a change in the relative position of the symbol along some scale of value. In other words, in valuation contests it is possible to manipulate the value of a symbol without changing it in any other way (ibid.: 266).

This is precisely what Tokyo Sexwale, then Premier of Gauteng Province, inadvertently attempted to do in 1996, when he made a highly publicised attempt at officially re-interpreting the contested VTM and re-inscribing meaning onto its mottled symbolic signifiers. Sexwale had himself photographed in front of and inside the monument for a double spread in the City Metro edition of the *Sunday Times* (Unsworth 1996; Coombes 2003). Examining one by one various elements of the monument's design, he attributed new meanings to each, often inverting the originally

intended one.[26] While precluding any physical changes, this ostentatious demonstration (or 'performance') was intended to illustrate the monument's potential for multiple readings, to make a contribution towards removing the structure's stigma for the majority of the population by manipulating its meaning and significance, and to appropriate the formerly exclusive structure for a new inclusive national agenda. However, critics might rightfully question the effectiveness of this strategy. Can a merely discursive revaluation without physical manifestations that visually support a new interpretive account be sufficient to disinvest this disputed monument of its ideological power and contested symbolic charge, which remains offensive for so many people?[27]

Recent scholarship has focused on how the symbolism of the VTM – far from being static – has habitually been remoulded over time. Grundlingh (2001) describes significant structural changes and transformations within the social composition of Afrikanerdom from the 1950s to the 1970s and explains how the meaning of the VTM and other cultural markers had to be adjusted and renegotiated in view of these historical developments. The pressure for such changes intensified during the 1980s and especially since the advent of the post-apartheid era, prompting Grundlingh to emphasise that one can no longer describe the significance of the VTM in the same terms as when Afrikaner nationalism was dominant. Coombes' (2003) analysis concentrates particularly on the cultural changes and political transformations of the post-apartheid period, illustrating how the symbolism of the VTM has effectively been altered by various constituencies, how the monument has come to act as a foil for the performance of different identity discourses, and how meanings have accrued over time, inflecting the originally intended symbolism and sometimes (as in the case of Sexwale's re-interpretation) contradicting it.

Specifically, Coombes (2000; 2003) considers a case of re-inscribing meaning not from an African but from an Afrikaner perspective. In June 1995 a new Afrikaans-language porn magazine entitled *Loslyf* was launched with a cover image of 'Dina at the Monument'. The magazine included a photo-shoot of porn model Dina posing in the grassy environs around the

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[26] Andrew Unsworth (1996) reports about the unusual visit: When told that the iron assegaais on the gates actually symbolise the power of Dingane who sought to block the path of civilisation, he [Sexwale] stops. 'No, it was not to be', he muses. 'It was precisely the assegaai at its height that turned the tide. That's why our army was called Umkhonto weSizwe, the spear of the nation. The path of civilisation was not blocked by the spear; in the end it was the spear that opened it up' (Sexwale quoted in Unsworth 1996).

[27] This observation is based on informal talks about monuments with various people, but most specifically on a class discussion (May 2002) among third-year students enrolled in the Cultural and Heritage Tourism programme at the then University of Durban-Westville.

VTM. Coombes argues that this feature represents not simply the usual disrespect of the boundaries between the sacred and the profane common in pornographic literature but 'a more serious critique of the most oppressive version of Afrikaner ethnic absolutism' (2000: 189). Dina, being reportedly related to General Andries Hendrik Potgieter, one of the leading figures of the Great Trek, proudly proclaims her Boer heritage and admiration for her great-great grandfather, Potgieter.[28]

Coombes (2000: 191) concludes that Dina represents a deliberately ambiguous figure, both in terms of gender and ethnic identifications, which disrupts the versions of Afrikaner identity (both male and female) as they are played out in the interior marble frieze and other aspects of the VTM. Dina's subscription to a considerably altered Afrikaner identity and her identification with the monument suggest that the structure carries multiple meanings within a fragmented and transforming post-apartheid Afrikaner community. While Sexwale is a public official who appropriates the VTM for a new political order and the population majority, Dina appropriates the monument to negotiate her own identity and perhaps that of a particular sector of the Afrikaans-speaking community, echoing Luella Chequenton's appropriation of the Kruger statue for herself and (gratuitously) for an unspecified number of 'coloured' descendants.

Such attempts at reworking and inventively adapting the monument's symbolism to the needs of different groupings have been accompanied, over the years, by various rumours and suggestions about possible physical changes, an inclusive re-interpretation of the Hall of Heroes through the addition of new heroes, or even an exhibition on the liberation struggle in the Cenotaph Hall (Kruger and Van Heerden 2005: 254). Pre-empting any possibility of such a 'violation' of Afrikaner sacred ground and preventing the prospect of future government interference, a number of Afrikaner organisations, including the FAK, transformed the VTM and its surrounding nature reserve into a private, non-profit (Section 21) company in 1993, officially named *Voortrekkermonument en Natuurreservaat*, and governed by its own Board of Directors. A recently published information brochure (2006) reads:

> Due to several reasons the VTM lost considerable support during the nineties of the twentieth century, which led the Board of Directors to accept a new management approach and philosophy based on the appointment of a more comprehensive management team in March 2000.

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[28] 'My great great grandfather, Hendrik Potgieter, has been my hero since my childhood. He was the sort of man who inspired people to trek barefoot over the Drakensberg mountains so that us Boere could be free and at peace living here in the Transvaal. If only we could have a leader of his calibre today' (Dina quoted in Coombes 2000: 189-90).

General Major Gert Opperman, formerly a successful military strategist in the South African Defence Force, was employed as CEO of the VTM. He is a multi-talented, well-respected and highly diplomatic man, who makes ample and strategic use of the media to publicly de-stigmatize the VTM and Afrikaner culture more generally. Motivated by both political and economic pressures (the monument now relies on its self-sustainability), the VTM has been repositioned from an ideologically tainted political icon to an important cultural icon in the rainbow-nation spectrum of South Africa's multi-coloured heritages. Lively marketing and fundraising efforts are targeted not only at inviting diverse (paying) audiences to visit, but also controversially at renting out the building and its grounds to host a variety of inclusive cultural activities such as concerts and even a fashion show.

The expansive grounds of the VTM Heritage Site are increasingly being developed into a prominent centre for the preservation of the culture and heritage of white Afrikaans speakers. In 2000 nearby Fort Schanskop, originally built by Paul Kruger to protect Pretoria from British invasion after the 1896 Jameson raid, was purchased from the Pretoria City Council and turned into a museum focused on the history of the South African Anglo-Boer War, whereas the museum at the foot of the VTM itself remained dedicated to the history and culture of the Voortrekkers and the Great Trek. A Garden of Remembrance was created near the monument where members of the community can purchase a final resting place for their cremated remains. Most recently (2008), a new heritage centre, entirely financed with funds raised from private individuals and interest groups, was opened between the Garden of Remembrance and the administration building. The centre houses a well-designed exhibition emphasising the positive contributions of Afrikaners to the country, especially in the economic and cultural spheres during the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Furthermore, archival records are being collected and a Research Trust has been established to concentrate on aspects of Afrikaner history in the broadest sense (Information brochure 2006; Pretorius and Judson, personal communication 2007).

Strategic marketing efforts have succeeded in selling the monument visit to school groups, many of them black, as an educational experience filled with fun and entertainment,[29] while tour operators regularly bring bus loads of curious tourists, especially from foreign countries. Indeed, tourists have emerged as an important new constituency for whose comfort and enjoyment adjustments have been made to the building and the grounds, ranging from improved access for the disabled and the elderly to signs indicating from where to take the best photo (Fourie 1999; Retief 2002). No physical changes have been made, though, to adjust the historical narrative of the

[29] Part of the tour for school children is that they can try on Voortrekker clothes; the black school kids like that very much (Anonymous 2004d).

Great Trek or encourage a different reading of the symbolic meaning of the monument. But the guided tours are now predominantly conducted by black individuals, who theoretically have the power to provide a counter-narrative and 'perform' a critical re-interpretation, perhaps emulating Tokyo Sexwale's precedent.[30] In practice, however, the new narrative may in fact not be so different from the old version, although it is impossible to generalise how different guides vary the scripted tour or how the same guide may spontaneously respond to challenges posed by specific audiences and occasions.

Ironically, as the VTM is becoming more palatable to black communities[31] and the flow of tourists is unabated, conservative Afrikaner individuals and groups keep expressing their outrage and offence at various incidents and activities which to them violate the most sacrosanct symbol of their culture and identity.[32] Opperman and the VTM Trust must walk a tightrope between different constituencies. They know that their strategy of opening up is the only viable option for the future of the VTM, but they also know that the diplomatic accommodation of ultra-conservative sentiments is essential if they are to remain credible as custodians of Afrikaner cultural heritage and its key icon.

New challenges have arisen since the national government approved the construction of the Freedom Park at Salvokop, the hill opposite the VTM, as a national heroes' acre and the country's foremost symbol of an inclusive post-apartheid national identity, as will be discussed in the next chapter. The Voortrekker Monument and Heritage Foundation (*VTM en Erfenisstigting*)

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[30] In the press, one guide, Petrus Maloka, was featured, whose own father had ironically worked as a labourer on the grounds of the VTM for many years during the apartheid era, sometimes taking his young son along. Maloka says that he tries to keep his narrative 'neutral', talking both about Afrikaner and African perspectives. His interpretation of the assegai at the gate appears to incorporate elements of Sexwale's re-interpretation (Anonymous 2004d; Anonymous 2004c).

[31] This is suggested by comments from members of the general public who called in to the SAFM public broadcaster's Tim Modise Show (2002) to share their opinion about the VTM.

[32] For instance, in 2004 an international fashion show hosted in the Cenotaph Hall caused an uproar, in which notably the Afrikaner cultural organisation 'Die Verkennerbeweging' condemned the event as blasphemous and insulting, demanding that the Board of the VTM ask the volk for approval before agreeing to such inappropriate usage of the space. In fact, the organisation called for a new Board to be put in place (Anonymous 2004d). When during the following year the photo of an actress, Michelle Pienaar (from the popular TV-series Egoli) posing on the cenotaph was published in the ATKV magazine *Taalgenoot*, the Board of the VTM condemned the move and demanded an apology (Williamson 2005).

has adopted a cooperative attitude and maintains good relations with the Freedom Park Trust (FPT), while at the same time being fiercely protective of the integrity and independence of the VTM. On 21 June 2006 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by both parties, affirming that

> … [t]he institutions concerned will retain their independence, but as they both represent significant moments in the South African history, it is accepted that visitors to one, should in future be encouraged to also visit the other (Joint media statement 2006).

An existing dirt path between the two sites will in future – this is the plan – be turned into a proper link road, facilitating easy driving across for visitors.

As a logical consequence of the VTM's ongoing efforts at repositioning itself and emphasising its relevance and educational value for all South Africans, the management is now seeking official recognition of the monument's national significance through declaration as a Grade I National Heritage site (Kruger and Van Heerden 2005). Ironically, the VTM was never declared a national monument by the NMC during the apartheid era. While the structure will always remain contested, especially among many black South Africans, the post-apartheid government's counterpart of Freedom Park is likewise contested and perceived as exclusive by many white South Africans, despite the fact that it was conceptualised as an inclusive national symbol in conscious contrast to the exclusive nature of the Afrikaner nationalist VTM. To any foreign observer, the two monuments juxtaposed on opposite hills, separate but equal, inevitably testify to continuing divisions: '*Twee monumente, een nasie*', two monuments – one nation, as a newspaper headlines aptly puts it (Kotzé 2003).

## Conclusion

Coombes (2003: 12) argues that monuments are animated and reanimated through performance or rituals and that the visibility of a monument is 'entirely contingent upon the debates concerning the re-interpretation of history that take place at moments of social and political transition'. In that sense, the VTM is arguably more visible and features more prominently in the public imagination than it has since the time of its inception. Contrary to the common understanding that a monument symbolises very specific sets of values and unalterable historical facts, monuments are in fact containers for a host of meanings which can be activated by individuals and societal groupings in different socio-political contexts. Different facets of meaning may be produced through a call for attention to the monument, e.g. in the context of a public commemorative ritual or a purposeful private visit with friends or family. Meaning production is also activated through a real or perceived threat to or a violation of the integrity of the monument – be it

through vandalism, alteration, removal, or destruction. Such acts of violation will not only increase public visibility, but may make the monument more meaningful and significant to a specific community as a site of highly charged political acts. This applies equally to other culturally constitutive products, such as murals or posters (see James, B. 1999: 292).

In a context where anxieties about the future and questions about identity are projected onto stone structures and bronze objects, monuments can serve as a metaphor of political action. The new post-apartheid government's cautious and conservationist approach towards the existing heritage landscape as a symbolic representation of the previous order mirrors the 'negotiated solution' and peaceful transition of the political landscape. Yet this approach places the representatives of the new order in a quandary. Appeasing and reassuring the white minority and conservative forces must be squared with the necessity of justifying the abstention from a more radical treatment of contentious 'white heritage' to their own, predominantly black constituencies. The pace of transformation is always relative to the vantage point. While some people perceive that their heritage is increasingly being erased, many others – ordinary people, some scholars and public officials purporting to represent the people's needs – lament that the transformation of the memory landscape is proceeding too slowly. Not only would they prefer to see more drastic measures meted out towards the bulk of the monuments thus far left untouched, but many indeed call for a more rapid and fundamental transformation of the actual socio-political landscape.

Although there are signs that the tide is slowly turning towards a more radical dealing with contested aspects of white heritage – notably street and place names, but also perhaps some monuments – the official response to addressing the monumental bias of the past still lies in the construction of new monuments to reflect the values and contributions of the previously marginalized.

# 6

# Defining National Identity with Heritage: The National Legacy Project

Around the time of the first general election, the Presidency and the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology were reportedly flooded with thousands of letters by individuals and organisations concerned about matters of heritage. They expressed a request for official forms of tribute to those who had made sacrifices for the fight against apartheid and encouraged the acknowledgement of significant sites and events reflecting the history and experiences of previously marginalised communities. The GNU understood such broadly shared sentiments as a mandate to make an urgent, high-profile intervention aimed at facilitating the construction of new monuments, memorials and museums, as well as encouraging the re-interpretation of existing commemorative markers and their associated historical narratives. In 1997 the Cabinet adopted the National Legacy Project, developed by the DACST in consultation with social historian Luli Callinicos.

The Legacy Project comprises a selection of nine high-priority heritage developments spread throughout the country, namely 1. the commemoration of the Zulu warriors at the battlefield of Blood River/Ncome near Dundee in KZN; 2. the Monument for the Women of South Africa at the Union Buildings in Pretoria; 3. the inclusive commemoration of the Centenary of the South African Anglo-Boer War; 4. Constitution Hill (the site of the Old Fort and the new Constitutional Court in Johannesburg); 5. the commemoration of Nelson Mandela's home and sites associated with his youth through the Qunu Museum in the Eastern Cape; 6. a memorial to former Mozambican president Samora Machel on the rural site where his plane crashed near the border town of Mbuzini; 7. the Albert Luthuli project focused on the restoration of his home in Groutville, KZN; 8. a Khoe/San heritage route situated mostly in the Western Cape; and 9. the ambitious Freedom Park outside Pretoria.

Drawing its legitimacy both from above and below, i.e. from the 'flood of requests' from grassroots-level and from its endorsement at the highest level

of the democratically elected government, the National Legacy Project appears to truly encapsulate what South Africans value about the past. However, this chapter retraces the genesis of the National Legacy Project based on archival records[1] and illustrates how the popular requests for memorialisation were carefully condensed and channeled into a few high-profile projects. I consider how these projects were selected, what their symbolic significance was perceived to be and how they reflect cornerstones of a newly defined foundation myth. It will become evident that most of the nine components became 'part of the list' not as a result of critical debate, consultation and conscious selection, but rather due to specific circumstances, pragmatic considerations, political compromises and technocratic processes of decision-making. I argue that the assembly of a panel of academics tasked with critical discussion and 'consultation' was largely a token gesture and that a very different memorial landscape could have emerged, had their recommendations been considered seriously. Ultimately the Legacy Project is not necessarily a reflection of what 'the people' value about the past and how they would like to see their heroes memorialised, but a highly institutionalised form of commemoration sponsored and directed by the national government in pursuit of specific aims and intentions.

## Foundation myth of the post-apartheid nation

Contrary to the popular notion that memories inevitably fade, some memories are nurtured and intensify with the passage of time, argues Assmann (2003: 15). This applies for instance to the memory of the Holocaust, which is currently marked by an increased awareness that the living memory (*Erfahrungsgedächtnis*) of those who witnessed the events must not get lost, but must be transferred into cultural memory and passed

[1] This chapter makes extensive use of archival material sourced at the DAC in Pretoria. Although I'm very grateful that the department eventually made these documents available to me after many unsuccessful attempts over several years, it must be noted that department officials have remained very uncooperative. Since so many new monument projects in South Africa are in one way or another endorsed by the DAC, I was keen to obtain the department's official perspective on specific heritage initiatives or official explanations for certain questions or contradictions. Despite numerous attempts, this has remained impossible, because department officials are unwilling to be interviewed or answer questions posed to them in writing. There appears to be a great sense of fear 'to say the wrong thing' and academic research appears to be perceived as a threat, not as an opportunity to assist or improve the government's efforts. Hence in this and other chapters the department's 'voice' is regrettably absent, apart from archival sources.

on to future generations. In South Africa, I argue, it is the memory of resistance against apartheid, colonialism and all forms of racism and oppression that is being transferred into a cultural memory designed to explain 'who we are and where we come from'.

In recent years, scholars have paid much attention to the ways in which images of the past serve to legitimate a present social order and specifically how nations forge a group identity through processes of selective remembering and the invention of usable pasts. '[W]e undoubtedly find narration at the centre of nation: stories of national origins, myths of founding fathers, genealogies of heroes. At the origin of the nation, we find a story of the nation's origin', states Bennington (1990: 121). The search for the foundational moment for the establishment of the self can be found in individuals and in nations alike. It is linked to the notion that every story has a beginning – an idea that is deeply ingrained in our consciousness and imported unnoticed into memory and practices of commemoration (Lambek and Antze 1996: xvii). The story of a nation's origin, the root and basis of its identity, commonly referred to as the 'foundation myth', is publicly represented and preserved through official, institutionalised forms of remembrance, including commemorative monuments and public statuary.

The term foundation myth may appear misleading and can indeed be perceived as offensive to those who identify with the selected narratives and know them to be true. Myth is commonly understood as fiction and beliefs, stories of uncertain truth – the opposite of history, which is popularly associated with objective fact. But history is today widely acknowledged to be a social construct, strongly dependent on power relations, frequently subjective, purpose-driven and containing elements of fiction.[2] Likewise, myth is not something necessarily untrue, but something that is true in a special sense. The fact that a great many people believe in it gives it a contemporary validity (Graham et al. 2000: 18). Roland Barthes' notion of

[2] Internationally such an understanding of history owes much to (and was partly prompted by) Foucault's seminal writings. In the South African context, the constructed nature of historical discourse and the link between history production and power – or as Trouillot (1995) would say, the gap between what happened and what is said to have happened – has been much debated, especially since the late 1980s. In more recent times, the rise of 'heritage studies' has prompted reflection about the nature and purpose of academic history and to what extent history can really claim to be more objective, factual, and disinterested than heritage. In June 2002, the South African Historical Association held a conference on Heritage Creation and Research: The Restructuring of Historical Studies in Southern Africa in Johannesburg, where these issues were extensively debated, followed up at the South African Historical Society's conference in Bloemfontein the following year (see e.g. Kros 2002; Wells 2002; Grundlingh 2002; Allen 2003). On related issues see also Rassool 2001; Minkley and Rassool 1998; Coombes 2003; Callinicos 1986.

myth as 'depoliticised speech' is important for its emphasis on what he describes as 'blissful clarity', the abolition of complexities and contradictions for the sake of rendering the myth pure, innocent, natural and eternally justified.[3]

Most useful for the present study is Assmann's (2003: 76) concept of myth as any past that has been (or is being) fixed and internalised as foundational history – irrespective of whether this past is fictional or factual. For instance, the Holocaust is a historical fact and, as such, the subject of historical research. Beyond that, in modern-day Israel, the Holocaust is the foundational past, or foundation myth, which provides legitimacy and orientation and which is institutionalised through incorporation in school curricula, representation in museums, commemoration in memorials,[4] rituals and public events. In the process of remembrance, says Assmann, myth and history are largely indistinguishable. The foundation myth provides the framework within which selected narratives and their associated artefacts, heroes, and places are embedded, and from which they derive meaning. Monuments and heritage sites are meant to visually represent, officially endorse, preserve and solidify these narratives, although they may not always succeed in doing so. Public monuments, in conjunction with other forms of institutionalized remembrance, are built to control and guide people's perception of the contemporary socio-political order, because the experience of the present is intricately linked with the memory of the past.

Given its colonial origins, arbitrarily drawn borders and racial, ethnic and culturally diverse population, what in fact is the essence and foundation of the South African nation? Chipkin (2007) has recently approached this question from a philosophically grounded angle in his provocatively titled book *Do South Africans Exist?* I want to engage with the issue from the perspective of the state-sponsored memory landscape, especially as it is being enshrined through the Legacy Project. In the current post-apartheid era, the challenge lies in creating a new, inclusive myth of origin or foundational story that can be shared by all and provide the basis of identification with the new nation. Some scholars consider the concept of the

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[3] For Roland Barthes, myth is 'depoliticized speech': 'Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact ... [I]t abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences ... it organises a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth ... [I]t establishes a blissful clarity' (1999 [1973]): 58). It is this blissful clarity – as opposed to the confusing opacity of gradations, ambiguities, and contradictions which tends to characterise historical reality – that arguably attracts people to myth.

[4] For an excellent analysis of the changing representation of the Holocaust in Israeli Holocaust memorials, see Goldman 2006.

'Rainbow Nation', much touted nationally and internationally during the immediate post-election period, as the key foundation myth of the post-apartheid state.[5] The term was first introduced into the South African context by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the 1980s, describing his vision for a new, non-racial state of diverse peoples, bound together by mutual respect and a shared humanity. But the metaphor of the Rainbow Nation is not unique to South Africa[6] and its invocation has lost currency in recent years. Rather, I want to argue that the imaginary of the post-apartheid nation rests on four interrelated foundational pillars: a) the 'meta-narrative' of the struggle for liberation; b) resistance – against apartheid, colonial domination and all forms of disenfranchisement of the marginalised, as well as against negation of their value systems; c) the notion of triumph over oppression; and d) the concept of *ubuntu*, which, broadly speaking, refers to a commonly shared humanity rooted in African values and associated beliefs in a romanticised notion of African 'tradition' as a means to facilitate reconciliation, healing and moral regeneration for the nation.

The language of constant struggle against oppression and humiliation and the centrality in such discourse of resistance and the quest for freedom echoes the Afrikaner nationalist foundation myth. Ultimately these obvious parallels are unremarkable and predictable, as many nations and new social orders describe their origins in roughly similar terms, especially after periods of prolonged conflict. Countless historical precedents show that immersion in and internalisation of dominant cultural ideas and myths prevailing in a particular society invariably contributes to the forging of new myths in a new society.[7] Burke (1989) explains how societies tend to remember in

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5 The Research Group On South Africa at the Université de la Réunion (Reunion Island, France) organised an international conference on 'Foundation myths of the new South Africa' at the University of Reunion Island in March 2003, where South African and international scholars representing different disciplines shared their perspectives on the matter and compared South Africa with other countries.

6 The 'Rainbow Nation' had served as a foundation myth for the island state of Mauritius also, in the 1960s (Boudet 2003), and the Reverend Jesse Jackson introduced the term in the United States in 1984. Jackson, one of the United States' foremost civil rights, religious and political figures, founded the National Rainbow Coalition in 1984. This national social justice organisation, based in Washington, D.C, is devoted to political empowerment, education and changing public policy. Jackson is known for his promotion of inclusiveness across lines of race, culture, class, gender and belief. See www.rainbowpush.org/founder/.

7 Elise Marienstras points out that myth-makers never invent from nothing, as their own culture is invariably immersed in earlier ideas and myths. In the case of the United States, for instance, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin both spoke about old Anglo-Saxon institutions as some kind of ancestors to the new American state (personal communication 2003). Koshar refers to the same example: '[I]n North America … Thomas Jefferson proposed that the seal of the

terms of templates or schemata, where new heroes are often fresh versions of earlier figures in reversals of hierarchies. Key battles fought and traumas sustained by the newly empowered social group mirror those of the previous order.

The centrality of the liberation struggle as the focal point of the post-apartheid society's effort of conscious remembrance is also scarcely surprising when considering the commemorative tradition of other countries on the African continent or indeed throughout the previously colonised world. Newly independent nations tend to engage in highly visible symbolic acts of paying tribute to those who fought for their liberation. Permanent public monuments are often erected to celebrate the attainment of political freedom[8] and museum exhibitions present detailed accounts of the liberation war and its main protagonists. Throughout the decades, many African states have organised the official periodic renewal of the memory of the liberation war through purposefully staged rituals and public 'performances' which often take place at monument sites, as a means of justifying the current socio-political order and endorsing the ruling party as liberators of the people.[9]

Among the most prominent examples is the official politics of remembrance pursued in Zimbabwe and its focal point, Heroes' Acre on the outskirts of Harare, built immediately after independence in 1980 according to a design imported from North Korea. Much has been written about Heroes' Acre as propaganda, as a didactic glorification of the war of liberation and its stalwarts; about its socialist iconography and symbolism; and about the heroic, socialist-realist style of its extensive sculptural artefacts, which are so roughly adapted to the local context that some of the facial features are said to be more Asian than African in character. The liberation struggle is portrayed in highly confrontational and dichotomous terms, drawing on crude stereotypes in terms of which all whites are oppressors, and depicting simplistic black and white, good and evil-type narratives (Anonymous 1986; Arnold 1989; Werbner 1998).

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United States feature not only the children of Israel being led out of the wilderness but the "Saxon chiefs" Hengist and Horsa, who were seen as political ancestors of the American revolutionaries' (2000: 37).

[8] Outstanding examples include the Ghanaian Independence monument in Accra, replete with a gigantic arc de triomphe topped by the five pointed Soviet star, expansive parade grounds and an eternal flame lit by Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first black president; two Uhuru monuments celebrating freedom from colonialism in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi; in the Algerian capital of Algiers, a well-known colonial equestrian statue in a prominent public square was replaced by an abstract Independence monument; both in Zimbabwe and twenty years later in Namibia, large-scale heroes' acres were built outside the capital.

[9] Among many examples the reader may be referred to Larsen (2004) for Kenya; Werbner (1998) for Zimbabwe; or Çelik (1999-2000) for Algeria.

Like most post-colonial African societies, South Africa is preoccupied with the commemoration of the fight for liberation, but no commemorative structure exists in this country that communicates its meaning in similarly aggressive, derogatory and confrontational terms, be they visual or verbal. On the contrary, despite inevitably making frequent reference to the oppressive acts meted out by the apartheid regime or the injustices of colonialism, both the images and the inscriptions in the newly erected post-apartheid monuments tend to be measured and restrained, and carefully considered to avoid giving offense. The notion of triumph and the linear unrolling of a teleological resistance narrative are certainly prominent in the National Legacy Project and other post-apartheid heritage developments, but these monuments do not crudely celebrate the victory of the black majority over its white oppressors. Rather, the Struggle is portrayed as an historic process that ultimately benefited all people. Members of the white minority, it is intimated, can also celebrate the advent of freedom and the achievement of the new democratic order, as they have been liberated from the moral burden of benefitting from racial injustice; from the constraints of living in an environment controlled by principles of social engineering; and from the stigma of belonging to a nation of white oppressors.

Not only can the history of the anti-apartheid movement and more generally the history of resistance against oppression, the fight for human rights, be portrayed as a morally elevated cause, a noble past that constitutes a proud foundation of the new democratic order. More importantly, the meta-narrative of resistance is not limited to the experience of one racial group, but rather shared by individuals from diverse backgrounds, including liberal and progressive whites, who contributed in their various ways, hence allowing for an inclusive identification with a new non-racial, non-sexist, democratic nation. What is more, the focus on a cross-culturally shared history of resistance and the liberation struggle was also meant to overcome the tension between ethnic and national identity, one of the greatest dangers to peace and democracy in newly independent nations, especially in Africa.

The emphasis on a shared past, the participation of all societal groups in the historical processes that shaped this country represents a relatively novel perspective compared to the dominant historiography of the colonial and apartheid eras. The commemorative practices of the previous regime had typically implied that Africans played no significant role in South Africa's history apart from being obstructive in the advancement of 'civilisation'. The motivation for the National Legacy Project and related commemorative initiatives is precisely the desire to define the beginning of a new order, and to express a new national identity and value systems completely different from those endorsed in the past, while simultaneously recasting the role of Africans as agents and positive contributors. Since the need for reconciliation and nation-building requires refraining from establishing national heritage developments that may be perceived as confrontational and

divisive, the emphasis on a shared past is also meant to express continuity with the past and to allow those who identify with that past to share in the celebration of the new nation.

## The National Legacy Project: Constitutive phase

I now want to investigate the constitutive phase of the National Legacy Project and introduce each of the projects that were proposed or adapted. It is important to briefly reflect on each project, including those that do not involve monuments, because the Legacy Project in its entirety provides official guidance to which historical events should be considered foundational moments for the birth of the democratic order, which extraordinary individuals should be respected as national heroes, and which aspects of the past should be conserved for future generations as symbols of the nation and as representations of 'our shared history'.

As the possibilities of symbolic politics inherent in historical events, places or personalities are almost infinite, diverse audiences and stakeholders are likely to differ in their interpretation of the past and their assessment of significance. Hence my introduction of the various projects will primarily be guided by the official documentation produced by or on behalf of the DACST, notably the Legacy Project discussion document, to illustrate what the government found important and memorable about each project. I also want to show how each project celebrates a foundational element or symbolically expresses integral, constituting values of the new nation as conceptualized by the government.

Following Cabinet's adoption of the Memorandum on the establishment of the National Legacy Project on 10 April 1997,[10] the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology approved the proposed composition and terms of reference of the Legacy Committee (11/6/1997), which would be located in the DACST and include representatives of the NMC, the President's Office and other relevant organisations and government departments (notably Education, Public Works and Environmental Affairs and Tourism). Once approved by the Legacy Committee (accountable to the Minister), each individual project was to be guided by a steering committee which would facilitate the implementation of the project and assist with additional fund-raising. The Legacy Project was initially planned to have a life-span of three years and funding was envisaged to come from the public and private sector within South Africa and from abroad.[11]

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[10] Some archival documents alternatively record this date as 4 April 1997 or 14 April 1997.

[11] Proposed Legacy Committee: Legacy Project, Letter Director-General to Minister, 9 June 1997, Ministerial approval 11 June 1997, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 1, file 6/16/7.

On 11 July 1997 the Legacy Committee met for the first time to consider the initial Legacy Project Discussion Document, prepared by the DACST. Apart from setting down key principles of operation, the document included six 'potential legacy projects which have been initiated or mooted', namely 1. Constitution Hill; 2. the Qunu Museum; 3. the Samora Machel Monument; 4. Freedom Square; 5. Freedom Park; and 6. the Centenary of the South African War 1899-1901 (sic).

Constitution Hill is the name chosen for the precinct around the Old Fort in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, which the eleven constitutional judges selected as the preferred site for the new Constitutional Court (officially opened on 21 March 2004). The Old Fort was established in 1893 as a military defence post, but soon began to function as a prison. New buildings were added over time, notably a Women's Prison, an Awaiting Trial building, the 'Native Quarters' and Isolation Wards. The summary of the Old Fort's history in the discussion document emphasises the link between incarceration and apartheid oppression, pointing out that over the decades, hundreds of thousands of prisoners were held here, many of them for contravening apartheid laws such as pass laws and beer brewing regulations. The Old Fort also served as a prison for political prisoners and leader figures of all racial backgrounds, among whom the discussion document mentions Boer generals during and after the Anglo-Boer War, Mahatma Gandhi during the 1913 Passive Resistance Campaign, white workers during the 1922 strike, and various political leaders, including Nelson Mandela at the time of the 1956 Treason Trial (Discussion Document 1997).

Constitution Hill – the 'Robben Island of Jo'burg', as the metro's official publicity department put it (Davie 2002) – is a highly symbolic site with multiple layers of meaning (see also Segal et al. 2006). The Old Fort is now a museum, an almost completely intact artefact of a larger topography of apartheid oppression, testifying to the racial injustice of the past. The new Constitutional Court building, designed by Janina Masojada, Andrew Makin and Paul Wygers, and much celebrated for its unique architectural qualities, has arisen next to it as a symbol of justice and the constitutional principles of the non-racial, democratically elected post-apartheid nation. The court building incorporates structural remnants of the demolished prison buildings and re-uses some of their materials, hence creating a deliberate interweaving of old and new that symbolically reinforces the triumph of freedom over oppression. From the outset Constitution Hill was meant to rise 'out of the ashes of colonialism and apartheid to symbolize a new, democratic South Africa' (Discussion Document 1997: n.p.). Today, the guided tour starts out with narratives of suffering and hardship while visiting the Old Fort and various adjunct prison facilities, all carefully restored, and ends up in a spirit of celebration inside the court with its remarkable design and artistic adornment, which is meant to express inclusiveness, common humanity, and

a truly South African identity through the creative genius of innumerable artists and crafters from throughout the country.[12]

The Qunu Museum, in later documents also called the Nelson Mandela Museum, refers to a project in the small rural village in the Eastern Cape where South Africa's first democratically elected president grew up. Since the publication of Mandela's autobiography *A Long Walk to Freedom* generated much public interest in his early life, his family origins and homestead, the Qunu museum was envisaged as a focal point of tourist interest in South Africa's most famous and internationally admired leader. Being located in a marginalised province much in need of development and tourist attractions, the Qunu museum moreover added to the geographical balance of the National Legacy Project. The museum was intended primarily as a resource centre holding the many gifts, tributes, films and documents produced in Mandela's honour. According to the Discussion Document (1997: n.p.), Qunu was meant to be a national tribute to Nelson Mandela as 'an international symbol for wisdom, reconciliation and statesmanship' and, I would add, as a 'founding father' of the post-apartheid nation. I will engage with the issue of commemorating Nelson Mandela from a different perspective in Chapter Ten.

The Samora Machel project commemorates the site at Mbuzini in the Barberton District, Mpumalanga, where the former president of Mozambique and his closest allies were killed under mysterious circumstances in a plane crash in October 1986. Machel (1933-86) was the socialist revolutionary leader in the Mozambican struggle against Portuguese colonialism and became the first president of the independent nation in 1975. Mozambique subsequently became an important support base for the South African anti-apartheid movement and numerous political activists spent time in exile there. Although an official investigation by the apartheid government at the time cleared the South African security forces of any possible involvement in the plane crash, the incident has remained contested and the post-apartheid government has expressed its commitment to re-opening the investigation.

The DACST discussion document (1997) points out that the Mbuzini valley carries deep historical significance for local communities, hence

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[12] One might add another interesting perspective here, reconnecting to the earlier distinction between monument and memorial. South African professor of law, Jeremy Sarkin, once argued that the new South African constitution is both a monument and a memorial. Monuments, in his understanding, are meant to be affirmative means of celebrating people or events, while memorials are reminders of losses and suffering (paraphrased in Macdonald 2002: 61). The new constitution is a proud monument to new values of equality and human rights, built upon the painful memories of the past and the old constitution, just as the new Constitutional Court is built upon the foundations of the Old Fort.

placing the proposed Samora Machel memorial into a larger cultural landscape. The fact that the rural site lies at the cross-roads of three countries (South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique) adds further to its symbolic value as a reference to the contribution of other African countries to the South African liberation struggle. The Mozambican government was anxious to see an appropriate tribute to their fallen national hero, and in 1996, Mandela himself promised that a memorial would be built to honour President Machel and acknowledge the support of the Mozambican people. The site of the plane crash, which still contains some wreckage, was declared a national monument in 1998 and the memorial, designed by Mozambican architect José Forjaz and consisting of 35 steel pipes symbolizing the lives of those lost in the plane crash, was unveiled there in January 1999. A museum or interpretation centre has recently been added to the site (Anonymous 1999; 2000c; 2001a; Koch 1999; SAHRA file Mbuzini; Discussion document).

The Freedom Square project refers to the commemoration of the place in Kliptown where the Freedom Charter was adopted by the Congress of the People. The fact that the Charter's various clauses had been widely canvassed amongst communities and organisations before the Kliptown meeting gave broad legitimacy to this important document. Although both the document and the process of its adoption remain contested to the present day, the Freedom Charter was ratified a year later, following consultations with various ANC branches. As the Discussion Document (1997) mentions, the political significance of the Freedom Charter, which sets out the vision for a free, democratic, non-racial South Africa, has been compared to Britain's Magna Carta or the United States' Declaration of Independence. Perhaps more importantly, as it constitutes the ideological basis of the present Constitution, the Freedom Charter can be considered a key foundational document of the post-apartheid nation.

Despite the emphasis on unity, one must not forget, as said earlier, that the Freedom Charter was not unanimously adopted and its adoption in fact led to the split between the ANC and the PAC. Most recently, the ANC has split once again with the establishment of the break-away party, the Congress of the People (COPE).bUsing the Freedom Charter as a foundational reference point, the new party portrays itself as the true heir of the 1955 Congress of the People. If COPE manages to become a sustained and substantive factor in the political landscape in South Africa, we will probably see, in due course, a fierce battle to appropriate this key icon of the past, which may manifest itself in a renegotiation of the meaning of the new heritage site in Kliptown.

The fifth project, Freedom Park, was described in the Discussion Document (1997: n.p.) as 'an accessibly situated, multi-disciplinary museum and monument park, representing the triple themes of struggle, democracy and nation-building'. From the outset it was envisaged as a large-scale, central

site of pilgrimage that would include various commemorative components such as art works, plaques, a proposed TRC memorial to the victims of apartheid, a monument to women, and a 'House of Memory' dedicated to oral culture and other aspects of South Africa's rich, intangible heritage. The conceptual evolution and actual implementation of this project will be detailed in the next chapter, but it should be evident that the intention was to build a 'shrine of the nation', an ambitious, comprehensive site that would become a national focal point of memory, a symbolic final resting place for the 'ancestors' of the nation, as well as a site of celebration of the political achievement and cultural diversity that characterises the new nation.

The sixth project was prompted by the impending centenary of the so-called Anglo-Boer War, now renamed the South African War or the South African Anglo-Boer War, which was seen as an opportunity for a critical assessment and inclusive re-interpretation of this important historical conflict. While the war has long played a significant role in the history of South Africa as represented from the perspective of the two opposing white minority groups, and was closely linked to psycho-cultural narratives of identity, especially for Afrikaner communities (Nasson 2004), the impact of this military encounter on the black majority had attracted little attention both in academic scholarship and in the popular imagination. Yet black communities had not only been affected by the devastation of the war but they had also been employed in various capacities by both warring parties. Many black men lost their lives in the conflict and black women suffered and died in British concentration camps just as Boer women did, although certainly not alongside them.

The Discussion Document (1997) envisaged that the National Legacy Project would guide the way in which the Centenary would be commemorated and in the process forge a new interpretation of the war, relevant to the values and principles of the post-apartheid nation. To this effect, new research would be needed 'to remedy the imbalances and omissions of past interpretations of the war' and to ensure that 'the formerly silenced voices … be heard' (ibid.). Commemorations should include multiple perspectives and experiences of the war. Broad public participation would be facilitated through the media. Educational programmes of various kinds were proposed, and the need for linking anniversaries and other commemorative events to the provision of opportunities for capacity-building among a range of people was stressed. In short, this Legacy Project proposal was about an appropriation of the ('white on white') Anglo-Boer war for the black majority, the encouragement of broad identification of all South Africans with one another, and the staging of an inclusive commemoration that would

pre-empt the predictable outcome of narrow sectarian commemorative events that divide and exclude in the spirit of the old order.[13]

## Portfolio of Legacy Projects and Consultation

Towards the end of 1997, the department commissioned DACST consultant, Luli Callinicos, to draw up a discussion document containing a complete portfolio of potential projects to be considered by the Legacy Committee. Without wanting to overstate Callinicos' role in the Legacy Project, it is nevertheless illuminating to consider briefly her academic background and her approach to history. Callinicos belongs to a small group of white academics with a long-standing interest in popular history and a dedication to radical social history, which often challenged the work of orthodox academic historians during the apartheid period. Popular historians tended to research and popularise the history of those sectors of the population marginalised by the ruling classes or within the prevailing socio-political order, and often developed a close relationship with the communities they addressed. Popular history and radical history were understood as alternative history, countering the dominant historical narratives and discourses developed by the ruling groups. Its aim was to examine the origins of prevailing struggles and the structures and power-relations underlying the contemporary socio-political order, drawing on new methodologies and techniques such as the use of personal testimony, experiential and oral history (Callinicos 1986).

Callinicos was a long-time research officer for the History Workshop at the University of Witwaterrand, and her publications strongly focused on the popularisation of worker histories (e.g. Callinicos 1981; 1986a). She was also an activist and a member of the Congress of Democrats in the 1950s and has remained politically well connected. Her most recent publications include *The World that Made Mandela* (Callinicos 2002) and a biography of Oliver Tambo (Callinicos 2004).

Callinicos' 41-page discussion document entitled 'Portfolio of Legacy Projects' represents a detailed, well researched and referenced paper,

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[13] Several war memorials throughout the country were re-dedicated in accordance with the general revision and repositioning of the war itself. For instance, the Rand Regiments Monument in Saxonwold, Johannesburg, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and originally erected in the early 20th century to honour the British victims (the Rand Regiments) of the Anglo-Boer War, was re-dedicated – as articulated in the changed inscription – to the victims of all races. But even prior to this recent rededication, there appears to have been confusion about the meaning of the Rand Regiment's Memorial. As Brink and Krige (1999) point out, it is frequently referred to as the 'War Memorial', reflecting the common notion that this memorial is dedicated to the victims of World Wars I and II.

comprising a total of twenty projects (including the six listed above) clearly aimed at broad inclusiveness. Although most projects related to political memory and histories of oppression and resistance, some were also dedicated to the celebration of the country's vibrant cultural achievements and literary heritage (e.g. 'Our Precolonial Heritage'; 'Dedicated Libraries').[14] But when the Legacy Committee met for the third time (on 18 November 1997), its members considered this impressive document only briefly towards the end of the meeting and did not engage with specific details. Rather it was decided that members of the committee should submit comments in writing by 2 December (the archival record suggests that few seem to have done so), and that the DACST should find 'a credible consultative process involving government and civil society' early in 1998 to obtain critical feedback and constructive input.[15]

To this effect, the DACST organised a colloquium attended by 15 invited academics[16] on 22 January 1998 to generate discussion around the Portfolio

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[14] These projects were titled as follows: 1. Constitution Hill, 2. The TRC Wall of Remembrance, 3. Monument to the San, 4. Our Precolonial Heritage, 5. Great Patriots, 6. Memorial to the Women of South Africa, 7. Monument to the Workers of South Africa, 8. Forced Removals and the Celebration of Restitution, 9. Freedom Square, 10. The Long Walk to Freedom: the Mandela Trail, 11. Cenotaph to the Martyrs who fell in the Armed Struggle, 12. Dedicating Libraries, 13. Historical Turning Points, 14. A History Trail of the Resistance of Slaves in the Cape, 15. In the Footsteps of Gandhi, 16. The Cultural Mapping of War Graves, 17. The Centenary of the 1899-1902 War, 18. New Museums, 19. The Samora Machel Memorial, 20. Freedom Park.

[15] 'Legacy Project Discussion Document', DACST, 1997, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 1, file 6/16/7. Minutes of the 1st meeting of the Legacy Committee on 11/7/1997, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7. Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Legacy Committee on 17/9/1997, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7. Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Legacy Committee on 18/11/1997, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7. 'Portfolio of Legacy Projects', Discussion Document, Prepared for the Legacy Committee, November 1997, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

[16] Jabu Maphalala (University of Zululand), Jeff Guy (University of Natal), Wandile Kuse (UNITRA), Henry Bredekamp (University of Western Cape), Albert Grundlingh (UNISA), Philip Bonner, University of Witwatersrand, Ben Magubane (HSRC), Paul Maylam (Rhodes University), Krish Rancod (Gyane College of Education), Palesa Makhale-Mahlangu (HSRC), Peter Delius, (University of Witwatersrand), Achmat Davids, (NMC), Christopher Saunders, (University of Cape Town), Sean Field, (University of Cape Town), Philip Tobias (University of Witwatersrand), Beki Peterson (University of Witwatersrand). The following apologies were noted: Cherryl Walker (University of Natal), Ciraj Rassoul (University of Western Cape), Colin Bundy (University of Witwatersrand), Bill Nasson (University of Cape Town), Eddie Molaka

of Legacy Projects. Since it appears that few (if any) other consultative processes were pursued, especially with civil society, the academic colloquium constituted the primary forum for critical debate. It should be noted that meanwhile the Legacy Project Steering Committee had already been set up (in January 1998) with fortnightly meetings aimed at discussing progress and proposing strategic actions for the smooth implementation of the existing components of the project. Participants in the academic colloquium discussed the Portfolio document and its twenty projects in terms of their inclusiveness and balance; their interpretation and 'voice'; the appropriateness of the proposed forms of representation; the issue of 'offensive monuments'; and the process of consultation. According to official reports, there were no major criticisms and the concept of the Legacy Project itself was not questioned.[17] Various points made in the Portfolio, however, generated some discussion and members of the panel made a number of suggestions, of which I want to highlight only those most relevant to this study.

Caution was expressed against an over-celebration of the nation state, as reflected especially in the proposed project on 'Great Patriots' and 'Founders of Nations'; the panel recommended a revision of these categories to allow for a more inclusive representation and especially a more accurate reflection of the role played by women. These are important points that overlap with my own critique of post-apartheid heritage and memorialisation, as argued especially in Chapter Eight.

Participants furthermore expressed concern about the use of monuments as the primary mode of representation and proposed that the portfolio emphasise more appropriate forms of commemoration, such as festivals,

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(University of Cape Town), Carolyn Hamilton (University of Witwatersrand), Alpheus Mangezi (Development Bank of Southern Africa), Pallo Jordan (Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism), Andre Odendaal (Robben Island Museum), Ndlunkulu Sigcau (Qawukeni: The Great Place). See appendix A attached to the 'Report on Colloquium on the Portfolio of Legacy Projects held on 22 January, 1998', undated, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

17 'Report on the Colloquium concerning the Portfolio of Legacy Projects', Letter Director-General to Minister, 5 March 1998, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7. In response to this summary, the Minister requested a more detailed document capturing the discussions. This was submitted on 7 May 1998. See 'The Portfolio of Legacy Projects: Report on the Discussions of the Colloquium held on 22 January 1998', Letter Director-General to Minister 7/5/1998, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7. The undated document entitled 'Report on Colloquium on the Portfolio of Legacy Projects held on 22 January, 1998' consists of summarised minutes of the meeting, as well as a list of those who attended the colloquium (DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7).

anniversaries and oral history, in which the community or general public has a direct role to play.[18] This recommendation was a direct response to the problematic issue of community identification and ownership and foreshadowed the more prominent role that has only recently been accorded the official recognition of intangible heritage. The shift towards a more comprehensive understanding of heritage conservation and more diverse forms of preserving memory was in alignment with an international trend bolstered by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This trend strongly influenced the approach of the NHC, which during the few years of its existence has placed much emphasis on promoting local, community-based heritage initiatives that focus on oral memory, rituals, music, and other aspects of intangible heritage (e.g. the Ubuntu Campaign for Nation Building, or the South African Traditional Music Awards) (NHC website 2009). Yet despite the inclusion of some elements of oral memory and community-based activities, the conceptualisation of the National Legacy Project remained firmly structured around monuments and museums in continuation of the established (Eurocentric) tradition.

The members of the academic panel also made a few concrete suggestions for specific commemorative initiatives or the modification of proposed projects. The most significant, in my view, was the installation of a cenotaph for miners (suggested by Jeff Guy in a written submission) in acknowledgement of the tens of thousands of miners who lost their lives underground in South Africa's long history of resource extraction. Indeed, many disused mines are virtual mass graves today, but to my knowledge no such memorial has ever been installed. If the post-apartheid foundation myth had been structured not around the resistance struggle but around the class struggle, in which the exploitation of black labour assumed centre stage, such a memorial might have been imagined as a national site of mourning. Viewed from this perspective, and compared with the commemorative politics of socialist states during the course of the 20th century, it is indeed striking to note how few post-apartheid monuments and memorials acknowledge the specific contribution of workers to the development of the country. This absence is a clear reflection of prevailing political power relations and the economic path South Africa has chosen, in which, for instance, the nationalisation of the mines remains out of the question. One may speculate how a potential shift towards the political Left might in time affect the memorial landscape in this regard.

The academic panel also debated the issue of 'offensive monuments', with one participant suggesting that the offending statues be moved to an

[18] 'The Portfolio of Legacy Projects: Report on the Discussions of the Colloquium held on 22 January 1998', Letter Director-General to Minister, 7 May 1998, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

apartheid museum or dedicated park, while another cautioned against large-scale iconoclastic measures. It was felt that the Legacy Project should somehow address the question of such contested markers. But in the context of the government's compartmentalised approach to heritage matters the Legacy Project was, of course, intended only to identify and appropriately commemorate new leaders and events, while a different process would deal with existing monuments of the previous order. Significantly, participants strongly emphasised the importance of conceptualising each project within a broader historical context and juxtaposing multiple voices around the same event. This would require that proper research, including oral history research, be conducted and that sufficient funds be allocated for this purpose. On the issue of consultation, some academics questioned the composition of the colloquium and it was generally felt that various mechanisms must be used to engage the community and civil society, as well as to foster collaboration between the media, academia and schools.[19]

It is remarkable that virtually none of the findings and recommendations of the panel of academics appear to have been implemented or even seriously considered. The minutes of the fourth and even the fifth meeting of the Legacy Committee (on 14 April and 13 August 1998 respectively) reflect no discussion or even mention of the colloquium and its work on the conceptual document. Instead, at the fourth meeting, the Director General, Roger Jardine, simply informed the Committee about three new legacy projects identified for delivery in 1998, namely the Blood River Commemoration, a Tribute to Chief Albert Luthuli, and the Women's Monument.[20] The first two of these had not been included in the Portfolio document or proposed by the participants in the colloquium (as reflected in existing written documents). Contrary to the panel's recommendation, it was announced that all projects would consist mainly of the building and unveiling of monuments and the Portfolio of Legacy Projects would be reorganised to foreground these priority items, with the NMC reorganising its budget to assist with funding.[21] This obvious side-lining of the academic

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19 'The Portfolio of Legacy Projects: Report on the Discussions of the Colloquium held on 22 January 1998', Letter Director-General to Minister, 7 May 1998, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

20 Minutes of the 4th meeting of the Legacy Committee on 14/4/1998: 8, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 3, file 6/16/7.

21 When the NMC submitted its revised budget for 1998/99 in response to Mtshali's request, 80% of the total budget was earmarked for legacy projects, surveys of cultural sites and the restoration of properties in previously marginalised communities. An unspent amount of R125 000 from the previous financial year was carried over and proposed to be used for the Women's Memorial and the Freedom Square projects. 'The National Monuments Council: Projects Budget 1998/99', Letter Director-General to Minister, Undated, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 3, file 6/16/7.

expertise of historians in the Legacy Project development suggests to me that the 'consultation' was largely a token process.

## Three priority legacy projects

Since the three new projects that Jardine presented to the committee in April 1998 were identified for priority delivery at the highest level of the DACST, I briefly want to consider their significance and their political import. Only the proposed Women's Monument project is rooted in the Portfolio of Legacy Projects Discussion Document (1997: 13). Under the heading 'Memorials to the Women of South Africa', the document seems to have envisaged several markers, presumably at different locations throughout the country. The discussion document refers firstly to a 'statue or monument' commemorating the women's march to the Union Buildings in protest against the extension of the pass laws on 9 August 1956, the day now celebrated as National Women's Day. Secondly it proposes the conversion of the Old Fort's Women's Goal in Johannesburg into a museum dedicated to women's political and social history, acknowledging women's contributions not only to the political struggle, but also to the economy and as custodians of culture and language. Thirdly, it suggests the inclusive re-interpretation of the *Vrouemonument*, the Afrikaner Nationalist monument in Bloemfontein dedicated to Afrikaner women who died in British concentration camps during the South African Anglo-Boer war.

However, the official national Legacy Project in honour of women as it stands today is based only on the commemoration of the 1956 protest march and consists of a monument in Pretoria.[22] This event constitutes the most obvious connection with the political memory of the anti-apartheid struggle, allowing the nation to celebrate women as active participants in political resistance and contributors to the country's liberation, 'founding mothers' or 'midwives' in the birth of the post-apartheid nation. The symbolic significance of the women's march in terms of the value systems promoted by the post-apartheid order furthermore lies in the peaceful nature of the event; in the determination and resilience of ordinary women, many of whom were very poor; and most importantly, in the true show of unity between black, white, Indian and 'coloured' women, hence representing a past model for the present vision of a non-racial society.[23] Chapter Eight will

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[22] The Old Fort's Women's Goal (part of the Constitution Hill legacy project) has been converted into a museum, but not as envisaged in the portfolio document. The Vrouemonument has never been inclusively re-interpreted, although a small exhibition on the suffering of black women was indeed added to the adjacent museum.

[23] The symbolic significance was captured thus: 'The dramatic event of the 9 August, 1956, also celebrates an harmonious and non-racial event, in which

engage in a detailed analysis of this project and critically assess its success in representing 'the women' of South Africa.

The Blood River Commemoration was soon referred to as the Ncome project in reference to the Zulu name of the river and its associated battle (*iMpi yase Ncome*). The famous 1838 battle between advancing Voortrekkers and Zulus over access to the fertile land between the Drakensberg and the coastline had long constituted a foundational moment in the history of the Afrikaner 'nation' – a historical consciousness shaped and passed on through multiple channels, including quasi-religious rituals during annual commemorations on the battle site on 16 December each year. Although the idea of paying tribute to the previously unrepresented fallen Zulu warriors and re-interpreting the conflict from a Zulu perspective related quite narrowly to ethnic history, the wider, national significance of the Ncome project was seen as having the potential to symbolise reconciliation between former enemies. This was a particularly apt symbol because after 1994 the public holiday on 16 December had been renamed the Day of Reconciliation. The impending 160th anniversary of the battle legitimated the prioritisation of this project, but the resultant time pressure arguably compromised the development process of the project and made it vulnerable to the domineering impact of IFP political officials with partisan agendas.

The Albert Luthuli project can be understood as a counterpart to the Ncome project within the politically divided DACST. The Luthuli project was essentially concerned with an official tribute to this remarkable political leader who became an international icon of peaceful leadership in Africa when he was awarded the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize. Chief John Albert Mvumbi Luthuli (1898-1967) was anchored in Zulu tradition and respected as a tribal authority (he was elected as chief in Groutville, north of Durban, in 1935), but as the son of a missionary and having himself been educated at Adams Mission south of Durban, he also embraced Christian and western values. He joined the ANC in 1945, rising through the ranks until he became president of the ANC in 1952. When the government forced him to choose between his chieftaincy and his anti-apartheid political leadership during the same year, he opted for the latter. Despite periods of detention, imprisonment and house arrest, he was crucially involved in various protest actions and resistance campaigns, as well as in the drafting of the Freedom Charter (Appiah and Gates 1999: 1210; Sithole and Mkhize 2000: 69-70).

It is necessary to briefly illuminate the complex and deeply ambivalent Zulu cultural identity discourses and the emergence of conflicting

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occupation, collaboration, cooperation, generosity, determination and remarkable self-discipline were displayed – qualities which continue to have meaning in our democratic society'. Towards a monument for the women of South Africa (project briefing document), Undated, DAC, Women's Memorial, Vol. 4, file 6/16/9, p. 6.

imaginings of African nationalism during the era in which Luthuli grew up to understand the different images that later emerged of this important leader figure. Since the late 19th century, as a result of the intense regional missionary effort, an elite of propertied, Christian African (*kholwa*) intellectuals had emerged in Natal and Zululand. They embraced Victorian Christian values, including an ideology of self-improvement and entrepreneurialism, but nevertheless remained marginalised within British colonial society, as well as largely excluded from the traditional societies of their origin, whose tribalist values they appeared to have renounced. However, during the early 20th century, this Christian, Zulu-speaking intelligentsia began to sympathize with the powerful Zulu ethnic sentiments attached to the memory of an autonomous Zulu nation under the leadership of the Zulu kings, which had broadly emerged as a result of the Bambatha Rebellion (1906-08). Their development of nationalist political models of community aimed at bringing together the world of urban Zulu migrant labourers and farm dwellers with the traditional communities in Natal and Zululand (la Hausse 2000: 1-13).

When the state began to promote the idea of the territorial separation of the races, the Natal Native Congress split into two factions over the issue, between 1912 and 1914. But it is significant for the history of regional African nationalism for decades to come that Zulu intellectuals appropriated the segregationist language of the state to endorse the separatist vision of Zulu chiefs and commoners and to mobilise them against oppressive state legislation. Despite the elite's rediscovery of Zulu ethnicity, black intellectuals of that period (e.g. John Dube) remained tied to the terms of engagement determined by colonial society and partially submitted to white authority, upon which their position was structurally dependent. During this formative period, the *kholwa* elite forged the development of a complex mixture of Zulu ethnic identity, African nationalism and Christian progressivism (la Hausse 2000: 14-17), which must have had a profound influence on Luthuli during his formative years.

Since the time of his death, Luthuli's memory has been appropriated by different political players – the apartheid state, the ANC, the Communist Party and most notably Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and Inkatha – for divergent ideological goals, and his memory remains contested today (Sithole and Mhkize 2000). Luthuli's symbolic significance for the post-apartheid nation as represented by the Luthuli Legacy Project primarily rests on his belief in nonviolent resistance and non-racialism, and his promotion of alliance politics. This image is essentially rooted in representations of Luthuli produced by the ANC after its unbanning in 1990, in the context of peace negotiations with the representatives of the apartheid state and between the ANC and IFP. But in the specific context of regional identity politics in KZN today, it is also significant to remember Buthelezi's strategic appropriation of the Luthuli figure through commemorative functions and

press statements in the 1970s and 1980s. This occurred to mobilise support for his ethnic Zulu political agenda and to bolster the notion of Inkatha as the true successor of the ANC with himself as a leader in the tradition of Luthuli (Sithole and Mkhize 2000; Sithole 2008a).[24]

Today, Buthelezi's and Inkatha's appropriation of Luthuli enjoys little credibility, certainly at national level. Although the Ncome project can conceivably be interpreted as playing into the hands of the IFP and Zulu nationalist forces in its celebration of the Zulu ethnic heritage and identity, allowing for a foregrounding of the Zulus' proud tradition of militarism and resistance, the Luthuli project is unmistakably associated with the ANC and its non-racial, non-ethnic national identity politics. Given the ideological and party-political differences between IFP loyalist Minister Mtshali and DG Roger Jardine as a member of the ANC, the simultaneous addition of the two projects appears to be the result of a political compromise at the very top of the DACST.[25] The fast-tracking of the Ncome project and the repeated postponement of the Luthuli project further testify to the politicised nature of each project in a province fiercely contested between the two parties, but ruled by the IFP. The Luthuli project, which included the restoration of Luthuli's house in Groutville, the construction of an adjacent interpretation centre, a bronze bust on this site and a life-size bronze statue near the city hall in KwaDukuza (Stanger), as well as the posthumous conferring of an honorary doctoral degree in law by the newly merged University of KZN, was completed only in 2004, incidentally the year in which the ANC won the provincial elections in KZN for the first time.

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[24] During the 2nd half of the 1970s Buthelezi first embraced the symbols of the ANC and the figure of Luthuli by painting a picture of the resistance struggle that began with the Zulu kings and continued via the ANC and Luthuli to Inkhata and Buthelezi. After the break with the ANC and its repudiation of Buthelezi and Inkatha as enemies of the oppressed people of South Africa in 1980, Buthelezi was forced to retreat into ethnic Zulu politics and rely on his KwaZulu Bantustan support base. Yet he tried to take the symbolic figure of Luthuli along by monopolising the annual commemoration services for Chief Luthuli and revising his earlier account of struggle history. He now claimed that the year 1960, when the ANC was banned and soon decided to embark on the armed struggle, represented an abrupt break with the principles of its founders, including Luthuli (Sithole and Mkhize 2000: 75-9).

[25] No archival records could be found that shed further light on this decision and despite repeated efforts, the DAC sternly refuses to provide information or engage in any discussion of this issue.

## Finalising the canon

Although the Legacy Project Steering Committee had 'generally endorsed' the Portfolio of Legacy Projects,[26] it was announced at the committee's 4th meeting on 18 March 1998 that

> … in a meeting between the DG and the Minister of DACST, it was decided that the department would not pursue the Portfolio of Legacy Projects, but would concentrate on the following identified projects: Freedom Park Project, Freedom Square Project; Constitution Hill Project; Women's Memorial Project; Samora Machel Project; Albert Luthuli; Centenary of the 1899-1902 War; Blood River Project.[27]

In a Memorandum dated 27 May 1998, the DACST presented Cabinet with an almost identical list comprising seven projects prioritised for implementation in 1998 and the first half of 1999, except that Freedom Square had been replaced by the Nelson Mandela Museum at Qunu. It is interesting that the former was no longer included, because the Legacy Committee kept dealing with this project and it had previously been decided that it would remain part of the Legacy Project portfolio, even if it should eventually be taken over by a local government level.[28] Mention was furthermore made of a number of other legacy projects identified for medium to longer term implementation (although only Constitution Hill was specifically named).[29] Cabinet subsequently proposed an eighth project – on the history of the Khoi-San community – and requested the Minister to submit a detailed schedule reflecting the prioritisation of and projected

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[26] Minutes of the 2nd Legacy Project Steering Committee Meeting held at the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, on 4 February at 12h00, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

[27] Minutes of the 4th Legacy Project Steering Committee Meeting held at the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, on 18 March at 11h30, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

[28] 'First progress report of the Legacy Project of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology for the period ending 17 September 1997', DAC Legacy Committee and General, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7. At the 9th meeting of the Legacy Project Steering Committee on 19 June 1998, concern over the ambiguous status of the Freedom Square project was raised for the first time, as the media had meanwhile reported Cabinet approval for nine projects excluding Freedom Square. Minutes of the 9th Legacy Project Steering Committee Meeting held at the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, on 19 June 998 (sic), at 11h30, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 4, file 6/16/7.

[29] Cabinet Memorandum No. 10 of 1998, prepared by DACST, 27 May 1998, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

financial expenditure on all Legacy Projects (Cabinet Minute of 12 August 1998).[30]

The Khoi-San project must have been inspired by the Portfolio of Legacy Projects discussion document (1997), which includes 'A Monument to the San' in 'acknowledgement of the highly skilled and detailed knowledge of, and respect for, the land, the fauna and flora, by which the San linked the environment to humanity …' (ibid.: 6). The document stresses the uniqueness and non-renewable nature of the San heritage and its relevance to the present and to all South Africans. The proposal envisaged selecting and developing one of the many rock art sites, possibly the Strandberg in the Northern Cape, as a symbolic site dedicated to San rock art and culture. It moreover emphasised the need for broad community consultation and some form of practical, material reparation, including modern services and amenities, because the San are the most neglected section of the country's population, who have furthermore been stereotyped and caricatured, their culture cast as frozen in time.

Today, more than a decade later, the Khoi-San project is the only one of the nine components of the Legacy Project not yet implemented or near completion. One of the key reasons for the long delay in developing even a more concrete project proposal is the fraught issue of community consultation and the difficulties in defining who can legitimately claim to represent the Khoi-San. In a context where impoverished, marginalised people harbour hopes for material benefits emanating from a national heritage project focused on 'their' community, 'belonging' or being seen to belong can become a matter of survival. The link between heritage and the formation of group identity here takes on another dimension. As a result of the fragmentation, diversity and shifting nature of the groups identifying themselves as Khoi-San descendents, it is moreover difficult to reach consensus on how the Khoi-San heritage should be represented. Ultimately, the stakeholders in the Khoi-San project were far less powerful than the stakeholders in any of the other components of the Legacy Project, and therefore unable to ensure a swift materialisation of 'their' project. From this perspective, the Legacy Project and the process of its implementation is also, to some extent, a reflection of existing demographic trends and power relations in the new democratic order.

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[30] The following figures were proposed as estimated total costs for the selected projects: Luthuli Monument: R1,650 000; Samora Machel Monument (phase 1): R 3,000 000; Nelson Mandela Museum (phase 1): R15,150 000; Battle of Blood River: R 3,750 000; Women's Memorial: R1,450 000; Khoi-San Project: R2,600 000; Freedom Park Project (phase 1): R2,950 000; Constitution Hill (phase 1) R2,500 000; Anglo-Boer War commemoration: R2,075 000. Cabinet Memorandum, no number, undated, Prepared by DACST, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 3, file 6/16/7.

By December 1998, these eight projects, plus Constitution Hill as a long-term initiative, had been approved by Cabinet and no more changes or additions were made to the selection after that.[31] Five of the nine final projects are identical with the initial selection of 'potential projects' drawn up by the DACST; one project (Freedom Square) was dropped from the list; two projects (Blood River and Albert Luthuli) were added; and two more projects (Women's memorial and the Khoi-San) were also added, probably inspired by the discussion document on the Portfolio of the Legacy Project. None of the many other proposals presented in the Portfolio document appear to have been seriously considered for incorporation in the Legacy Project, although some may be said to have a degree of overlap with the selected projects.

At its 9th meeting (on 19 June 1998), the Legacy Project Steering Committee discussed how to deal with letters from enthusiastic individuals and organiations who regularly approached the DACST with suggestions and proposals for other commemorative initiatives. Although some of these projects were raised and briefly discussed at the meetings, it was resolved that a standard letter should be sent in reply, explaining that the Cabinet has approved nine projects for delivery in 1998/9 and no mandate has been received by the DG or the Minister to pursue any other projects.[32] In other words, one could say that the government had decided to invest in nine high-profile projects and all other commemorative initiatives emanating from civil society and seeking public funding had either to be aligned with one of the approved projects or be put on hold until such time as a future list of Legacy Projects was drawn up.

After the 2002 split of the DACST, both the National Legacy Committee and the Legacy Project Steering Committee were disbanded and the newly formed Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) appointed a permanent Sub-directorate, headed by a Deputy Director, which was responsible for the planning and evaluation of the Legacy Projects. Steady progress had being made in the construction of most projects since 1998, but overall the duration of the implementation process considerably exceeded the originally envisaged three years. Costs have also far surpassed initial projections, especially for Freedom Park, and although the nation can now be proud of several state-of-the art heritage sites, one might want to reflect on what

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[31] 'The Legacy Project: Progress Report' (for the period ending 1 December 1998), DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

[32] Minutes of the 9th Legacy Project Steering Committee Meeting held at the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, on 19 June 998 (sic), at 11h30, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 4, file 6/16/7.

alternative – perhaps more humble, but truly community-driven – ways of commemorating the past could have been attained with the same resources.[33]

Shepherd and Robins (2008: 118) aptly observe that

> … [i]n the self-mythology of heritage it arises from 'below', spontaneous and decentralized. In practice, it more often comes from 'above', through official projects of memorialization and celebration.

Many archival documents relating to the National Legacy Project contain a brief summary that cites the 'thousands of letters' allegedly sent to the Minister, which officially prompted the development of the Legacy project. Likewise, the comprehensive status report on the National Legacy Project produced by the DAC towards the end of 2002, which recaps the rationale and administrative process of the Legacy Project, is infused with a strong sense of legitimation through recourse to those letters.[34] While these submissions may have provided the first impetus for the plans eventually adopted, I have tried to illustrate that the process of developing heritage projects for the nation increasingly took on a dynamic of its own, one that was entirely propelled from within the government and its sometimes conflicting political forces. Incidentally, I was keen to read exactly what it was that members of the public requested, but no trace of the letters could be found either at the DAC or at the Presidency.

## Proposed New Legacy Projects

Meanwhile, the idea of developing a new list of additional legacy projects had taken hold within the department. By June 2002, the new DAC Directorate: Heritage had developed a tentative list of six proposals for possible inclusion in the National Legacy Project, some of which were already under way and at varying stages of completion. First on the list was a 'Project to Honour Steve Biko'. A bronze statue of Biko (1954-77) had

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[33] The DACST could, for instance, have developed a policy with clear guidelines about proper processes to be followed for the construction of heritage sites and the erection of statues and then provided funds for approved proposals. Such guidelines may have stipulated that a broad public consultation process needs to be conducted; that design and construction need to be developed through competitions or public tender processes; that feedback mechanisms need to be in place to avoid types of memorialisation that clearly offend or alienate some sectors of the population; that a feasibility study and budget need to be attached, etc.

[34] The letters are referred to as 'requests from diverse sources for official approval for the installation of monuments, museums, statues, commemorations of great leaders and historic events' ('The National Legacy Project: Status Report July 1998-October 2002', Department of Arts and Culture, DAC, New Legacy Projects, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7.

already been erected in front of the city hall in East London (Buffalo City) in 1997 in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of his death in detention, a bridge had been renamed in his honour in the same city, and his home in Ginsberg township outside King William's Town had been declared a national monument with a bronze bust set up in front of it. The new Legacy Project on Biko proposed a re-conceptualisation of the 'statue' (i.e. the bust) in King William's Town, as the existing one 'does not adequately reflect the stature of the man'. In addition, it was thought that an interpretive centre should be constructed to document the development of the Black Consciousness movement and the life and work of Steve Biko.[35]

The parallels between this proposal and the Luthuli project are obvious and the proposed Biko project of course constitutes another example of the institutionalisation and 'upgrading' of an existing memory site. But the Biko project may also be interpreted as allaying fears of ANC domination or appropriation and encouraging a more balanced representation of the liberation struggle and its leaders (perhaps in response to criticism) by acknowledging – at the officially declared level of national significance – a prominent leader figure not directly representing the ANC.

This rationale becomes even more poignant with respect to the second proposed project – in honour of Robert Sobukwe – given the common neglect or under-representation of the PAC's contribution to the anti-apartheid movement. The proposed Sobukwe project included the establishment of a statue in his home town of Graaf Reinet in the Eastern Cape, the restoration of both his grave and his family house, as well as the house in which he lived on Robben Island, and the establishment of an interpretive centre detailing the history of the PAC and Sobukwe's life and work, to be set up in his former law office in Galeshewe township outside Kimberley (Sol Plaatje Municipality).

The list of proposals furthermore included a Hall of Fame, for which no details were supplied; the Freedom Square project, which had been dropped from the list of the original Legacy Project but was indeed progressing fast, driven by the province and the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA); the memorialisation of Hector Pieterson, which was similarly nearing completion at that time; and the eMakhosini project in KZN, which concerned the commemoration of a cultural landscape associated with the origins of the Zulu 'nation' and their royal burial site. Spearheaded by Amafa, this heritage site development was well under way and is discussed in Chapter Ten. Echoing Ncome in the original Legacy Project, eMakhosini

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[35] 'Legacy Projects: Proposals for New Legacy Projects', Letter Acting Director-General to Minister, 14/11/2002, DAC, New Legacy Projects, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7. 'Projects to be tabled at MINMEC on Tuesday 11/06/2002: Confirmation of New National Legacy Projects for Cabinet Approval', DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 3, file 6/16/7.

is the only site celebrating a specific ethnically based heritage and identity. Like Ncome it occupies an ambiguous position within the National Legacy Project as it so obviously lends itself to fostering partisan Zulu nationalist values.[36]

By November 2002 this tentative proposal document had been finalised with considerable modifications to a list of six projects, which now read 'Project To Honour Steve Biko', 'Project to Honour Robert Sobukwe', 'eMakhosini Project', 'Liliesleaf Legacy Project', 'Sarah Bartmann Memorial, and the 'Mapungubwe Legacy Project'. Liliesleaf is the name of a farm in Rivonia, Johannesburg, which served as a cover for the headquarters of Operation Mayibuye.[37] It was here that the ANC High Command and leaders of MK were captured in July 1963. Joined by Nelson Mandela, who had been captured in August of the previous year near Howick in Natal, the arrested leaders were charged with sabotage at the Rivonia Trial, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Sarah Bartmann Memorial proposal resulted from the repatriation of the famous KhoiSan woman's bodily remains and the plaster cast of her physique from the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. According to renowned palaeo-anthropologist, Philip Tobias, who initiated and tirelessly pursued the repatriation issue with the French authorities over a period of several years, Sarah Bartmann (or Saartjie Baartman) was born in 1789 near the Gamtoos River in what was then called British Caffraria and is now part of the Eastern Cape Province, but she grew up in Cape Town (Memorandum on Saartjie Baartman 2001). By 1810 Bartmann was working as a servant on a farm, when the farmer's brother, Hendrik Cezar, much impressed by some features of her anatomy, persuaded her to go to England for the purpose of publicly exhibiting herself against payment. Although in a subsequent court case in England Bartmann declared that she had voluntarily entered into this deal, the degree to which she had freedom of choice in the matter has been disputed.

Known as the 'Hottentot Venus', Bartmann had to parade naked and perform 'tricks' in front of curious paying audiences both in England and later in France (from the middle of 1814), who were particularly fascinated by her buttocks and genitalia. She was featured in numerous cartoons (many of which satirised the spectators) and quickly became the object of medical and scientific attention. Following Bartmann's premature death from illness

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[36] 'Projects to be tabled at MINMEC on Tuesday 11/06/2002: Confirmation of New National Legacy Projects for Cabinet Approval', DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 3, file 6/16/7.

[37] Operation Mayibuye, which had not been universally accepted by the time the ANC High command was arrested, refers to a proposed plan of action for a full-scale revolutionary civil war, possibly with the assistance of the Soviet Union (SADET 2004: 137ff.).

in 1816, Georges Baron Cuvier obtained permission to dissect her corpse. He first produced a complete body cast in wax, from which an authentic reconstruction of her body could later be produced. This was preserved in the Musée de l'Homme until recently, along with her skeleton and some of her remains (notably the brain and genitalia) conserved in glass jars.

While the bottled organs seem to have disappeared, the skeleton and the body cast were repatriated to South Africa in May 2002, where they were officially handed over to the South African Government, rather than any particular community who might gain political advantage from the possession of these highly symbolic remains. In this way the DAC became charged with responsibility for the dignified interment of Sarah Bartmann, which occurred on 9 August (Women's Day) 2002 at Hankey in the Eastern Cape, a site chosen for its proximity to her place of birth. A memorial in her honour was to be erected in Cape Town during the 2003/04 financial year, but this has not yet materialized.[38]

The memorialisation of Sarah Bartmann could have been considered part of the original KhoeSan Legacy Project, but its inclusion as a separate proposal in the portfolio of new Legacy Projects may have been motivated by her symbolic significance and iconic status. In the figure of Sarah Bartmann the unspeakable humiliation, exploitation and suffering inflicted upon the indigenous population through colonialism is given a personal face. She can be interpreted as the epitome of the innocent, helpless victim of the racist ideological discourses of her time, the precursor of countless victims of colonial and apartheid-era humiliation who suffered like her until the end of the apartheid era. The 'bringing home' of Sarah Bartmann and her dignified 'burial', in which appropriate KhoiSan rituals were performed, were highly emotional events for specific communities.[39] Beyond that, the initiative represents an official act of acknowledgment of the suffering and contributions of the marginalised KhoiSan community – the post-apartheid government's show of respect for South Africa's 'first nation' in a context often marked by community resentment over the perceived prioritisation of the needs of Africans. The symbolic import and high visibility of the Sarah Bartmann project was also an important gesture in view of the embarrassment over the long delays faced with the implementation of the orginal KhoiSan Legacy Project.

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[38] 'Sarah Bartmann Project: Invitation to President T Mbeki to deliver the keynote address during the ceremony to inter the remains of Sarah Bartmann scheduled for 9 August 2002', Letter DG to Minister, 31/7/2002, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 5, File 6/16/7; see also Bauer 2002; Barbier 2004.

[39] One might question, however, to what extent KhoiSan communities indeed consider the process of laying Sarah Bartmann's spirit to rest as completed, especially given the fact that the brain was never repatriated and buried.

The last project to be considered here is the archaeological site of Mapungubwe in the Shashe-Limpopo basin, which UNESCO declared a World Heritage site in 2003. In addition to Early, Middle and Late Stone Age artefacts, Mapungubwe testifies to the existence of pre-colonial African civilisations in the region, dating back to the period AD900-1300. Between 1220 and 1300 Mapungube was the capital of a Middle Iron Age society characterised by sacred leadership and distinct social classes. It contained a stone-walled palace for the king and his entourage on a hill site with an adjacent town below (Huffman 2005: 7).[40] This previously neglected, indeed invalidated history has now been recovered and is proudly presented as one of the roots of the South African nation. It is a powerful refutation of older historical discourses that vested the notion of civilisation exclusively in the white settler community and credited 'the white man' as the sole producer of science, technology and progress. The DAC proposal document sees further significance in the site, when it states that '[t]he history of Mapungubwe and the civilization it exhibits typifies what Africa could achieve this century, through NEPAD' (i.e. the New Partnership for Africa's Development), hence linking the celebration of a chosen past to the chosen path of the present and the envisaged future of the nation and the African continent.

The Minister seems to have approved of all of the six projects on the list, as the DAC developed a comprehensive document detailing the 'Process towards the development of conceptual framework documents for each project', in which key stakeholders were identified, and the status quo and proposed further development sketched out.[41] All six projects, plus an additional one referred to as the Matola project, are included in the DAC's Strategic Plan 2007-2010 under the heading 'Legacy Project (new)'. However, Cabinet has not at the time of writing yet approved of the New Legacy Project.

## Conclusion

When comparing the components of the proposed new Legacy Project with the original set, it is evident that there is an even stronger emphasis on leader

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[40] Three distinct Middle Iron Age settlements have been identified in the region. The first capital was at a site called Schroda and is dated AD900-1000, the second is K2 (AD1000-1220) and the third Mapungubwe, which in turn was the forerunner of the well-known Great Zimbabwe civilization.

[41] 'New Portfolio of Legacy Projects: Process towards the Development of Conceptual Framework Documents for Each Project: Initial Key Stakeholders Consultation Process', DAC, New Legacy Projects, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7. 'Legacy Projects: Proposals for New Legacy Projects', Letter Acting Director-General to Minister, 14/11/2002, DAC, New Legacy Projects, no Vol. #, file 6/16/7.

figures and on the memorialisation of extraordinary individuals, as opposed to collectively shared experiences. Despite the explicit concerns of the academic panel about nationalism and an emphasis on great patriots, the notion of identifying heroes and celebrating implicit 'founders of the nation' plays an increasingly prominent role not only in the Legacy Project, but also in the wider post-apartheid commemorative effort as it has been unfolding over the past years. This is evidenced not least in the flourishing production of bronze statues and busts, mostly in honour of African male leader figures.

Participants in the colloquium had also cautioned against the use of monuments as the primary mode of representation, 'especially in light of the fact that the existing heritage sector has not yet been transformed'.[42] This point – along with virtually all points of critical but constructive feedback raised by the panel of experts – was largely ignored. Almost all of the components of the Legacy Project now involve monuments, museums and bronze statues, furthermore often rendered in highly conventional, Eurocentric style or fashioned along the lines of international trends in memorial design.

As I will explain in Chapter Nine, I certainly do not concur with scholars who advocate a 'moratorium' on the installation of monuments and who tend to summarily disparage monuments and statues as an inappropriate medium of memorialisation in a post-apartheid context. However, given the enormous financial investment in the Legacy Project, I maintain that this initiative represents a lost opportunity for the development of more unique, creative alternatives not necessarily involving buildings and sculptures. Although some projects do include performative modes of commemoration, notably community-based anniversary celebrations, as recommended by the colloquium, on the whole the Legacy Project misses the opportunity to explore intangible forms of heritage more firmly rooted in local cultural traditions and memory practices. Not only is the conservation of intangible heritage specifically called for in the NHRA and affirmed by international trends, but it is arguably much more meaningful to communities because it is genuinely rooted in their traditions and customs.

Given its multifaceted nature, geographical spread and aims of broad inclusivity, the National Legacy Project constitutes a state-directed strategic attempt at addressing the imbalance of the South African heritage landscape and countering the exclusiveness of existing monuments. Some may appreciate the project as a decisive political tool for the purpose of inspiring the nation and fostering social cohesion, reconciliation, nation-building, community development and other national policy goals. Others may argue that through the Legacy Project – organised, financed and professionally

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[42] 'The Portfolio of Legacy Projects: Report on the Discussions of the Colloquium held on 22 January 1998', Letter Director-General to Minister, 5 March 1998, p. 3, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7.

implemented – the government has helped 'the people' see 'their' heritage represented. They might see the agents of the state primarily as acting on behalf of and mandated by impoverished communities who lack the experience and professional capacity for self-initiative due to decades of marginalisation.

But others will be more inclined to agree with Shepherd's provocative assessment of the nature of heritage in post-apartheid South Africa, which is that it claims to be available and accessible to all, but in fact tends to be managed and controlled by highly bureaucratic structures and agencies which – he argues – are moreover largely unaccountable (2008: 118). The government's decision to invest in the Legacy Project has turned the state into the main promulgator and interpreter of history. Although communities and key stakeholders were consulted and to some extent participated in the implementation phase of each project, it was the government that made the principle decisions about what is most significant and how the past should be remembered. The Legacy Project and the prominent role of the state arguably stifled the emergence of a more broadly based, community-driven approach to memorialisation, which might have resulted in a much more diverse, albeit probably less ambitious, landscape of memory, and especially a far broader range of perspectives on history.

The increased involvement of the state in the shaping of 'public history' and the government's encroachment and restructuring of public space through symbolic interventions and the strategic usage of heritage for the purpose of political and societal policy goals have sparked much debate in South Africa, especially within the field of academic history. Historians lament the decreasing role of critical scholarship and the academic study of history in the face of the persistent trend towards political appropriation and endorsement of selected historical narratives, their absorption into the realm of 'public history' and their commodification and sometimes outright commercialisation by the growing 'heritage industry' (Nuttall and Wright 2000; see footnote 1). Drawing on Alessandro Triulzi, Ranger suggests that the prominent role of the state in interpreting, representing and memorialising the past represents a wider trend in Africa.[43] Professional historians are often side-lined in this process, in fact sometimes dismissed as public agitators, and many aspects of history are invariably marginalised or neglected, e.g. 'trade-union history, the history of the towns, the historical

[43] With reference to examples from north-east and southern Africa, Triulzi argues that 'public history in many parts of Africa has largely overcome academic explorations of the past, while its strongest ally, an ill-defined "public memory", under the guise of state rituals and public memorialisation of past events, has come to dominate the public arena filling the fluid space which exists between memory and history with a disturbing asphalt-like cover of enduring cement' (Triulzi quoted in Ranger 2007: 258).

experience of women, religious history, and the history of the ambiguities of colonialism and of African response' (Ranger 2007: 257).

If one analyses the historical content of the various components of the National Legacy Project, including the proposed new list of projects, an overwhelming emphasis on recent political history is immediately evident. The vast majority of the projects relates to events and leader figures of the anti-apartheid struggle or the broader history of anti-colonial resistance, which constitute a key aspect of the foundation myth of the post-apartheid state. Although most new heritage initiatives contain depressing memories of oppression, loss and humiliation, their overall 'message' or morale is always one of victory or triumph over suffering, allowing South Africans to be cast, not as a sorrowing nation of victims, but as a proud, brave people whose courageous fight for justice and human rights can indeed serve the world as a role model. Although unconventional and innovative in some respects, the National Legacy Project remains firmly tied to an established nationalistic tradition of creating physical spaces, memory sites, where a new national identity is intended to be forged and a re-orientation of personal values is intended to take place.

# 7

# Freedom Park as National Site of Identification

Freedom Park was conceptualized as the most important, ambitious and financially well-endowed element of the National Legacy Project. Purpose-built for the nation and for international visitors, it is intended to become the symbolic focal point of the post-apartheid nation and an instrument of nation-building by fostering reconciliation and an inclusive, non-racial national identity. Freedom Park has variously been referred to as 'a leading national and international icon of humanity and freedom',[1] a 'people's shrine', and 'a place of pilgrimage and inspiration, a message from Africa and South Africa to the world, of suffering and the triumph of the human spirit', but also in more mundane (and rather tourist-oriented) terms as 'a one-stop heritage precinct' and a 'technologically advanced and interactive wonder of South Africa's heritage industry'.[2]

Freedom Park was inspired by the concept of the national heroes' acre, with important precedents in neighbouring countries (especially Zimbabwe), socialist societies and the postcolonial world. These are in turn rooted in the tradition of the national monument, as it was popularised during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Western Europe, accompanying and consolidating the emergence of the nation state. But Freedom Park is also different from these (usually unacknowledged) models in important ways, as this chapter will show. Freedom Park combines two strands discussed in previous chapters, namely the concern for the mourning of victims and the attainment of healing on the one hand, and the representation of the country's rich tapestry of diverse heritages and the celebration of the contributions and achievements of iconic leader figures on the other. In

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1 The official vision of Freedom Park as reflected in all brochures, newsletters and on the website.

2 These descriptions were sourced from the official Freedom Park website in 2003 (www.freedompark.co.za), which has since been changed, but similar phrases can also be found in various brochures and leaflets produced by the FPT over the past years.

terms of the monument-memorial conundrum discussed earlier, one might say Freedom Park qualifies as a combination of the two.

Although the government always envisaged Freedom Park as an inclusive symbol of identification for all South Africans, the latter have been slow to embrace the site, and controversies have consistently accompanied the process of the park's conceptualisation and construction. As was to be expected, the more the physical molding of Freedom Park progresses and tangible elements such as buildings and lists of names begin to take shape, the more concretely does critique manifest itself. The FPT, charged with conceptualising the project and overseeing its implementation, tends to react defensively to criticism. However, I suggest that such contestation is a natural and not necessarily unhealthy manifestation of the fragmentation and ideological fissures within present-day South African society.

The concept of the Freedom Park and the process of its implementation, including its associated challenges and inherent contradictions, is a synecdoche of the larger project of public memorialisation in post-apartheid South Africa, providing insight into how the state envisages the imaginary of the nation and how communities negotiate their role within that nation. Parallelling the National Legacy Project, the exhibitions in the museum at Freedom Park will probably place strong emphasis on the shared participation of all populations in South Africa's history, but since the museum is still under construction at the time of writing, judgement must be reserved for future research. What can be assessed at the present moment is Freedom Park's second key function, the commemoration of the dead. In this respect I will especially focus on some of the problems and tensions associated with the selection of victims and 'heroes' for memorialisation, and their implicit linking with the nation's myth of origin.

Ultimately Freedom Park is being built to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of 'the people' from colonial and apartheid oppression, the 'founding fathers' of the new post-apartheid nation. But in order to be credible as a national symbol and inclusive site of identification in the prevailing post-apartheid South African context, Freedom Park also has to signal continuity with the past and recognition of newly marginalised populations by respecting their heritage and especially the dead they cherish. Comparable heroes' acres in the region are unambiguously devoted to honouring the victims and celebrating the triumphs of the anti-colonial liberation struggle. They are confident, often confrontational and radical symbols of a new beginning. Freedom Park, on the contrary, acknowledges the historical struggles (their victims and heroes) of different populations in South Africa's long, divisive past, along with the liberation struggle, even if these wars were fought with conflicting interests. It is this inclusiveness that makes Freedom Park unique, but it also constitutes the root of its contradictions.

## Early conceptualisation

The idea of a heroes' acre as a national site of identification with the post-apartheid state and especially a place of honour for those who died in the course of the liberation struggle probably existed early on in the minds of the new political elite, not least inspired by the Zimbabwean Heroes' Acre at Harare and various types of independence monuments erected by postcolonial states in Africa and elsewhere. In fact, in its early stages the Freedom Park project was referred to as a heroes' acre, and although no actual graves are contained there (unlike the situation in Harare), in essence the Freedom Park is a symbolic resting place for freedom fighters (broadly defined) and all South Africans, 'ancestors' of the nation, who are deemed as deserving of such an honour.

The historical precedent for the concept of a National Heroes Monument in modern history is the French Pantheon, the former church of St. Geneviève in Paris, which was transformed into a hall of heroes of the post-revolution French nation in 1791. Following this model, Bavaria's King Ludwig I created a similar site for German heroes, the Walhalla, near Regensburg in 1842 (Koshar 2000: 22). Similar initiatives followed in other countries, and later in the newly formed post-colonial 'nations' of the formerly colonised world. The establishment of a national heroes' acre is usually motivated by the perceived need to enhance national loyalties and to bolster the idea of the nation, especially where that nation state has only recently been established or substantially been redefined. The selection of heroes to be included in such a prestigious official site of public commemoration is invariably a reflection of the contemporary imagining of the nation.

The Freedom Park project was officially launched on 1 June 2000, when the Trustees of the Freedom Park met for the first time in the Presidential Guest House in Pretoria in the presence of media representatives.[3] By the end of that year, Luli Callinicos had drafted a nine-page Position Paper, which outlined a basic concept of the park, listed a long series of possible components, and discussed the feasibility and various logistical aspects of the ambitious development (henceforth cited as Position Paper 2000).[4] This comprehensive and considered discussion document was meant to enable the DACST to develop a business plan for the Freedom Park initiative. Although

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[3] The Minutes of this meeting list as trustees the following names (sic): Dr R Fox (architect), Ms L Callinicos (historian), Ms B Masekela (historian), Adv. Moseneke (business), Dr W Serote (portfolio committee chair), R. Jardine (business); chair: J. Modise. 'Draft. Meeting of the Trustees of Freedom Park. 1 June 2000; 09:30-13:30. The Presidential Guest House', DAC, Freedom Park Project, Vol. 6, file 6/16/4.

[4] 'Position Paper: Freedom Park', DAC, Freedom Park Project, Vol. 8, file 6/16/4.

the concept of the site has changed considerably over the past years, many of its basic elements remain rooted in this initial proposal.

The concept as set out in the initial discussion document was structured around three interactive themes, namely Struggle, Democracy and Nation-building, associated with the past, the present and the future respectively. The struggle for liberation was understood in a broad historical perspective to begin with 'the earliest 17th century Khoi and slave uprisings' (Position Paper 2000: 2) and to include various wars of colonial resistance, as well as the armed struggle against apartheid. The section on Democracy refers to processes of reconciliation, reconstruction and development which are reflected 'through our icons' and the way South Africa represents itself to the world. It argues that the South African narrative has captured the imagination of the world and the way South Africa realises its democratic vision has become a universal case study for other multi-cultural societies (notably the United States and the United Kingdom). South Africa hence has an important role to play internationally and Freedom Park with its multifaceted 'portraits, representations, commemorations, performances and festivals' (ibid.) should become a focal point and exemplar of a truly democratic site of representation through processes of consultation.

The section on Nation-Building is particularly interesting. It deals with the conceptualisation of a national consciousness, which 'is not a "given", or handed down from above' (ibid.), but which will emerge only over time in a process that will and must include contestation and debate.

> It will be important to include the debates and contradictions that occur in the process of exploring concepts related to nation-building in a multi-cultural society. The presentations in Freedom Park should communicate the important point that there is never 'closure' in exploring the exciting yet difficult challenges and possibilities inherent in the concepts and process of nation-building (ibid.).

As will become evident below, this is one of the key challenges the FPT is currently facing. Despite its strong emphasis on diversity, inclusiveness and non-sectarianism, and the Trust's determination that this will be a site where all South Africans can find their heritage represented and where multiple voices and narratives can be found, the Position Paper also states that 'ultimately, the ambit of Freedom Park should be the unfolding of one coherent story' (2000: 7).

The FPT officially began its operations in April 2001 with Dr Wally Mongane Serote as CEO. Serote is internationally renowned as an award-winning poet and novelist (*To Every Birth its Blood*) and a long-standing political activist dedicated to the anti-apartheid struggle. He was born in 1944 in Sophiatown, Johannesburg and grew up in Alexandra, Lesotho, and Soweto. During this final high school years in Soweto he was strongly

influenced by Black Consciousness and wrote poems about black identity, revolt and resistance. He has always championed the need for self-expression among the oppressed people and one might link this to his concern about asserting the 'African voice' in the development of Freedom Park today.

Serote also has a deep personal bond with the experiences of the countless anti-apartheid activists whom the Freedom Park project is meant to acknowledge. He was arrested under the Terrorism Act in 1969 and held in solitary confinement for nine months, after which he went to live in exile. He obtained a Fine Arts degree from Columbia University in New York and later worked for the ANC in Botswana and London. His role in assisting the liberation of South Africa was recognised at the highest level when Thabo Mbeki honoured him with the Order of Ikhamanga, a national medal awarded by the President of South Africa. During the immediate post-apartheid period, Serote served as chair of the parliamentary select committee for arts and culture, before becoming involved in the Freedom Park project. He has recently been reported as having been called upon to become a traditional healer (Mokae 2007; Wikipedia website, Serote).

The concept for the Freedom Park project gradually began to take shape during the course of the years with Serote at the helm, but it was also the developments on the opposite hill that influenced the decision-making processes of the FPT. The idea of establishing a relationship with the VTM, ideologically 'countering' it but also metaphorically and to some extent physically connecting with it as a symbol of reconciliation, was not much evident in the early stages of the conceptualisation of Freedom Park, but emerged as an increasingly important imperative.[5]

## The symbolism of the site

Following an initial search for a suitable site and consideration of various options, the FPT decided on Salvokop, a hill on the southwestern outskirts of Pretoria, similar in size and shape and in close proximity to the hill occupied by the VTM. The main reason for the choice of this location – according to

[5] Oblique references in the FPT documentation – i.e. minutes of board meetings, jury reports etc. – suggest that the need to respond to the VTM, and in some ways contrast with it, had an important, albeit perhaps subconscious, influence on the visual appearance of Freedom Park. Consider for instance the recommendation that a specific contemplative space should be created along the Spiral Pathway 'in the western facing grassland area near the axis to the Voortrekker monument' (Document 7: 7). The brief for the 2nd stage of the competition, it was decided, should emphasize that the sightline with the Paul Kruger monument in Pretoria was not as important as the Union Building and Voortrekker Monument axis (Document 12: 2).

the Minutes of the June 2000 meeting – was its visibility,[6] but I believe that the site's opportunities in terms of establishing a counterpart to the VTM must have played at least a subconscious role.

A site on top of a hill and close to the national capital or some other location of national significance is of course also the most conventional and time-honoured solution for any national monument or heroes' acre, thus linking Freedom Park to a long international commemorative tradition. I will engage in the next chapter with such imitation of established and usually Eurocentric models, often disparaged by critical observers. Furthermore, Salvokop is both well accessible (i.e. conveniently close to the political capital and the largest metropolitan centre) and remote. Isolation, remoteness, or peripherality are important prerequisites for symbolically charged sites, argues Hetherington (1998), emphasising their liminal status and allowing 'pilgrims' to reorder their values or contemplate their identity.

Hetherington maintains that identity politics is always also a spatial politics. Identity is achieved not only through identification with groups who share common values and goals, but also through the performance of recognisable repertoires, such as ritual processes and pilgrimages, and through the adoption or creation of significant spaces in which identity is constituted and expressed (1998: 17-18). Such spaces 'are not merely places where like-minded people congregate but symbolic centres around which the values and practices associated with an identity position are performed' (1998: 106-7). In a similar vein, Hecht (2005) shows how sacred places can become powerful symbolic focal points in the building of a nation. New nations, he argues, virtually 'need' such a sacred place and if none presents itself naturally, a site can be sanctified or constructed as sacred.

Freedom Park is actively *being made* into a symbolic centre, the foremost 'shrine of the nation'. Since its selection as the site for Freedom Park, the entire hill has acquired a distinct aura, and is treated and promoted as hallowed ground, paralleling Afrikaner nationalists' attitude towards the grounds of the VTM and the battlefield of Blood River. Salvokop was historically also known as Bron Koppie, Railway Hill, Signal Hill or Time Ball hill, testifying to different uses and connotations associated with this landmark over time and for different communities. At the apex of the hill were the sparse remains of Fort Tullichewan (commonly known as Fort Tully), one of several examples of Boer fortifications in the Pretoria area, dating from the First War of Independence (1880-81) (Tomlinson 1985). As the minutes of the June 2000 meeting show, the FPT was keen to change the name of the hill, and despite the initial plans to preserve the architectural traces of the old Boer fort (as theoretically required by conservation legislation), these were soon eliminated in the process of building Freedom

[6] 'Draft. Meeting of the Trustees of Freedom Park. 1 June 2000; 09:30-13:30. The Presidential Guest House', DAC, Freedom Park Project, Vol. 6, file 6/16/4.

Park. One might interpret these moves as an attempt to erase the layered history of the chosen site, to clean up its 'contamination' with historical traces testifying to a chequered past, in order to create a pristine place for a 'pure' development where the intended symbolic meaning can unfold unencumbered.

## Design and Consultation

Reflecting the ambition and prestige associated with the Freedom Park project, an international architectural design competition was held during the second half of 2002, drawing roughly one hundred entries by architects from all over the world. By April 2003 the first phase of the international architectural competition had been adjudicated and five finalists had been selected to advance to the second stage.[7] Most of the entries submitted had proposed western or international style commemorative models, some drawing on recognisable iconic imagery to establish African references (notably the familiar conical tower of the Great Zimbabwe archaeological ruins). The FPT's decision that none of these schemes was suitable for implementation was groundbreaking. The second phase of the adjudication process, completed in July 2003, consisted of merely selecting three ultimate winners who received a prize but no contract.[8] They were OBRA Architects (Pablo Castro) from New York; Peter To Tai Fai from Hong Kong; and the Lebanese team of Vladimir Djurovic as landscape architect with architect Imad Gemayel (Fox 2004; O'Toole 2004; FPT document 16 2003).

The FPT then focused on the development of a suitable structure in a gradual design process which would evolve in negotiation between key members of the Trust and selected local architectural firms.[9] In other words,

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[7] According to the FPT documentation (Document 3), the Jury met from 22 to 26 April 2003 and consisted of the following persons: Dr Wally Serote (Freedom Park CEO); Ms. Barbara Masekela (Freedom Park Deputy Chair); Mr. Revel Fox (Freedom Park Board Member); Dr. Bademli (UIA Representative); Prof. Max Bond; Mr. Jordi Farrando; Mr. Femi Majekodunmi. The Deputy Jury consisted of: Prof. Julian Beinart; Mr. Mphethi Morojele; Mr. James Ngobeni; Mr. Gerrit Burger (UIA Representative).

[8] The jury met on 17 July, and jury reports were completed on 20 July. 'During the process of adjudication the Jury permeated what in its estimation were the three best schemes. While each of these proposals has very positive qualities none of the schemes fulfilled the Jury's expectations that if constructed as presented it would satisfy the expectations and requirements of the FPT nor would it become what the President has described as "the most ambitious heritage project to be undertaken by the new democratic government". As a consequence the Jury decided that no first prize should be awarded' (Document 16: 2).

[9] The architectural structures are being designed by Mashabane Rose Associates, Mpheti Morejele and GAPP Architects and Urban Designers. A premier source

the prestige and status associated with the product of a world-class architectural firm was forfeited in favour of a home-grown design informed by the specific South African context and rooted in local traditions. Most importantly, the FPT maintains that the design was informed by the input obtained through an extensive consultation process with various stakeholders and communities. In total, 21 sectors of the nation, including the youth, women, traditional healers, faith-based organisations, representatives of the different racial groups, labour, and veterans' organisations from both sides of the former political divide were engaged in workshops conducted throughout the country over a period of several years. Ramzie Abrahams, the Heritage Manager of the Freedom Park since 2006, emphasises that both the overall concept of the Freedom Park and the design of its individual elements evolved organically over the years as a result of these workshops (Abrahams, personal communication 2008).

Public consultation processes also involved nation-wide surveys to canvass public opinion about the Freedom Park concept, determine what core values South Africans associated with the site, and what they expected to experience there. One of these surveys, conducted in 2001, was based on qualitative fieldwork research among predominantly black urban-based members of various organisations covering a range of different societal sectors in four South African provinces (henceforth cited as Survey 2001).[10] A market survey involving both qualitative and quantitative methods was conducted between March and April the following year among black and white local residents and foreign tourists (henceforth Survey 2002),[11] with a focus on 'target consumers'[12] to provide the FPT with a deeper understanding of the composition and expectations of the park's most likely visitor groups. It is interesting to reflect, for a moment, on the results of these

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of insight into the development and conceptualisation of the site and the debates associated with this process are the minutes of the FPT, dating mostly from the period of the competition adjudication in 2003.

[10] The report is presented in a presentation-type format and does not indicate the name of the researcher responsible. Geographically the survey was limited to Gauteng, Northern Province, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape.

[11] An exploratory qualitative survey involving focus groups and in-depth interviews was first conducted to assist with the design of the questionnaire. The sample for the quantitative research phase consisted of 605 respondents, of whom 505 were locals and 100 foreign tourists. The geographical coverage of the fieldwork was limited to Gauteng, Western Cape, KZN and North West province (Survey 2002: 12).

[12] The 'realistic target market' for a visit to the Freedom Park was defined as being adults with a minimum monthly income of R3000, while the extended market may include their friends and relatives (Survey 2002: 12, 13). The perceived target market, as established in the survey itself, was the general South African population, tourists, school children, youth and artists (ibid.: 29).

surveys. As with any analysis of a large amount of data, I acknowledge my selective focus in highlighting particular responses.

Significantly, only a few people seemed to have rejected the idea of a Freedom Park outright, mostly on the grounds of scarce resources and the fact that South Africa has more pressing problems to attend to (Survey 2001: 11). The majority of respondents in the 2001 survey appreciated the need for a symbolic tribute of this nature. The 2002 survey confirmed these findings, specifying that 85 percent of locals and 80 percent of foreign tourists expressed positive sentiments about the Freedom Park concept.[13] Negative responses were most frequently registered among white South Africans, who often expressed concerns about the perpetuation of ill-feelings by dwelling on a history of oppression and especially the negative tainting of people in the present who were not responsible for the events of the past (Survey 2002: 19).

Not everyone supported the site's central location in Pretoria, though. Among white participants there were strong reservations against building 'another monument in Pretoria' (Survey 2001: 8) and the general feeling was that the new democratic government should distinguish itself from past regimes by encouraging a more equitable distribution of the nation's memorial heritage (ibid.: 5). As a result, the majority strongly favoured localised variants of the main (Pretoria) Freedom Park or the situation of separate but complementary components of Freedom Park throughout the country. Firstly, there were distinct concerns about the inclusion or adequate commemoration of local events and heroes that would be unlikely to command their rightful prominence at the central national site (ibid.: 9). Secondly, respondents raised the issue of access and affordability; it was pointed out that many local people would not have the resources to ever visit Freedom Park and that the site might end up as a place only for the rich (ibid.: 10). To my knowledge, there is only one case in which a localised 'subsidiary' of Freedom Park was established, namely the Poelanong memorial in Bloemfontein.

During the 2001 survey, when the Freedom Park development was still in a largely conceptual stage, participants were ambivalent about the name 'Freedom Park'. In fact, it was generally felt that the idea of a 'peace park' would be more appropriate than a 'freedom park'. The latter

[13] To put these results into perspective, one must acknowledge that participants were probably not informed about the costs of the development and some may have reconsidered their response in the light of this information. As the 2002 survey found, many participants moreover based their professed interest in visiting the park on the premise that entrance would be free or at most a token amount (Survey 2002: 31). This will probably not be the case.

> … was said to evoke memories closely aligned to the freedom struggle whilst 'peace park' appears more compatible with the idea of unifying and reconciling South Africans behind symbols of 'reconciliation', 'national pride', and 'freedom and democracy' (ibid.: 4).

In accordance with these sentiments, the majority of participants, although being somewhat divided about the envisaged visual appearance of Freedom Park, conjured up images of a spacious peaceful place, a site with limited built structures in expansive gardens generating a tranquil atmosphere, but nevertheless impressive in its total impact and size (ibid.: 12-15; Survey 2002: 24, 31). A considerable number of participants in both surveys emphasised the need for a very large-scale development and some even entertained outright megalomaniac visions.[14] Some saw the initiative as a 'once in a life time project' and any attempts at making it smaller or optimising it were seen as undermining its basic premise (Survey 2002: 5). Members of the FPT must have felt extremely pleased and fully legitimated in their efforts with the following conclusion from the 2002 survey:

> There is a need for it [the Freedom Park] to be carefully designed to achieve that so much anticipated 'wow effect' and to be unrelenting in directing the requisite level of time and financial investment towards the project. It may even be necessary to delay full implementation but to undertake only those portions that can be at the expected levels of grandeur (ibid.: 7).

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[14] 'In my view, the Freedom Park gives you the impression of a very large place which is half the size of the city of Pretoria … buy all the farms around Pretoria and build something that will transform the heartland of the Boer republics and apartheid into a world show stopper' (Survey 2001: 16); 'President Mbeki must be brave enough to say to the whole country that this is going to be a big place because we wish to build a place that will be one of Africa's most sacred grounds … this cannot be just a statue or monument perched on a hill or mountain side somewhere in the Cape or Pretoria … buy enough land and don't be intimidated by those who will criticise this move as a waste of money for housing or jobs … the best monuments, statues and peace parks around the world were built by leaders who were criticised and vilified as madmen during their time' (ibid.: 17); 'I think the government must be warned not to put up some Mickey-Mouse project … people do not expect government to fund small projects … governments are generally expected to come up with huge projects that you cannot get used to easily … you end up being respected as a visionary when you put up huge and breathtaking projects like that … the Statue of Liberty in America took decades to complete …many others were built over decades … pyramids took centuries … so we must not rush government to finish this thing in one or two years … because people will just ridicule the things afterwards' (ibid.: 21).

As Serote put it in a December 2006 television interview (SABC 3 2006), Freedom Park was really 'designed by the nation' and the latest version (at the time of writing) of the official Freedom Park information brochure speaks of a 'Dialogue with the Nation … to gather and present all the perspectives of the South African history' (henceforth referenced as 'Freedom Park brochure', undated, unpaginated). This is certainly a colossal overstatement. Observation suggests that (at the time of writing) there is still a relatively low level of awareness among many sectors of the population about the objectives and even the very existence of Freedom Park. The FPT itself has on various occasions stressed the need for more publicity and community education.

Nevertheless, in comparison with the top-down imposition and fast-track construction of the national heroes' acres and independence monuments in South Africa's neighbor states and presumably in other countries on the African continent and elsewhere in the once colonised world, Freedom Park has thus far evolved in a far more democratic, transparent and consultative manner. In response to criticism about the long delays in the implementation of the Freedom Park project and especially the enormous escalation of costs, Serote tends to point precisely to this time-consuming consultative process, which is meant to legitimate the project as an inclusive symbol of national identity (e.g. Mokae 2007). To some extent he is right. However, whether the mammoth expenditure – estimated at around 800 million rand at the time of writing, but possibly still rising – will ever be considered worthwhile and appropriate or, on the contrary, will add fuel to the fire of contestation that already surrounds the site, remains to be seen.

## Site orientation and Isivivane

Although the final phase of Freedom Park site is still under construction, the overall conceptualisation and the construction of key elements were largely completed by the end of 2008. I shall now briefly describe these for the sake of orientation. My point of reference for the official names, purposes and intended symbolic meanings of the park's various components is the FPT website (www.freedompark.co.za) and the official publicity material published by the FPT, notably the Freedom Park brochure, which consists of a glossy folder with several colourfully illustrated loose leaflets.

Freedom Park consists of a variety of spiritual, educational and recreational elements, deliberately named in a kaleidoscope of Southern African languages: the *Sikhumbuto* near the crest of the hill constitutes the visually most dominant element. It is a place of remembrance, reflection and prayer dedicated to the major struggles that shaped the South African past and those 'who laid down their lives in the struggle for humanity and freedom' (Freedom Park brochure). Nearby is the *Moshate*, a hospitality

suite for high-level delegates and a meeting place for diplomatic functions, as well as the adjacent Gallery of Leaders, an exhibition space dedicated to the extraordinary leaders in the struggle for humanity and freedom.

Photo 7.1 'Isivivane' at Freedom Park, Salvokop (Tshwane), completed in 2004.

The spirits of the fallen heroes are said to rest at the *Isivivane* on the eastern side of the hill, a sacred place of healing and cleansing. The *Tiva* is a proposed artificial lake further down the hill on the same side, which is meant to symbolise tranquility and serenity. Adjacent will be a Traditional Healer's Garden. The *Mveledzo* or spiral path circles the hill, linking all individual components and taking the visitor on a metaphorical journey of healing and learning. Near the entrance, where various visitor amenities will be established, is the place for the ambitious *//hapo* (currently under construction), an interactive museum combined with the Pan African Archives, intended to 'address the gaps, distortions and biases in South African history' (ibid.). Situated half-way between the entrance and the *Sikhumbuto* is the *Uitspanplek*, a family oriented rest area, and further up is a small, secluded place of comtemplation.

As the 10th anniversary of the First General Elections was approaching, the Office of the President exerted pressure on the FPT to have at least one section of Freedom Park completed by the key date of 27 April 2004. This led to the fast-tracking of the *Isivivane*, the focal point of the Garden of Remembrance. This part of Freedom Park was deliberately exempted from the international architectural competition, because it was felt that 'it must

be designed by Africans' (Serote, personal interview 2004). It was meant to bring out the 'African voice' by drawing on IKS, African philosophy and cosmology.[15] This is where the results of the community workshops presumably found their most notable impact.[16]

Photo 7.2 Spiral Path at Freedom Park, Salvokop (Tshwane) with Voortrekker Monument in the distance.

[15] 'Emancipation of the African voice' was also important for the adjudication of the competition, as is explicitly stated in the Freedom Park minutes: 'Dr. Serote mentioned that after a lengthy consultation process it was clear that the Emancipation of the African Voice should form an integral part of the design. He further indicated that it is essential that the jurors are aware of the latest developments of the first phase. Traditional healers played an important role in defining the concept for the first phase. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) should be tapped into. Time should be found to inform the jurors in this regard. Mr. Fox stated that Dr. Serote had conducted extensive research on this topic and this should be shared with the jurors. He further suggested that Dr. Serote choose a number of research papers that should be presented to the jury' (Document 10: 2).

[16] This two-tiered approach can – on the one hand – be considered a clever solution to combining what may be meaningful at the grassroots-level with what is internationally respected. On the other hand, exempting the design of the Garden of Remembrance from the international competition meant that no truly holistic approach to the conceptualisation of the entire commemorative site was possible. Architects were invariably limited to designing a museum building and some kind of memorial structure to be located somewhere near the top of the hill.

It is noteworthy that Freedom Park means to distinguish itself from related heritage sites and icons of the struggle (for instance Robben Island) through its conceptualisation as a spiritual place of healing, cleansing and moral regeneration. The 2001 survey confirmed the need for a site such as Freedom Park to help rebuild pride and cultural integrity among rural communities and promote a new sense of morality consistent with African values (Survey 2001: 30). Respondents expected that the Freedom Park experience would contribute to restoring 'true indigenous cultural values' or function as a tool for the restitution of 'the authentic values and mores amongst the country's rural communities', because colonialism and apartheid domination had 'robbed every rural African community or tribe of self-identity and indigenous values' (ibid.: 28).

This is an important objective associated with the Garden of Remembrance. According to the Freedom Park brochure, the *isivivane* is a place deeply imbued with spirituality, where sacred rituals are performed to lay the spirits of the fallen heroes and heroines to rest. Its middle section comprises a sacred heap of stones surrounded by nine boulders sourced from South Africa's nine provinces. Two more boulders represent the national government and the international community respectively. Samples of soil from all those countries where South Africans lost their lives in various historic conflicts are interred here, based on the notion that the remains of the dead have merged with the soil and are now 'brought home'. One may recall the African tradition of burying the community's most important deceased in the centre of the homestead or cattle kraal, but this also links with an established, perhaps worldwide practice of repossessing the dead, the insistence that the bodies of 'our' fallen soldiers must be returned and buried in 'our' soil to allow their souls to rest (Verderey 1999: 42). Steam-generated smoke rises from this site to emphasise cleansing and purity, while simultaneously creating a sense of mystery and, once again, evoking traditional African religious practices, notably the burning of incense, which is associated with the presence of the ancestors.[17]

Simple stone cairns referred to as *izivivane*[18] can be found dotting the landscape throughout South Africa and numerous theories exist about their origin. In the Southern African context, the tradition was apparently adopted by Bantu speakers from the Khoi, who regarded them as graves connected

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[17] 'The spiral pathway will start in the general area of the alignment of Paul Kruger Street as indicated on the attached document and move in an easterly direction up the slopes of the hill. Smoke will be created along this stretch of pathway to symbolically represent the beginning of the healing/cleansing process. The smoke, along with the relatively dense vegetation, will evoke a sense of "mystery" and the unknown due to the lack of open views and the closed tree cover' (FPT Document 7: 7).

[18] Izivivane is the plural of isivivane.

with their mythical ancestor, Heitsi Eibib (Hodgson 1982). The Xhosa especially followed the Khoi practice in that a passer-by would pick up a stone, a branch or a bunch of grass, spit on it and then place it on the cairn. Sometimes a simple prayer to the cairn itself or to the Supreme Being and the ancestors was said in the process. The custom was also found among the San and a similar tradition of creating cairns to bring good fortune to travellers exists in many parts of world. Cairns are also established in memory of persons or events or as place markers, for instance on the battlefield of Blood River or on Robben Island.

As Pitika Ntuli (personal conversation 2002), sculptor and then chair of Sankofa, the Centre for African Renaissance, explains, the real significance of the *isivivane* is not so much the cairn (i.e. the tangible object) but the underlying principles of the tradition, notably the fact that the whole community gets involved (i.e. the intangible, performative aspects). This is presumably what the FPT tried to achieve when conducting workshops with different community groups throughout the nation. The *Isivivane* also constitutes the symbolic centre of the Moral Regeneration Movement facilitated by the FPT. It conducts Cleansing and Healing as well as Return of Spirits ceremonies in different parts of the country and selected places abroad, drawing much on the methods and rituals of traditional African healers. A memorial was erected in Bloemfontein specifically for the purpose of providing an adequate 'stage' and a lasting testimony to this important event. This is the Cleansing, Healing and Reparation Memorial or Poelanong monument in the northern garden (renamed Poelano Park) of the City Hall, which was unveiled on 25 May 2003.[19]

When I visited the *Isivivane* in the presence of a Freedom Park official in April 2004, all visitors were requested to respectfully take off their shoes, to surround the heap of stones holding hands as a symbol of unity and reconciliation, to observe a moment of silence in memory of the dead, and ritually to cleanse themselves with water from an artificial spring upon leaving the site. On other occasions the visit is accompanied by elaborate cleansing rituals, as can be gathered from images published in illustrated Freedom Park publicity material and on the official website.

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[19] Serote had written to the Premiers of all provinces, requesting a list of items from each province for the Garden of Remembrance at Freedom Park. The items were to be displayed at the Provincial Cleansing, Healing and Reparations Ceremony and subsequently dispatched to Freedom Park. As a result, the Free State MEC for Sport, Arts, Culture, Science & Technology initiated the construction of a purpose-built Cleansing, Healing and Reparation Memorial (designed by Roodt Partnership) on 14 May 2003. Due to great time pressure – the project was due to be completed 11 days later – construction went ahead without building permit or consultation with the City Council, although permission was retrospectively granted (Letter Ralikontsane to MEC 2003; Fax Mfebe to Mokoena 2003).

One of the challenges the FPT identified in the process of establishing the *Isivivane* was the recognition that 'South Africans are a diverse people … and not everybody … will align themselves with the cleansing ceremony' (FPT document Annexure D 2003: 28). In the interest of inclusiveness, the FPT insists that the iconography and ritual practices associated with the Garden of Remembrance are not exclusively African, but rather cross-cultural, interfaith or inter-denominational, drawing on common denominators, universal spiritual concepts and ritual elements shared by many religious traditions. As Abrahams aptly puts it, every South African is meant to discover an echo of his/her religion and culture there (personal communication 2008).

Only time will tell to what extent different sectors of South Africa's multi-racial, religiously and ideologically diverse population will in fact identify with this site and especially how meaningful the rituals performed there will be perceived in achieving reconciliation and nation-building. Afrikaner groups, for instance, have thus far proven indisposed to participating in healing and cleansing ceremonies, because 'they were worried that they would have to partake in processes which were alien to their culture' (The Freedom Park Trust undated d: 30). Indian, Coloured and KhoiSan minority communities have equally shown reluctance in embracing the Freedom Park concept, prompting the FPT to engage with each of these groups separately to determine their specific needs and mobilise their support (ibid.).

But critical challenges can also be anticipated from within the heterogeneous African community. Many urban black South Africans, especially the youth, arguably no longer identify with rural traditional customs and practices. The younger generation, which has grown up in a post-apartheid society, may not feel the need for healing and cleansing. At the other end of the spectrum, some conservatives and traditional healers may find the space of the *Isivivane* compromised and the performance of the Freedom Park cleansing ceremonies lacking and 'improper'. For instance, they may not believe the invocation of ancestral spirits to be effective without the slaughtering of a cow or another form of animal sacrifice, a practice which has thus far been discouraged at Freedom Park, presumably in part because it is widely considered offensive by non-African communities.[20]

One could conclude that the Freedom Park is trying to accomplish too much, and that by attempting to accommodate all it may end up being meaningful to few. Alternatively, one might argue that the *Isivivane* and its healing and cleansing rituals can only ever be meaningful to separate

[20] Although no slaughtering of animals has thus far been performed at Freedom Park, Abrahams explains that no policy decision has ever been made against the practice as a matter of principle (personal communication 2008).

gatherings of different, culturally homogeneous groups with their own religious leader or a ritual geared towards their respective cultural needs. Some may criticise such a separatist practice as defeating the reconciliatory and nation-building objectives of Freedom Park. However, recalling Luli Callinicos' initial proposal document, nation-building is a process, a long-term project, constantly evolving. One might suggest that South African society is not yet ready to have meaningful joint gatherings and to undergo spiritually inspired symbolic rituals at Freedom Park together, but this may very well change with time.

## The Sikhumbuto and the Wall of Names

According to the Freedom Park brochure, the word *Sikhumbuto* is derived from a siSwati reference to a place of remembrance, where those who have passed on are commemorated, but also invoked for assistance. The most visually dominant element of the *Sikhumbuto* is the sanctuary, a sandstone-clad building with rounded walls and a dark, cavernous interior intended for quiet contemplation and prayer. An Eternal Flame is situated in the large-scale opening, serenely surrounded by a pool of water and facing an Amphitheatre where up to 2000 people can gather for national events, rituals and ceremonies. An imposing series of 200 metal poles arranged in ascending order and illumated at night defines the rear edge of the *Sikhumbuto*. The monumental sculpture symbolises reeds and signifies 'the rebirth [of] the South African Nation as well as a nation moving forward' (Freedom Park brochure).

The most contested element of the *Sikhumbuto* (and in fact of Freedom Park as a whole) thus far is the Wall of Names, which was built in response to Thabo Mbeki's concern that the *Isivivane* is not sufficient in honouring the country's heroes, but that the nation needs to know the names of those who sacrificed their lives for humanity and freedom (FPT Annual Report 2008: 31). The Wall of Names is inscribed with the names of all those who lost their lives in eight selected conflict events that shaped South Africa's history, namely the Pre-colonial Wars, Genocide, Slavery, the Wars of Resistance, the South African Anglo-Boer War, the First and Second World Wars and the Liberation Struggle.[21] The Wall is laid out to accommodate up to 136 000 names. By the time of the official opening of the *Sikhumbuto* on 16 December 2006, 75 000 names had been collected for inscription.

[21] Most recently, the Liberation Struggle was furthermore subdivided into four distinct phases or struggles, namely the Armed Struggle, the Mass Struggle, the Underground Struggle, and International Solidarity (Abrahams, personal communication 2008).

Photo 7.3 Sikhumbuto, Freedom Park, Salvokop (Tshwane), photographed in December 2008.

Photo 7.4 Wall of Names Freedom Park, Salvokop (Tshwane), photographed in December 2008.

It is significant to note that the fallen heroes are not commemorated primarily as victims but implicitly as founders and ancestors of the new democratic nation. This is not unlike the famous memorial site of Yad Vashem (opened in 1968) in Israel, where the victims of the Holocaust are commemorated not merely as passive victims, but as active pioneers and 'potential citizens of Israel' (Kirsch 2003: 245). Ultimately, however, the question of who receives the honour of being commemorated at this foremost shrine of the nation will probably always be subject to contestation and negotiation. Before I engage with issues of exclusion – from the Wall of Names and by extension the narrative of the nation – I briefly want to place the structural and conceptual elements of Freedom Park described thus far into an international context, pointing out some prominent sources of inspiration and discussing how unique and 'African' the design of the Freedom Park really is.

## Designing an authentic African monument?

The Freedom Park brochure explains that the museum and archive will tell 'the South African story in a particular way', as Freedom Park is meant to strengthen democracy by 'emancipating the African voice. This emancipation of the African voice was also an important criterion in the adjudication of the competition. Thabo Mbeki's well-known speech 'I am an African', delivered on the occasion of the adoption of the Constitution in Cape Town in May 1996 was a key document that informed the early stages of the conceptualisation of the Freedom Park. Linking with an important underlying theme of this speech, Abrahams still stresses the importance of representing the South African past from an African perspective and the challenge of defining an African voice that is not constructed by others (personal communication 2008). The FPT has produced a number of commissioned research publications on various aspects of African culture and their significance for reconciliation and nation-building (e.g. The Freedom Park Trust undated a; b; c; d; e). IKS 'as a way of knowing the world' (Freedom Park brochure) is strongly promoted in the development of Freedom Park and the architectural elements, sculptural objects and landscaped features undoubtedly contain many rural traditional African references. Notably the design configurations of the *Sikhumbuto* memorial space, claims the Freedom Park brochure, are 'steeped in the traditions of Africa'.

Despite this bold affirmation of African traditions and value systems and the frequent references to a character firmly rooted in the local, the conceptualisation and design of Freedom Park is of course also strongly influenced by a concern for international recognition and competitiveness within the global arena of public memorialisation. The architectural design

competition was attractively positioned to encourage wide international participation and its adjudicators included international jurors. The initial meeting of the Trustees already pointed to international examples of best practice, notably in Russia, Algeria and Cuba, which (it was resolved) needed to be closely investigated.[22]

Paradoxically, even after the winning competition entries of the international contributors were abandoned in favour of a home-grown design, the sources of inspiration for almost all of Freedom Park's components are quite clearly Eurocentric, Western or specifically American. The Wall of Names, for instance, has its obvious conceptual and to some extent formal precedent in the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington D.C. The Eternal Flame is one of the most conventional elements in the European tradition of commemorative monuments (furthermore imitating the VTM). The organic-looking architectural design of all buildings (notably the reception building at the entrance and the Sanctuary) shows striking similarities with the new American Indian Museum in Washington, D.C., with its distinctive curved walls and sandstone cladding, while of course also referencing the Great Zimbawe ruins. The buried samples of soil in the *Isivivane* recall the same concept in the healing space of the internationally much publicized Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. The *Isivivane* as a final resting place for the spirits of the nation's heroes imitates the sacred altar to Piet Retief and his fellow men at the VTM, as well as more generally the European tradition of war memorials designed around a cenotaph. The Gallery of Leaders recalls the Hall of Heroes at the VTM and its European precedents. The assembly of ascending steel poles at the *Sikhumbuto* is informed by current international design trends towards minimalist repetition of like elements, as exemplified most notably by Eisenmann's famous Holocaust memorial in Berlin, but also seen in South Africa in the Samora Machel memorial. Like the VTM, Freedom Park is meant to last for all eternity.[23] The list goes on.

Various members of the FPT indeed undertook several international journeys to sites on the African continent, in Europe, the United States (notably Washington D.C.) and Cuba in an attempt to gain first-hand experience of eminent commemorative monuments and state-of-the-art museum technology. The intention presumably was to investigate useful models for the design of Freedom Park, but also to establish points of difference to constitute the uniqueness of the South African development. Despite the prevalence of such international references, one must

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[22] 'Draft. Meeting of the Trustees of Freedom Park. 1 June 2000; 09:30-13:30. The Presidential Guest House', DAC, Freedom Park Project, Vol. 6, file 6/16/4.

[23] In a recent newspaper interview Serote was quoted as saying: 'If, in 2000 years from now, there is a conflict in the country and people ascend to Isivivane to reflect on how we got to where we are, I will be happy' (Mokae 2007).

acknowledge that Freedom Park is also very consciously striving to develop unique design solutions that significantly differ from both the emulation of prestigious western and especially regional socialist models of commemoration. One might say that Freedom Park (like the South African nation) attempts to articulate a uniquely African identity, while simultaneously manifesting its firm alliance with the European tradition and its global connection with the rest of the world. One might also say that Freedom Park represents the re-interpretation or Africanisation of the Eurocentric concept of the national monument. Despite the Freedom Park's attempts at being 'different', one cannot overlook its conceptual and even formal similarities with the VTM. Of particular interest to me was how respondents to the public consultation effort perceived the relationship between the two sites, although this was not directly part of the questionnaire, and responses emerged only obliquely in various contexts. Both black and white participants in the 2001 survey consistently recommended that the VTM be incorporated into the Freedom Park rather than be left out or destroyed (Survey 2001: 38). One person seemed to consider Salvokop's proximity to the VTM a distinct advantage and suggested that the two sites must be linked, but others were concerned about the potential perception that the Freedom Park was built 'just for the sake of closing the score with the Voortrekker Monument next door' (ibid.: 18). As another respondent put it:

> The government must be very careful not to be seen to be competing with the Voortrekker Monument in terms of message, size and location … if this new place is near the Monument, they must be careful not to build something that fills the space next to the Voortrekkers … that would look short-sighted and silly … we must not be seen to be wanting to compete with those who subjugated and oppressed us (ibid.: 16).

Is the Freedom Park project indeed primarily a silly imitation of a contested yet still prominent ideologically tainted monument of the old order, initiated for the sake of competition and 'closing a score'? This question, which can be extended to a growing number of post-apartheid monuments and heritage sites constructed throughout the country in deliberate juxtaposition with existing monuments, will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

## Inclusion/exclusion

From the time that the government announced its plans to construct Freedom Park, members of the general public and specifically the Afrikaner community raised questions about who would be included in this eminent site of honour, how the fight for freedom and humanity would be defined, and specifically to what extent there would be room for Afrikaners (e.g. Esterhuyse 2000; Beukman 2002). If – as the Freedom Park brochure claims

– the Freedom Park and especially the *Sikhumbuto* 'showcases the essence of the South African Nation', the question emerges as to who belongs to the nation, who shares in the new narratives of nation formation?

The 2002 Survey found that some sectors of the population clearly lack a sense of identification with Freedom Park as the symbolic centre of the nation. The park's predominant themes of oppression, struggle and liberation were largely unpalatable for white respondents, concluded the survey (2002: 5). This suggests that respondents were predominantly conservative whites resisting or only reluctantly adjusting to transformation, but I argue below that many liberal or leftist white South Africans, who may indeed strongly identify with these themes, nevertheless also feel at odds with Freedom Park. More worryingly even, the 2002 Survey found that many 'coloureds' and Indians too felt alienated from this national commemorative venture. There was a perception that the representation of the nation's heritage and especially the liberation struggle was skewed towards a particular perspective from which their role was largely excluded and in which their heroes were overlooked (ibid.: 6).

In an attempt to address the lack of participation in the Freedom Park project by minority groups, including the KhoiSan, South Africans of Indian descent, Afrikaners and 'coloureds', the FPT embarked on a series of workshops with these specific communities. In April 2005 the first workshop took place with members of the 'coloured' community, revealing several areas of grave concern. It emerged that the Freedom Park was perceived to be an 'African' project. Not only did the 'coloured' community feel excluded, but there was a perception that entire communities were being written out of history (Freedom Park News, April 2007: 6; The Freedom Park Trust undated d; Naran 2007). One may add to this the complexity of identity politics in present-day South Africa, where no coherent group identity exists among members of the 'coloured' community. Some individuals, for instance, reject the term 'coloured' altogether and prefer to identify themselves with blacks, Khoi, San or Griquas (Naran 2007). This reflects the tension between the preservation and dissolution of established colonial and especially apartheid-era identity categories and renders the FPT's intended task to represent the history of all South African 'communities' and their contributions to freedom and humanity highly problematic. The issue is likely to come to boiling point with the completion of the museum at Freedom Park, which is intended to 'rewrite' South African history from its very beginning.

Among all of the marginalised minority groups, the credibility of the Freedom Park as an inclusive place of national identification hinges also critically on the acceptance of the Afrikaner community as the former ruling power. In an attempt to bring conservative Afrikaners on board, the FPT tailored the ideological construct of the fight for freedom and humanity to accommodate Voortrekker leaders and Boer generals on the basis of their

struggle for freedom from British oppression and colonialism. The fact that the Afrikaner nationalist concept of freedom and nationhood was not only racially exclusive but also often contingent on the simultaneous oppression of black populations is conveniently ignored or implicitly subordinated to the utopian imaginary of an inclusive post-apartheid nation. The inclusion of Afrikaner leaders furthermore stigmatises whites of British descent as the true enemy and oppressor, thus once again pitching the two historical opponents against one another and ironically deepening fault-lines at a site dedicated to reconciliation and nation-building.

Let us recall that the Freedom Park concept was crucially informed by Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech, which has generated much critical debate, especially with respect to the question of who might be considered an African. In a careful analysis of this seminal speech, Chipkin (2007: 101) highlights that there is a constant shifting between two registers. 'On the one hand, the term [African] includes both the perpetrators and the survivors of the colonial "crime against humanity". On the other hand, it refers exclusively to those who lived and struggled against this terrible injustice'. Chipkin suggests that whites are recognised as Africans only in so far as – in the words of the Constitution – they 'recognize the injustices of the past' (ibid.) This is consistent with my earlier discussion of the post-apartheid foundation myth and the expanding record of commemorative projects installed or promoted by the state. But Freedom Park honours all those who fought for freedom, even if their freedom was contingent on the oppression of others. It seems to me that the very contradictions and ambiguities that characterise Mbeki's speech are echoed in the conceptualisation of Freedom Park.

The mutual commemoration – for the sake of reconciliation in the present – of those who fought on opposite sides in the past constitutes the greatest conceptual challenge for the FPT. Ultimately, the inclusion of Boer heroes might purchase the Freedom Park a small slice of recognition among Afrikaners or even whites in general, but it will pay a price, namely an equivalent loss of credibility among those on the other side of the racial and ideological divide. As I have briefly indicated in Chapter Two, some visitors will no doubt find their contributions devalued by such an inclusive definition of 'freedom fighter' and be offended by finding perpetrators and victims, apartheid oppressors and liberation stalwarts honoured in the same commemorative arena.

Verdery argues that nationalism is 'a kind of ancestor worship, a system of patrilineal kinship, in which national heroes occupy the place of clan elders in defining a nation as a noble lineage' (1999: 41). National ideologies are saturated with kinship metaphors and many national ideologies celebrate great political leaders and cultural figures as forefathers, 'progenitors' of the new nation, as ancestors (ibid.). Koshar (2000: 25) similarly notes that 'etched-in genealogies were central to the nineteenth-century theory of the modern nation'. The National Heroes Monument with its roll or honour or

busts of heroes constitutes an authoritative way of endorsing selected forefathers as the ideological founding fathers or chosen ancestors of the present nation.

But this strategy becomes complex and contradictory when the international pressure for peace and the internal political necessity of attaining unity, especially after years of violent conflict, require an inclusive definition of the nation, mirrored in the selection of ancestors commemorated in symbolic spaces and monuments. In Romania, for instance, the National Cemetery in Bucharest accommodates both those who died in the so-called Christmas Revolution in 1989 and supporters of Nicolae Ceauşescu (1918-89), the country's communist dictator, who was executed following his conviction on charges of genocide and crimes against the state and the national economy. In the 1990s a sign referred to both groups as 'Heroes of the Revolution'. Volkan (1997: 182) explains that the 'mix of rebels and villains in the same location makes mourning them complicated because, no matter what the mourner's sympathies, the burial place is contaminated with "bad" dead buried alongside the "heroes"'. Although it must be acknowledged that Freedom Park is not an actual burial site but a resting place for the spirits, I contend that many visitors will feel deeply ambiguous about the politics of remembrance pursued at this national heroes' acre and would prefer to see a 'pure' genealogy of the post-apartheid nation.

## Contestation and counter monuments

The FPT's dilemma is that the thorny issue of inclusion/exclusion will continue to form the basis for contention. On 16 January 2007, one month after the official unveiling of the *Sikhumbuto*, a group of about 60 former South African Defence Force (SADF) members led by the popular musician and self-declared custodian of Afrikaner culture, Steve Hofmeyr, unveiled an alternative monument at the bottom of the access road to the Freedom Park (Govender 2007). Expressing their sense of marginalisation and exclusion, the counter monument commemorates SADF soldiers who lost their lives in the so-called 'bush war' against 'communist terrorists' in Angola and South West Africa between 1975 and 1989.

This drawn-out civil war began when a power vacuum and subsequent conflict ensued between the three rival contenders to rule in Angola, following the Portuguese withdrawal from their African colonies in 1975. In an attempt at preventing a Soviet-backed government from coming into power, the South African army invaded Angola to fight the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Due to the Soviet Union's support of the MPLA with sophisticated arms and military advisers from Cuba, the SADF was soon forced to retreat, but managed to keep the civil war alive in the southern part of the country, thereby keeping the popular

liberation movement in South West Africa (SWAPO) at bay (Davenport and Saunders 2000: 527-8).

In an open letter to Wally Serote, the SADF veterans protested the exclusion of their compatriots from the Wall of Names at the Freedom Park, because as young conscripts they had believed that they were defending the freedom of the (white) South African nation against the threatening prospect of an autocratic communist dictatorship.[24] To add insult to injury in the eyes of the disgruntled critics, the FPT had decided to include on the Wall of Names more than 2000 Cuban soldiers who had been brought in to fight on the side of the MPLA and lost their lives in Angola. Amidst a deluge of public criticism and debate (e.g. Claassen 2007; Greyling 2007; Warwick 2007 and 2007a), Serote justified the decision by pointing out that the Cubans had fought and died for a just cause, namely the basic human rights of Africans, and had helped South African liberation forces to attain freedom from apartheid rule (Govender 2006).

Ironically, many members of the white minority, especially those with liberal or leftist political convictions who opposed the apartheid system in the past, may agree with Serote about excluding the SADF veterans but are nevertheless likely to feel marginalized and alienated from the Freedom Park project.[25] The concept of the Wall of Names, derived from the tradition of the hall of heroes and the roll of honour on war memorials, notably the famous Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., raises fundamental questions about criteria for heroism and definitions of suffering or sacrifice. Helen Suzman is one of the few prominent regime-critics of old who publicly and on numerous occasions voiced her disappointment about the lack of recognition of the contributions and sacrifices of white South Africans and the reluctance to celebrate white heroes of the Struggle.

There were many white saboteurs, commanders of MK, and militant activists in the trade union movement – some of them members of the ANC, others affiliated with the Communist Party. Marius Schoon, for instance, was arrested for sabotage in 1964 and spent 12 years in prison. Upon his release he left the country illegally for Botswana with his new wife, Jeanette Curtis, a trade union activist under banning orders, and the two of them carried out instructions from the ANC to mobilise the white left in support of the ANC.

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[24] The names of the SADF soldiers do not appear on the Wall of Names, but they have nevertheless been collected (Abrahams, personal communication 2008). As Freedom Park deputy CEO, Peggie Photolo, explained, reconciliation is an ongoing process and future generations could decide to include the names (Govender 2006a).

[25] Abrahams firmly denies that some whites feel excluded (personal communication 2008) and the FPT places much emphasis on the performance of healing and cleansing ceremonies in which members of Afrikaner communities, as well as other minority communities, participated and expressed their support for the Freedom Park concept (The Freedom Park Trust undated d).

People like Barbara Hogan, Guy Berger, Jeremy Cronin and Raymond Suttner, often operating from abroad, set up network structures inside South Africa, provided political education to newly recruited ANC cadres, established underground routes across the border and were involved in a variety of other operations (SADET 2006: 416-20). Some white activists suffered long terms of imprisonment. Others were tortured, forced into exile or even killed. Albie Sachs for instance, lost an arm and an eye in a security agent bomb blast in Maputo, Mozambique. Ruth First lost her life, her body torn to shreds, when she opened a letter bomb sent to her office in Maputo. There are many more examples.

Other white anti-apartheid activists were not involved in the armed Struggle but made valuable contributions of other kinds, which were important, if not essential, in supporting, or even enabling, the efforts of their black comrades. Many liberal and leftist whites were members of anti-apartheid organisations and campaigns, such as the Black Sash, the End Conscription Campaign, or various human rights organisations. They gave shelter and delivered services to banned black activists; they helped organise protest marches and creative arts events with conscientising 'messages'; they distributed prohibited leaflets and posters; they smuggled weapons, money or other goods in and out of the country; they boycotted official events organised by state-affiliated institutions (e.g. graduation ceremonies, sports contests, performances and exhibitions); they rejected contracts, tenders and awards offered by the state; they defied orders and sabotaged state procedures and projects through clandestine administrative acts; with their pens or cameras or many other means they found ways of documenting and publicising injustices and atrocities that the world was never meant to know about.

While some high-profile survivors now occupy government positions or play leadership roles in other spheres of public life (e.g. Albie Sachs is now a judge in the Constitutional Court, and Barbara Hogan has been appointed Minister of Health), the people described above remain largely unacknowledged.[26] Although they might not publicly voice their disappointment, I have personally met many middle-aged white South Africans who resent the fact that their contributions – small as they may have been – to the

[26] Even some of those who now occupy government positions have on occasion admitted feeling sidelined. Carl Niehaus, for instance, who was imprisioned for high treason from 1983 to 1991 and appointed Member of Parliament for the ANC in 1994, was asked in a recent interview about his 'most difficult experience'. He replied, 'The last few years [after prison] were hardest. I found it difficult when I found myself sidelined from what was the mainstream of ANC under Mbeki. I don't want to be a lackey; it seemed to be the expectation. I was a loyal member of the ANC and did not speak out in public but voiced my criticisms internally' (Isaacson 2008).

liberation struggle or the goal of human rights for all is under-appreciated or belittled. Sacrifice and suffering must be seen in relation to what is at stake. Any white South African could have enjoyed a life of security and privilege, yet many chose to stand up for the rights of others and had to endure suffering as a consequence of their actions. They suffered from police harassment, tapped telephone lines, occasional arrest. They lived in constant fear of detection, they had to wage the balance between fighting for their ideals – a better life for all – with the repercussions their actions might have for their own lives and the lives of their families. Some suffered psychological damage (perhaps permanently) from forced participation in traumatic experiences, such as shooting 'terrorists'. Others made personal sacrifices in terms of forfeiting educational or professional opportunities, promotions, lucrative business contracts or even in terms of simply indulging in ordinary pleasures (like swimming at a 'whites only' beach) that the system provided for them.

Many whites today still suffer from the lost opportunities for the advancement of their careers and personal goals. Unlike their former black comrades, who now benefit from affirmative action and other measures of redress, they may lose out all over again because they are white and considered 'formerly privileged'. They certainly lose out at Freedom Park and in the heritage sector more broadly, where their contributions and their suffering are largely considered too insignificant to be officially commemorated. A few white activists have indeed been included in the official commemorative effort, although mostly through naming processes, hardly through monuments. In part this is due to the TRC process and its focus on victims of 'gross human rights violations', as discussed in Chapter Three. But this lack is particularly problematic for Freedom Park with its specific objectives of reconciliation and nation-building, because reconciliation is widely thought to depend on an official recognition of loss, suffering and sacrifices.

## Who will visit Freedom Park?

As a prime heritage site and visitor attraction, Freedom Park will inevitably compete with internationally known historical icons of apartheid oppression and resistance, notably the Robben Island World Heritage site, as well as newly created heritage developments like the ambitious proposed Freedom Tower in Port Elizabeth (Nelson Mandela Metro), which will be discussed in Chapter Ten. While it is unclear how many South Africans are likely to visit Freedom Park, it can be anticipated that the site is indeed likely to become a popular attraction for foreign tourists. The strategic link with the VTM promotes a visit of both sites to gain an ideologically and historically balanced heritage experience. Equally important but also problematic is the

fact that Freedom Park to some extent feeds into the popular Western fascination with exoticising stereotypes about the African 'other'. It is likely to be attractive as an alluring, 'authentically' African monument, associated with the mystery of traditional healing rituals and ancestral spirits. It comes as no surprise that the 2002 survey found foreign tourists expressing considerably higher interest in visiting the Garden of Remembrance with the *Isivivane* than any of the other components of Freedom Park (Survey 2002: 22).

The 2002 survey included a market segmentation study, in which five main visitor or 'consumer' segments were identified, each of which would be likely to provide different types of experiences and facilities served to visitors through a different communicative approach. The largest anticipated visitor group is what the Survey calls 'Peace and scenic lovers' (38 percent), which includes people of all racial backgrounds. People in this group like visiting game parks and themed areas, but they enjoy a tranquil, uncrowded atmosphere and expect to find a range of essential facilities and amenities. This group is closely followed by 'South African Heritage Stewards' (34 percent), predominantly black visitors who are interested in heritage for its intrinsic value, but who are also keen to see heritage as a strategic means of redressing the past and recognising those who made sacrifices.

Such emotional attachment is the key factor that distinguishes members of this group from the next segment, the 'Avid Scholars/Historians' (9 percent), a much smaller, generally younger, multiracial visitor group whose members are more interested in analysing the facts from a purely historical perspective (Survey 2002: 41). Many foreign tourists are also likely to fall within this group.[27] Another segment is constituted by the 'Entertainment Seekers' (11 percent), who are predominantly higher income female visitors interested in an outing for the whole family and concerned about family-oriented facilities. The group called 'Tourists/Curiosity Train' (8%) comprises predominantly black male, lower income people. Their interests are similar to those of the avid scholars group, but they are more concerned with the qualities of the place as a tourist attraction (ibid.: 35-43).

These are mere projections, and other surveys would have to be conducted once Freedom Park is fully operational to ascertain more precisely what different visitor groups expect from the experience of the site. One is likely to find – as did the 2002 survey – that not all visitors or 'customers' are motivated by the same reasons to come to the Park (ibid.: 35) and neither will all visitors interpret the site and its varied components in

[27] In other words, while the locals extolled above everything else the constant reminder of those who sacrificed for freedom, tourists were relatively more preoccupied with acknowledging the role of all those who were involved (Survey 2002: 25).

the same way or as intended by the FPT. But one may ask a much more fundamental question: who is captured in such surveys?

During my last visit to Freedom Park, in December 2008, I noticed a group of vagrants or homeless people who appeared to be living in an open-air camp along the side of the road towards the entrance of Freedom Park. I wondered whether they had ever visited the nation's most eminent heritage site up the road and, considering their raggedy appearance, how welcome they would have been made to feel. On the occasion of the same visit I become aware of the extent to which the construction site of the museum cuts into the residential area that borders on the Freedom Park site. Some residents have presumably lived here for a long time, but they are now being forced to resettle because their houses are earmarked for demolition to make way for the museum and its parking lot. I was told that these families had ignored the eviction notices served on them and were now facing legal action to evacuate their homes. Clearly this suggests that they will experience resentment and discontent in connection with the sacrifice expected of them for the sake of this 'shrine of the nation'. The Freedom Park premises are surrounded by a high boundary fence and a private security company is employed to patrol the fence and secure the premises – possibly from attacks by reactionary political opponents, but much more likely from ordinary thieves and vandals.

I want to refer back to my earlier discussion of vandalism and the suggestion that some people not only lack a sense of ownership of newly installed heritage sites but do not appear to share a sense of citizenship and belief in the narrative of the nation. Chipkin draws an important distinction between two kinds of political community, namely 'citizens' and 'authentic national subjects'. The former are members of a democracy, not simply as a form of government, but rather as a society. The second refers to the nation as a particular kind of society defined by specific properties. The national subjects are the veritable bearers of the national mission, the community of true believers. Nation-building implies that some citizens are more authentically members of the nation than others (2007: 10, 14).

I have earlier considered who among whites is considered an 'African' in Thabo Mbeki's 'I'm an African' speech, but the same question still remains to be answered with reference to the black population. 'Africans are authentically so when able to "see" themselves through liberated eyes', argues Chipkin (2007: 102).[28] This harks back to the notion of the nation

[28] 'So who is an African today? The African in a democracy is a new sort of being: an individual, free to belong or not belong to any group he/she sees fit. The democratic nation, therefore, is not simply a nation of multiple identities; it is a nation composed of individuals. But we recall that being African was intimately linked to combating racism and refusing apartheid and colonial social taxonomies. What this therefore means is that being an African, or being an

having emerged in and through the struggle for democracy, but it raises the central question about the meaning of freedom, i.e. who is truly liberated.

## Conclusion

The issue of the excluded SADF veterans led to much debate about the core purpose of Freedom Park. In November 2007 an unnamed researcher was quoted by the *Mail & Guardian* as suggesting that Freedom Park must ultimately make a choice between reconciliation and commemorating struggle heroes, because the park's current mandate is confused and inherently contradictory. Serote refuted such criticism, pointing out that '[t]he contradiction exists in the nation' (Ismail 2007).

Although the Freedom Park heritage site should – in all fairness – not be judged before completion, one cannot help noting its inherent contradictions, ambiguities, inconsistencies, and unresolved challenges. The canonisation of the eight selected wars and conflicts has been questioned and criticised.[29] The definition of who deserves to be honoured for their contribution to freedom and humanity arguably lacks historical consistency. The professed 'Africanness' of the site contradicts the Eurocentric root of the concept as a whole and the western/international style elements of its design. The frequent reference to the emancipation of the 'African voice' raises questions about who is considered an African. It could be argued that Serote is to some extent right when he claims that the contradiction exists in the nation. Freedom Park represents the 'essence of the nation' – not in the sense in which the statement was presumably intended, but in the sense that the site is a mirror of precisely all of those racial and ideological tensions, contradictions and discords, challenges and unresolved dilemmas that characterise the real state of the post-apartheid nation at the present moment in time.

The problem is that Freedom Park does not acknowledge these contradictions. It has not been conceptualised in such a way as to allow for multiple interpretations. It does not encourage different perspectives on the past. Even the prospect of future modifications to the park in accordance

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individual, is contingent on something very special: being able to understand the racist power at work in apartheid and colonial taxonomies. Africans are authentically so when able to "see" themselves through liberated eyes. This, it appears, is the mark of authenticity' (Chipkin 2007: 102).

[29] For instance, Warwick (2007a) notes that '[d]uring the early 1950s, dozens of South African Air Force personnel gave their lives in defence of South Korea', but this war is eclipsed from the list of conflicts selected for commemoration at Freedom Park and their names hence do not appear.

with potential shifts in socio-political values is broached with caution.[30] In keeping with my point in the previous chapter, thus far academic historians have been sidelined in the Freedom Park project (although it remains to be seen who will be invited to participate in the conceptualisation of the museum exhibition). Their narratives of complexities, ambiguities and gradations are often viewed with suspicion or as outright counter-productive. Referring back to Barthes, the FPT essentially wants to represent the 'blissful clarity' of myth, i.e. a celebratory struggle history with a specific purpose, namely 'symbolis[ing] the universality of connections among South Africans of all backgrounds and ages' (Freedom Park brochure).

Casting aside fundamental questions such as whether South Africa really needs a Freedom Park, and adopting a positive attitude and a long-term view towards the project, one might argue that the park has the potential to be adjusted to changing interpretations. As opposed to the Zimbabwean Heroes' Acre and the self-aggrandising commemorative efforts of the African elite in some other African postcolonial states, which have remained largely unchanged since they were built, the social and political needs of future generations might lead to shifts in the interpretation of the park's constitutive elements. The success of the Freedom Park as a site that South Africans truly identify with will, in my view, crucially depend on such openness of meaning.

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[30] Abrahams explains that Freedom Park makes allowance for future modifications and acknowledges that such changes are essential to ensure that the site remains meaningful for future generations. However, any such changes will affect only the exhibitions on display and the narratives told. None of the current structures or 'fixtures' are envisaged to be altered ever again and the key principles and values upon which the Freedom Park concept is based must always remain in place (personal communication 2008).

# 8

# Celebrating 'Mothers of the Nation': The Monument to the Women of South Africa in Pretoria

## Introduction

While providing a detailed investigation of the Monument to the Women of South Africa at Pretoria, this chapter discusses issues of gender within the commemorative effort of the post-apartheid order and more specifically examines the relationship between gender identity and conceptions of national identity. As stated earlier, the Women's Monument (unveiled by Thabo Mbeki on 9 August 2000) commemorates the 1956 protest march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria and more generally honours the contribution of women to the liberation struggle. But as part of the National Legacy Project, the Women's Monument also more broadly celebrates the role of women as 'mothers of the nation' through their contribution to the foundation of the new democratic order and expresses the constitutionally enshrined commitment of the national government and especially the ANC to gender equality.

If the commemoration of the past is a mirror of the values of the present, the National Women's monument makes a powerful statement for the recognition of women as equal partners in the attainment of liberation and proclaims the importance of women more generally. Yet, as media reports remind us daily, the sad reality is that the problem of gender discrimination – ranging from economic inequality to the abuse of women – has not been resolved or even adequately addressed in South Africa. While under apartheid the women's fight for equality had to take a back seat behind the larger struggle for black liberation, which was perceived as being more important, during the immediate post-liberation period women's issues were again subordinated to the new priorities of nation-building and racial reconciliation. Only in recent years can one discern a more concerted effort – both within civil society and the government – to push agendas of gender

equality and devise plans to address the persistent marginalisation and abuse of women (and children).

This need for strategic intervention in the social ills of the present society, coupled with the forging of a new national identity based on values of non-racialism and non-sexism, constitutes the context for the commemoration of past events involving women and the identification of female heroes selected as models for identification in the present. But I demonstrate in this chapter firstly that the post-apartheid practices of public commemoration throughout South Africa remain overwhelmingly male-dominated, and secondly that the few commemorative initiatives in honour of women, notably the National Monument for the Women of South Africa, promote a specific gender discourse in which women's achievements and contributions are appropriated for wider societal and political goals and women's identity is placed in the service of a particular vision of national identity.

In its interrogation of questions relating to national identity this chapter follows on from the previous chapter's investigation of the Freedom Park project. If the Freedom Park must in part be understood as a counterpart to the VTM, the new national Women's Monument in Pretoria must be considered against the foil of the old National Women's Monument, the *Nasionale Vrouemonument*, which Afrikaner Nationalists built on the outskirts of Bloemfontein almost 100 years earlier. Countering the exclusiveness of the old Women's monument, the post-apartheid initiative intends to truly honour the epithet 'national' by commemorating the contribution of all women, irrespective of race, class, culture or political association. This chapter critically investigates how 'different' (in ideological and artistic terms) the new Women's Monument really is. More precisely, I want to investigate to what extent this monument perpetuates or diverts from entrenched patterns of gendered memorialisation, what this monument can be thought to say about women and their role within the nation, how the monument might encourage new models of gendered identification, and also what new limitations, gender stereotypes and categories of exclusion it might be seen to create.

## Historical background of the 1956 Women's March

The 1952 Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act mentioned in Chapter Three stipulated that African women, who had until then largely been exempted from permit requirements, would also be forced to carry reference books at an unspecified future date. The government indeed began issuing permits to women in 1954 and reference books from 1956, starting in the Western Cape and soon extending throughout the Union. Protests against the Native Laws Amendment Act followed immediately, notably with the demonstration conducted by hundreds of African

men and women in Langa township outside Cape Town on 4 January 1953. The ANC Women's League played a key role in organising the first non-racial National Conference of Women, which took place in Johannesburg in April 1954 and led to the foundation of the non-racial Federation of South African Women, composed mostly of affiliated women's groups, political organisations and trade unions (Schmidt undated: 2-4).

The conference also led to the adoption of the 'Women's Charter', a progressive emancipation document calling for the enfranchisement of men and women of all races and the removal of all laws and customs that denied women equality of opportunity in employment, equal pay for equal work, equal rights to property, marriage and children, etc. The charter, which was ultimately incorporated into the Freedom Charter adopted by the Congress of the People in Kliptown, concluded:

> We shall teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate themselves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and practice … freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as we women are kept in bondage (quoted in Schmidt undated: 4).

In succeeding years the Federation in conjunction with the ANC Women's League focused on protesting the extension of pass laws to women, which they perceived as the ultimate symbol of their oppression. Passes would confine women and their children to the rural areas. Families would be torn apart when passes made it impossible for women to join their migrant labour husbands in the urban areas. Passes would prohibit women from pursueing income-generating opportunities in town to supplement their family's insufficient livelihood gained from subsistence farming on increasingly exhausted or inferior agricultural land. Mostly, women were concerned about their children and who would take care of them if both parents were arrested and detained for pass law offences (Schmidt undated; Towards a Monument for the Women of South Africa undated: 3-5).

Demonstrations outside government offices were organised in towns and cities around the country. The first national protest took place on 27 October 1955, when 2000 women of all races marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Many women belonged to the newly founded Black Sash, which had been organised as the 'Women's Defence of the Constitutional League' in protest against the unconstitutional election of Senators in preparation for the National Party's intended disenfranchisement of Cape 'coloured' voters. When Dr Verword, then Minister of Native Affairs, refused to receive a multiracial delegation, the women handed over a petition protesting a variety of apartheid laws to Ben Schoeman, then Minister of Transport. The marchers camped in the grounds of the Union Buildings for two nights

before ending their campaign in Johannesburg (Schmidt undated: 4-5, 7-11; Rogers 1956).

In August of the following year, the Federation and the ANC Women's League organised a similar but much larger demonstration, focused exclusively on the pass laws. Approximately 20 000 women from all over the country, representing all racial groups, assembled in the grounds of the Union Buildings. A delegation of nine spokeswomen, led by Helen Joseph (1905-92), Rahima Moosa (1922-93), Lilian Ngoyi (1911-79) and Sophie Williams (b. 1938) went into the Union Buildings with the intention to meet with Prime Minister Strijdom, who had however been notified of the women's plans and clandestinely vacated the building. The women then left bundles of petitions with more then 100 000 signatures at the Prime Minster's door. This was followed by a 30-minute silence and then the singing of freedom songs, including 'Wathint' abafazi …', which had been composed specifically for the occasion by Durban-based activist Florence Mkhize (Schmidt undated: 5; Towards a Monument for the Women of South Africa undated).

Although the women were not successful in achieving the desired repeal of the pass laws, the 1956 march is considered a mile-stone in the history of the anti-apartheid struggle. Due to traditional male attitudes towards the role of women in society, few men were prepared for the women's militancy and their ability to organise a campaign of this magnitude. In fact, the husbands of some of those very same women now honoured for their courageous protest may well have objected to their wives' participation in the march (Brooks 2003). The leadership of the ANC and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) paid tribute to the women's contribution and called upon men to respect women as equal participants in the liberation movement (Schmidt undated: 6). Although this strong official support for the women's efforts and their goals of achieving gender equality has remained an ambiguous and incomplete project to the present day, the post-apartheid government's initiative to establish a monument to the 1956 march and women's contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle can be understood as a culmination of this process of paying tribute. Before considering the genesis of the Monument to the Women of South Africa, I want to briefly discuss the old national women's monument, the Afrikaner Nationalist *Vrouemonument* in Bloemfontein, which must be taken into account as a conscious or unconscious reference point for the initiators and the designers of the new national women's monument in Pretoria.

## *Nasionale Vrouemonument* in Bloemfontein

Issues of gender and national iconography have become areas of increasing interest in studies of statuary and public monuments in recent years.

Although in many societies women served as the keepers of memory, the genre of official commemoration through public monuments was historically a male reserve. Gillis (1994: 10) observed that women, as well as members of ethnic minorities, often served as symbols of a 'lost' past, nostalgically perceived and romantically constructed, while their real lives were largely forgotten. The female body has extensively been used for allegorical representations, especially in ambitious national monuments, but women rarely appear as political or cultural leaders in public statuary (Johnson 1995: 57). Where conventional monuments are indeed dedicated to women, they usually follow a collective rather than individual mode of commemoration and such tributes tend to be stereotypically gendered in a process that is often connected with nation-building. Women's contributions are remembered largely in terms of sacrifice, a traditional female role (Gillis 1994: 12; McDowell 2008).

Photo 8.1 *Nasionale Vrouemonument*, Bloemfontein, unveiled in 1913.

The 1913 *Nasionale Vrouemonument* in Bloemfontein, designed to commemorate the approximately 26 000 women and children who suffered and died in British concentration camps during the South African Anglo-Boer War, is a classic example of this trend. Initiated in 1906 by the former Orange Free State President M.T. Steyn, the project was strongly supported by Emily Hobhouse, who had become a close ally of the Afrikaners due to her relentless efforts at bringing the plight of the Afrikaner women to the attention of the British. The main monument, consisting of a tall obelisk with a sculptural group and two relief plaques made by Anton van Wouw, was officially unveiled on 16 December 1913, but the commemorative precinct

evolved further during the following decades. The graves of three prominent men and two women were added from 1916-1955,[1] a museum was built and three more bronze sculptural groups – designed by Danie de Jager – were erected on the expansive grounds between 1983 and 1994.

As the monument complex stands today, all elements are carefully placed along a pre-determined path, describing for the visitor a journey through history. The story begins with an equestrian statue (unveiled in 1986) entitled '*Afskeid* (Farewell) 11-10-1899', showing an energetic Boer on horseback bidding farewell to his wife and child on the eve of the war. The visitor then walks towards the obelisk and graves along a *via dolorosa* lined with plaques that specify the number of women who died in different concentration camps. Next in line is the bronze group *Die Banneling* (Exile), unveiled in 1983, which extends the theme of Boer suffering in British concentration camps to include men, namely prisoners of war in different camps around the world. The path terminates further up the hill at *Die Bittereinder* 31/5/1902 (unveiled on 31/5/1994), showing the Boer protagonist again, now exhausted, gaunt and dressed in rags, his horse emaciated, but having fought to the bitter end. Visitors can then proceed to the museum, which places the suffering of the women into the larger historical context of the South African Anglo-Boer war.

Any visitor will quickly notice that the *Vrouemonument*, especially when including the museum and the three sculptural groups, is really more about men's than about women's experiences. Elsie Cloete's (1992) analysis of the language and contents found in the commemorative publications on the monument finds that throughout the decades the National Women's Monument served as an opportunity for Afrikaner men to make statements about women, defining and confining their role in Afrikaner society. A similar trend can be observed in the variegated aesthetic elements of the monument itself, in which women's experiences are framed and women's identities stereotyped in ways that support larger ideologically-charged readings of the Anglo-Boer war and associated visions of the Afrikaner 'nation'. Although Grundlingh (2000) insists that such an interpretation is coloured by the role the monument played in Afrikaner Nationalist discourses only much later, the visual and textual messages of the monument speak for themselves.

The relief plaques at the base of the obelisk, depicting emotional scenes of women's suffering in the camps, represent women as passive victims and martyrs, but also celebrate their resilience. In the large sculptural group in the centre, a seated woman with bare feet and a look of sadness, despair and exhaustion on her face embraces a dead child in her lap in evocation of the lamenting Mary holding the deceased Son of God. The implied 'message' of

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[1] According to van Tonder (1961), the burials occurred as follows: 1916 President Marthinus Theunis Steyn; 1922 General Christiaan Rudolf de Wet; 1926 Emily Hobhouse; 1941 Dr J.D. Kestell; 1955 Rachel Isabella Steyn.

this sculpture with its carefully calculated religious overtones and Christian iconographic references is one of suffering and martyrdom, but also ultimate triumph. The standing woman next to her, upright and 'properly' dressed in Voortrekker clothes, including the '*kappie*' or bonnet, which soon became the standard signifier of the traditional Afrikaner woman, speaks of women's determination to survive for the sake of the *volk*. This sculpture is considered one of the earliest examples of visually representing the Afrikaner ideology of the *volksmoeder*, which emerged during the early 20th century and associates women with the domestic sphere and particularly with child rearing – not only as mothers to their own children, but as mothers of the nation (van der Watt 1996).[2] The *volksmoeder* ideal was later articulated and reinforced in other public monuments, most notably in Van Wouw's own later work at the foot of the VTM.

The Women's Monument does not commemorate named individuals but the collective suffering and victimisation of all women, and by extension the Afrikaner *volk* as a whole. As it is a national monument, it was felt that differences in terms of class, economic welfare, politics and religion must be transcended (Cloete 1992: 1). Instead, the women's experiences are universalised and the women themselves are reduced to types, each closely allied with a functional role within the nation. Van Tonder (1961: 117) describes the Women's Monument as 'the most touching *volksmonument* in our country, a shrine for the Afrikaners'. The conceptualisation and implementation was hence a highly exclusive affair. Firstly, Steyn explicitly did not want the British to have any representation in the project. Secondly, it did not occur to anyone to involve or represent those many 'coloured' and black women who had also suffered in British concentration camps.

## Historical background of the Pretoria monument initiative

In comparison with the exclusive and male-dominated process of establishing the Bloemfontein monument, the Pretoria project appears to have been marked by inclusiveness and transparency. An open design competition was held at the end of 1999, which drew over sixty entries from a variety of artists and architects, male and female, black and white. Before the competition a process of consultation with several women's organisations (the Gender Commission, the ANC Women's League, etc.) took place and workshops were run with mostly women artists to help

[2] The *volksmoeder*, as an ideal vision of Afrikaner womanhood, was to a certain extent paradoxical. '[It] allowed women to be both active (like the courageous Voortrekker woman) and passive (like the silent victims of the concentration camps) as long as they acted in the domestic sphere or took up tasks associated with what were considered to be traditional feminine qualities – like the nurturing aspect of welfare work' (van der Watt 1996: 54).

participants with little experience in public art projects. The jury, selected by the Deputy Minister of the DACST, Brigitte Mabandla, consisted of a racially diverse group of members, most of whom were women.[3] The selected winning entry was created by a male architect, Marcus Holmes, and a female sculptor, Wilma Cruise (Callinicos, personal communication 2004; Coombes 2003).

Initially, however, the DACST did not envisage organising a design competition, but intended to simply appoint an artist or artistic team. Jane Alexander and Noria Mabaso were identified as most appropriate for the task and the artists were requested to complete a working model in time for 9 August 1998. The monument itself was meant to be unveiled in August 1999. While Alexander asked permission to join the project team at a later stage due to prior commitments, Mabaso had in fact been commissioned to develop a sculpture on the theme of '*Wathinta abafazi wathinta imbhokodo, uzokufa*' (sic).[4] It is not clear precisely what led to the delay in the proposed implementation schedule and the decision to open up the opportunity for wider participation in this symbolic tribute, but one factor may have been the wider debate emerging within the government at the time around the need to re-interpret the Union Buildings as the seat of the nation's executive powers.

> Union Buildings was designed to celebrate the achievement of the Union of South Africa in 1910 after years of strife, civil war and division amongst the settler population. But the reconciliation that took place in order to achieve this union excluded the majority of the population of South Africa, the blacks. The vision of the new state of that time was therefore narrow, racist and elitist. Clearly, the site will need to be reinterpreted in order to celebrate our newly democratic, inclusive state – in contrast to the older order – and to find a way of acknowledging the struggles that took place in order to achieve this.[5]

In a memorandum dated 14 September 1999 the DACST sought approval from Cabinet to implement the relocation, re-contextualisation and/or replacement of artworks, visual symbols and memorials at the Union Buildings. Moreover, a visitor exhibition, information and tourist centre was to be established 'to create a new identity appropriate to recent political changes and to represent the inclusive identity and ethos of the new

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[3] Adjudicators were Luli Callinicos, Bertha Gxowa, Rayda Becker, Bongi Dhlomo, David Brown, Patti MacDonald and Nazeem Mahetey (Mabandla 2000).

[4] Progress Report: Women's Monument Legacy Project. DG to the Minister, Undated, DAC, Women's Monument, Vol. 2, file 6/16/9.

[5] Towards a monument for the women of South Africa (project briefing document), Undated, DAC, Women's Memorial, Vol. 4, file 6/16/9: 7.

democracy'.[6] While the memorandum proposed that some of the existing artworks should be relocated and exhibited to the public in an appropriate venue, in future possibly the planned 'Apartheid museum' at Freedom Park, the removal or relocation of the plethora of exterior monuments and statues was deemed 'neither practicable nor desirable'.[7]

Photo 8.2 Central part of the Union Buildings in Pretoria with vestibule and amphitheatre.

Instead it was suggested that the current imbalances in the commemoration of leaders and events in the grounds of the Union Buildings should be addressed 'in a symbolic and cost-effective way' (ibid.). Although the Task Team suggested that a statue of Nelson Mandela be commissioned and installed on the spot where he was inaugurated as president,[8] a proposal that was never implemented, it is obvious that the National Monument to the Women of South Africa was the ideal (and especially 'cost-effective') solution to symbolically recoding the Union Buildings. The rededication was to be undertaken in three stages. Firstly, 'a new name should be ascribed to the site which will honour the women of South Africa'. This was accomplished on 9 August 1998, when the amphitheatre was renamed *Malibongwe Embokodweni* ('the place of the women'). Secondly, the competition for the

6 Shaping a new identity for the Union Buildings, Pretoria. Cabinet Memorandum, 14 September 1999, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 4, file 6/16/7.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

design of the Women's Monument would be announced. And thirdly, the winning design would be implemented.[9]

## Countering the *Vrouemonument*

The winning artists assert that their first and foremost concern was the creation of a work that would be conceptually and aesthetically different from the Eurocentric convention of commemorative public monuments in South Africa.[10] This tradition was epitomised in their view by the VTM, the icon of conservative, white, patriarchal Afrikaner culture, which is within the sight line of the Union Buildings. In contrast with the tradition of individual hero worship so common in older monuments, the objective of the National Monument for the Women of South Africa was to celebrate the democratic, collaborative and communal nature of the event and the ordinariness of its actors. While both the VTM and the Bloemfontein Women's Monument are bold, dominant constructions designed to command the surrounding landscape, the Pretoria Women's Monument is as unobtrusive as possible. It is conceptualised as fitting deferentially into an existing space – the vestibule in the centre of the Union Buildings, where the women had congregated to hand over their petition – taking care not to disturb the acknowledged quality of this architectural master-piece by Herbert Baker.

Instead of erecting a structure or creating a sculpture, the National Monument for the Women of South Africa utilises a rather small and humble 'found object' as its centre-piece, namely a grinding stone or *imbokodo*, which is unpretentiously placed on the floor of the vestibule. As a symbol of nurture and reproduction, an icon of women's culture, the *imbokodo* is an object used by women in every traditional African homestead to grind the maize, its anti-heroic stance stressing the ordinariness of the women to be honoured here. It also refers to the monument's title, 'Wathint' Abafazi Wathint' Imbokodo' – 'Strike the Woman Strike the Rock' – derived from the song the women were chanting during the protest and serving as a

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[9] Towards a monument for the women of South Africa (project briefing document), Undated, DAC, Women's Memorial, Vol. 4, file 6/16/9.

[10] This is also expressed in the team's own report of the project: 'We felt that whatever was done had to reflect that particular ability of women to organise democratically and communally. From the start we were clear as to what the monument would not be. It would not be a man-(or woman)-on-a-horse-on-a-pedestal in the heroic (some would say fascist) mould. That sort of monument would nor suit the project conceptually, neither would it formally fit the indicated site in the vestibule of the Union Buildings' (Cruise and Holmes 2000: 32).

metaphor of women's resilience.[11] Highly symbolic and meaningful to the event, as a visual object the grinding stone is also easily accessible and anti-elitist.[12] Its being placed in the vestibule, the very centre of the Union Buildings, this once white, male political preserve, adds to its significance, making a bold statement about women's equality (Becker 2000).

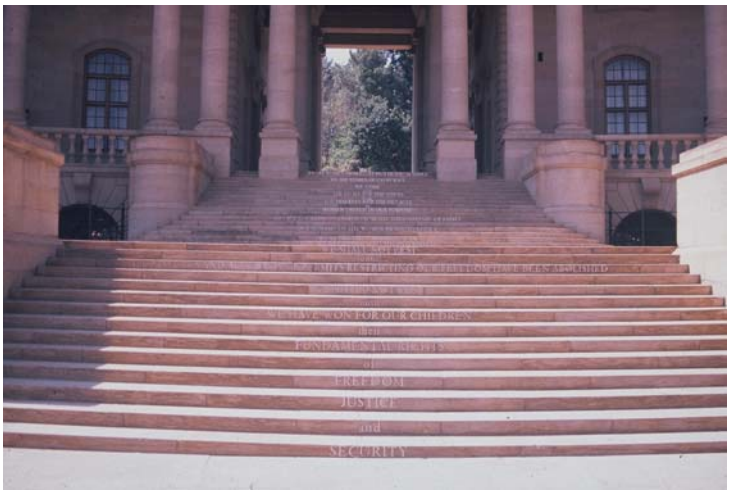


Photo 8.3 National Monument for the Women of South Africa, Pretoria.Stairs with petition text. Photographed in 2002.

[11] An interesting linguistic analysis of the translation of this motto has been conducted by Mdululi (1997). While the rock is also a symbol of solidity and unity, Mdululi highlights that the essential theme here is the petrification of the male hero in front of, or caused by, a woman's body. Mdululi points out similarities with Irish myths and concludes (perhaps a bit rashly) that this is indeed a universal theme. Callinicos (personal e-mail communication 2004) furthermore points out that the word 'rock' is a rather inadequate translation for the grinding stone that the song refers to. The power of the imbokodo (which consists of both the stone and the receptacle) lies in the fact that 'it has the power, over time and with skill, to crush, as the women warned the Prime Minister' (ibid.).

[12] 'The panel [of adjudicators] was of the opinion that the sculptural meaning of the centrepiece would be immediately understood by the public. The simplicity of the imbokodo, its traditional function and association with the nurturing role of women, particularly in the rural areas where it continues to be used daily, all combine to convey a direct and evocative message'. Findings of the Adjudication Panel for the Competition for the Monument to the Women of South Africa. DAC, Women's Monument, Vol. 12, file 6/16/9.

The conceptual accessibility of the centre-piece is backed up by an audio component, whereby the line 'Strike the Woman Strike the Rock' is repeated in all eleven official languages 'as if', according to the artists, 'the women are whispering down the tunnel of history' (Cruise and Holmes 2000: 33; Cruise undated). The sound component is an unusual and unexpected aspect of the monument, which can be interpreted as alluding to the predominance of orality in African traditional culture and challenges the conventional predominance of the visual sense and the (voyeuristic) gaze, much in line with current trends in contemporary art production. It also serves as another device of inclusive identification, as it 'addresses' diverse audiences in their mother tongue. The text of the petition handed over by the women is mounted in metal block letters onto the steps of the grand flight of stairs leading up to the vestibule.

Photo 8.4 National Monument for the Women of South Africa, Pretoria, imbokodo, photographed in 2002.

Although the artists themselves never explicitly made this reference, I argue that the Monument to the Women of South Africa is an inclusive, post-apartheid response to the exclusive *Nasionale Vrouemonument* (as well as the VTM and other Afrikaner Nationalist monuments), whose dominant visual signifiers it inverts. If the tall obelisk of the Bloemfontein monument, which Cloete (1992: 8) called 'the transcendental signifier of a phallocentric volks-metaphysic', can be interpreted as a male symbol, the grinding stone in Pretoria is a female symbol, a receptacle. Being small and placed on the

ground, it appears submissive, unobtrusive and unpretentious, just as the obelisk is ostentatious, domineering, commanding attention and power.[13]

Yet the emphasis on 'difference' camouflages many discursive similarities between the *Nasionale Vrouemonument* and the Monument for the Women of South Africa. For instance, both commemorate women collectively, in a societal context dominated by public monuments dedicated to named male individuals. Both monuments praise women's virtues and contribution to the nation as defined by the socio-political values of the current order: in Bloemfontein as resilient mothers, in Pretoria as active participants and indeed initiators of resistance campaigns. The jury lauded the winning design for the way in which it celebrates 'the agency of women, as evidenced by their courageous initiative in 1956' (Callinicos, Jury report 2000). In fact, many artists participating in the design competition focused precisely on this aspect, producing dynamic images of women with their arms raised, recalling the tired vocabulary of the heroic socialist monument tradition. One of the most outrageous entries (in my opinion) consisted of a realistically rendered nude female torso with broad hips topped by a disproportionately large clenched fist in *lieu* of a head.[14]

## Inclusions/exclusions

Newspaper reports largely praised the Women's Monument, hailing it as 'the first of its kind in the country, and the first for all women'. Luli Callinicos, one of the competition judges, was quoted as saying that the monument was dedicated 'to all women in civil society' (Regchand 2000).[15] Indeed the competition briefing document specified that the new monument should become a tribute to 'the women of South Africa' and Rayda Becker, another competition judge, explained with reference to the competition entry form that the site acknowledges 'all the women of South Africa, black, brown and white' (Becker 2000: 1). However, being a national heritage project and integrally linked with the post-apartheid foundation myth, the Pretoria Women's Monument certainly does not represent 'all women', but all women who resisted apartheid and played a role in the meta-narrative of the struggle for liberation.

Mirroring the exclusion of black women from representation in the *Nasionale Vrouemonument*, and in fact from the 'nation', the new Monument for the Women of South Africa implicitly excludes a considerable section of the (white) female population, namely all of those

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[13] See Luli Callinicos' comment in note 10. The 'rock' component, loosely placed inside the shallow bowl, was missing when I first visited the monument in 2003.

[14] Some of the competition entries were published in Beeld, see Fourie (2000).

[15] Newspaper coverage of this monument includes Anonymous 2000; Rohan 2000; Fourie 2000; and Regchand 2000.

who actively supported the Nationalists, those who tacitly approved of racial discrimination, or those who didn't condone apartheid but quietly enjoyed the personal privileges that the system reserved for them. As in the case of Freedom Park and other components of the National Legacy Project, these women are, however, invited to identify with the monument. By acknowledging and sympathising – even if only retrospectively – with the celebrated 'mothers of the nation' and the noble cause of their courageous protest, the monument offers all women (and men) a chance to share in the new narrative of the nation.

While the cited exclusions are obviously justified and necessary to make the National Monument for the Women of South Africa meaningful as a tribute to the many courageous women who made sacrifices and took personal risks to resist oppressive apartheid legislation, other types of exclusions are more problematic. Despite aiming at accessibility and anti-elitism, the monument is arguably quite restricted in its visual language and symbolism. For instance, the grinding stone is a reference solely to African culture and does not do justice to the remarkable show of unity between women of all racial backgrounds that characterised this historical event. Some critics also felt that the traditional, rural associations of grinding stones were limiting and did not represent the advances made by women since 1956 (Becker 2000: 8). The emphasis placed on the text component – not merely an inscription, but an integral part of the monument – excludes many of those very same people, whose mothers or grandmothers the monument is meant to honour. At the inauguration, a number of women criticised the monument's lack of monumentality, suggesting that they either did not understand or appreciate the point about the work's intimacy of scale and deliberately understated nature (Coombes 2003: 108).

In comparison with the stunning computer-generated photographic impression of the model[16] published in the architectural magazine *SA Architect* (Cruise and Holmes 2000), the visual experience of the National Monument for the Women of South Africa is highly disappointing. In plain daylight the stone is nothing more than a simple, ordinary object – unglamorous and hardly noticeable. It was immediately ridiculed by the media for its inconspicuousness and its iconographic references.[17] As

[16] The DACST had contracted the CSIR to design a computer-generated, three-dimensional model of the competition entries set in the designated space (Anonymous 2000f). This was meant to assist adjudicators in their decision making process, but in the case of the winning design, it may actually have misled the jury.

[17] E.g. Bristow-Bovey (2000): 'The dignitaries all trooped by to inspect the monument. I was eager to see it myself. Then I realized that I had been looking at it for 10 minutes without recognising it. It was a stone bowl on the floor. Inside the stone bowl was a rounded rock. An unsuspecting pilgrim looking for a monument might bark his shin on it and still be none the wiser. … I am not a

Callinicos concedes, the jury may not have realised that the item is perhaps too small-scale in relation to the vestibule space to have the desired impact (personal communication 2004).[18] At the time of my first visit, it was furthermore soiled by the droppings of pigeons that nested in the loudspeakers above, and invited usage as an ashtray or rubbish bin. The sound component was soon turned off following complaints by office staff. 'It is nothing short of a disgrace', lamented Wilma Cruise (personal communication 2003).

Worst of all, although the site chosen for the monument is most apt in terms of the historical event it commemorates and can be considered a place of honour,[19] it effectively precludes the monument from public accessibility since the introduction of new security measures shortly after its unveiling. Poor communication between the DACST and the Department of Public Works, which is in charge of the management of the Union Buildings, including the security arrangements, led to an embarrassing impasse in February 2000. Only days before the official announcement of the winners of the competition, initially scheduled for 29 February, DACST officials were informed that the site of the National Monument for the Women of South Africa and the project to shape a new identity for the Union Buildings was completely impractical in terms of security measures, which had already

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woman, so I am possibly not qualified to speak, but I was a little surprised that the women's monument is, in fact, a monument to making supper. The functionary [of the department of arts and culture] explained that making supper is symbolic of throwing off the shackles of the oppressor, among many other things, but the fact remains that the women of South Africa are being celebrated by a stone-age food processor. What will the next monument be? A frying pan? A broom?'

[18] The report of the adjudication panel states: 'The size and elevation of the central feature of the monument, the imbokodo should be further investigated with the view to its optimal elevation and display within the vestibule. Should a larger than normal size be decided on, this may necessitate a commissioned piece by a rural woman artist rather than a found object as suggested in the proposal'. Findings of the Adjudication Panel for the Competition for the Monument to the Women of South Africa. DAC, Women's Monument, Vol12, file 6/16/9. Cruise recalls having officially been requested to raise the imbokodo before its installation, but she refused as this ran counter to her artistic intentions. In 2006 she was again asked to raise and encase the monument, as well as possibly add a figurative element, but the artist firmly stood her ground (Younge and Cruise 2008).

[19] '… it is appropriate to locate a national monument to women at the core of the democratically elected government's buildings, and so place our women in a central place of acknowledgement'. Towards a monument for the women of South Africa (project briefing document). Undated, DAC, Women's Memorial, Vol. 4, file 6/16/9: 6.

been planned for some time and were now going to be implemented.[20] The DACST nevertheless proceeded with its plan to place the Women's Monument in what was then declared a high security area. It was agreed that the monument could be visited under conditions of controlled access, but in practice this model has clearly failed. Unless security clearance is obtained prior to the visit, tourists, the general public and even the very women whom this monument is dedicated to are effectively excluded from viewing it.[21]

Despite the artists' good intentions, the Monument for the Women of South Africa ultimately strikes me as overly academic, rational, dry and 'belaboured' in its eagerness to be different. Made by an academically-trained female artist and an established architect, it is too obviously a textbook-like application of all of the basic tenets of post-structuralist theory, postmodernism and postcolonial discourses. One can also criticise the winning entry as a patronising attempt, emanating from privileged spaces, to speak on behalf of those less advantaged, whose voices remain silent. This is highlighted by comparison with some of the other competition entries, most notably the highly inclusive proposal by Andrew Lindsay.

Lindsay's competition entry envisaged working with as many women as possible, especially from rural areas and otherwise marginalised communities, who were to interpret the protest march in any medium, including mosaic, sculpture and even poetry. The best pieces would have been installed in the park in front of the Union Buildings – resembling a journey with stopping points, analogous to the journey the women took in 1956. As the intention was to make as many voices heard as possible in order for the work to become truly democratic, even some of the other competition entries could easily have been incorporated (Lindsay, personal conversation 2002). The jury indeed liked this proposal and recommended its implementation in the park in addition to the winning monument design for the vestibule, perhaps at a later date (Jury report 2000). Unfortunately, the DACST never followed up on this recommendation.[22]

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[20] Legacy Projects: Women's Monument and the Shaping of a New Identity for the Union Buildings. Letter to Director-General by Officers concerned. Undated. DAC. Women's Monument, Vol.7, file 6/16/9.

[21] At the time of the competition, the site was still generally accessible. Yet due to security concerns, the entire area was closed off shortly afterwards. Although visitors should theoretically be granted access after having identified themselves at the security gate, I personally encountered great difficulties when trying to visit the monument for the first time. A more recent attempt to visit failed completely when the person in charge of granting permission was on leave for the day. It can be assumed that visitors arriving in large groups will have even greater problems. Certainly, lack of knowledge about what procedures are required to gain access functions as a deterrent from visiting the monument.

[22] The panel of adjudicators also recommended that entry No 28, submitted by Anton Roodt, should be considered by the DACST as an additional companion

## Under-representation of women's contributions

If one considers the Horse Monument in Port Elizabeth, the Police Dog Monument in Durban, and the Uppington Monument installed in honour of camels, one may get the impression that South Africans historically considered animals more worthy of public commemoration than women. Indeed, apart from statues of Queen Victoria, which are emblems of empire rather than public reminders of an extraordinary woman, virtually all public statuary in South Africa (as in other countries) represents male leaders. Among the few exceptions are statues of the remarkable wives of those leaders, notably Maria de la Queillerie, wife of Jan van Riebeck in Cape Town and, in Potchefstroom, Magdalena Retief, wife of the Voortrekker leader Piet Retief.[23]

If this public landscape of memorialisation historically shaped by men around the memory of men was a symbolic manifestation of a patriarchal society, the post-apartheid state's commitment to a society based on principles of gender equality should impact on the reshaping of the symbolic landscape. However, the vast majority of statues and portrait busts, memorials and monuments erected throughout the country remain dedicated to male political activists or resistance leaders. This raises the suspicion that the Pretoria Women's Monument is primarily a patronising token gesture intended to 'cover' women's contributions and implicitly exonerating those who promote gender-exclusive monument initiatives and masculine value systems.

As stated earlier, the new South African Constitution, one of the world's most liberal and progressive, places strong emphasis on gender equality. The ruling party has a historical and current commitment to women's equality and various high-ranking political officials regularly speaking up on behalf of women's rights. President Thabo Mbeki himself publicly acknowledged the need to pay tribute 'to our mothers, sisters and daughters who were and

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piece to the winning entry. It was recommended that Roodt rework the proposal for implementation at Strijdom Square, where it would have served to recontextualise the existing apartheid-era Strijdom monument. As the latter collapsed soon after – as mentioned in Chapter Five – nothing came of this recommendation. Women's Monument Project: Ratification of the adjudicators' recommendation'. Letter DG to Deputy Minister, 28 February 2000. DAC Women's Monument, Vol.6, file 6/16/9; Findings of the Adjudication Panel for the Competition for the Monument to the Women of South Africa. DAC, Women's Monument, Vol.12, file 6/16/9.

[23] Other examples include a simple monument in front of the N.G. church in Rouxville commemorating the Voortrekker heroine, Johanna van der Merwe (Nienaber and le Roux 1982), a statue of Nurse Henrietta Stockdale in Kimberley, and a statue of a generic female teacher at a teacher training college in Pretoria.

are equal combatants for the all-round liberation of all our people' (Rohan 2000).[24] But in reality South African society remains conservative and imbued with patriarchal values – among both the black and the white sectors of the population. Indeed, on the occasion of the official announcement of the competition winner in March 2000, the Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Brigitte Mabandla, acknowledged on behalf of the government that the 'struggle for the emancipation of women still remains a great challenge' and that the new monument 'should serve not only as a celebration of our women folk's contribution, but it must always be a reminder of the challenges that we face in advancing our agenda of women's emancipation' (Mabandla 2000).

Despite much official talk to the contrary, contemporary South African society as a whole and black African society in particular are still based on patriarchal value systems and attached to stereotypical gender roles. These are often deeply rooted in African traditionalism and were carried over (albeit modified) into Black Consciousness ideology and African nationalism. As Chipkin (2007: 119) explains, when Steve Biko called the 'black man' to action, 'man' is not meant to be a synonym for human being.[25] Women could simply not be imagined or taken seriously as political activists.

Despite this attitude, the South African anti-apartheid struggle was in fact distinguished by the high level of involvement of women in comparison with liberation wars in other countries, especially on the African continent. Yet the under-representation and even erasure of women's contributions to the struggle can be found in a variety of forums and media – for instance in murals (Khan 2003), in films (Tomaselli 1996),[26] or even in the TRC

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[24] He singled out stalwart women activists such as Dora Tamana, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Mary Moodley, Dorothy Nyembe, Ida Mntwana, Ray Alexander, Florence Mophosho, Ruth First and Albertina Sisulu (Rohan 2000).

[25] 'Let us note that the frequent masculine injunctive "men" in Biko's writings, above, is not just stylistic. "Man" is not a synonym for human being and a "black man" does not just signify a black human being. When Biko calls the "black man" to action, that is exactly what he means. In treating black alienation as an affair of white racism, or in Fanon's terms, the "white gaze", neither Biko nor Fanon take seriously or, for that matter, can take seriously the black woman. She is not simply produced and reproduced through a white gaze. She is overdetermined through a male gaze too. By making freedom, therefore, contingent on the dissolution of the white gaze, Black Consciousness (and Fanon's "Third Worldism") forsakes the woman to patriarchy. Indeed, Biko goes one step further. In returning to a "pure African culture" does he not, indeed, valorize patriarchy as a condition of freedom?' (Chipkin 2007: 119).

[26] Coombes (2003: 106) notes that the lack of acknowledgement of women's contributions to the liberation struggle has often struck her. She mentions the example of a planned film series, Women in the Struggle (directed by Barry

hearings as mentioned earlier (McEwan in Lester 2003; Ross, F. 2008).[27] The trend is not unique to South Africa. In the African-American context, scholars frequently criticise the marginalisation of women in past and current discourses relating to black emancipation. James (1999) points out that male activists tend to receive public recognition for their speeches, deeds and sometimes militant action in the African-American experience of the struggle for emancipation and liberation, while female activists, who are often more focused on social programmes, rarely become icons and tend rather to be viewed as appendages to male initiatives and endeavours. Unsurprisingly the memorialisation of the Civil Rights movement in the United States is developed around the 'Great Man' paradigm of history, in which women hardly feature (Dwyer 2006; Romano and Raiford 2006).

Cloete (1992: 5) argues that the *Nasionale Vrouemonument* turns women into a muted group – 'muted by the internalisation of the language used to describe them', which focuses on their mental and physical frailty. Although the Pretoria Monument celebrates women, on the contrary, precisely for their agency and robustness, I argue that in a different way it also mutes women, because they now have been spoken for. The National Women's Monument functions, as Spivak and Gunew expressed it in a different context, as a 'secure alibi' to show that 'we have covered that' (quoted in During 1993: 195). Being classified as a project of national significance, the Monument for the Women of South Africa becomes a convenient excuse for the under-representation of women in local level commemorative tributes – as I have personally experienced in interviews and informal conversations with male political officials and community leaders.

## Criteria for heroism

It is also striking to note how male-dominated many monument committees appear to be and how in that way past gender bias is invariably replicated, because men are primarily concerned about the recognition of their own and one another's contributions. In the same manner, male values and criteria for heroism are being replicated. As Aleida Assmann (2003: 61) aptly puts it, 'greatness' is a property invented by men for men. While women participated in all kinds of ways in the project of resistance against colonial and apartheid oppression, it remains largely men who determine to what extent

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Feinberg in 1993/4), for which no funding could be found beyond the production of a ten-minute preview.

[27] Lester (2003: 611) discusses Cheryl McEwan's research (in the same volume), which criticises the ways in which black women's stories have been marginalised in the TRC process and her insistence that women's representations of the past be given more prominence in the collective imagination of the post-apartheid South African nation.

they will receive recognition and what kind of recognition, what deed deserves public acknowledgement, and which woman can be considered a hero. Men derive their terms of reference for such judgements from their own realm of experience, notably the traditionally male-dominated spheres of warfare and political activism. This is also mirrored in the TRC hearings, where the emphasis on 'gross violations of human rights' resulted in accounts of events that were heavily focused on the death, torture, abduction and damage to male activists, while women's activities, contributions, suffering, the harm done to them and their children were largely excluded even when women themselves gave testimony (Ross, F. 2008: 239).

This is also the reason why the 'imagined community' conjured up at Freedom Park has scores of 'founding fathers' but very few 'mothers of the nation'. The symbolic representation of a progressively envisaged nation at Freedom Park is conservatively cast in the mould of a patriarchal convention promoting gender bias. The concept of creating a site in tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for freedom and humanity is ultimately derived from the historical tradition of war memorials and heroes' acres, which honour death in the context of military conflict, and legitimate the loss of life by pointing to higher moral objectives. This discourse is extended at Freedom Park and adjusted to the needs of the post-apartheid state by celebrating political activism and passive resistance, but not (as the evidence on the Wall of Names shows) explicitly the vital supporting and nurturing roles frequently played by women.

By conducting a protest march, drafting a petition and excelling in mass mobilisation, the women to whom the Pretoria Monument is really dedicated meet men's criteria of being courageous resistance fighters. Women who have contributed in other ways – by nurturing the wounded, lending moral and emotional support to activists, or providing shelter to those on the run – are hardly acknowledged. Even those women who actively fought as MK soldiers, who led marches or spent time in prison, sometimes report resentment over marginalisation by their own comrades.[28] In 1995 women from the ANC and other organisations severely criticised the organisers of a former Robben Island political prisoners' reunion for the complete omission of women's contributions to the liberation struggle (Coombes 2003: 105). As in Bloemfontein, the Pretoria Women's Monument casts women in a particular role and locks them into a discourse not necessarily of their own making. Once again the women's issue has been appropriated to serve a specific national political agenda, infused with the values of a patriarchal society.

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[28] This is described, for instance, by Emma Mashinini, political activist in the trade union (see Schalkwyk 2000: 288). Suttner's (2008) new book on the ANC Underground also explores the role of women in the organisation and the discriminination, harassment and abuse they had to contend with.

## Commemorating remarkable women throughout the nation

Where else in South Africa can we find memorial tributes to memorable women? The proposed inclusion of Sarah Bartmann in the new Legacy Project was referred to in Chapter Six, but her memorialisation beyond the burial site poses unique challenges – both conceptually and formally. South African communities frequently consider a realistically rendered life-size bronze statue the most honourable form of enshrining the memory of respected persons, but in Sarah Bartmann's case, this might constitute the ultimate affront, given the morally tainted history of her body cast and the circumstances of (and intentions behind) its production. Cape Town artist Willie Bester's abstracted work entitled *Sarah Bartmann* (2000), welded together from an array of mechanical metal parts, acknowledges precisely the problematic nature of representing Bartmann and specifically the literal reproduction of her physical features. It remains to be seen what kind of memorial (if any) will eventually be installed to pay tribute to Sarah Bartmann and what will happen to her body cast, which was ceremonially clothed as an act of restoring her dignity on the occasion of her interment in 2002.

Sarah Bartmann has become a national icon, symbolising the innocence of the indigenous people versus the inhumanity of colonialism and the moral baseness of those professing to represent the 'master-race'. The fact that Bartmann may have agreed to the exhibition of her naked body and accepted payment for the service does not diminish the violation of her dignity and the deplorable nature of her employer's enterprise. But I cannot help thinking of those thousands of nameless female victims of slavery during Sarah Bartmann's time and many decades before, who suffered unspeakable emotional and physical trauma, who were habitually raped by their masters for years on end, some of whom may have been forced to parade naked in front of their master's friends at dinner parties, then perhaps gang-raped. Although the former slave lodge in Cape Town has been turned into a museum and the new slave memorial has recently been unveiled in Church Square, no memorial has yet been erected or proposed to pay specific tribute to these women, who in my view constitute the ultimate, silent victims of colonialism.

During the first decade of democracy only one full-length, slightly under life-size statue dedicated to a woman was set up anywhere in the country, and this project was not a South African government initiative. I'm referring to the so-called 'Lady in White', unveiled on a site in the Durban harbour in 1995, which commemorates the legendary South African artist, Perla Siedle Gibson (1888-1971), international concert soprano, classical pianist and portrait painter, who sang to the crews of ships coming into the Durban harbour during World War II. Improving the morale of countless service

men, she reportedly never missed a ship from April 1940 to August 1945, even on the day she was informed about the death of her eldest son in Italy.

Photo 8.5 Lady in White, Durban, Harbour, unveiled in 1995.

In 1991 her life story was published in England by Sam Morley, himself a war veteran, as a result of which the following year a party of 34 British war veterans travelled to Durban for a memorial service at the harbour pier. They initiated discussions with the harbour authorities about a monument and set up the Lady in White Monument Fund in 1992. Many British and some South African veterans contributed, as well as the Queen Mother. Durban-based sculptor Barbara Siedle, Gibson's niece, was commissioned to create the statue, which she largely based on photographs. On a state visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip in March 1995 the statue was temporarily set up for a private viewing in the HMS 'Britannia' and later installed on T-jetty next to the Portnet offices, where it was unveiled on 15

August 1995 (Siedle personal communication 2005; Goodwin personal communication 2005; Durban's Lady in White official brochure, undated).

The 'Lady in White' constitutes an exceptional incident within the larger post-apartheid commemorative project and does not really represent its ethos.[29] Since the Durban harbour, like the Union Buildings in Pretoria, has been cordoned off for security reasons, the statue is virtually inaccessible to the public today. However, Siedle is grateful that local authorities provided a site for the statue at all, which – she believes – would no longer be possible in the current political climate marked by African nationalism and concerns over 'political correctness' (personal conversation 2005).[30]

It appears that there are more public markers dedicated to the memory of remarkable women in Durban, part of the eThekwini Municipality, than in any other city in South Africa, but upon closer examination each of these projects is problematic and ambiguous it its own right. The Wall of Hope or Memorial for Gugu Dlamini, the young woman who had helped educate local communities in Durban about HIV/Aids, is a case in point.

When Dlamini publicly revealed her HIV positive status as part of a campaign of Acceptance and Disclosure in 1998, she was brutally assaulted by a mob, which resulted in her death on 14 December 1998 at the age of 36. On 1 December 2000, World Aids Day, Central Park in the heart of Durban was renamed in Dlamini's honour and the memorial, initiated by the City Council[31] and made by local artists Jeremy Wafer and Georgia Sarkin (with

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[29] The only commemorative project in honour of a woman that expresses the post-apartheid city council's ethos is a sculptural tribute to the late local 'struggle hero', Florence Mkhize. Mounted on a make-shift plinth, the approximately life-size bronze bust (unveiled in 2005, and made by Zama Dunywa, a recent graduate from the Durban Institute of Technology), is inconspicuously set up, not in the public arena, but inside the waiting hall of the eThekwini city treasurer's building in Smith Street renamed in Mkhize's honour – formerly the Martin West building). Florence Mkhize or 'Mam Flo' had joined the ANC at a young age and later became a member of MK. In the 1996 local elections she was elected ward councilor for the township of Lamontville south of Durban (ANC KNZ 1999; Maphumulo and Kleinbooi 2005).

[30] If she is right, this could explain why the Portuguese community in Durban has been unsuccessful – despite much effort – in obtaining a public site for an over life-size bronze bust of Vasco da Gama, also made by Barbara Siedle and completed in 1997, which is still being stored at the Portuguese Club (Siedle, personal communication 2005; da Silva, personal communication 2005).

[31] Ngcobo (personal communication 2004) explains that the Provincial Department of Health was not involved in the project and the non-governmental organisation, People Living with Aids, was actually against the memorial. They tried to stop the initiative on the grounds that Dlamini was not really an Aids activist and she was not to be held up as a model because of her lifestyle (multiple partners, etc.). However, the council argued that the memorial does not commemorate how she lived, but how she died.

the participation of Bronwen Findlay and Jane du Rand) was conceived as a focal point in the rededicated park (Coombes 2003: 112; and original memorial dedication plaque).

Photo 8.6 Wall of Hope (Gugu Dlamini memorial), Gugu Dlamini Park, Durban. Photographed in 2001.

As in the case of the National Monument for the Women of South Africa, the artists rejected the notion of constructing an object in favour of creating a contemplative space, working with the land and shaping a mound out of earth. But because the city wanted 'something more concrete, not so esoteric' (Wafer, personal communication 2001), a commemorative wall, clearly inspired by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) in Washington D.C., was added to cut into the mound. The completed memorial consists of a symmetrically descending, concave plastered wall encircling a mosaicised space into which an existing opaque circular skylight for the parking garage underneath is cleverly incorporated. The light adds a mysterious, perhaps spiritual element, especially at night when light shines through. According to Wafer it can be interpreted as 'memory coming to light / shining through, but also suppressing of memory' (Wafer, personal communication 2001).

Anyone who has visited the VVM will recall the numerous flowers and other kinds of small offerings that people habitually leave behind at the base of the memorial wall. To encourage a similar practice at the Gugu Dlamini memorial, the wall was equipped with small projecting ledges, forming little niches for offerings, which were supposed to be collected regularly by staff from the nearby KwaMuhle Local History Museum.

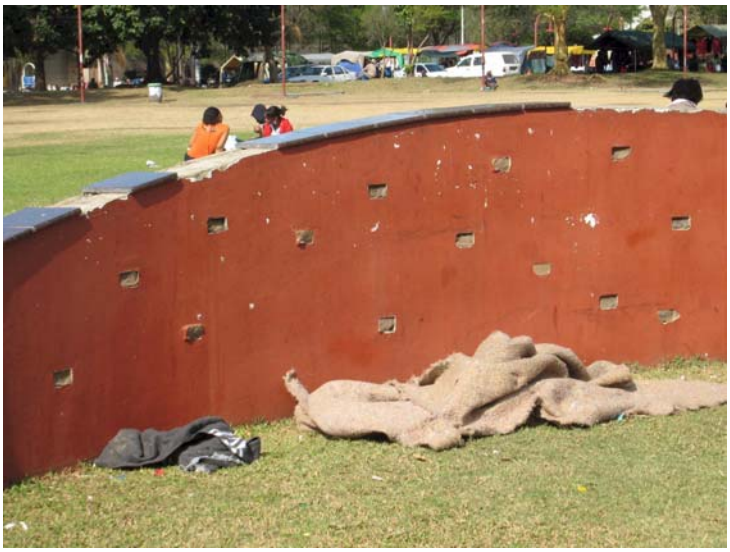

Photo 8.7 Vandalized Gugu Dlamini memorial Durban. Photographed in 2007.

However, nobody left such offerings, and the niches were instead used as stepping stones for climbing onto the memorial wall. Meanwhile, every single one of these ledges is broken off, suggesting acts of systematic and deliberate vandalism rather than accidental damage. In fact, by the end of the year 2004 virtually every aspect of the Gugu Dlamini memorial had been vandalised and there is persistent visual and olfactory evidence of the wall's common usage as a public urinal. The removal of all of the text plaques has furthermore rendered the meaning of the memorial inaccessible.

One might argue that such treatment speaks not only of disrespect and contempt, but represents a metaphorical act of violation that parallels the original killing of Dlamini. Clearly, for those responsible the stigma of Aids is far from broken as to them Dlamini symbolises shame, and vandalising her memorial is perhaps an attempt at obliterating her disgraceful memory. The so-called Wall of Hope, like the memorial for Amy Biehl, is hence an ambiguous marker, likely to rouse strong opinions and disconcerting sentiments among many viewers, albeit for different reasons.

The Gugu Dlamini memorial must be understood in the context of South Africa's unabated HIV/Aids crisis and President Thabo Mbeki's reluctance to take decisive action on the issue. Although I'm digressing slightly here, I want to point out that despite the staggering number of people dying from Aids-related illnesses, there are only very few public memorials for Aids victims in South Africa today, all of which are small, cheap, inconspicuous

and ill-respected.[32] Although the popular fight against the pandemic has appropriated the rhetoric of the liberation struggle (consider slogans such as 'Aids – the new Struggle', or 'Unite against Aids'), the symbolic level of public memory remains almost exclusively reserved for victims of the political struggle. Given Mbeki's skepticism and denialist attitude towards the disease, notably his apparent belief that HIV does not cause Aids, the establishment of public markers in memory of Aids victims could be interpreted as an affirmation of mainstream discourses about HIV/Aids and hence as a political statement in opposition to the Presidency. One might imagine what kind of effect an Aids memorial similar in scale and stature to the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum might have as a symbolic focus and geographical rallying point for groups such as the Treatment Action Campaign and other factions representing the interests of those affected by the disease, in mobilising their opposition to the government.

## Humility and other visual characteristics of women's memorials

Monuments and memorials always 'speak' to us through textual and visual signifiers, sometimes conveying 'messages' somewhat at odds with what they were intended to symbolise. Focusing on aesthetic issues, I briefly want to compare the Gugu Dlamini memorial with the Australian Servicewomen's Memorial in the sculpture garden of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The garden contains a large number of war memorials relating to

[32] In Cape Town, for instance, a small tombstone painted white with a red ribbon was set up in a flower bed in the Company Gardens. Next to the Electric Workshop in Newtown, Johannesburg, a simple Aids memorial wall was unveiled by Brigitte Mabandla on 1 December 1998 (Thom and Ndlovu 1998). In the centre an Aids ribbon frames a small relief of two hands caringly holding a third hand, a motif that freely adapts the popular conventional tombstone emblem of the wreath framing praying hands. Small bronze plaques have randomly been mounted onto individual bricks, inscribed by various people in different handwritings. Some contain generic messages (e.g. 'In memory of all the children'), others seemingly address specific individuals, but ultimately always withholding their identity (e.g. 'Dear Cyril. Rest in peace' or simply 'Molefi'), a fact that conveys a sense of ambiguity and caution, perhaps fear. When construction work commenced adjacent to the Newtown Aids memorial a few years later, the site around the memorial was fenced in and used as storage for building materials and equipment. At a site visit in mid-2004, staff in the nearby restaurant was convinced that the memorial was still there, hidden from view by the timber enclosure, but it had in fact been completely dismantled some time before without anybody noticing. It is hard to imagine that this could have happened to a memorial dedicated to victims of apartheid repression. One gets the impression that this Aids memorial was not seen as important or imposing a moral duty of respect.

all international wars in which Australians were involved,[33] but the Servicewomen memorial, unveiled on 27 March 1999 and made by Sydney sculptor, Anne Ferguson, specifically commemorates 'all women who served, suffered and died in the defence of Australia' (Australian Servicewomen's Memorial website).

A square concrete slab with a mosaic surface made of multi-coloured granite stones collected from all over Australia is intersected by a deep curved groove filled with water. According to the attached explanatory plaque, one side of the 'river' represents the pre-World War II period, where dark colours evoke the ominous clouds of war, while the other side represents service after 1945 with lighter colours referring to peace. While the website suggests that the mosaic platform 'represents a carpet laid by women' (ibid.), one may also be reminded of traditional Aborigine visual representations of 'dreamings' with their condensed (originary) representation of key features of the land. Visitors are invited to walk on the surface of the memorial, hence becoming part of this symbolic landscape and its (re)creation.

It is possible, although perhaps unlikely, that the artists involved in the Gugu Dlamini memorial had seen images of the Australian Servicewomen's memorial. However, astounding parallels emerge if one compares the latter with most other war memorials in the same garden and the Gugu Dlamini memorial (as well as the National Monument for the Women of South Africa) with other post-apartheid commemorative markers. It appears that whenever women are the subject of dedication, artists seek to express 'difference' in their formal language and consciously try to transcend the time-honoured conventions of commemorative design, so intricately interwoven with the tradition of male-centered public memorialisation. As monuments the world over share common characteristics of design, a more comprehensive comparative study may find that women's memorials likewise show affinities, including perhaps a trend towards understatement and humility: elements arranged low down on the ground, close to the earth, in contradistinction to the tradition of domineering (phallic) objects and structures; a penchant for working with the elements of nature; and a fondness for employing colourful surfaces, such as the mosaic, in allusion perhaps to traditional women's crafts, such as quilting, embroidery and other types of handiwork.

Like works of fine art made by women, especially first generation feminist artists, such formal characteristics are meant to celebrate what is perhaps perceived as honourable female qualities, but – possibly contrary to

[33] Examples include 'Bomber Command' (Neil Dawson, 2005), a memorial commemorating members of bomber commands in WWII; or 'Australian Serviceman' (Ray Ewers, 1954; moved to the sculpture garden in 1995) commemorating the sacrifices of Australians in all wars.

the artist's objective – also promote essentialism and stereotypes about women. In the case of the Monument for the Women of South Africa, a certain expectation of modesty and understatement was seen to be fitting for a monument dealing with 'women's issues'. This is evident from the NMC's response to the DACST's application (in February 1999) officially seeking permission to make changes to the Union Buildings as a registered national monument by adding the proposed women's monument. The NMC, drawing on its 'Criteria for the Evaluation of Changes and Related Interventions at National Monuments', supplied the DACST with a list of specific guidelines for the conceptualisation of the women's monument. With respect to scale, the NMC recommended: 'The event that is to be commemorated deals with social, humane and women's issues. An oversized monolith is considered inappropriate'.[34]

Of course, critics deem an oversized monolith inappropriate for any commemorative task, but in South Africa greatness of scale is frequently considered a requisite for greatness of significance, as the next chapter will demonstrate. In the case of the Pretoria Women's Monument, some viewers will understand and appreciate the artists' intention behind the modest visual appearance, especially those with an intellectual and experiential background similar to that of the artists, but many others won't, because their yardstick for an honorable form of memorialisation is the existing corpus of monuments and their established markers of monumentality and dignity. The point is that although monuments are works of public art, they are also clearly different from art, fulfilling a different societal function and frequently being measured according to different criteria.

## Conclusion

The Monument for the Women of South Africa is a noteworthy and thought-provoking work, important as a conscious attempt to seek a unique, creative design that would do justice to a new "Afrocentric" post-apartheid identity. The artists' benchmark and reference point was the male-dominated tradition of monuments generally and in particular the Bloemfontein Women's Monument, which represents both the old political order and the old social

[34] National Monuments Council. Criteria for the Evaluation of Changes and Related Interventions at National Monuments. Letter by J.J. Bruwer, 18 February 1999 with annexure, DAC, Women's Mommerial (sic), Vol. 3, file 6/16/9. Incidentally, the same document emphasized that 'it is strongly RECOMMENDED that the memorial or focal point of the memorial not be placed on the central axis. In many ways the Union Buildings is itself a pedestal that invites articulation of niches and plinths which flank staircases. Furthermore, the utilisation of existing "pedestals" could reduce the cost of the final product allowing funds to be spent more meaningfully elsewhere'.

order dominated by patriarchal values. The artists' goal was to find a visual expression that would be as 'different' as possible from these examples in order to symbolise the novelty of the post-apartheid order with its ground-breaking advancements in the field of women's rights. Hence the appearance of the Pretoria Women's Monument is more informed by creative practices and discourses in contemporary fine art than by entrenched conventions of monument design. However, ultimately the work remains a monument. It continues an established tradition and many of its conventions and properties. As Becker (2000: 9) aptly puts it, the Monument for the Women of South Africa is not quite a subversion of the monument genre but rather a rethinking of it.

Unlike works of fine art made by women, women's monuments, including those made by women, are not means of self-expression, grounded in women's experience. Rather, they are primarily *about* women. Their visual and textual signifiers reflect and sometimes challenge particular discourses about women that circulate in society, usually in accordance with the intentions of those commissioning the monument. They reflect a sense of (interpreted) identity constructed through social relations of power and offer 'subject positions' for individuals and groups. In this case, women and indeed citizens of all colour and conviction are invited to identity with the brave women of 1956 and respect the values they fought for.

One might interpret the National Women's Monument as a gendered adjunct to Freedom Park, balancing the latter's unintentional but structurally determined gender bias and symbolising the inclusion of women in the narrative of the nation. As part of the National Legacy Project the Women's Monument signals the government's concern for gender equity, but there is also the peril of tokenism as the commemoration of women is 'out-sourced' to national level. If one compares the Pretoria monument as a national site of public tribute to the women of South Africa with other sites linked to the history of resistance and the anti-apartheid struggle, notably Robben Island, the preeminent site of struggle for male prisoners, one finds the latter to be a thriving national and international tourist destination while the former is virtually impossible to visit (Coombes 2003: 114). The same situation is echoed at the local level, where commemorative tributes to women – as far as they exist at all – are often difficult to access, rarely feature in tourist brochures and draw little media attention in comparison with other 'struggle' memorials.

Despite essentially serving a male-dominated political agenda, any women's monument makes a contribution towards the representation of women in the grand scheme of national commemorative endeavours. It does represent women's experiences, however biased, and it does give women a voice, however marginal. In short, it is better than nothing. But even if there were more women's monuments or opportunities to set up works of public art made by women that genuinely expressed women's experiences, the

impact of such works would still be mediated by their positioning in a patriarchal society. As Gayatri Spivak aptly observed in a different context, giving the Other a chance to ‘speak’ is only one side of the coin. It still depends on who will listen (Spivak and Gunew 1993: 195). Discourse is always determined by the dominant position, and South Africa has a long way to go before achieving gender equality.

# 9

# Africanising the Symbolic Landscape: Post-Apartheid Monuments as 'Critical Response'

## Introduction

Although the elimination of a contested commemorative object may eventually curb public awareness of the person or event it represents, as Zeller (2000: 214-5) shows with reference to German colonial monuments, public memory cannot be erased by removing statues and memorials. Iconoclastic measures also inevitably and usually permanently erase the opportunity for the public to critically engage with the respective monument, its one-sided representation of the past and its political message. In this chapter, I want to elucidate the post-apartheid strategy of balancing the existing heritage landscape in South Africa and interrogating biased historical narratives through the establishment of new monuments placed in deliberate juxtaposition with existing markers. One important consequence of the new heritage legislation and the cautious, conservationist approach towards colonial and apartheid era heritage is that the continued presence of 'white' monuments and the effective limitations of their adaptation to the symbolic needs of the new order justified and indeed encouraged the installation of new symbolic markers. Official pro-monument discourses insinuate that if the overwhelming bulk of commemorative markers erected by the old order cannot be replaced, it must be complemented with new statues and monuments representing previously marginalised groups, which will 'correct' or counter the biased historical discourses espoused by the old markers.

This chapter begins with a detailed discussion of the Blood River/Ncome monument and museum,[1] tracing its genesis and establishing its significance

[1] In archival records, the Ncome project is referred to in various ways, e.g. as a 'Wall of Remembrance Monument', a 'Monument of Reconciliation', and the

as a model and trend setter in the region and indeed in the country for the principle of countering existing, often contested monuments. The Ncome project has not only attracted extensive media interest but also considerable local and international scholarly attention (e.g. Dlamini 2001 and 2008; Girshick 2004; Schönfeldt-Aultman 2006). Dlamini and Gershick have closely analysed this monument and museum in the context of the Legacy Project and the coalition politics of the time, notably the tension between the ANC and its national agenda of reconciliation and nation building versus the IFP and partisan Zulu nationalist aims. I want to take a step further back in the genesis of the Ncome project and add another dimension to the complex interplay of political forces that in my opinion have played a key role in the emergence of Ncome. It will become evident that the dynamic which unfolded over the commemoration of this famous battle several years before the Legacy Project came into being had a defining influence on the wider politics of memory in post-apartheid South Africa and particularly in KZN up to the present day.

When it became clear that the newly established museum at Blood River would not sufficiently represent the Zulu perspective on the famous battle, Ncome was implicitly developed as a counterpoint or a 'critical response' to the existing Blood River monument. Although the concept of the monument as a 'critical response' differs from the conception of the 'counter-monument' (as defined by Young), both types of commemorative intervention share a crucial dependence on the ideologically charged narrative of a specific existing monument as reference point. Unlike the counter-monument, monuments as critical response are also inspired by the physical presence and aesthetic appearance of the existing monument, which they emulate, often literally imitate, despite claims to originality and 'difference'.

This observation leads me to a consideration (in the second half of this chapter) of other examples of new monuments in KZN and elsewhere in the country. I want to highlight the complex and contradictory relationship between the desire to Africanise the symbolic landscape, which one might expect to include a search for African models of memory practice and African-based creative formats or visual languages, and the compelling power and anxious tenacity of the Eurocentric model and Western-dominated conventions of monument design. I argue that the continued presence of existing monuments not only impacts on the ideological meaning of the new commemorative markers, but also on their design. The desire to effectively 'counter' a contested monument or statue implicitly or explicitly prompts those who initiate such responses to insist on similarity

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'Battle of Blood River/Ncome Monument'. The museum is sometimes referred to as an interpretation centre.

and correspondence of design, while simultaneously connecting with African roots and validating African traditional memory practices.

Photo 9.1 Blood River Monument, Battlefield of Blood River/Ncome, near Dundee. Oxwagon laager, unveiled in 1971.

Photo 9.2 Ncome Monument, Battlefield of Blood River/Ncome, near Dundee, unveiled 1998.

In other words, the mimicry frequently criticized in the consideration of post-apartheid commemorative monuments is in fact an integral and necessary part of their meaning within the framework of their intended ideological purpose.

## The Battle of Blood River and its commemoration

When in February 1838 the Voortrekker leader, Piet Retief, tried to secure a treaty with the Zulu king Dingane (also spelled Dingaan) to obtain land for white settlement, he was killed in controversial circumstances at the royal residence in Mgungundlovu. Warfare broke out between the Zulus and the Voortrekkers in which the latter approached the reputable and experienced commando leader Andries Pretorius (1798-1853) for assistance. Pretorius arrived in Natal on 22 November and immediately made preparations for a carefully planned punitive counter-attack against the Zulus, who had been trying to stop the advancing Trekkers. As he considered it too dangerous to engage the Zulus on their own ground, he decided to advance with 64 trek wagons, carrying only supplies and ammunition, which could be arranged in a defensive, fortified laager formation. Religious services were held twice a day to spiritually strengthen the commando and assert that the Voortrekkers were God's chosen people in a holy cause. On 9 December the famous covenant was made at Danskraal, asking for divine assistance in the impending battle against the heathen Zulu force in exchange for a binding obligation to build a church in God's honour and hold the day of victory sacred for all times (Laband 1995: 97-102; Mountain 1999: 108-11; Report of panel of historians 1998).

The Trekkers arrived on the banks of the Ncome/Blood River on 15 December and established their laager in a strategic spot, well protected on the eastern side by the river and on the southern flank by a deep donga. In the evening the Voortrekkers held a service, sang psalms and renewed the Vow in anticipation of the imminent attack. In the early morning of 16 December, a Sunday, the Zulus advanced to attack from the south-east. The Zulu attack formation commonly employed at the time mimicked the shape of a horn with the young *amabutho* on the wings advancing fast to encircle the enemies, and the older, more experienced warriors of the chest engaging them in battle. Despite their overwhelming manpower, the Zulus, equipped with spears and cowhide shields, had no chance against the superior weapons technology and firepower of the Voortrekkers. By about 11 a.m. the futile Zulu assault began to break down and Pretorius rode out with a mounted force of about 160 men in pursuit of the withdrawing Zulus. Many were killed while trying to hide in the river. The resulting bloodshed prompted the Voortrekkers to name the stream Blood River. In the end over 3000 Zulus lost their lives in the battle, excluding those who would have

died later of their wounds, while the Voortrekkers recorded only three men injured and no deaths (ibid.).

The historical context that led to the Battle of Blood River, the precise details of the fighting formations and the course of the battle, and especially the significance of the battle for both Voortrekkers and Zulus have long been subject to interpretation and different ideological viewpoints. Most publicly available and officially endorsed historical narratives produced during the previous era represent the events exclusively from the Voortrekker perspective. Zulu perceptions of the battle, mostly passed on orally, were largely suppressed – a neglect that the Ncome project was meant to redress.[2] But it is important to note that the hegemonic Afrikaner account of the historical events and especially the significance of the battle had already been fundamentally challenged from within the Afrikaner community years before the advent of the post-apartheid era.[3]

Nevertheless, the commemorative effort on the battlefield, as it unfolded over many decades, was determined by the traditional, conservative Afrikaner interpretations. Especially during the apartheid era, the Covenant and the Battle of Blood River were vigorously promoted as milestones in the historical consciousness of Afrikaners, and they still arouse strong emotions among some. In fulfilment of their promise, the Voortrekkers built the Church of the Vow in Pietermaritzburg in 1840, the anniversary date of the great victory was held sacred, and the battle site of Blood River was considered hallowed ground. In 1866 concerned members of the Afrikaner community erected the first permanent commemorative marker, a small cairn, which was followed by a larger cemented, pyramidal cairn in 1938. By

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2 Various volumes of the Stuart Archive testify to the range of different stories that were once told about Ncome. Yet, as John Wright suspects, this variety has since been narrowed down to a few formulaic statements as the history of Ncome and King Dingane become political battlegrounds (personal e-mail communication 2008). Ironically, the construction of the monument and museum, I argue, further assists this reductionist process, as certain versions are authorised over others and officially institutionalised.

3 The different ideological positions are summarised in the Report of a panel of historians (1998) assembled by the DACST for the purpose of developing the historical framework of the Ncome project. The traditional interpretation of the battle holds that 'the Voortrekker victory at Blood River saved the Great Trek; Blood River was the birthplace of the Afrikaner people; Blood River was a battle between Christianity and barbarism and a victory for Christianity over barbarism; the battle of Blood River was a miracle, with God intervening to save the Voortrekkers and proving that He was on the side of the Voortrekkers; the vow is binding on all Afrikaners up to the end of days' (ibid.: 1). The new interpretations developed by Afrikaner historians such as van Jaarsveld and van Aswegen largely demythologise the battle, place it into a broader historical context and challenge all the fundamental points of the traditional interpretation.

that time Blood River had become one of Afrikanerdom's holiest shrines, closely allied – historically, ideologically and aesthetically – with the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria and the Church of the Vow. Plans for a much more impressive monument were investigated, leading to the unveiling – in 1947 – of the life-size granite ox-wagon monument sculpted by Coert Steynberg.

This monument had to be moved in 1971 (apparently much lamented by Steynberg) to make room for a new, even more ambitious commemorative effort: the life-size, recreated ox-wagon *laager* monument of Andries Pretorius, for which Blood River is now best known. Unveiled on 16 December 1971, but fully completed only many years later, the monument (designed by Cobus Esterhuizen) consists of 64 bronzed cast-iron wagons, placed in a D-shape (later re-arranged as a circle) around the original 19th century cairn. While Steynberg's granite version of the symbolic ox-wagon was slightly stylised as a necessary concession to the medium, the bronze wagons were indeed facsimiles of the real wagons, modelled on the Johanna van der Merwe centenary wagon, which had participated in the symbolic re-enactment of the Great Trek in 1938. In a quest to further enhance their realism, all of the ox-wagons were equipped with real lanterns (later replaced by electrical lights) which could be lit at night. Furthermore, replicas of Pretorius' gun, *Ou Grietje*, were cast and placed in the openings (van Tonder 1961 and 1975; Oberholster 1972; Rankin 1988).

## Blood River museum initiative

In the context of the post 1994 re-shuffle of the museum administration field, the state-funded Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg was temporarily put in charge of the Blood River monument site, which had originally been owned by the Dutch Reformed Church. Management immediately decided to upgrade the monument site by adding a museum which would include various visitor amenities. The KZN Regional Office of the NMC considered an application with plans for the proposed new development towards the end of 1994 and promptly rejected it. The proposed museum or visitor centre, reportedly designed as a British-style medieval fortress with towers and battlements, was 'entirely inappropriate for the site', explained NMC Regional Manager, Andrew Hall, because 'developments on battlefields and similar sites should be as unobtrusive and understated as possible'.[4] This statement is rather ironic in view of the earlier-mentioned ostentatious

[4] Letter from Andrew Hall (NMC Regional Manager KZN) to the Director of the Voortrekker Museum (Pietermaritzburg), 15/12/94, SAHRA Head office, file # 9/2/447/1, Vol. 4.

monument developments that the NMC had previously approved for installation on this battlefield site.

Significantly, Hall went on to suggest that the funds available for this project should rather be utilised to purchase the other portion of the battlefield on the opposite (eastern) bank of the river, 'thereby attaining an ability to portray the Zulu role in the battle' (ibid.). This would foster a 'better' (read 'more inclusive') interpretation of the history of the Province and create facilities relevant to the development of the heritage tourism industry, as well as being in 'the spirit of the times' (ibid.), i.e. the impending socio-political changes and associated revaluing of long-neglected African perspectives on local history.

While the western bank of the river belonged to the province of Natal, the eastern bank was part of the 'homeland' of KwaZulu, where heritage conservation was administered by the KwaZulu Monuments Council (KMC), but the amalgamation of the two conservation bodies was already anticipated at the time. The director of the KMC, Barry Marshall, had apparently long cherished the idea of building a Zulu counterpart to the Blood River monument, and was therefore highly supportive of Hall's proposal. However, divergent visions existed about the symbolic significance of the proposed development among various individuals in the two conservation agencies and associated heritage bodies. Some saw it as an opportunity to make a Zulu nationalist statement, while others wanted it to symbolise reconciliation in line with national policy goals (Hall, e-mail communication 2007). These developments constituted the first concrete steps in building a Zulu counterpart to the Afrikaner Nationalist monument and, more importantly, the beginning of what soon became a key strategy in the post-apartheid politics of remembrance throughout South Africa.

At a meeting on 1 February 1995, members of the NMC considered a revised design for the museum building on the Voortrekker side of the battlefield, prepared by renowned architect Hannes Meiring. Compared to the initial British-style medieval fortress proposal, Meiring's blueprint drew on North African and Ndebele architectural sources of inspiration, presumably in an attempt to 'Africanise' the building and make it more relevant in terms of the 'spirit of the times'. But the KZN Plans Committee of the NMC again deemed this proposal unsuitable for aesthetic reasons, as it was not unobtrusive enough and the specific African references were considered unsuitable for a building on this site.[5] Meiring eventually produced an acceptable design (Letter Hall to Meiring 9/2/1995), consisting of a one-story red-brick building with sparse detailing and a flat roof. (The currently

[5] 'The current design was not suitable. A new design of which the principle was that the structure should be part of the landscape rather than deriving inspiration from any cultural context would be likely to find acceptance' (Minutes of the KZN Plans Committee 1995).

visible hipped roof and gable were added years later.) Although the committee had in principle been in favour of the proposed development, because it acknowledged that the site was in need of tourist facilities, a more fundamental issue had been opened up by the projected museum, quickly creating avid media attention (e.g. Chothia 1995).

The controversy revolved around the fact that a considerable amount of money, mostly financed by the Voortrekker Museum and the FAK, was about to be spent on a commemorative development at Blood River, an emotionally and politically sensitive site, to represent narrow, sectarian interests.[6] This furthermore occurred at a time of significant socio-political changes, in the context of which familiar historical narratives and their public representation were already becoming subject to critical re-assessment. As Hall cautioned in a letter to the Director of the NMC:

> We are coming under increasing pressure from the Province, Zulu leadership, the IFP and the Kwazulu Monuments Council, to use the NMC's powers to make those sponsoring the development re-evaluate it in light of the concerns of a community broader than that which they represent (Letter dated 14/2/95).

Simultaneously, the Director of the FAK intervened in the matter and urged Hall and the provincial Plans Committee to approve the plans. Hall advocated that the issue be addressed at the NMC policy-making level and suggested that a broad process of consultation with other cultural formations and communities be instituted before the proposed development should be permitted to proceed (Letter Hall to Director NMC 14/2/95 and e-mail Hall 20 April 2007).

Hall then informed Meiring of the required community consultation exercise and advised that the KMC had pointed out the need to add 'some sort of Zulu focus', most likely a statue, but the nature of it ultimately to be decided upon through the consultation process (Letter Hall to Meiring 16/3/95). Following a meeting of various stakeholders on 14 September 1995 it was resolved that the *Stigting vir die Bloedrivier-Gelofteterrein* (hereafter *Bloedrivier Stigting*), a heritage foundation established to manage the site,[7] would build a large *indlu* (round thatched hut) on either side of the Coert Steynberg ox-wagon monument, which could be used by the local

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[6] The building was to cost around one million rand, which equates to approximately US$ 140 000 at the current exchange rate.

[7] According to Cecilia Kruger (personal communication 2008), Blood River was handed over to the FAK when the Voortrekker Museum could no longer accept responsibility for its management due to lack of funds (the Dutch Reformed Church had determined that the site might never be sold, but could be handed over to a not-for-profit Section 21 Company). Since heritage management was not the focus of the FAK, they established the Stigting vir die Bloedriviergelofteterrein for this purpose.

community either to sell crafts or for exhibition purposes. This directly foreshadows details of the later Ncome project, where two such huts are now found in front of the entrance more or less for these purposes. However, the *indlu* was considered a temporary solution to the issue of Zulu symbolism and in the medium term the *Bloedrivier Stigting* was requested to commit 'a fair sum of money' towards the erection of 'a large work of public art'.[8] Although the inclusion of a Zulu symbol was now a condition of the permit, it soon became clear that the *Bloedrivier Stigting* would not be prepared to spend enough money on this to produce a significant icon. Arguably this fact later contributed to the national government's decision to finance the Ncome project through inclusion into the National Legacy Project, hence turning a provincial initiative into a national venture.

In a faxed letter to Barry Marshall (dated 21/9/1995), Hall highlights the need to extend the boundaries of the officially protected battlefield across the river and emphasises the desirability of a future re-interpretation of the entire site, which would in effect give previously marginalised communities a chance to have a say in the creation of the museum exhibition.[9] This was significant, because it would invariably lead to a more inclusive and balanced representation of this contested battle than if stakeholders of the Afrikaner perspective were exclusively in charge. The museum building – incidentally referred to as an interpretation centre, just as the Ncome museum was also initially conceptualised as an interpretation centre – was by now almost completed and two bronze plaques, one in Afrikaans and one in isiZulu, were affixed on either side of the entrance. The inscription of the plaques refers to reconciliation between Zulu and Afrikaner and the unveiling of the Zulu plaque by a prominent Zulu-speaking representative of the KZN government[10] in November 1995 presaged the emerging role of this battlefield site as an icon of reconciliation at a time when the National Legacy Project was still in its conceptual stages. Even the idea of creating a physical link between the two sides of the battlefield was discussed at the time.

## Ncome's inclusion in the National Legacy Project

Although the NMC had pushed the project in a specific direction, no further steps were taken to implement the plans and communications exchanged

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8 Faxed letter Hall to Henno Cronje (dated 10/10/95).

9 See faxed letter Hall to Barry Marshall (dated 21/9/95).

10 Prince Vincent Zulu, KZN Minister of Education and Culture, was invited to attend the unveiling, but sent Dr Khanyile as a representative. The Afrikaans plaque was unveiled by Rev. Henno Cronje, Chair of the FAK.

earlier.[11] No members of the Zulu community or historians representing the Zulu perspective on the battle were involved in the exhibition of the newly opened museum, which predictably depicted the battle exclusively from the Afrikaner perspective. No steps were taken towards the construction of a bridge, and no Zulu statue was erected. Amazingly, by the end of 1998 the NMC had still not declared the eastern side of the battlefield a national monument. This was in fact accomplished only on 11 December 1998 after intense pressure from the DACST, following Ncome's inclusion in the National Legacy Project (e.g. letter Havemann to Hofmeyer 21/8/1998).

I have explained in Chapter Six how the Blood River/Ncome project was added to the portfolio of Legacy Projects, following a discussion between the DG and the Minister. In terms of the coalition politics of the early post-election period, it is important to note that Mtshali was a senior member of the IFP in the ANC-led GNU, but unlike Ngubane he was also a prominent Zulu nationalist who was keen on promoting Zulu culture and the notion of a proud Zulu nation. He had apparently picked up the idea of the Ncome project directly from Mangosuthu Buthelezi, but Bongani Ndhlovu, Curator of the Ncome Museum, importantly adds that Mtshali had grown up in the Ncome area (in Kingsley) and was likely to have a personal interest in the project and its anticipated economic and development benefits for 'his' area (e-mail communication 5 March 2008).

Girshick (2004: 26) suggests that Mtshali seized the opportunity to 'make an historical end run around what he saw as an ANC "cabal" in the Ministry who were trying to force their own partisan monuments through'. This assessment illustrates the intensely political nature of decision-making about heritage and links with my earlier discussion about the objection of opposition parties to the dominant role of the ANC in representing and appropriating the past. But in addition I want to suggest that the lack of effort on the Afrikaner side to represent Zulu perspectives on the battle and the absence of a substantial move towards a re-interpretation of the biased historical narrative (as foregrounded by Hall and others) must have been a strongly contributing factor in Mtshali's decision to include Ncome in the National Legacy Project and endow it with relatively substantial funding. The prioritisation and fast-tracking of this project was inevitably prompted by the upcoming 160th anniversary of the battle on 16 December 1998.

Based on the supreme significance attached to the Battle of Blood River, Afrikaner Nationalists had always considered the 16th of December a holy day, initially called Dingaan's Day.[12] It is important to note that the post-

[11] This might in part be due to the fact that Andrew Hall, who had been a driving force in the negotiation with the stakeholders of the Blood River museum initiative, left the regional office of the NMC around this time.

[12] It was later renamed the Day of Covenant (1952) and since 1980 it has been celebrated as the Day of the Vow.

apartheid government did not eliminate the date from the newly devised list of public holidays after 1994, but rather renamed it the Day of Reconciliation.[13] This was particularly apt, because the 16th of December was also the day that the ANC in alliance with the Communist Party had chosen in 1961 to launch its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, marking the beginning of the armed struggle.[14] It was logical that the battlefield associated with this key date should now become a symbol of reconciliation – in the narrow sense between the two warring parties of the past (Zulus and Voortrekkers), and in a broader sense between black and white in the present – to supersede or redress the divisive historical moments which that date had traditionally marked.[15] From this perspective, the Ncome project fitted well into the National Legacy Project and it may not have been obvious from the start that the project would eventually be seen to promote an exclusively Zulu ethnic cause, in conflict – as Dlamini, Girshick and Schönfeldt-Aultman argue – with the government's inclusive agenda of national unity.

## Ncome as a symbol of reconciliation

The processes that occurred during the following period of intense activity in the run-up to the anniversary date have been traced in detail by Dlamini (2001) and Girshick (2004). Mtshali appointed Musa Xulu, also an IFP loyalist, as Deputy-Director General of the DACST and made him ultimately responsible for the Legacy Project and specifically Ncome. He set up the Blood River/Ncome Steering committee, bringing together a diverse group of heritage and museum officials, academics, representatives of various cultural foundations and local tribal authorities. Several sub-committees were established, including one focused on devising the conceptual framework, another attending to the architectural design and construction of the monument, and another to the planning of the public unveiling ceremony. Although various tensions and divisions manifested themselves in

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[13] Ultimately, this provides ultra-conservative Afrikaners with the opportunity to carry on commemorating the date in their accustomed way as the Day of the Vow.

[14] The ANC's political appropriation of the battle is detailed by Sithole (2008).

[15] Although not part of the Legacy Project, one might, in comparison, similarly consider the case of the new memorial and museum at Sharpeville. The 21 March, the day previously commemorated (especially by members of the PAC) as 'Sharpeville Day', was included in the official list of public holidays as 'Human Rights Day'. Consequently, the new commemorative structure (erected mostly with government funding) was called 'Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct' (rather than Sharpeville memorial) and meant to symbolise a broader, national agenda of human rights values in addition to the specific historical circumstances of the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960.

meetings and communications, the project eventually took shape through the process of negotiation among members of these different sub-committee groups (Girshick 2004: 26).

The committee work engendered various proposals about how the project would express its intended message of reconciliation. Not only would the development of a parallel structure to the overall site create aesthetic and conceptual balance, but the reconciliation was to be emphasised also through symbolic architectural signifiers. The most important element in this regard, both in symbolic and practical terms, was the proposed foot bridge linking the two sections of the battlefield, which would encourage visitors to experience both perspectives on this contested battle. Furthermore, the unveiling ceremony on the day of the 160th anniversary was intended to become a public show of reconciliation with prominent representatives of the Afrikaner and Zulu constituencies in attendance.

Most importantly, the DACST assembled a diverse panel of academic historians, representing different intellectual and ideological standpoints, and tasked them with developing a historical account that would 'reconcile' divergent interpretations of the battle.[16] Within an allocated time frame of only one month the appointed academics were supposed to 'hold several meetings amongst themselves; conduct some preliminary research aimed at establishing the fundamental facts; if necessary pay a visit to the site; reconcile their views; compile a document, outlining the new intellectual framework', and present it to the Minister by 23 July 1998.[17] By 7 July some members of the panel were still unsure about the nature of the required document. In response to Prof Maphalala's question whether the document was supposed to reflect the different views on the battle in one single document, Xulu stressed the need to produce a synthesised narrative in which different perspectives were 'put together' and reconciled after 'fierce debate'. He added that 'cabinet demands quick action on this issue' and that

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[16] On 30 October 1998 a Seminar on the Re-interpretation of the Battle of Ncome/Blood River was held at the University of Zululand, where a number of academics presented papers (J. Carruthers, J. Laband, J. Sithole, L. Mathenjwa, J. Grobler, M. Kunene, J.J. Guy, F. Pretorius, J.S.H. Maphalala). Only two reports about the significance of the battle (by Laband and Grobler respectively) are still among the DAC's files. Blood River, no Vol#, file 6/16/8. Progress Report on Legacy Project: Income – Blood River. See also Dlamini 2001.

[17] Quoted from Musa Xulu. Legacy Project: Blood River Memorial. Towards the re-interpretation of history. Undated. Laband file. PMB Archives. At a meeting on 25 May 1998, Xulu explained that the brief of the panel of historians would be 'To put into the correct perspective what has already been written about the Battle of Blood River; to ensure that this research becomes the basis for future research in [the] cultural and political history of this county; to emerge with a focused and more intellectual interpretation'.

the purpose of the paper would be to 'inform government and enable it to have a perspective, informed by historians'.[18]

The prominent role the panel of historians played in developing the intellectual framework for the Ncome project may appear to contradict my earlier point about the side-lining of academic historians in the development of new heritage sites, but the Ncome case and the parameters set for the historians' involvement is precisely indicative of my argument. Instead of organising a conference open to all historians and other academics with interest and expertise in the battle and its representation and commemoration in a post-apartheid context, the DACST invited a handful of selected academics to work under the pressure of time and conduct a debate the outcomes of which had been pre-determined by the government. As the short time frame prohibited undertaking any new research, the task was really one of synthesising existing ideological perspectives on the battle and reworking its symbolic meaning in the interest of specific political needs, notably reconciliation and nation-building. One could argue that the government engaged and utilised professional historians to assist with and lend legitimacy to the process of turning history into heritage.

One might draw parallels here with what Azaryahu (2003) calls 'commissioned memory' in the context of the 'reorientation' of the Buchenwald memorial site, the former Nazi concentration camp near Weimar. After German reunification in 1990, the East German paradigm of commemoration – focused on socialist resistance heroes and martyrs – was largely discredited in a state now dominated by West German authorities and alternative interpretations of the past. The government appointed a carefully selected panel of historians and tasked them with the development of a new symbolic meaning of this emotional site, relevant for a unified Germany. Azaryahu shows that

> … [g]iven the composition and concerns of the commission, the cultural production of the Nazi past was bound to conform with the dominant West German paradigm of memory as a juxtaposition of victims (most notably of Nazi-perpetrated genocide) and (German) perpetrators (2003: 11).

The same procedure was applied in Berlin in 1993-4 in the context of the renaming of East Berlin streets. Commissioned memory, argues Azaryahu (2003: 17), is a strategy to direct memory formation while disguising the agency of the state, because public credibility was derived from the allegedly objective academic expertise.

Back in South Africa, M. Kunene and C. Hamilton, both members of the academic panel of historians, produced a three-page document entitled

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[18] Minutes of the Meeting held on 07 July 1998, Re: Re-interpretation of the Battle of Income – Blood River, Laband file, PMB Archives.

'Reconceptualising Monuments' in which they ask challenging questions about the impending task of commemorating the battle of Blood River/Ncome.

> We are then faced with the question: why commemorate this battle? In 1998 this is by no means a simple question to answer. Do we wish to revisit the site to reverse the claim to racial domination and settlerism? For those for whom the symbolic laager is a bitter symbol of settler conquest: how would they want to remember the battle? … Do we wish to celebrate war, and especially a war between blacks and whites, whatever the heroicism on either side? Do we want to produce a monument that lends itself to use as political propaganda? (Kunene and Hamilton undated: 1, 2).

Such critical comments could be interpreted as undermining the government's intention to build a Zulu monument at Ncome and the pre-determined outcome of academically bolstering the need for such monument. This was presumably not what the DACST expected from members of its appointed panel and it is not surprising that these comments had little impact on what was to be developed with great urgency during the following couple of months.

Essentially, the Blood River/Ncome project was affected by precisely the same dilemma that I have highlighted for Freedom Park, namely the potentially contradictory objectives of reconciliation in the interest of nation-building and the proud celebration of heroes who fought for resistance against oppression. The entire Ncome project, I argue, including the development of its historical framework, the conceptualisation of the heritage site, the architectural signifiers of the completed monument, the museum exhibition, and the commemorative function on the day of the 160th anniversary was characterised by this ambiguity, which opens up contradictory avenues for interpretation.

## Ncome as response to Blood River

Dolf Havemann, Deputy Director of the Heritage Section of the DACST and in charge of supervising the Ncome planning process, conceived of the idea that the envisaged Wall of Remembrance should take the shape of the much celebrated horn-like Zulu attack formation, *izimpondo zenyathi* (horns of the buffalo), commonly used by the Zulus at the time and widely, although probably erroneously, believed to have been introduced by King Shaka. A few artists were invited to compete for the design of the monument, but its basic shape was never open for negotiation.[19] Hall (e-mail communication

[19] Although the architectural plans (now housed at the SAHRA head office in Cape Town) were drawn up by Pretoria-based architect, André Kriel, the initial design

2007) remarks that a monument/museum building of this kind was very much in line with the experience and expertise of Havemann, who had worked in the field of museum services under the old regime for many years.

Some viewers may appreciate the concept of an architectural shape with recognisable references to Zulu cultural icons as a (re)conciliatory gesture. But others, especially perhaps older people, may perceive it as a patronising and even racist signal, because during the heydays of apartheid, government-funded architectural developments in the 'homelands' (e.g. universities, administration buildings and especially any buildings with a 'cultural' purpose) were frequently designed to include 'tribal' iconographic references. In the heartland of KwaZulu for instance, the architecture of the KMC office and museum at Ondini outside of Ulundi (built in the 1980s) is inspired by a Zulu homestead, or *umuzi*, and the roof of the adjacent amphitheatre takes the shape of a traditional cowhide shield. The state presumably promoted this design approach to increase the level of identification that 'homeland' citizens would develop with 'their' institutions, as well as to imprint a discernible mark of difference onto the contemporary built landscape.

But while an ethnically explicit approach to architectural design was certainly familiar territory to Havemann and perhaps others on the committee, I suspect that it was also precisely the narrative quality and explicitness of the Afrikaner Nationalist *laager* monument on the other side of the battle that prompted the Ncome Steering Committee to favour a narrative structure over an abstract memorial marker or a plain Wall of Remembrance. If the Blood River monument literally depicts the Voor-trekker battle formation on the one side of the river, the shape of the Ncome monument likewise represents the Zulu fighting formation on the other side.

The Ncome monument's one-story structure consists of two roughly parallel plastered and painted masonry walls, describing a semi-circular 'horn' shape, while the ground plan of the museum space inside recalls the shape of a shield. Metal shields with painted cowhide patterns representing the different regiments that fought in the battle are also mounted along the 'horn's' convex centre part, facing the Boer *laager* in a simulated front. The ox-wagon has become a key icon of Afrikaner culture (symbolising a home, a fortress and a church, according to the Blood River museum exhibition) and the strategically placed wagons played an important role in the Voortrekker victory. Likewise, certain animal horns are highly symbolic in traditional Zulu culture. Cattle horns, for instance, are linked with ancestral beliefs. The horns of the sacrificial cattle are traditionally placed on the hut of a deceased person and fulfill a commemorative function. The Zulu battle formation imitating the horns of the buffalo has not only become legendary

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for the Ncome monument was made by Dolf Havemann's son, who immediately produced a model and later happened to win the competition (Girshick 2004).

within Zulu culture, but is inter-culturally associated with the success and efficiency of the 19th century Zulu military machine.[20]

In comparison, the expansive, dynamic architectural shape of the Ncome monument itself suggests Zulu aggression, while the bronze *laager* at Blood River looks defensive. This is in line with historical accounts of the battle, but it may also be seen to reinforce stereotypes of Zulu militarism and violence, while (unintentionally) bolstering conservative Afrikaner discourses of a peaceful *volk* forced to defend itself against Zulu aggression. Although the Zulus lost the battle, the Ncome monument's *mise-en-scène* of the historical battle formation can be interpreted as a celebration of Zulu military prowess, perpetuating common stereotypes about the 'proud warrior nation', simultaneously feared and admired. In that sense seems to be rather ironic that Mr Mtshali said at the opening ceremony: 'Today's event marks freedom from the yoke of many years of the divisive symbolism and dangerous stereotyping' (quoted in Khumalo 1998).

## Museum exhibition

The museum exhibition, which opened only a year later was developed under great pressure of time and was presented in a haphazard manner. For example, artefacts were displayed without labels indicating dates or regional provenance. Only one of the four glass cases displayed information on the battle. The rest contained Zulu ethnographic material such as weapons, beadwork, pottery, and baskets. They were borrowed from various museums in KZN and did not necessarily represent the specific styles and shapes typical for the region around Ncome. The emphasis on ethnographic material shifted attention away from the humiliating military defeat to a proud celebration of Zulu tradition and culture, represented as homogeneous, fixed and static, much in line with stereotypical tourist imagery (Girshick 2004: 30-1; Dlamini 2001: 134).

The museum exhibit of the battle itself, argues Dlamini (2001), did not reflect the findings of the collective report worked out by the academic panel

[20] The inscribed shield in the centre carries an image of the Zulu headband worn by warriors, which mimics the laurel wreath on conventional Western war memorials. Below is the inscription 'iMpi yase Ncome' (the Zulu name of the battle) and the poetic verse: 'Vezi, people will die, but their praises will remain, and mourn for them, where their homes used to be'. The last line implies that the fallen Zulus used to live around here, thus establishing a claim to the land in response to a long history of Afrikaner claims to the contrary. A more general reference to 'redress' can be found in the narrow passage between the two curved walls of the structure. The architectural shape here recalls the famous monument of the 'Great Zimbabwe' ruins, thus boldly reclaiming the heritage of this early civilisation, long presumed to be of white origin, for black Africans.

of historians, but was rather primarily guided by the radical Zulu nationalist interpretation of one member of the panel, namely Jabulani Maphalala (IFP), a Zulu nationalist historian from the University of Zululand. Maphalala was also extremely close to Xulu, who had become very involved and influential in the running of the Ncome project and made some crucial decisions including, in July 1999, the resolution to change the initially envisaged interpretation centre into a museum on Zulu culture (Girshick 2004; Hall e-mail communication 2007). Dlamini (2001) argues that Xulu was key to the 'Ncome contradiction', i.e. the project's appropriation by Zulu nationalist forces, which succeeded in exploiting a national resource for the advancement of partisan ethnic identity discourses, thereby contradicting the aims of the Legacy Project (2001: 132). While officially espousing the national government's goal of reconciliation, Girshick (2004: 26) agrees, Mtshali's main concern was to promote a particular Zulu version of the historical past and the notion of a heroic Zulu nation, much in line with IFP ideology.

But considering the matter from an ANC perspective, one could also argue that by including Ncome in the National Legacy Project the ANC-led national government with its aims of national unity, non-racialism and non-sectarianism ultimately retained some control over the site and what it should symbolise. This effectively pre-empted the IFP-led provincial government from devising its own commemorative venture at this contentious site, as happened, for instance, at the nearby battlefield of Isandlwana. Here, Amafa initiated a memorial similarly honouring the previously unrepresented Zulu dead with funding raised from the traditional Zulu leadership (Zwelethini 1999). Amidst much praise the project (unveiled in 1999) was also criticised, namely for fostering partisan ethnic identity discourses, the Zulu nationalist cause and IFP political party agendas, instead of representing a commemorative 'message' with which all South Africans could identify.[21]

Furthermore, the fact that the Ncome monument/museum was designed to become an independent national museum, administered and managed directly by the DACST, indicates that the national government wanted to remain in charge of this important heritage site and keep it out of the sphere of influence of partisan forces. Due to logistical and funding difficulties, however, the government requested the Voortrekker Museum in Pietermaritzburg to administer Ncome. (This was intended as a temporary

[21] 'Why is a monument that celebrates Zuluness – not blackness, not South Africanness, but distinctly Zuluness – being unveiled in the heart of a region that is being ripped apart by internecine violence', asked Alex Dodd (1999) on the occasion of the official unveiling, which took place only months before the elections. She insinuates that the high-level appropriation of the new memorial for the Zulu nationalist cause was an attempt by the IFP to please the local voting community, known to consist overwhelmingly of IFP supporters.

measure.) Significantly, the Voortrekker Museum itself, which had previously focused exclusively on Afrikaner history, was by then in the process of transforming itself into an inclusive museum with exhibits representing all sectors of the local population.

The initial exhibition inside the Ncome museum, which was so roundly criticised by both Dlamini and Girshick, was soon changed, not least perhaps as a result of the turbulent internal politics within the DACST.[22] Much of the originally displayed ethnographic material has been removed and the focus is now on the representation of the battle and the historical circumstances that surrounded the conflict. Along the left-hand wall of the museum a combination of glass cases and larger objects on open display are arranged under the following headings: *Amabutho* – Age regiments; Women at War; Medicinal Plants; Traditional Weapons; and Sotho Material Culture. The inclusion of the role of women and the display on Sotho culture arguably pre-empt critiques about an ethnically and gender-exclusive perspective. The right-hand side contains small artefacts in continuous glass cases with ample explanations on labels and text panels, detailing the historical context of the Zulu kingdom, the events leading up to the battle, and the course of the actual battle.[23]

The final glass case before the exit, dedicated to the Dingane-Retief agreement, is arguably the most important display in contesting the Afrikaner version of the battle. A copy of the alleged treaty between Piet Retief and the Zulu king is shown with the accompanying text questioning how the latter, who was illiterate, could have signed his name 'King Dingaan'.[24] This particular display is significant firstly in terms of its content, because it discredits a piece of paper that has long played a crucial

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[22] When Ben Ngubane returned to the Ministry (in 1999), he clashed badly with Xulu and his adherents. Xulu was suspended (in mid-2000) and subsequently dismissed on charges of misconduct, while Havemann left soon after (Hall e-mail to author, April 20, 2007; SA Government Information 2000).

[23] Topic headings are as follows (from the entrance): The Zulu kingdom and its political framework. Life in KwaZulu. Healers. King-in-council. NoMgungundlovu. Royal Palace. Protection. Causes of the Ncome War. Retief's arrival. Death of Retief. Aftermath of Retief's death. The Zulus prepare for war. Women in the war. Regiments leaving. Women's Drift. Attack. Dingane passed away. Dingane Retief agreement.

[24] Captions and labels in the display case entitled 'Dingane Retief agreement' read as follows: 'King Dingane was illiterate, and land in the Kingdom of KwaZulu was indivisible and could not be partitioned into farms. Land was regarded as an important resource given to the people by God. It was only the King who could give people residential sites'. 'Amakhosi, i.e. "chiefs" in the 1880's were putting crosses when they signed but here it is said that Dingane signed the document. Does this make sense?' 'Did he really sign or is this a fake signature?'

role in legitimising Afrikaner claims to the land.[25] Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it makes a fundamental point about historiography and its methodology in direct response to the Blood River museum.

Both the exhibition and the video in the Blood River museum were changed in 2002 after the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria took over the administration and management of Blood River.[26] Wall panels with images and abundant text are mounted all along the walls and a display case with various artefacts occupies the centre of the room. The exhibition and the video now acknowledge the existence of other perspectives on the battle and its historical context, although there is still an unmistakable subtext privileging the traditional Afrikaner version. In part this is achieved by emphasizing that the Afrikaner narrative of the battle is based entirely on 'written sources', presumed to be reliable and accurate (according to an older, Western school of thought), while the Zulu version is based on oral history, and by implication must therefore be largely fictitious.

In their predominantly one-sided, nationalist orientation, both museums nevertheless remain skewed reflections of each other. In fact, the new commemorative development at Ncome echoes its existing ideological counterpart at Blood River in almost every respect. Although members of the Steering committee had proposed that Ncome should not become a monument in the conventional, western sense, but rather a place of pilgrimage which would serve the local community both culturally and economically (Girshick 2004: 26-7), the end result is just as much a monument as the bronze laager on the other side of the river. Virtually every facility and activity offered on the one side is replicated on the other. For instance, just as the Blood River site is used for Afrikaner cultural events, especially on 16 December, various Zulu (and Sotho) cultural activities are performed at the Ncome site.[27] A kind of flower and herb garden can be

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[25] The official Blood River guide book (published in 2000 and reprinted in 2007) reproduces the hand-written treaty document and spells out its exact wording. The introductory paragraph explains that 'in this treaty Dingane ceded all the land between the Tugela and the Umzimvubu rivers to the Boers' (d'Assonville, V.E. 2007: 10).

[26] Several other changes were made to the site, including the modification of the roof of the museum building, the upgrading of the on-site tourist accommodation and the caravan park, as well as the installation of an automatic access gate to the fenced-in site. The older version of the video was still sold in the museum shop for a few years subsequently (but not any more).

[27] According to the information brochure (2004), the most important annual event at Blood River is the Vow commemoration on 16 December, which includes a church service and listening to the history of the battle as told by historians. Traditional Voortrekker activities such as baking bread, fixing wagon wheels or horse riding are also demonstrated. Cultural events at Ncome include monthly

found on both sides of the river, and the cairn on the Blood River battlefield finds its counterpart in a newly established cairn or *isivivane* at Ncome, where each visitor is requested to add a stone. Blood River offers tourist accommodation, and similar accommodation is currently under construction at Ncome.[28] In 2004 the Voortrekker Museum published a visitor information brochure on the 'Ncome-Blood River Heritage Site', a simple photocopied A4 folded leaflet, which provides all of the relevant information for Blood River on the one side and for Ncome on the other.

## Ncome: success or failure?

'Two monuments at the site of the battle, commemorating the participation of both sides, will complete the symbolism', said a satisfied Lionel Mtshali at the opening of the Ncome monument in December 1998 (quoted in Schnehage 1998). Some might, however, rather agree with Jabulani Maphalala's view (personal interview 2005) that the Ncome monument on the other side of the river constitutes an 'apartheid-style solution' to the problem of publicly commemorating a contested battle. To him the very existence of the Ncome monument/museum testifies to the failure of this Legacy Project's reconciliatory aim, because the two monuments, facing each other like two hostile camps, ostensibly perpetuate old divisions. Indeed, the construction of Ncome as an entirely separate monument and museum was ultimately the result of a failure to modify the existing commemorative site at Blood River to be more inclusive, and notably to represent a re-interpreted battle narrative in the newly established Blood River museum.

Much has been made of the fact that the pragmatically and especially symbolically significant foot bridge between the two sides of the battle field was never constructed. In fact, the sight of the unutilized concrete pylons already constructed in the river brazenly highlights the absence of the bridge up to the present day. A range of different reasons for the delay has been suggested, but ultimately, as Maphalala aptly put it, 'the bridge must start in the mind' (personal interview 2005). The problems and contradictions surrounding the Ncome project are evidence of the continuing tensions between the utopian vision of a non-racial society, at peace with the world and itself, and the daily reality of a deeply divided society, segments of which are highly defensive and adamantly resistant to change and reconciliation, despite the national government's efforts in that direction.

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performances of isiZulu and seSotho traditional songs, as well as displays of traditional isiZulu/Sotho food, dress and dances.

[28] More precisely, at the time of writing (February 2008), earthworks for such accommodation facilities have been completed, as well as paving and parking bays, but actual construction has not yet started.

The unveiling ceremony of the Ncome monument on 16 December 1998 revealed precisely these fissures. The occasion was marked by lavish festivities attended by thousands of people, which included many dignitaries, traditional leaders (*amaKhosi*), representatives of various Afrikaner organisations, international tourists and foreign media representatives. Many of the speeches and statements delivered on that occasion focused on reconciliation between Afrikaner and Zulu people as the primary objective and significance of the new monument, and prominent representatives of both constituencies engaged in symbolic gestures of reconciliation.[29]

But the festivities were also marred by interference from Afrikaner right-wingers, who displayed their strong disapproval and resistance to the notion of reconciliation (Milazi 1998). This overture was followed, during subsequent years, by occasional incidents of racial discrimination against black visitors by white racists, especially on the public holiday of 16 December, the Day of Reconciliation, which sometimes escalated into outbursts of hatred and abuse (e.g. Courier 2004). Since the Voortrekker Monument took over the administration of Blood River, the two museums or the two sides of the same battlefield are now administered by separate entities, one arguably associated with inclusiveness and transformation, the other with an ideologically repositioned, albeit still exclusive Afrikaner identity.

Despite this, I believe the Ncome project in general and the specific question of whether or not it achieved its officially intended objective should not be judged too quickly. To what extent monuments and memorials can contribute to reconciliation is in any case difficult if not impossible to measure. It must be acknowledged that reconciliation is always a long-term process or a work in progress, and that different viewers or groups of stakeholders might perceive the project and its success differently. Moreover, Girshick (2004) rightly raises the question of whether reconciliation and redress are indeed always compatible goals. One might say that at Ncome a bold statement of resistance, reflecting a radical Zulu nationalist perspective, might be necessary in order to achieve a balanced representation of the past and an effective counterpoint to the conventional Afrikaner version of the battle, which can be considered radical in its own right.

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[29] 'Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen and Blood River Foundation Chairman Hennie de Wet crossed from the Afrikaner monument to the Ncome monument on the other side of Blood River, to extend the hand of goodwill and reconciliation' (Bishop 1998).

## Multiple interpretations

However, as much as I agree that one *can* plausibly interpret Ncome as a Zulu nationalist statement, it is important to emphasize that this is not the only meaning of Ncome. For instance, while the iconographic references support a reading of both monuments as two hostile camps facing each other and frozen in time, some visitors may also interpret the widely opened U-shape of the Ncome monument/museum as an embracing form reaching out to the other side in a gesture of reconciliation. Likewise, not all visitors will interpret the museum displays in the same manner and much depends on the narrative and attitude of the on-site guide and especially the guide that any visiting groups may bring along. In short, I argue that a potential ambiguity pervades many aspects of the project, opening up a possible multiplicity of interpretations and meanings, a potentiality which can be considered an asset and which decisively impacts on the question of whether or not the project was a success in terms of its stated objectives.

Schönfeldt-Aultman (2006), although unequivocally endorsing the interpretation of Ncome as a Zulu nationalist statement, makes an important contribution to the debate by illustrating the possibility of multiple interpretations. The author engages with the politics of representation and specifically with an examination of Zulu identity through the visual signifiers of the monument structure and the museum exhibition. He includes a detailed and very personal interpretation of various aspects Ncome, including the colour, shape and position of the building and the multiple meanings it communicates to him about Zulu identities (2006: 222).

For instance, the author contemplates the possibility of a symbolic meaning of the pinkish colour painted on the exterior of the plastered building. Noting that the same colour frequently appears in Zulu beadwork, pottery and other crafts produced by women, he suggests that 'the colour may be intended to call attention to women's role in Zulu society' (ibid.). He then considers the meaning of pink in Zulu beadwork, which he says (drawing on Hilgard S. Schoeman) alludes to

> … poverty, laziness, high birth and rank, oath, and promise. Thus the colour simultaneously symbolises the significant role of women in the Zulu warrior nation, the still poor rural Zulu people, the royal blood and identity claims of Zulus, and a new covenant to a new South Africa (ibid.).

The author carries on relating pink to 'the red blood bled by Zulus and … slightly sunburned white skin' (ibid.: 223), based on which he develops some thoughts about Zulu and Afrikaner identity.[30]

[30] My own speculation about the choice of the pink-reddish colour is that it may have been inspired by the red face-brick finish of the Blood River museum on

Not everyone will consider these suggestions plausible. Some may find them far-fetched or even completely outlandish, but the example illustrates the range of personal interpretations that are possible when an individual encounters a museum or in fact a cultural product of any kind. It illustrates the potential for an accidental accrual of meaning(s) that can never be controlled or predicted and that may contradict or subvert the originally intended meaning. The issue of communication and multiple interpretations in the museum and heritage context has gained much attention in scholarship internationally (e.g. Mason 2005) and has influenced scholarly work on museums in South Africa (e.g. Coombes 2003; Rassool 2006; Witz 2006). The ensuing understanding of the audience (or the tourists) as consumers and, more importantly, producers of meaning represents a paradigm shift away from the central role of the curator or, as in the case of Ncome, the institutional-political forces that initiate and shape the project and its meaning.

Recalling Harrison's concept of the 'expansionary contest', the Ncome project, as well as Freedom Park and a host of other new post-apartheid monuments installed in deliberate juxtaposition with older markers, challenges historical narratives once officially sanctioned, and implicitly contests identity discourses once associated with these monuments. One might say the aim of the new, competing identity symbols was indeed to neutralise or displace the existing ones without physically destroying them. To some extent this strategy has succeeded as both the Blood River and the Voortrekker Monument have been ideologically repositioned and their management now officially dissociates itself from the exclusive, racist discourses defended by the minute ultraconservative Afrikaner community. Although this process was driven from within the constituency that these monuments presumably represent, the impetus clearly came from the outside – a response to pressures induced by the advent of a new socio-political order.

On the other extreme of the spectrum, however, the construction of post-apartheid counterparts made the continued existence of the Afrikaner monuments possible and even desirable. Both the Blood River Monument and the VTM are now receiving government subsidies and the sites have been ideologically repositioned (although arguably less successfully so in the case of Blood River) to form popular tourist attractions. The lack of physical changes has allowed them to retain their integrity and their originally

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the other side of the river. It must be considered that the colour has probably faded somewhat over the years and may originally have appeared more reddish than pink. In South Africa plastered sections of a brick building are sometimes painted in reddish colour if the intention is to blend in the two or aesthetically minimize the difference.

intended meaning as identity symbols in the eyes of the conservative minority.

## Countering contested heritage

As the material evidence of newly unveiled (ignoring the proposed) monuments and statues increases at a phenomenal rate throughout the country, it is striking to note how many of these commemorative ventures fit the pattern of strategic juxtaposition. I argue that all of these new monuments are more or less purposefully conceptualised in response to the discursive meaning, as encapsulated in visual signifiers and textual inscriptions, of the related existing symbolic markers. The new monuments highlight absences of representation and break the monologue of the official historical record. They pose counter-narratives to exclusive interpretations of the past and re-inscribe a history previously invalidated. In each case, the new commemorative object derives part of its intended meaning from the presence and specific 'message' of the older monument. I maintain that apart from the ideological content of the new counterpart, its mere presence opens up new discourses which invariably affect the existing older monument, possibly subverting but at least inflecting its intended meaning.

There are of course examples in other countries, notably in the United States, where public monuments and statuary representing previously marginalised sectors of the population (notably African-Americans, Native American Indians and women) have been installed in recent years to render the existing symbolic landscape more multifaceted and discursive, and to challenge the hegemony of existing commemorative markers. I have referred to the Arthur Ashe statue in Richmond, Virginia, before, but despite the statue's challenge to the racist ideological values of the Confederacy, the tennis star does not belong to the same historical context or conceptual category as the military leaders that populate the symbolic landscape of Monument Avenue. In other words, the Arthur Ashe statue does not tell 'the other side' of the Confederate story, but an altogether different (although in some ways related) story.

In other southern states, too, 'black heritage' has officially been added to 'white heritage' through the public monuments that celebrate influential leaders of the Civil Rights movement, or mark sites where race riots took place, or testify to other key events in the history of African-American emancipation (Romano and Raiford 2006).[31] Although they are not

[31] Especially since the early 1990s, a substantial effort has been made in this regard. Examples of such sites include the Martin Luther King Jr National Historic Site in Atlanta; the Benjamin Elijah Mays National Memorial at Morehouse College in Atlanta; the Rosa Parks/Bus Boycott Historical

necessarily placed in the immediate vicinity or with direct conceptual reference to a specific older monument, in the broader sense these additions certainly respond to the distortions of and absences from the symbolic landscape that have become contested as a result of shifting power relations and identity discourses. An excellent example in another part of the country is the memorial at the Battle of Little Bighorn in Montana, South Dakota, the Native Indian response to the famous late 19th century memorial at Last Stand Hill, which pays tribute to Custer's Last Stand.

The South African approach to reshaping the commemorative landscape, it seems to me, is inspired by such precedents but applies the principle far more consciously and systematically, not least perhaps because the commemorative effort is directed by the state. From national to local level one can detect a determination to seek out opportunities for complementing old with new monuments, juxtaposing one set of symbols and values with another, establishing an historical and conceptual relationship between old and new, and reaching out in reconciliatory gestures and building metaphorical bridges.

## Monuments as critical response versus 'counter-monuments'

In his seminal article on the 'Counter-Monument', James E Young (1992) discusses examples from Germany that involve the matching of war memorials, perceived to glorify war and propagate imperialist values, with a 'critical comment' in the form of a 'counter-monument'. Based on his definition, the term counter-monument is now commonly understood as referring to a structure or artistic work that not only confronts an existing monument, highlighting its bias and challenging its intended 'message', but also fundamentally contests or interrogates the tradition, conventions and functions of monuments and memorials.

Examples include Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz' 1993 Memorial against fascism in Hamburg-Harburg or Horst Hoheisel's Memorial in front of the City Hall in Kassel (1987). These counter-monuments seek to invert the basic characteristics of a conventional monument. Both Gerz and Hoheisel, for instance, counter the visibility and durability of the conventional monument with a structure that disappears into the ground and is no longer visible. Jochmann (2001: 23) sums up Young's position on the counter-monument, as espoused in various publications, thus. The counter-monument seeks to provoke. It demands interaction. It is not fixed, but meant to change constantly. It asks to be touched, even violated or vandalized. Rather than claiming eternal presence and visibility, it is meant

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Monument in Montgomery, Alabama; or the Civil Rights Memorial in the same city.

to make itself invisible or even destroy itself. The invisibility of the counter-monument, or the effort required in detecting a trace of it, turns remembering into an active, conscious process and prompts questions not only about the memory of the event commemorated there but about memory itself.

From such fundamentally negating works, which could also be called 'anti-monuments', another type of counter-monument or counter-memorial is sometimes distinguished, exemplified by Alfred Hrdlicka's well-known Hamburg Memorial against War and Fascism (1986; incomplete), which formulates a critical response to an existing war memorial on the site (erected in 1936).[32] A more recent example is Jenny Holzer's 'Black Garden' in Nordhorn, Germany (Sachs 2000). Although these examples do not seek to invert the basic prerogatives of the memorial tradition, they must be classified as works of public art, not as commemorative monuments. They usually represent one individual artist's personal vision in critically commenting upon an existing monument, and do not have a memorialising function in their own right. This is what distinguishes them fundamentally from the current post-apartheid commemorative practice in South Africa.

Although they are also often referred to as 'counter-memorials' or 'counter-monuments' (especially in the media), post-apartheid commorative markers are always conventional monuments in their own right. They don't question the monument genre as a medium of commemoration – on the contrary, they affirm it. The new monument may interrogate the existing marker's intended message, perhaps undermining its credibility, but it essentially respects the integrity of the older monument and acknowledges its validity as a potentially important symbol for a specific community. In that sense it seeks to foster reconciliation rather than to provoke confrontation.

## Imitating western models of commemoration

The notion that a material object such as a monument can come to stand for memories and thus prolong or preserve such memories, theoretically indefinitely, is based on the Western tradition of memory (Forty 1999). The concept of statues on pedestals and solid commemorative monuments and memorials is deeply rooted in Western culture. European culture, based on

[32] The terms 'counter-monument' and 'counter-memorial' are sometimes used interchangeably and at other times distinguished in a confusing manner. According to Jochmann (2001) in German the distinction is drawn between 'Gegendenkmal' and 'Gegen-Monument'. This cannot be accurately translated into English as the two German words largely signify the same in English, which confirms the point I made in the Introduction about the importance of language in defining different types of commemorative structures.

the Greco-Roman heritage, was distinguished historically by its emphasis on the individual's relationship with the physical and cultural environment. The human sense of constant transformation and change fostered the need for symbols of stability or permanence in the external world. This trend had a far-reaching impact on many aspects of Western culture, including art, architecture and the formation of cities (Koshar 2000: 292). It is epitomised in the commemorative monument, made of the most durable material available or affordable to its initiators. The commemorative monument is the penultimate symbol of stability and permanence as it is established precisely with the intention of preserving specific memories for eternity, thus enshrining a specific set of (present) values as normative for future generations. In the broader context of the commemorative politics of a particular nation-state, the values encoded in the officially endorsed memory landscape serve as a basis upon which the dominant socio-political order rests, thus presumably ensuring its own stability and permanence.

As said earlier, the practice of erecting commemorative monuments and statues was exported to various parts of the world, including South Africa, through European colonialism, and often pursued quite vigorously in an attempt at inscribing settler-dominated histories. In the current post-apartheid context, which is characterised by claims of support for the 'African Renaissance' and indigenous knowledge systems accompanied by a climate of widespread critique targeted at the country's entrenched Eurocentric cultural practices, the enthusiastic push for installing public monuments and bronze statues imitating Western, Eurocentric, or Victorian models attracts much academic critique (e.g. Nettleton 2003; Maré 2002 and 2002a; Küsel in SAHRA Monuments project report 2003). Some even advocate an immediate moratorium on the construction of new monuments on the basis that such objects have never been part of African culture and are completely inappropriate in the current post-apartheid South African context. Instead, it is suggested, more suitable (presumably 'Afrocentric') ways should be found to symbolically represent and memorialise the sacrifices, values and achievements of the new order. This may not necessarily involve the construction of tangible objects but could include the dedication of buildings or bursaries to past leaders, as well as works of creative art or ephemeral performance-type phenomena in allusion to traditions of oral history and indigenous memory practices. Before I engage with what I perceive as the flaws in this position, I want to interrogate its key point of contention, namely the imitation of colonial monument conventions.

There are, of course, compelling pragmatic reasons for imitating, or rather continuing, established traditions of public memorialisation. The urgency with which new monuments are perceived to be needed precludes the time-intensive (and perhaps impossible) task of finding an original, unprecedented aesthetic, or an altogether different commemorative practice, perhaps derived from indigenous traditions, yet modern and inclusive. Once

the medium has been adopted, a more or less conventional style and iconography are likely to follow, as anywhere in the world the public monument tends to be a conservative genre. New monuments often recycle the visual language, the conceptual formulae and aesthetic strategies of acclaimed older models. Famous international examples serve as sources of inspiration or emulation and are adapted for local needs (Michalski 1998).

Emulation may not be intended. In fact it may even be explicitly rejected in theory, as in some cases in South Africa, but it nevertheless occurs in practice, unwittingly or unconsciously. Nnamdi Elleh observed the same trend in the architectural design and urban planning of new post-colonial African capitals, where builders often believed they were 'producing the antithesis of the colonial legacy, yet they tended to recoup all of the characteristics of the colonial projects' (Elleh quoted in Peffer 2004: 96). Sculptors, architects or designers who conceptualise and physically create monuments are influenced by the formal and informal training they received in the past,[33] by their personal or mediated experiences of contemporary and historical examples encountered in their surrounding or elsewhere in the world, and – not least – by current discourses and international trends in art and design.[34] Today modern information technology allows images of famous memorials from all around the world to be obtained at the touch of a button. The many glossy magazines and academic journals in the fields of art, architecture and design disseminate images of new memorials in the global arena, and the accessibility of international air-travel facilitates first-hand experience of such structures.[35] All of these factors contribute to the

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[33] For instance, descriptive naturalism as the preferred style for post-apartheid monuments has always been favoured in South African monumental sculpture (Rankin 1991) and a sense of continuity with this tradition is not least provided through institutions of formal training and through the employment of certain architects and sculptors who are often awarded public commissions based on their reputation and prestige.

[34] This is by no means a new phenomenon. One might consider, for instance, the formal parallels between the South African Voortrekker Monument, the German Völkerschlachtdenkmal and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Michalski's (1998) survey of monuments in the 19th and 20th centuries includes numerous examples of the international recycling of commemorative forms and concepts, sometimes even affecting monuments that represent opposite ideological values. It was common that monument designers, especially architects in charge of large and prestigious commemorative structures, would travel to other countries in search of inspiration and consult illustrations in a variety of publications.

[35] Top management officials and project leaders from the Freedom Park Trust, for instance, have undertaken a number of exploratory trips to visit monuments, memorials and museums in Europe, the United States and other parts of the world to gather information and gain a personal experience of state-of-the-art

fact that certain types of commemorative vocabulary and symbolic strategies gain international currency and hegemony.

Thornton (1996: 139) maintains that one of the most profound continuities connecting the postcolonial state with the colonial one is found in the resilience of administrative practices. Although frequently being 'culturally revalued' in the post-colony, the appropriation of the colonial administrative forms can be defined as one of the hallmarks of the post-colony. Monuments – sometimes funded by the private sector or civil society, but endorsed and administrated by local or national government structures – could in this sense be interpreted as a conventional form of administering (i.e. managing, controlling and institutionalising) public memory, a conventional form which was introduced by the coloniser and is now being continued, albeit revalued.

The field of postcolonial studies offers more distinctly politically or ideologically motivated explanations for the trend towards imitation of colonial models, which commonly manifests itself in previously colonised societies after the attainment of independence. A frequently cited argument for such mimicry, especially the postcolonial order's tendency to replace the envied yet despised symbols of the coloniser with similar symbols of its own, draws on René Girard's (1987) concept of 'mimetic desire'. The previously oppressed have an urge to 'get even' with those who have oppressed them. Girard saw this coveting and attempting to emulate an object of desire produced by the model group as a potentially violent process, whereby the model is eventually eliminated out of the desire to appropriate its identity (Girard 1987; Maré 2002 and 2002a).

This reasoning insinuates that the trend towards imitation of established models is a characteristic behaviour found specifically in previously colonised societies. But historical evidence shows that the appropriation of forms, styles and symbols associated with the past order, building on existing traditions, is general commemorative practice among all peoples (Koshar 2000: 118). During the early Christian period, for instance, artists habitually appropriated the style and much of the iconography of established pagan art traditions to express new religious values. The Soviet Union vigorously embraced academic realism, a style promoted by the late 19th century bourgeoisie, to express distinctly anti-bourgeois ideological values in its public art and sculptural monuments.

Drawing on foundational texts of postcolonial theory, notably *The Empire Writes Back* by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) and *Describing Empire* by Tiffin and Lawson (1994), a related although less vindictive perspective can be proposed. The notion of 'writing back' evoked in these texts involves the appropriation and utilisation of the coloniser's

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commemorative structures in the international arena, which might be useful for the conceptualisation and design of Freedom Park.

language for the purpose of articulating subversive messages of resistance or countering the biased record. 'Just as fire can be fought with fire, textual control can be fought with textuality', explained Tiffin and Lawson (1994: 10) about one of the primary strategies of postcolonial response. The postcolonial agent can express him/herself *in similar ways*, appropriating *the same means* utilised by the coloniser in order to 'write back' or 'de-scribe'.[36] Applied to the field of public commemoration, one might say, the postcolonial or post-apartheid society imitates or appropriates the commemorative language (the solid monument as medium and the specific conventions of its visual and textual language) of the coloniser or apartheid oppressor to 'write back' or 'describe', to counter the latter's ideology or 'correct' its biased representations.[37]

Lüsebrink (1999: 417-8) explains that postcolonial historical consciousness is often constructed as a counter-discourse to the colonial representation of local history, driven by heroic leaders (*Replikstruktur*). As the coloniser used statues to parade his heroes, the post-colonial society identifies its own heroes and likewise celebrates them through statues in a deliberate or subconscious act of appropriating the coloniser's own visual and commemorative 'language'. Harrison's (1995) concept of 'innovation contests', the competitive creation of traditions and symbolic forms in competition with the symbols of another, specifically a (previously) hegemonic order, also applies here. As Harrison (1995: 263) states,

> there is at any particular time, a more or less agreed minimal complex of symbols that a political entity should have in order to be understood as a nation state or, indeed, even to be understood as a political movement having aspirations to nation statehood.

In other words, the new socio-political order in South Africa needs monuments to be taken seriously as a nation state, because establishing monuments (just as designing a flag or coat of arms, adopting a national anthem, or inventing other national symbols) is a time-honoured, internationally accepted practice in representing a nation or political entity.

Harrison (1995: 262) emphasizes that innovation contests are always based on the *similarity* of symbols.

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[36] Wallace (1990: 126-7) reminds us that 'blacks have "imitated" white Western languages, literatures, religions, music, dance, dress and family life, but with a "signifyin'" difference'.

[37] This strategy rests on the premise that the binary nature of colonial discourse is ambiguous and may even be self-contradictory. The prime example of such active rewriting of existing 'texts' is Sexwale's re-interpretation of the Voortrekker Monument discussed earlier. Here, the postcolonial agent creates his/her own voice by appropriating the coloniser's discourse and subverting or inverting it.

> The point is that the act of producing these representations is not only an assertion of an identity separate from other clans; it is also an assertion of equality with these other clans and a newly-created symbol must therefore resemble the corresponding symbols of rival groups and belong to the same genre, as well as differ from them.

Just as making the new monuments 'different' from the existing ones in some important way is a necessary strategy, so imitating western commemorative models and notably those derived from the colonial / apartheid past is as much a strategy necessary to rendering the new symbols legitimate, authentic and authoritative. Designing these important symbolic structures in any other way, especially if that implies less durability, visibility, monumentality or (perceived) dignity, might be a statement of their diminished importance (Ross, personal communication 2003-04).

This perspective explains why many people's idea of a 'proper monument' is a highly conventional granite memorial or a realistically rendered bronze statue on a pedestal. Through time-honoured usage in colonial monuments, bronze as the preferred material for sculptural monuments, in particular, has acquired a symbolic value, which is not only desirable, but largely non-negotiable as the guarantor of dignity and status.[38] A strong sense of competition and comparison between the commemorative products of the old regime and those representing the new order pervades many new monument proposals and designs.[39] Expectations of dignity, monumentality, longevity and grandeur, as frequently expressed in monument proposals, clearly reveal an aspiration to emulate the visual appearance of the commemorative markers of the previous era.

## Some examples of monuments as critical response: battlefield memorials

As a result of South Africa's volatile history, many battles have been fought throughout the country, including the Xhosa border wars, the Anglo-Zulu

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[38] Given the material value of bronze and the frequency with which such sculptures are vandalised or completely removed for their scrap metal value, one could argue that the authorities would be well advised to encourage an exploration of other materials or the use of a fiberglass imitation of bronze. However, I believe that there would be strong resistance to such suggestions, because the inferiority of the medium would be perceived as an insult to the hero to be honoured.

[39] The Provincial Leader of the ANC and KZN Minister of Transport at the time, S'bu Ndebele, for instance, urged that a 'lasting monument' should be erected in honour of the local Indian community in Durban. 'Just as we have a monument for the 1820 British settlers in Grahamstown, the Indian community, too should be *similarly* honoured' (Ndebele quoted in Yoganathan 2000; my emphasis).

wars, the Voortrekker wars against the Ndebele and the Zulus, and the (South African) Anglo-Boer War. Parallelling the case of Blood River, on virtually every battlefield in the country the visitor encounters one or more memorials, in some cases even elaborate monuments and museums, celebrating the victory or mourning the losses of exclusively white combatants. Following the Ncome model, other battlefields in KZN have since been equipped with memorials dedicated to the formerly unrepresented Zulu warriors. This measure is meant not only to redress past bias but also to provide a more meaningful visitor experience. Monuments are photogenic visual markers and natural focal points for tourists. They can assist the visitor in visualizing the course of the battle, hence contributing to 'bringing history alive'. They provide a sense of tangible experience where there is objectively nothing to see.

The most notable example is the new memorial at Isandlwana, described earlier, which commemorates the fallen Zulus in the famous Anglo-Zulu battle of 1879, in which the British army, led by Lord Chelmsford and equipped with Martini Henry rifles, was defeated by 24 000 Zulu warriors in the service of King Cetshwayo equipped with the *iklwa* stabbing spear (Laband 1995). Despite this glorious victory, the Zulus probably suffered much higher casualties than the British and could ultimately not stop the expansion of British colonisation and the occupation of their land – including that of the very battlefield. Over the years, several plain memorials were set up in different locations on the battlefield to commemorate the fallen British soldiers,[40] of which there were over one thousand.[41]

The new Zulu memorial was unveiled by King Goodwill Zwelethini on 21 January 1999, the day of the 120th anniversary of the battle (Gowans 1999; Anonymous 2001b; Dodd 1999; Zwelethini 1999). It consists of a low circular concrete base upon which four traditional headrests and a Zulu *isiqu* made of bronze are placed.[42]

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[40] Different constituencies erected these memorials over time. A few of them commemorate named individuals, others a specific group of people. For instance, one was set up in 1913 by ex-members and members of the Natal Mounted Police and Natal Police, and another in 1969 by the Old Boys of Pietermaritzburg High School (Maritzburg College) to commemorate their fallen fellows of decades past. The Historical Monuments Commission furthermore erected an inscribed battlefield marker explaining the significance of the battle (undated).

[41] Laband (1995: 227) reports that the British dead numbered 52 officers, 727 white and 471 black troops. The number of dead Zulus is more difficult to ascertain. There were certainly no less than 1000 immediate casualties, although many more died later of their injuries (ibid.: 229).

[42] Incidentally, the curved shape of the Isandlwana memorial can also be read as referring to this battle formation (Gowans 1999; Swart, personal conversation 2005). Swart himself agrees with this reading, but insists that he was not

Photo 9.3 Battlefield of Isandlwana (near Dundee). Example of several memorials erected in honour of British colonial victims of the battle.

Although the precise meaning of the *isiqu* (plural: *iziqu*) appears to be disputed,[43] the artist understood the item to be a traditional recognition for bravery awarded by the king to warriors who had excelled in battle (Swart, telephonic interview 2005). This interpretation is also disseminated by the on-line African History Encyclopaedia and was picked up by the media, thereby implying that the *isiqu* is a kind of Zulu equivalent to the Victoria Cross awarded to British soldiers (Dodd 1999; Gowans 1999; African History Encyclopaedia).

Be that as it may, the new memorial makes reference to Zulu military prowess without reiterating the clichéd image of the warrior figure with assegai and shield.[44] It seeks out a relationship with the existing memorials and endeavors to respond to them in equivalent terms.

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influenced by the Ncome monument, which he saw for the first time only years after its completion.

[43] Jeff Guy considers 'the dynamic range of interpretations attached to these wooden beads, together with the extraordinary variety of meanings invested in them in different historical contexts and across cultural boundaries' (2008: 193).

[44] Swart (telephonic interview 2005) recalls that some members of the Monuments Council wanted precisely such as statue.

Photo 9.4 Memorial to the fallen Zulu warriors of the Battle of Isandlwana, unveiled in 1999. Isandlwana Battlefield (near Dundee).

In his speech at the unveiling of the memorial King Zwelethini described the new memorial as a combination of Zulu symbolism with an essentially European commemorative medium, that of bronze sculpture.[45]

One might say, in other words, a western form has been filled with African content, or an old Eurocentric medium has been appropriated by a new Afrocentric order to express its own values and identity. Compared with the monumental project at Ncome, it is striking to note the small scale and unobtrusive appearance of the new Isandlwana memorial. One might be forgiven for overlooking it while driving around the battle site. I argue that at Isandlwana, as at Ncome, the specific visual appearance of the existing commemorative markers precipitated the scale, form, iconography and symbolism of the 'African response'. At Isandlwana the unassuming, self-effacing nature of the British memorials could be complemented with a low-key, humble counterpart, while the large-scale, brash, Afrikaner Nationalist monumental effort at Blood River required a bold, conspicuous response.

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[45] See Zwelethini (1999: 4). Although the famed tradition of Ife and Benin bronzes proves that both the medium of lost-wax technique bronze cast and the sculptural style of naturalism or idealized realism were not as unknown to sub-Saharan Africa as previously thought, it is true to say that the genre of realistically rendered bronze sculpture is a Western tradition introduced to Southern Africa through colonialism, where it remained for a long time associated with the commemorative ventures and artistic endeavours of the white population.

Influenced by the Isandlwana project and roughly equal in size, a bronze memorial for the fallen Zulu warriors was installed at Rorke's Drift in 2005, made by Peter 'Abbo' Hall next to the memorial for the British victims of that battle.[46] In Grahamstown, the Egazini monument (unveiled 24 February 2001) represents the Xhosa combatants of the Battle of Grahamstown (1819) and makes reference to a small colonial memorial marker, although not being directly visually juxtaposed.[47] At Ambush Rock, between Greytown and Keate's Drift in KZN, a memorial unveiled on 16 December 2000 is dedicated to the Zulu victims of the 1906 Bhambatha Rebellion, an event that constituted one of the last collective acts of Zulu resistance against the state and marked the beginning of the systematic impoverishment and marginalisation of the Zulu population in colonial Natal. Although not set up in the immediate vicinity, the black polished granite stele responds to the presence of a very similar memorial (made of sandstone) about ten kilometres down the same road, which commemorates the police officers who died in the line of duty as they were fighting off the Zulu rebellion headed by Chief Bhambatha of the Zondi (Zondi 1998).

## Public statuary as critical response

Since the time of the ancient civilisations one of the most respected modes of paying tribute to individual leader figures has been the placement of their likenesses, cast in bronze or carved in marble, in a public place of honour, notably as a *point de vue* in a public space. It serves to distinguish an extraordinary individual from 'ordinary' persons, literally placing him or her (mostly him) on a pedestal, as a model for present and future generations to 'look up' to. In South Africa, bronze statues of liberation struggle activists, resistance leaders and African chiefs are currently being erected throughout the country and often deliberately positioned in the immediate vicinity of a specific colonial or apartheid-era statue, or responding in more general terms to the presence of such public statuary in the surrounding environment.

The symbolic reshaping of Botha's Park in Durban, where the Heroes' Monument proposal was never implemented, took a new turn when Arthur Konigkramer, editor of the Zulu language newspaper, *Ilanga*, and formerly head of the KMC, approached the Premier of KZN, S'bu Ndebele, with a

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[46] This memorial, installed in January 2005, consists of a realistic rendering of a mound of Zulu shields topped by a gracefully reclining leopard (a symbol of royalty). In the very centre of the monument – as if growing out of its midst – is a buffalo thorn tree, which is associated with traditional Zulu spiritual beliefs and funeral rituals. The same tree has also been planted next to the Isandlwana memorial (Hall 2003).

[47] For a critical analysis of the Egazini project see Wells 2004; for press coverage see Anonymous 2000a; 2000b; Williams and Surmon 2001.

new idea. He suggested that the Louis Botha statue be 'countered' with a statue of King Dinuzulu – of similar size, on a plinth of similar height, dressed like Botha in military uniform, reportedly Dinuzulu's most favoured outfit.[48] Dinuzulu (also spelled Dinizulu) ka Cetshwayo (1868-1913) was a well-known royal of the Zulu 'nation', who had a special relationship with Botha throughout his lifetime. For instance, Botha had helped Dinuzulu to restore his claim as paramount chief of the Zulus in 1884 and when Botha became Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa in 1910 one of his first acts was to release Dinuzulu from prison, where he had begun serving a four-year term for his role as instigator of the Bhambatha Rebellion in 1909 (Standard Encyclopedia of Southern Africa). Following a competition held in 2005, the new statue was installed in October 2006, but unveiled only on 20 September 2008.[49] It highlights the intersections between the two contemporaries and by extension symbolises the interweaving of the historical past and the destiny of white and black people in the region and in the country.

In the same manner, Konigkramer proposed to complement the marble statue of Queen Victoria in front of the Legislative Assembly in the new provincial capital of Pietermaritzburg with a similar statue (also in marble) of King Cetshwayo (1826-84) as her contestant and arguably her equal in a different context (Peters 2005; Theron 2006). Not only do such statues endorse their subject as counter-hero and open up a discursive reading of the narrative embodied by the corresponding white leader's effigy, but they also officially install these individuals as significant actors in the public history of the place and even the narrative of the nation. The selection of individuals deemed worthy of such extraordinary public tribute is hence a way of

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[48] In the same vein, the marble statue of Queen Victoria outside the Legislature in Pietermaritzburg was to be countered with a similarly sized marble statue of King Cetshwayo (Olifant 2006).

[49] Peter Hall won the 2005 competition for the Dinuzulu statue, while the base, shaped like a Zulu 'beehive hut' in reference to Zulu tradition, was designed by local architect, Erhard Huizinga. The statue remained carefully wrapped up in hessian sacking and watched over by a 24-hour security guard for almost two years. Official reasons for the long delay point to the difficulty of finding a suitably symbolic date and securing the availability of officials and prominent leaders, but the media reported that certain ANC councilors in the eThekwini municipality had objected to the statue's inferior height compared with the one of Louis Botha (Goldstone 2008). The statue was initially meant to be funded through donations and the Premier, S'bu Ndeble, acknowledged several prominent members of the political leadership as having pledged specified amounts between R1000 and R15000 towards the statue in his budget speech in April 2005 (Ndebele 2005). The statue was eventually produced at a cost of R600 000, but it is not clear which portion thereof (if any) was indeed financed through donations.

assembling a lineage of preferred founding fathers (and theoretically mothers) defining an ancestry – not in biological, but in ideological terms – a chosen genealogy as a foundation for the construction of a preferred community and national identity.

Photo 9.5 Bronze statue of Steve Biko, City Hall, East London, unveiled in 1997.

On 12 September 1997, then President Nelson Mandela unveiled a bronze statue of Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko (1946-77), in front of the City Hall in East London (now part of the Buffalo City Municipality) to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Biko's death in police custody (Anonymous 1997a).[50] The statue, made by Naomi Jacobson, was initially

[50] Biko grew up in Ginsberg township outside King William's Town. At age 16 he went to study at Lovedale Institution along with his older brother Khaya, but both were soon expelled on account of Khaya's political involvement. Biko finished his studies at St. Francis' College in Natal and entered the University of Natal Medical School in 1966. After initially joining the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), a multiracial anti-apartheid group, he founded the all-black South African Students Organisation (SASO) in 1968. He travelled throughout the country training students and expressing his views on Black Consciousness, the belief that black South Africans must overcome the mentality of oppression as a prerequisite for liberation. In 1972 he left the university

planned to stand directly in front of the entrance to the City Hall, a space occupied by an equestrian bronze memorial, erected in 1908 (made by W.Reynolds-Stephen) in honour of the British regiments of the South African Anglo-Boer War (Van Tonder 1971 and 1975). The latter sculpture depicts a generic young British soldier, a scout, his exploring look focused on the horizon. Public protests about the envisaged displacement or replacement of this memorial resulted in the decision to set up the Biko statue a few meters away at the corner of the City Hall. Both statues are elevated above street level on high plinths, facing the same direction, with a similar look of commitment and assertiveness on their faces. The strategic positioning, the use of the same commemorative medium (a bronze statue on a pedestal) and the same style (academic realism, slightly abstracted in the case of Biko) emphasise that they are equal in importance and dignity. It is precisely through such imitation that the challenge to the hegemonic discourse represented through the existing statue is made effective.

The new statue was privately initiated by Biko's friend, Donald Woods, who originally approached the City for permission to set up the sculpture next to East London's most important bridge, which he proposed to simultaneously rename in Biko's honour. The Council enthusiastically embraced the idea of the statue and immediately offered the site in front of the city hall, the most prestigious and symbolic public space in the city. Woods recalls:

> I flew from Johannesburg to East London and met with the mayor, deputy mayor and key heads of department of the city in what was now, change of all changes, an ANC-governed city. They were strongly supportive and I was thrilled when they said they would like to locate the statue right in front of the city hall – the most prominent site in the city. I was moved, and said this was the perfect place, and that the only reason I had asked for the bridge site was because I hoped this might cause them to rename the bridge. At this the mayor said: 'We can do that too! We'll call it the Biko Bridge and have the renaming done on the same day the statue is unveiled'. From that moment the East London City Council were the epitome of energy, enthusiasm and efficiency on the question of the Biko statue (Woods 2000: 204-5).

The Council's fervour in implementing the privately initiated statue project is reminiscent of the Hector Pieterson case and finds parallels elsewhere, for

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without obtaining a degree and devoted himself to community work and political activism. He helped found the Black Peoples Convention (BPC), which was aimed at extending SASO's work beyond the student population. In 1973 the government placed banning orders on Biko and other SASO leaders. After the 1976 Soweto Uprising, police intensified their harassment of Biko. He was detained several times under the Terrorist Act, tortured and eventually killed in police custody (Tuttle in Appiah and Gates 1999: 233).

instance in the Nelson Mandela statue proposal in Port Elizabeth, which is discussed in the next chapter. By honouring Steve Biko in this way, the ANC-dominated municipality of Buffalo City implicitly laid claim to the Biko heritage and made a political statement about the broader ideological context in which it wanted to be seen. Dead people come with a curriculum vitae, a résumé, or rather several possible résumés, argues Verderey (1999: 28-9), which in turn lend themselves to analogy with other (living) people's résumés. Statues can be strategic means of tying the past to the present and publicly proclaiming the identification of present elites with selected deceased leaders and past elites, in whose name the former purport to act, or who lend themselves to be appropriated for the advancement of present political agendas.[51]

The presence of the Biko statue, its style and its positioning, are highly symbolic and exemplary of the process of reshaping landscapes of memory in South Africa. Biko complements and diversifies the city's 'ancestry' without replacing it. He has moved in to join the ranks of heroes, but not without contestation.[52] The statue's privileged position in front of the city hall establishes a strong link between Biko and the current Buffalo City municipality, indeed turning Biko into an iconic symbol associated with the city – perhaps to the detriment of nearby King William's Town, where Biko lived and where he is buried. This kind of appropriation of 'struggle icons' and resistance heroes for the purpose of reshaping identity and establishing an attractive 'image', which can furthermore be exploited for destination branding and tourism marketing, is a growing trend among municipalities in South Africa, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[51] This is aptly illustrated when high political officials have themselves photographed next to the immortalised likeness of their 'chosen ancestor' on the occasion of the official unveiling: President Thabo Mbeki, for instance, posed for the *Sunday Times* standing next to the bronze Albert Luthuli in KwaDukuza, with whom he amicably joined hands (Anonymous 2004a). A month later *THISDAY* newspaper published a similar photo showing Mogale City mayor Lenstwe Mokgatle giving a power salute to the 2.5m bronze statue of Kgosi Mogale wa Mogale (Anonymous 2004).

[52] Shortly after its official unveiling, the statue was repeatedly subjected to attacks of vandalism by the AWB. The City Council came out strongly in support and defence of the statue. Local newspapers even reported that the City Council in fact considered hiring a security guard – recalling images of bodyguards or a guard of honour – to watch over the statue on a long-term basis (Anonymous 1997; 1997c; 1997d).

## Conclusion

Public officials claimed – as reflected in archival documents and the media – that an intervention in the memory landscape at Blood River was 'needed', because the fallen Zulu warriors had never officially been commemorated on this famous battlefield. One wonders what might have happened if a Zulu memorial, a simple stele, had swiftly been erected without much ado somewhere on the expansive battlegrounds. Interestingly, this option was never considered, neither by those defending the status quo at Blood River, nor by those pushing for Zulu representation – not even after conservation authorities had advocated establishing 'some sort of Zulu focus' on the battlefield. In my view, it was not considered because the Blood River museum initiative had raised the stakes beyond a level that could be addressed or rather redressed with a memorial.

As stated earlier, Girshick argues that Ncome was initially planned to become a memorial but then turned out to be a monument on account of powerful Zulu nationalist forces steering the process in a particular direction. I would argue that Ncome became a monument, at least in part, because there is a brash monument, not a solemn memorial, on the other side of the river. The museum, not initially planned but spontaneously added in response to the space that emerged inside the curved walls of the monument design, likewise became a reality, at least in part, because there was a museum on the other side of the river, which needed to be countered in both physical and ideological terms.

Extending Maphalala's critique of the Ncome project and reconnecting to my point about the Freedom Park project, I want to suggest that the increasingly popular pattern of building 'separate but equal' symbolic representations of black heritage opposite those of white heritage smacks of apartheid-style solutions, especially when coupled with racially or ethnically defined notions of 'community'. A similar point has been made for the 'multicultural adjustment' of exhibitions in South African cultural history museums (Rassool, Witz and Minkley 2000; Rassool 2001). However, I also believe that some of these monuments, including Ncome, may be very important and meaningful to many individuals and communities – despite the critique that academics and opponents might levy against them.

The demonstration effect of statues and monuments erected by white communities as a time-honoured form of public tribute, compounded by the continued presence of a substantial body of such monuments in the public arena, surely contributes to the new order's desire to respond in 'equivalent' terms. In other words, a hospital named after Nelson Mandela does not have the same symbolic impact as a statue of Mandela in an urban environment dominated by statues dedicated to white leaders. Arguing (as some critics do) for a moratorium on new public monuments because they were never part of African culture implicitly limits the contemporary African population

– never mind the racially and culturally diverse South African citizenry – to the boundaries of an ill-defined African tradition and fixes their cultural practices in the past. If it is widely accepted that African culture even in the most remote rural areas has dynamically changed and been hybridized, if not completely westernised, why should new monuments as symbolic cultural products not be allowed to reflect just that?

What is important though – and largely lacking in the current enthusiastic embrace of the monument genre – is the promotion of a critical understanding of the historical tradition, the ideological functions and inherent characteristics of monuments: their persuasiveness and manipulative nature, for instance; their propensity to represent simplified, biased interpretations of the past; their discursive exclusions and hegemonic tendencies. In the current South African context, the concept of monuments as critical response may be very effective as a highly visible, easily accessible, symbolically powerful strategy of addressing the biased heritage landscape, but it ultimately fails to acknowledge the true complexity of the post-apartheid socio-political context and local identity politics. Below the veneer of inclusiveness, most post-apartheid monuments endorse simplistic dichotomous notions of blacks and whites as former enemies to be reconciled, ignoring much more complex historical lines of division, some of which still prevail in the socio-political landscape of the present. This may partially account for the alienation felt by the 'vandals and vagrants' mentioned earlier, and more generally, the frequent lack of identification and contestation even among 'the people' for whom the new monuments were primarily installed.

# 10

# Commodification, Tourism and the Need for Visual Markers

## Introduction

Previous chapters have focused on monuments and memorials as symbolic entities, whose intended meanings underscore or challenge the dominant discourses of the cultural landscapes they inhabit; or as commemorative beacons responding to the political, cultural and psychological needs of the society that installs them. Monuments are such familiar and commonplace elements, especially in the urban environment, that one tends to overlook them completely; yet for the culturally or historically interested visitor, monuments often stand out. In their silent yet blaring manner, monuments address the visitor and announce what is significant about the locale. They are visual markers attracting and directing the tourist gaze. In present-day South Africa, where both national legislation and local policies emphasise sustainable heritage conservation allied with community economic development, tourism becomes a central motivating factor for the construction of monuments. If one believes public statements by government officials and press reports, it is anticipated that virtually all new monuments and memorials will attract scores of tourists, thereby functioning as catalysts for infrastructure development, employment creation, income generation and poverty alleviation to the benefit of previously disadvantaged communities.[1]

This chapter focuses on the link between monuments and tourism, i.e. the ability of monuments to become tourist attractions, to serve as focal points of the tourist's experience of a cultural landscape, to commodify complex historical circumstances and personalities through transformation into recognisable icons, to assist in the branding of destinations, to create memorable and reproducible visitor experiences along with the sale of merchandise, but also to create visual imaginaries of the past and of the

[1] To refer to but a few examples of such press reports, see Bishop 1998 about Ncome; Edwards 2000 about Sharpeville; Mkhize 2001 about monuments in Durban; Moya 1997 about Soweto; and Koch 1999 about the Samora Machel memorial. In a similar vein, see also Goodenough 1996.

nation, that gain authority through tourist consumption. This chapter does not aim to conduct a strategic impact analysis of monuments or attempt to measure their concrete economic impact based on the evaluation of solid quantitative data. Such research still needs to be conducted and is methodologically not unproblematic. Rather, what interests me here is how, precisely despite the absence of such research, claims about economic benefits are regularly utilised to support heritage ventures that essentially serve other goals. Based on selected case studies, this chapter therefore focuses on political discourse and the ways in which heritage tourism can support (and sometimes undermine) cultural policy, serve (sometimes disguised) political agendas, and entrench particular readings of the past.

## Tourism, heritage and identity

The official end of apartheid ushered in a growth period for tourism, including international tourism, assisted by the depreciation of the rand in relation to major western currencies, the country's increasing exposure to a globalising world, the international media attention paid to the 'new' South Africa, and the general euphoria for Nelson Mandela's 'rainbow nation'. Many foreign tourists arrived to be part of the experience of a crucial historical moment and look in on a society in transformation – long closed off through stigma yet well known through the media – while concurrently enjoying the country's legendary scenic beauty and recreational opportunities.

The ANC-led government's shift towards economic principles favouring liberal market policies presumes that poverty eradication and economic development will result from economic growth, including that generated through tourism. Hence the government strongly promotes tourism as a panacea for all ills and many communities perceive tourism, often uncritically embraced, as the only viable option for their economic development. The niche area of cultural and heritage tourism, comprising township tours, cultural villages, battlefield tours, festivals and traditional ceremonies, markets and craft fairs, art, craft and architecture, dances and even literature, appears to hold particular promise for the previously marginalised population, because attractions can be structured around existing activities, often requiring little capital investment, while simultaneously boosting community pride.

The growing academic literature on the tourism phenomenon increasingly highlights common misconceptions about tourism, 'the tourists', and their purported desires. Grundlingh (2006) points out that the current focus on tourism in post-apartheid South Africa has erroneously led scholars to dismiss tourism before 1990 as inconsequential. His important contribution to the historiography of tourism in South Africa traces trends in international

tourism arrivals since World War II and explores how tour operators and tourism officials marketed and presented the destination to the outside world throughout the tumultuous apartheid period against the foils of violent political protest on the one hand and prevailing, media-supported stereotypes of the 'primitive' and exotic African on the other.

Tourism development is generally believed to require conditions of peace and stability, yet tourism in South Africa is thriving despite a staggering rate of violent crime, regular incidents of social unrest and the escalating HIV/Aids pandemic. This observation prompts Kapstein (2007) to place some aspects of South African tourism (especially township tours) in the context of an international penchant for adventure tourism, risk tourism or extreme tourism, where visitors are drawn to 'controlled-edge' experiences in demilitarised war zones and other sites associated with risk and danger. The author also criticises the prevailing lack of attention to domestic tourists, to 'the postcolonial native' who now increasingly tours his or her own nation. The common assumption in much of the tourism literature is that 'the tourist' is always an outsider emanating from countries of the western developed world, who wants to visit 'a new place in order to experience the new, the exotic, the erotic, and now the dangerous' (Kapstein 2007: 110).

In South Africa (as in many other countries) the number of domestic tourists indeed far exceeds that of foreign arrivals. According to SA Tourism 2006, 7.369 million foreign tourists visited South Africa in 2005, mostly from the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States (in that order), staying for an average of eight nights. In comparison, during the same period 36.2 million domestic tourist trips were recorded with an average of four nights in length. The main domestic source markets are the provinces of KZN, Gauteng and North West. Although by far the majority of foreign tourists come from the western developed world, there is an increasing inflow of tourists from the developing world, especially neighbouring countries (e.g. Zimbabwe, Mozambique), other African nations (e.g. Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo) and further afield (e.g. Korea, India).

Tourism tends to be associated primarily with economic issues, but what interests me more is the political dimension of tourism, in which, I argue, monuments play a key role, tying economic benefits to socio-political agendas. Several scholars, employing a variety of disciplinary perspectives, have explored the nexus between tourism, representation, national or community identity construction and political discourses (e.g. Grundlingh 2006; Hottola 2006; Kapstein 2007; Rassool and Witz 1996; Witz, Rassool and Minkley 2005). Tourism not only represents but actively constructs and commodifies cultures, focusing on unique identities and historical traditions which are often consumed in a context of unequal power relations.

Heritage tourism produces images of the past that may reflect distorted or reductionist interpretations in the interest of creating an inspiring narrative. As tourism actively appropriates the memory landscape, emphasising some

memories and downplaying others, history is framed in a particular way, often in line with destination branding efforts and hegemonic political discourses. The close connection between tourism and political discourse in the arena of heritage is moreover illustrated in the association of museums and heritage sites with issues of national identity and other socio-political debates within society. Moreover, the development and interpretation of heritage as a tourist attraction is regulated through state cultural policy, and the ways in which different places present themselves and are marketed as destinations are increasingly important in local cultural policy (Butcher 2006; Koshar 2000: 296; Rassool and Witz 1996).

In a 1998 article entitled 'Building a nation through our heritage', Valli Moosa, then South African Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, poignantly links heritage, tourism, and economic development with the wider project of nation-building and identity construction in a post-apartheid society. Referring to three new world heritage sites in South Africa declared in 1998, Moosa said:

> They are symbols or icons of what we as a nation can feel justifiably proud about in the world. We must take them and boldly start to project ourselves as a nation internationally whether through promoting investment or marketing tourism … We have to start working on a consensus of how we see and want to build our nation … The manner in which we do this cannot be separated from the process of nation building. We cannot say that our campaign to market SA to potential British tourists can be separated from nation building (Moosa 1998).

This echoes what Themba Wakashe (1994: 36), national co-ordinator for Arts and Culture South Africa (ACSA), said right at the beginning of the post-apartheid era: 'We also have to show and tell the world how we want to be seen, how we are forging a new nation ...'. The state promotes heritage as a vehicle for nation-building and directs the establishment of symbolic markers in order to reshape the nation's identity and control the representation of a contested past, but monuments and heritage sites are also very consciously built as tourist attractions and perceived as mechanisms for community economic development. Through monuments a new identity is portrayed to the outside world, and increasingly to the touring nation itself.

## Tourism as a lifeline for contested heritage

Hewison's (1987) now widely used term 'heritage industry' is meant to capture the close alliance between the preservation of the past and the economic benefits derived from this preservation for those in the present. Cultural heritage, argues Hewison, has become a product – preserved, framed, marketed to 'consumers', and in competition with other such products. In the socio-economic context of Britain in the late 1970s and early

1980s, marked by rapid de-industrialization, heritage came to play a strategic role in economic development mostly through cultural tourism (Urry 1990). Heritage-induced tourism can resolve the conflict between conservation and development, as the success of the international 'waterfront phenomenon' demonstrates. South Africa followed the trend when the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town was developed in the early 1990s.[2] This venture has proven so successful that it is now being replicated in other coastal cities, notably Durban and Port Elizabeth.

Compared to the situation in Britain, the conservation issue in South Africa is complicated by the fact that the majority of the population frequently perceives architectural structures and sculptural objects of the colonial and apartheid eras as 'white heritage', the preservation of which may not be deemed necessary or even desirable. Those who do care for the conservation of colonial heritage are often forced to find ways of making these sites useful and financially self-sustainable to ensure their survival. 'If monuments pay they stay', quipped Leo van Schalkwyk (1995) from the KMC, in the context of the old battlefield memorials at Isandlwana. Similarly, Denver Webb (1997), focusing on the Eastern Cape region, suggested that new meanings must be attached to old monuments. While some of them may be 'recycled' into useful facilities for local communities (e.g. turning old mission stations into community centres), it is anticipated that for others the emerging tourism industry will help make conservation 'useful'.

The frequent invocation of tourism, especially cultural and heritage tourism, as a potential life-line for embattled colonial heritage in a contested landscape of memory is not entirely unfounded. Tourism statistics show that in the developing world a large section of foreign arrivals emanate from the respective country's former colonial power. French tourists travelling to Algeria or Germans visiting Namibia are without doubt attracted to the architectural remnants and other traces testifying to the presence and activities of their forefathers. British tourists in South Africa are frequently interested in the battlefields where their heroic ancestors fought and perhaps lost their lives in serving the British Empire. Werbner observed a striking boom in colonial nostalgia throughout postcolonial Africa (1998: 1),

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[2] Cape Town-based architect, Revel Fox, known for his advocacy of architectural conservation, conjures up the financial benefits of conservation through tourism for 'those who remain unconvinced by the educational, cultural and aesthetic arguments' (1994: 27). Speaking from an urban planning perspective, he advises the creation of clusters or precincts within the city in order to preserve individual objects of special significance in a larger and more meaningful context and to provide a holistic visitor experience for the tourist. Ideally these clusters should eventually become economically self-sustaining.

fortifying the argument of those who see tourism as a neo-colonial phenomenon.

In comparison with recreational tourists, cultural and heritage tourists are commonly believed to have a higher level of education and 'cultural capital' (Ritzer and Liska 1997; Craik 1997). Their presumed interest in a holistic, politically balanced, or contextualised representation of the past motivates them to visit diverse and contradictory sites as avenues leading to an understanding of the complex realities that have shaped a country's history and its people. In this context, even sites and monuments associated with ideological causes no longer shared or even explicitly despised may be significant points of attraction for both domestic and international visitors. Various Afrikaner Nationalist monuments (notably the VTM, Blood River and the Taalmonument at Paarl) are now managed and marketed as educational sites that open up a perspective on the historical viewpoint of a minority. The interpretation of these sites – as the discussion of the VTM case study in Chapter Five illustrated – must walk a tight rope between defending a particular community perspective while simultaneously indicating that this community has shifted away from the radical ideologies that prompted the construction of these monuments in the first place.

## Spirit of eMakhosini: Intangible heritage and the need for visual markers

Chapter One explained that the new heritage legislation promotes a holistic approach to heritage management, whereby conservation in the Western tradition, focused on the physical site and especially its tangible, material remains, is coupled with the preservation of intangible heritage often associated with the history and culture of the African and other previously marginalised communities. Intangible heritage includes cultural beliefs, traditional customs and rituals, aspects of oral tradition and local memory, marked or unmarked burial sites, places associated with important events or leaders, and features of the land with mythical or religious significance. As the significance of intangible heritage is primarily based on community values, rather than defined by experts, this can be interpreted as a progressive move, potentially empowering to previously disadvantaged communities, shoring up pride in their traditions and establishing a sense of ownership in their cultural heritage.

But the strongly promoted focus on the neglected intangible heritage of marginalised communities poses considerable challenges for both the conservation management sector and especially the tourism industry, because oral tradition, ephemeral cultural phenomena and the 'people's history' have often produced few material remains to attract potential tourists. Tourism thrives on visual experiences, on tangible, material objects,

on attractive visual markers upon which the voyeuristic gaze, supported by the camera, can be fixed (Urry 1990). Commemorative monuments, memorials and public statuary are in part established to fill this gap, to translate intangible into tangible heritage, as I want to illustrate with the case of the new Spirit of eMakhosini monument near Ulundi in KZN.

Throughout the world, royal burial grounds and sepulchral structures tend to be accorded special status and significance, often constituting tourist attractions and inspiring awe on account of their infusion with myths and legends or a residual sense of might and splendor. The Zulu kingdom is arguably the most widely known African monarchy internationally and it is currently the only one still existing as a political entity (although primarily of symbolic significance) within the constitutional frame of the Republic of South Africa. Many members of the Zulu royal family lie buried in a forested valley near Ulundi, the eMakhosini Valley, now considered the heartland of the Zulu clan, its place of origin and last resting place of its early kings.[3]

The provincial tourism authority, working hand-in-glove with the heritage sector headed by Amafa, discovered the valley's unique cultural and heritage tourism potential, which is now part of the eMakhosini Ophathe Heritage Park, and considered the 'Cradle of the Zulu Nation'.[4] While the aspect of the origin relates to the established international fame of the 'Cradle of Humankind' at Sterkfontein, one of South Africa's World Heritage sites, the sacred royal burial ground emulates the famed Valley of the Kings in Egypt. However, no pyramids are to be found here apart from the small pyramidal cairns that dot the valley floor, often quite inaccessibly hidden amidst dense vegetation. In other cases, the memory of a burial site lives on merely in a place name or local oral history. Amafa, in consultation with members of the local community and the Zulu Royal House, recently proposed the upgrading of these royal graves, but in a suitably sensitive manner, respecting the existing character of the burial site. Tourists will be allowed access only in small groups under strictly controlled conditions and in the presence of a community guide (van Vuuren, personal e-mail communication 2006).

However, there was a need for an easily accessible, imposing physical marker and attraction point for casual cultural tourists, often arriving by the

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[3] The only Zulu king whose supposed burial place has been marked with a highly public western-style memorial is that of Shaka Zulu in KwaDukuza (Stanger). It was commissioned by the Zulu people under King Solomon in the 1930s and consists of a commemorative urn on an inscribed pedestal (Oberholster 1972).

[4] The address prepared by Amafa for the occasion of Prince Buthelezi's unveiling of the monument reads: 'The eMakhosini-Ophate Heritage Park has great economic importance for the region and South Africa as a whole. It is destined to become one of our country's major tourist attractions' (Speech Buthelezi 2003).

busload on their way to nearby game reverses. For this purpose, Amafa facilitated the construction of the new Spirit of eMakhosini monument, unveiled on 3rd May 2003 by Prince Gideon Zulu and King Goodwill Zwelithini – members of the royal Zulu house – alongside Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who is himself affiliated with the royal clan. Called kwaNkomba (*nkomba* means 'to show') the impressive sculptural monument scenically overlooks the valley off the main road, situated on a hill allegedly used traditionally as a viewing platform for reconnaissance and observation. Now the hill has become a viewing platform for tourists, facilitating their gaze into the historical valley and drawing attention to the significance of this cultural landscape without actually entering or disturbing it. An interpretation centre with essential tourist amenities is currently being added to the site.

The centrepiece of the monument is a gigantically enlarged traditional Zulu beer pot or *ukhamba*, made in bronze by local sculptors, Nkosinathi Khanyile and Peter 'Abbo' Hall. According to van Vuuren (personal e-mail communication 2006), the icon of the pot was chosen because it is an object found in all households – from kings to commoners, from Africa to Europe. However, in this specific context, a more ethnic and gender exclusive reading arguably presents itself, as the object is strongly associated with both ancestor worship and traditional practices of male bonding.

A series of small bronze relief plaques (made by a group of mostly young black artists based in Durban under the coordination and supervision of Khanyile[5]) encircling the base depict scenes from traditional Zulu life. They project the viewer into an imaginary past replete with all the well-known stereotypical icons: the Zulu warrior, the bare-breasted maiden, and the submissive married woman preparing food or serving her husband.[6] At the base of the pot is a head ring or *inkatha* (after which the IFP takes its name), a tightly plaited coil made from grass that was traditionally employed to carry heavy loads on the head. As I was told by the official on-site guide that it symbolises unity or 'the coming together of all races' – an interpretation which inscribes the monument with a reconciliatory, inclusive meaning somewhat at odds with my earlier interpretation of a rather exclusive ethnic and gender iconography and symbolism.[7] The beer pot is encircled by

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[5] Names of artists as indicted on the plaques (in random order): Lindelani Ndinisa; E.D. Mthethwa; Nhla Goge; F.R. Mapumulo; Raksha Gobardan; S.P. Madlala; Dumisani S.; Lalelani Mbhele; S. Belle; S.S. Cele; Joseph Manana.

[6] Discussions of these and similar images among Zulu mother-tongue students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal regularly reveal high levels of identification and pride, even among emancipated, westernized, urban black females, who commonly understand such representations as respectable symbols of 'culture'.

[7] Van Vuuren (personal e-mail communication 2006) clarifies that within Zulu tradition the inkatha symbolises unity because it was made from grass and other items from across the kingdom. The king would sit on it during times of strife,

aluminium casts of seven different animal horns (e.g. rhino, kudu, nyala), which look like giant pointers into the surrounding landscape and represent (in a non-specific, symbolic way) the kings who are buried in the valley below.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the officially endorsed representation of cultural heritage in this and other commemorative monuments manifests striking parallels with the rearrangement and reauthorization of the past in South African history museums. Soudien (2005) distinguishes different approaches currently dominating the field of museum exhibitions in South Africa, one of which is the Nostalgia Style. Driven by discourses of nostalgia, this usually narrow, ethnically based exhibition style provides an unsullied, innocent representation of the past. Strongly supported by the tourism industry, it promotes tropes of timeless beauty and offers 'authentic' representations of what life was like in the past, suggesting that remnants can still be found in modern descendants. The same pattern can be observed in cultural villages, observed Witz, Rassool and Minkley (2001).

Exploiting the aura and mystique commonly associated with royal graves, the Spirit of eMahkosini monument conjures up a sense of grandeur about these early Zulu kings and their noble subjects. This not only serves as a springboard for the appreciative perception of the Zulu 'nation' today, but also potentially triggers further interest in Zulu heritage sites and cultural tourism products, of which an increasing number is being developed throughout the province, conveniently supporting TKZN's destination branding effort and its much publicised slogan that refers to KZN as the 'Zulu Kingdom'.[8] The most recent and most extraordinary proposal involves the construction of a gigantic statue of King Shaka along the coastline north of Durban. Current plans to restock the eMakhosini Ophathe Heritage Park with game and Nguni cattle, protect and restore indigenous vegetation and rebuild Mgungundlovu, the massive royal capital of Zululand during the

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implying that should the king be removed, unity would be under threat. The interpretation provided by the guide must be seen in this context. The inkatha is different from the 'isicoco', a male head ring that was traditionally permanently woven into the hair as a symbol of seniority (Turner, personal e-mail communication 2008).

8 Mthethwa (2008) illustrates the tensions and contradictions that arise from this branding effort for the small Thembe community at Kosi Bay in northern KZN. Although this community never accepted integration into the Zulu 'nation' and has retained its language and distinct ethnic identity to the present day, many members did accept the tourist description of their area as a typical 'tropical Zulu outpost' throughout the 1980s and 90s for the sake of the revenue it generated (ibid.: 500). More recently, however, local identity politics have resurfaced, especially in the context of land claims and the establishment of the Great St Lucia Wetland Park as a World Heritage Site, which has substantially increased tourism to the area.

reign of King Dingane on the fringe of the valley,[9] can be interpreted as an attempt to reconstruct an entire cultural landscape and recreate a past era of lost glory, not least for the sake of capturing the imagination of tourists and fostering their fantasies about encountering the 'authentic' historical traces of the mighty Zulu nation.

The commemoration of a magnificent past, about which historical details are blurred but sketchily survive in oral traditions and local myths, can also be a source of pride and inspiration for locals, for whom such validation of their cultural heritage and traditional value systems is implicitly championed as a backbone for moral regeneration. Jan Assmann (1999: 29) calls this familiar pattern, found in many societies in the world, *Mythomotorik* – a type of remembrance focused on an unrecoverable past, which becomes glorified as a Heroic or Golden Age to serve as a counter-image to the negativity of the present. Such remembrance provides the energy for and functions as a motor for the creation of a new and better order. The vigorous embrace of highly stereotyped images of King Shaka and the Zulu people, images often based on colonial invention and reinforced by apartheid ideologues,[10] also reflects an escape from the uncertainties and instability associated with post-apartheid identity discourses. [11]

As much as the official conservation of intangible heritage is considered empowering for local communities, Keitumetse (2006) demonstrates in her case study of burial customs among the Batlokwa people in Botswana (near Gaberone) that the practice can also lead to the disempowerment of local people. The formal inventorisation of intangible heritage sites and practices, a necessary precondition for their conservation and management, inevitably

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[9] The entire settlement, consisting of the royal residence and military barracks, is thought to have housed approximately 7000 people. Dingane abandoned Mgungundlovu in 1838 when the Boers advanced to take revenge for the Zulu attacks on Bloukrans and Weenen. The king had ordered that all huts be burnt down, and the fire baked the mud-and-dung floors of the homesteads, which are currently being excavated. Archaeological excavations have also uncovered charcoal remains of the enclosure's outer palisade, as well as other important components within the kraal. While a small part of the settlement, mainly the huts in the royal section, have already been restored and made accessible to visitors, the current initiative is aimed at restoring the entire expanse of the massive royal enclosure (Derwent 2006: 6).

[10] Much has been written about images of Shaka Zulu and the mythologising of Shaka in South African history (notably Hamilton 1998; Wylie 2000 and 2006). See also John Wright's (2008) informative chapter on Zulu identity in changing historical contexts.

[11] Adding a party-political dimension to this equation, one might furthermore suggest that the investment in the historically significant past of the Zulu kingdom allows the IFP to recapture in the symbolic realm what ground it lost in political power since the ANC won the provincial elections in 2004.

takes away part of the power these sites and practices derive from their secrecy and sometimes inaccessibility. Cultural brokers and individuals or communities charged by traditional authorities to take care of the intangible heritage resource sometimes lose out when formal heritage management structures take over and new rules of management and visitation are introduced.

A similar pattern might emerge in the eMakhosini Ophathe Heritage Park, but there is also the potential for new cultural brokers to emerge in the shift towards commodification and some existing role players might reinvent themselves in the face of new opportunities associated with the emergent cultural and heritage tourism sector. This is especially true for young people, as a comparison with a case study from Namibia illustrates. Although being influenced by Western values and American hip hop culture, youths in Namibia show marked interest in indigenous traditional culture and the performance of revived or reinvented indigenous cultural practices, often as a result of their involvement in cultural tourism (Fairweather 2003). It remains to be seen how young Zulu people, some of whom now are now academically trained in Cultural and Heritage Tourism, will in future deal with the commercial pressure for pandering to tourist expectations about the exotic African 'primitive' and some communities' own embrace of stereotypical notions of identity and static conceptions of their culture.

## Nelson Mandela as a tourist attraction: Freedom Statue in Port Elizabeth

> Having a name associated with one of the most respected and well-known personalities on earth is any marketer's dream. There is therefore a strong view that the future branding and positioning of the [Nelson Mandela] Metro could be based on the characteristics associated with Nelson Mandela. He represents a big part of South Africa's political heritage and people would want to learn more about him and his emergence as a world figure. This powerful name should creatively be used to build a powerful and credible identity for the new Metro (Heath 2004: 155).

The city of Port Elizabeth, nicknamed 'the Windy City', has never ranked among South Africa's foremost tourist attractions. It is usually considered either the end point of the popular Garden Route (to the south) or the starting point of the pristine Sunshine Coast (to the north) and its scenic hinterland, but not much of a destination in its own right. Written off as 'the Ghost of the Coast', the area's image reached an all-time low in the 1980s, both from an investment and tourism point of view. However, the city identified tourism as the most promising replacement industry and decided to invest in strategic marketing and appropriate tourism development from the late

1980s. Although Port Elizabeth has an attractive coastline and beaches with ample recreational opportunities, hosts a number of well-attended sports events (especially water sports), boasts a rich history and diverse cultures, and features some nature-based attractions nearby (e.g. Addo Elephant Park), the city has always lacked a true magnet or 'must-see' attraction (Heath 2004).

Entirely new opportunities opened up when the larger region around Port Elizabeth was named 'Nelson Mandela Bay' in December 2000, administrated by the 'Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality' (Nelson Mandela Metro, NMM).

Nelson Mandela is still South Africa's foremost icon, much beloved and respected internationally and nationally across the racial spectrum. His name is also one of the best recognised 'brands' in the world. Port Elizabeth has no special association with Nelson Mandela, but the city was quick to 'grab' this foremost icon of the Struggle before anyone else thought of the strategic move. Tourism has fuelled a sense of competition between cities and localities throughout South Africa, which has urged marketing strategists to focus on – and if necessary invent – difference and uniqueness. Much has been written about the ways in which cities invent or elaborate distinctive self-images as place selling strategies (Jacobs 1996: 33) and monuments, I argue, can play a key role in this process. Monuments and statues narrate difference and create a perpetual visual display of the symbols and icons associated with the city's chosen self-image.

In search of innovative tourism draw-cards, the NMM developed the Boardwalk Casino and Entertainment World along the beachfront, and plans for a state-of-the-art wildlife theme park (Madiba Bay Project) are being discussed, but the local tourism authority's most promising strategy is seen in capitalising on the Mandela icon. A year after the renaming of the area, the media announced an extraordinary proposal for a gigantic Mandela statue, developed by a local business executive, Kenny McDonald from Lighthouse Advertising (Rogers 2001; Madwara and McDonald 2001). McDonald soon linked up with a local black empowerment partner, former councillor Mandla Madwara, to form a company called Freedom Enterprises, which planned to implement the project on a public-private partnership basis. The proposed 'Statue of Freedom' was to emulate New York's famous Statue of Liberty, but exceed its model in height by almost 20 metres (proposed height of statue 65 meters, plinth 40 metres). Like the latter, the colossal statue (popularly known as the 'Mandela statue' or 'Madiba statue') was to stand at the entrance to the harbour at Port Elizabeth.

Initial newspaper reports published a preliminary sketch drawn by Simon Legras from the same advertisement company, depicting Mandela with his right arm raised on a high pedestal surrounded by eight reclining lions (one might be reminded of the Rhodes Memorial at Cape Town) (van Heerden 2001; van Niekerk 2001; Matavire 2002). Objections to the symbolism of

the proposed clenched fist prompted a change of design to an open hand, while the figure of a little girl with a bowl was added to give the statue structural support at the bottom. The maquette for the revised sculpture was made by sculptor Maureen Quin, from the nearby town of Alexandria.

The statue was intended to become one of the country's foremost tourist attractions. Initial plans envisaged that the statue would rotate and be equipped with all of the trappings of a commercial tourist enterprise according to western standards, including a restaurant and a wax museum à la Madame Tussaud's in London (van Heerden 2001). The statue itself was to be part of a much larger development which by the end of 2002 was to include 'the Freedom Statue itself, the international Freedom Museum, Long Walk to Freedom Avenue, a cruise liner terminal, residential marina, a five-star hotel, retail centre and an international convention centre', all of which would cost an estimated R2 billion (Matavire 2002; see also Matavire 2003c).

From the time of its initial announcement the statue project remained in the public eye and attracted an endless flow of reporting in the media, especially from the Eastern Province's primary newspaper *The Herald* (a keyword search for 'Mandela statue' in the newspaper's online archive yielded 3469 results by November 2004!). Even the BBC sent a TV news crew to report on the statue initiative and the controversy around it in December 2002 (Matavire 2002a). From the start, public opinion about the project was extremely divided, drawing fierce criticism and ridicule from some – a few readers associated it with an early April Fool's Day joke (e.g. 'Cynthia' 2001; 'Cymru' 2001) – and vigorous support from others. Dissent prevailed also within the ANC, with senior members attacking each other through the press, despite the national structure having officially sanctioned the statue (Galloway 2004).

Mandela himself, according to his late biographer Anthony Sampson, was not keen on the statue initially, because he insists on having been part of a group and because he is concerned about the kind of personality cult that has characterised public memorialisation of leader figures in other African countries (Anonymous 2002). Eventually the anticipated commercial spin-offs appear to have convinced Mandela to endorse the project, as did various other members of the anti-apartheid struggle. At the end of 2003, however, the Mandela Foundation once again raised serious concerns about the size of the statue. 'The foundation wants to distance itself from something similar to the statues of Lenin or Saddam' (Madwara quoted in Matavire 2003f).

While some were concerned about the aesthetic aspects of the project – considering it 'too vulgar' (Gush 2002), or rejecting its obvious imitation of the Statue of Liberty (Anonymous 2001d) – most critics worried about high costs. Although funding was to be procured through the private sector and

other outside sources,[12] many people felt that the money would better be spent on housing, healthcare, welfare, education, crime prevention, or other such priorities.[13] Paradoxically, supporters too focused on money, using the project's anticipated commercial spin-offs, mostly through tourism, as their strongest argument.[14] The business sector, in particular, firmly rallied behind the initiative. In early projections the number of visitors who would be attracted by the statue was estimated at an utterly ridiculous figure of 5000 per day (Philp 2002). This projection was later scaled down to about 500 per month (Matavire 2002a).[15] Most reports, however, refrain from mentioning figures, preferring instead to claim that the statue would establish the NMM as a world-class tourist destination. In short, the Mandela statue is really about big business. The international, iconic status of Nelson Mandela is to be unabashedly exploited to attract and generate cash for municipal and provincial coffers, but also for selected private businesses, notably Freedom Enterprises.[16]

The Freedom Statue project swiftly moved towards final approval during the course of 2004, perhaps spurred on by the 10-years-of-democracy celebratory spirit (Matavire 2003; 2004; 2004a; Madwara and Williams, personal communication 2004). Following an international design competition, the statue has however metamorphosed into a Freedom Tower, a steep pyramidal structure in which various leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle will be honoured alongside Mandela and the visitor will experience a symbolic journey from darkness to light.[17] Although the public description

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[12] For instance, the French government was supposed to be approached for funds in reminiscence of their donation of the Statue of Liberty to the United States at the end of the 19th century.

[13] See e.g. Haddon (2002); 'Cynthia' (2001); 'Veritas' (2002); and 'Concerned Ayesha' (2003).

[14] Anonymous (2003a); Schoeman (2003); Gutsche (2002); Matavire (2003e).

[15] Such extremely divergent estimates show that the attractiveness of the statue to tourists might be based more on emotionally clouded perceptions and wishful thinking than on any scientific basis. One can also sometimes observe completely unrealistic expectations about the benefits that tourists would bring to the city. For example, one reader maintains that each tourist arriving on a cruise ship would spend an average of US$1000 per day in Port Elizabeth (Wiblin 2002).

[16] Not surprisingly, most matters of dispute that arose over the course of the past years in connection with the statue were in some way about money. They included an extended row over the awarding of the tender for the feasibility study; failure of the provincial government to pay for the feasibility study; some wrangling over ownership of the site; and not least the artist's claim for payment for the City's appropriation and use of her design. Anonymous (2004b); Madwara (2003); Oosthuizen (2004); Matavire (2003a; 2003b; 2003d; 2003g); Mokeli (2004).

[17] Details of its conceptualisation are not yet finalised, but the winning design by Equilibrium Studios, chosen out of 107 entries from around the country,

of the project points only to the great pyramids of Egypt as sources of inspiration, it is obvious that the tower structure was equally (if perhaps unconsciously) motivated by the notion of countering the tower-type 1820 Settler Monument in Port Elizabeth itself. Unveiled in 1923 in honour of the British settlers as 'founding fathers' of the city and the region, the 'Campanile' has formed a prominent landmark at the entrance to the harbour ever since. It must have been perceived as dominating the city's skyline in the early 20th century, as the envisaged new tower will probably do in the NMM of the early 21st century, and Hatfield (1967: 49) refers to the Campanile as a unique structure, 'a sort of poor man's Taj Mahal … and a Mecca of all tourists' in its heyday.

Despite reminders from critics that megalomaniac monuments are internationally recognised hallmarks of fascist dictators and totalitarian regimes, supporters insist that greatness of spirit and deed must be expressed through vastness of scale and 'greatness' of design. The project's mission to become an international icon of freedom and one of South Africa's foremost prospective tourist attractions are perceived to demand impressive, cleverly designed and ambitiously engineered signature structures of truly monumental proportions. As a 'modern interpretation of the great pyramids of Egypt', the Freedom Tower will emulate, at the southern tip of the continent, this internationally recognised icon of ancient high civilization in the north of Africa. Its construction is meant to become a masterwork of the modern world, just as its model was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, hence – if one believes the promoters of the initiative – rivalling the international fame of one of the world's most prominent heritage attractions and tourist sites. At the time of writing, the implementation of the Freedom Tower initiative had been placed on hold indefinitely due to various logistical problems, notably the requirement of a major reconfiguration of the harbor area. Incidentally, since the concept of a monumental Mandela statue has been converted into a tower design, the idea of a gigantic statue along the South African coastline has re-emerged in KZN more recently in a proposal for an even more outlandish statue in honour of King Shaka. Initiated by the Ilembe District Municipality for a site near the Tugela River mouth, ca 90km north of Durban, the proposed landmark statue is almost identical with the initial Mandela statue proposal in virtually every respect. At 106 metres, it is envisaged as becoming the world's highest statue (exceeding the Statue of Liberty by 13m). The bronze sculpture would be situated on a three-story podium with various amenities, including 'a museum, conference centre, an upmarket "ethnic" hotel with world class

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envisages a 122 foot tall structure in the shape of a steep, spiralling pyramid. The interior offers space for museum exhibits on Mandela's life and the anti-apartheid struggle, as well as possibly various tourist amenities (Anonymous 2005c).

finishes, a shopping centre, restaurant and art and craft stalls'. Envisaged to be completed in time for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the statue was meant to become a 'must-see' tourist attraction with an estimated 4000 visitors a day and 'the most visited and photographed landmarks (sic) in Africa' (concept proposal, quoted in Cole 2007; see also Anonymous 2006). The estimated costs of R200 million for the statue itself and R1,2 billion for the development as a whole were expected to come from the private sector. The investment was said to generate an estimated 24,76 percent return during the first year, rising to 32 percent by the fourth year. Paralleling the Mandela statue experience, during the weeks following the official announcement of the initiative on 3 August 2007, the *Daily News* carried a number of letters to the editor ridiculing and disparaging the statue idea, and comments of a similar nature quickly accumulated in the blog space of the paper's on-line version.

## Other Mandela statue initiatives

The Freedom Statue project was preceded and without doubt in part inspired by another large-scale private-sector monument initiative in honour of Mandela, which had created much controversy when it was first made public in 1996. The project became popularly known as the 'Mandela's Hand' monument, because it envisaged a giant bronze cast of Mandela's hand breaking through prison bars.[18] The 23-metre (some sources say 33-metre) high sculpture, envisaged for a hill site outside Pretoria (some sources suggest Robben Island) was to be privately funded by businessmen Solly and Abe Krok at a cost of R50 million (some sources say R60 million) and sculpted by Danie de Jager, an artist closely associated with the commemorative endeavours of the apartheid regime (see also his involvement in the *Nasionale Vrouemonument* described in Chapter Eight).

The project drew an unprecedented amount of debate and criticism.[19] The *Natal Witness* thought the controversial proposal was an April Fool's Day joke (Munusamy 1996; Oosthuizen 1996), and South African cartoonist Zapiro (Jonathan Shapiro) ridiculed it in the *Mail & Guardian*. The concept is 'in the best tradition of fascist South African monumental kitsch', commented Robert Greig (1996), Arts Editor of the *Sunday Independent,* and with respect to its tourism potential Marilyn Martin, director of the South African National Gallery, added in a letter to the Director General of the Office of the President that tourists would indeed flock to see the

[18] In a *Mail & Guardian* article the project is described as being made of welded copper plates rather than bronze cast (Beresford 1996).

[19] See for instance Anonymous (1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1996d; 1996e; 1996f); Beresford (1996); Greig (1996); Rossouw (1996); Vanderhaeghen (1996); Dubow (1996). About the monument initiative see also Coombes (2003).

monument, but to laugh at South Africans' naivety and philistinism, not to share in their liberation through a work of art (Letter Martin to Gerwel 2/4/1996; Vanderhaeghen 1996). [20]

Apart from its aesthetic and scale, the project was slammed for a number of other reasons, including its high expense, its lack of transparency, its lack of public participation and consultation, and most notably for ethical problems concerning its initiators. The latter point referred to the perceived 'mismatch' between the person to be commemorated and the persons in charge of creating and sponsoring the monument. The project was considered to be 'contaminated' through de Jager's involvement and the fact that the Krok brothers had made part of their business fortune from skin-lightening creams, which made their sponsorship for a project of this nature inappropriate and ethically questionable in the public opinion (Coombes 2003; Letter DG to Minister 13/3/1997).

The Mandela Hand proposal was shelved completely, but despite efforts by the Nelson Mandela Foundation and other stakeholders to defend and control the public representation of Madiba, both private and public sector constituencies keep seeking opportunities to exploit the man's international iconic status and instant recognition value.[21] It is perhaps no coincidence that the first Mandela statues emerged in the commercial arena on sites associated with trade and tourism. One of the very first examples was the roughly life-size bronze statue made by Phil Minnaar, which was unveiled in 1998 in Hammanskraal, a small township north of Pretoria. The statue forms the focal point of Mandela Square, a new tourist-oriented urban development at the fringe of the town next to the new municipal offices, comprising a series of craft stalls along a new street, very obviously laid out for coaches. Here tourists can shop for snacks and curios, watch the crafters at work, and

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[20] Members of the South African art world condemned the proposal in terms of its aesthetic. 'That monumental arm that is supposed to symbolise freedom, bursting through prison bars, is it waving or drowning? In its overblown, vein-bulging literalism, it is an echo of all that is bad in the discredited rhetoric of totalitarian art', said Neville Dubow (1996) from the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town. The fact that the arm was meant to be based on an actual cast of Mandela's arm furthermore prompted him to draw comparisons with the Victory monument in Baghdad (commemorating Iraq's victory over Iran), which is based on enlarged bronze casts of Saddam Hussein's right forearm (ibid.; see also Michalski 1998). In the South African context, some might also be reminded of the controversial colonial practice of making body casts of San/Bushmen people, upon which many well known 'statues' or dioramas – most notably that of Sarah Baartman – are based.

[21] According to Verne Harris (2007) from the Nelson Mandela Foundation, during the first nine months of the year 2007 the Foundation received over 4000 requests for endorsement (e.g. use of Mandela's name, image, etc.).

take a picture of the Mandela statue,[22] which, as the City of Pretoria/ Tshwane's publicity brochure on township tourism hyperbolically claims, '… now features in every tourist's photo album all over the world and should be seen by every visitor to the region' (undated: 35).

Photo 10.1 Bronze statue of Nelson Mandela, Hammanskraal, unveiled in 1998.

In March 2004 a more than double life-size bronze statue made by Hattingh and Maponyane was unveiled in Sandton Square, now renamed Nelson Mandela Square, a secluded open-air piazza inside an up-market shopping centre in the heart of Sandton, north of Johannesburg. While the statue at Hammanskraal portrays Mandela in a formal posture, solemnly taking his oath of office at the beginning of his presidential term, the Sandton statue is based on the popular image of the relaxed, laughing and dancing man of the people. Critics have condemned the re-branding of the square as one of the worst excesses of capitalist commercial exploitation and the statue has drawn much criticism from the art community, notably on account of its poor craftsmanship (Corrigall 2007: 15). Nevertheless, it continues to fascinate visitors, many of whom have themselves photographed next to it.

[22] Ironically, the statue is set up facing south, which forces the photographer to shoot against the sun for most of the day, making it almost impossible to take a decent picture other than of Mandela's backside.

Photo 10.2 Bronze statue of Nelson Mandela, Nelson Mandela Square, Sandton (Johannesburg), unveiled in 2004.

In the present context of South Africa's eagerness to attract foreign investment and tourism, flashing the Mandela card presumably projects a confident image of peace and stability to the international audience of foreign public officials and private sector delegates who regularly descend on Sandton for conventions and business summits. The statue of Mandela, 'man of the people', has essentially become a kind of décor that lends a local flavour to the international-standard shopping experience at this high-class commercial site, from which ironically the majority of 'the people' are implicitly excluded.[23]

Despite efforts to prevent Mandela from being turned into a commodity, such initiatives and their strong association with tourism and commercial enterprise carry the danger of trivialising the man's role and personality and preparing the way for his likeness to be turned into an item of kitsch. In the NMM, tourism authorities are seeking ways of developing the destination brand by linking well-known characteristics of Mandela with already established positive attributes associated with the city or the region. It has been suggested, for instance, that Port Elizabeth's eagerly nurtured image as the 'friendly city' can be enhanced by creating a new logo, used on stamps

[23] When I visited the statue a few months after its unveiling, I found it telling that the black garage attendant working right outside the shopping complex reported he had never seen this tribute to what might be expected to be 'his hero', because he believed he would not be allowed to 'go in there'.

or seals of approval, that resembles Mandela's smiling face (Heath 2004: 152).

A few other proposals for Mandela statues have been received by the Nelson Mandela Foundation over the years, including some from opportunistic foreigners who would like to associate their name with a highly visible monumental tribute to a world-famous man. In December 1998, for instance, Edward T Breathitt, an American sculptor based in Arizona, in partnership with Michelle Maddox, Director of the SATEX-US Development of Operations, approached the South African authorities with a proposal for a US$200 million Freedom Park on Robben Island, which would contain a 72-foot Nelson Mandela sculpture and additional commemorative structures and statues to portray the anti-apartheid struggle.[24] In response, the initiators were informed of the Government's National Legacy Project, which already included a Freedom Park. Had the initiators conducted more thorough research on current issues in post-apartheid heritage conservation, they might have understood that the development of a statue park on Robben Island was unlikely to be deemed desirable.

In May 2000, Godfrey Lencwe from Pat Voice Promotions in Diepkloof wrote to Nelson Mandela to request permission (and implicitly funding) to build a life-size sculpture of Madiba.

> It is unfair to see a prestigious and a person of such noble character such as he not having a symbolic monument placed in honour of him for history sake (sic.). This not only plays a major role in increasing tourist revenue, but gives an opportunity to build a better rememberance (sic) of what our country was and an update of what it is.[25]

What this clumsily phrased letter reveals is not only how some ordinary people are beginning to make their voices heard and seek to actively participate in heritage conservation and the creation of symbolic markers, but also how they are beginning to understand the 'use-value' of heritage and the opportunities, not least in economic terms, that heritage can provide.[26]

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[24] Letter Carol Steinberg to Ahmed Kathrada, 'Estimated $200 Million Project on the establishment of a Freedom Park and the Development of a 72 foot Nelson Mandela Sculpture on Robben Island', 3/12/1998, DAC, Freedom Park Project, Vol. 3, file 6/16/4.

[25] Letter Godfrey Lencwe to Dr Nelson Mandela. 'Request to build a monument sculpture for Dr. Mandela', 22 May 2000, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 6, file 6/16/7.

[26] In July 1997, Harare-based Project Director SuSu Lavelle of the company Phoenicia proposed a research project for establishing the Madiba Theme Park, which was envisaged to greatly contribute to tourism. Letter SuSu Lavelle to

Another proposal for a Mandela statue emerged from the members of Parliament in mid-2003, when the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (Ms B. Mbete) requested advice from the DAC on the most suitable location for such a statue. The DAC supplied some guidelines, including the requirement 'that the statue fit into an existing tourism node'[27] and produced a complex scoring model according to which different potential sites should be rated and their suitability assessed. While nothing came of this initiative, a very small number of Mandela statues and busts have indeed been established, for instance one in Kempton Park, one in Paarl and one at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, where Mandela forms part of an ensemble of South Africa's four Nobel Peace Prize Laureates. (The other three are Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Former State President FW de Klerck, and Nkosi Albert Luthuli.)

Sponsored by the V&A Waterfront and the Western Cape Province, the latter initiative was originally intended to be completed by 2004 in celebration of ten years of democracy, but its unveiling was delayed to 16 December 2005 in celebration of 'South Africa's process of reconciliation and nation building' (according to the inscription on the site). It constitutes a rather unusual sculptural tribute because the statues, made by acclaimed South African artist Claudette Schreuder,[28] are more clearly works of public art than monuments in the conventional sense. But Schreuder's popularly accessible, somewhat caricaturist style and the commercial environment of the tourist-dominated waterfront once again contribute to turning Mandela and his fellow laureates into entertaining, commodified icons enhancing the up-market shopping experience.

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Ahmed Kathrada, 'The Madiba Theme Park – A Research Project', 1 July 1997, DAC, Legacy Committee and General, Vol. 2, file 6/16/7. The stated aims of the project were to honour Nelson Mandela's legacy, to promote the welfare of the aged and children, and to cultivate quality tourism in South Africa. Strangely, the narrative of the proposed park was based on 'a science fiction novel depicting alien animals, characters and robotics aimed for children' (ibid.).

27 Letter Alicia Monis to Rani Naiker, 'Statue of former President Nelson Mandela to be commissioned by Parliament', 19/6/2003, DAC, New Legacy Project, No vol. #, file 6/16/7. Mbete's letter also requested information on the government's current policy on the relocation of existing statues. On the latter point, the DAC responded that 'Government does not have a policy with regard to the relocation of statues, and specifically those of previous heads of state. However, a general understanding exists that Government does not relocate or in any way alter existing monuments and statues'.

28 Both Schreuder and Noria Mbasa were commissioned for this work, but they opted to produce separate pieces. Mbasa, renowned for her wood sculptures, made the work 'Peace and Democracy', which was set up in front of the four bronze sculptures by Schreuder.

Why have so surprisingly few statues of Nelson Mandela been erected by now? One might suggest that South Africa is opting to follow the model of western democratic nations, which – by and large – tend to abstain from the production of statuary tributes to living persons, especially political figures, but Mandela was always implicitly exempted from that rule. Rather, I suggest, Mandela statues are relatively scarce precisely on account of the widely acknowledged stature of and respect for the man, broadly shared across the racial, ethnic and even ideological spectrum. Mandela arguably constitutes South African's only truly shared heritage. This places special demands on the representation of that heritage, which many believe must be protected from exploitation and appropriation by sectarian interests. Depending on where it is located, who made it or who sponsored it, a statue may be perceived as allowing certain individuals or communities to draw undue advantages from or lay special claim to the Mandela heritage. Although the Nelson Mandela Foundation fiercely protects the Mandela image, it can be anticipated that a flood of proposals for Mandela statues and indeed an entire Madiba 'heritage industry' will spring up when this extraordinary man has passed away.

Regardless of the broad-based admiration for Mandela, we must remain critically aware of how the need for commodification and the strategic exploitation of Nelson Mandela and other struggle icons promotes the reduction of complex events and multifaceted personalities to one-dimensional images and recognisable signs. As the symbolic lives of publicly venerated heroes supersede their real lives, excessive glorification, sanitisation and suppression of unsuitable aspects of their actions and personality can lead to a veritable process of sanctification. In a context where the writing of public biographic history easily becomes hagiography, heroes are effectively shielded from criticism, and even academic historical research exposing ambiguities and contradictions can be regarded a traitorous act.

## Monuments and the symbolic reshaping of the urban environment

'Tourists do not come here to see a mini London but an African city and how its people live. We need to Africanise the city', said Thembinkosi Ngcobo, eThekwini's Executive Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture, when he argued that the city of Durban needs new monuments (Ngcobo cited in Mkhize 2001). The practice of establishing public monuments and statuary in urban centers appears to be a growing phenomenon in many countries, including some of the poorest of African nations. As in South Africa, these monuments are often initiated by the state and serve a dual purpose: the endorsement and communication of specific value systems or redefined

notions of identity in line with government policies, and the creation of tourist attractions and associated destination marketing.

In Mali, for instance, as in other African countries, historical memory was traditionally encoded primarily in oral and performative acts, but between 1995 and 2002 the national government, under then president Alpha Konaré, invested in a large-scale public monument programme, concentrated in the capital city, Bamako. The initiative constituted 'a concerted effort to refashion the visual and symbolic landscape of the city in the popular imagination' (Arnoldi 2003: 56). As commonly seen in post-apartheid South Africa, the sculptural and architectural monuments, over 25 of them in total, represent key events in the country's history, and especially the movement for independence. Some relate to African philosophy or cosmology. Others portray important leader figures. All of them express the government's vision of specific national values, notably patriotism, civilisation and nationalism. But another important aim of the Bamako monument programme was the beautification of the city and the desire to portray a sense of cosmopolitanism in emulation of other world capitals, notably Paris (ibid.).

In his analysis of road monuments in Nigerian cities Oha observed that 'the city (re)constructs itself to be seen, and also speaks to its inhabitants and visitors through what it makes them to see' (2000: 33). Public monuments and statues as 'sights' are persuasive, iconic cultural artefacts in the (artistically redrawn) landscape of the city. They commodify the city by advertising in their mute ways its character and cultural values (ibid.: 37). Monuments command attention, especially from visitors unfamiliar with them and their urban context. They make visible – through symbols and images – what is deemed important; and they assist in the creation of a sense of uniqueness that distinguishes the city as destination from its competitors.

## Statues and name changes: Tshwane

In this context of national and regional competition between towns and cities, the appropriation of well-known iconic leaders and the construction of monuments in their honour can be an important strategy of attracting visitors. Who succeeds in the competitive race for the exploitation of the most desirable icons, which city or community manages to claim which hero for the dual purpose of redefining identity and attracting visitors, is increasingly becoming a matter of power – not only political power but also economic power. Echoing the case of the Mandela statue initiative in the NMM, in other cities and towns statue proposals have likewise been strategically linked with name changes. In the Northern Cape city of Kimberley, for example, now called Sol Plaatje municipality, a statue of the African writer and political activist, Sol Plaatje, was produced in 1998, but its public installation has been delayed ever since due to political

controversy and discussions over the preferred site.[29] In Mogale City, formerly called Krugersdorp, a statue of the important local chief, Kgosi Mogale wa Mogale, has been set up in front of the city hall, thus making the new name seem potently official, following a familiar pattern introduced through the colonial tradition.

Photo 10.3 Bronze statue of Kgosi Mogale wa Mogale, Krugersdorp (Mogale City), unveiled in 2004.

In 2002 the Northern Province officially changed its name to Limpopo and the provincial government immediately embarked on a controversial drive to change names of towns and cities throughout the province in an attempt to 'indigenise' the cultural landscape. In some cases names reverted to supposedly pre-colonial place-names and in other cases they now enshrine the memory of important traditional leaders or 'warrior kings'. The historical Voortrekker town of Louis Trichardt is now called Makhado, for instance, and a public bronze statue of King Makhado was unveiled there in Septem-

[29] At the time of writing the statue is still stored in the William Humphreys Art Gallery in Kimberley, but in 2008 a new bronze statue of Sol Plaatje was cast. He is depicted as a vigorous agitator with clenched fist, a detail that caused fierce controversy. Although already installed on its plinth, the statue was never unveiled. It was dismantled immediately afterwards and has been stored away ever since (Chonga 2008).

ber 2005, immediately to be vandalised with spray-painted references to ultraconservative Afrikaner political symbolism (Hlatshwayo and sama-Yende 2005).

By far the most controversial name change proposed thus far is the renaming of South Africa's capital, Pretoria, as Tshwane, reportedly the name given to the area by local black communities before the Voortrekkers established the town they called Pretoria after their leader Andries Pretorius in 1855. The wider, integrated municipal area which comprises the current city of Pretoria and all surrounding townships had already been named the City of Tshwane Municipality in December 2000, but the most recent dissent refers to the proposed renaming of the actual core city, which was officially approved by the Council on 5 December 2005.[30] Space does not allow me to engage with the heated, often emotionally charged debate over the name change, the controversial research conducted to investigate its desirability, the divergent opinions about the meaning of the name Tshwane, or the petitions and court hearings associated with this contentious proposal. Among the reasons cited by opponents of the name change for their opposition to it were the cost factor and the implications for tourism, notably the damaging impact on the destination branding effort, but the key issue remains centered on Afrikaner identity and heritage.

While the controversial debate was continuing, the consolidation of the name Tshwane was taken forward on a different front, namely through the fast-track production of a 3m bronze statue of Chief Tshwane, unveiled in July 2006 in front of the city hall. When the proposal was first tabled in the Metro Council, two months after the council vote on the name change, no reference was made to the problematic issue of the envisaged name change for Pretoria. Rather, the primary rationale for the erection of the statue was the official acknowledgement in the public memory landscape of a cultural heritage predating the arrival of whites in this area. Secondly, it was pointed out that the Chief Tshwane statue would contribute towards tourism and economic development, following the model of Mogale City, where the new statue had allegedly become 'a major draw card for local and international tourists' (Council Minutes 20 May 2005).

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[30] This was first officially decided with the Council vote on 8 March 2005. The decision created much controversy and debate. For media reports refer to Anonymous 2005; 2005a; 2005b. For detailed information and analysis see Jenkins (2007). In response to the furore, the Minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan, intervened in the matter and put a final decision about the name change on hold, pending further consultation. At the time of writing, the name Tshwane has not yet been officially approved at ministerial level, but it has gained currency in practice at various levels.

Photo 10.4 Bronze statue of Chief Tshwane, City Hall, Pretoria (Tshwane), unveiled in 2006.

Like the name change, the statue proposal led to much disagreement in the Tshwane Metro Council, as well as public debate and pressure from ordinary residents of the city. One of the key issues was whether or not Chief Tshwane had ever existed. According to oral history sources, chief Tshwane was the son of Mushi, chief of a small tribe that moved from Zululand to the area east of Pretoria during the early 19th century. He is later believed to have moved from there to the banks of a river which he called Tshwane after his son, and the whole area became known as Tshwane (Council Minutes 20 May 2005).[31] It is hardly surprising that a Chief Tshwane does not feature in many written versions of the local history, given the ideological agendas and interests of those in power to record and write such history. But in May 2005 the *Mail & Guardian* reported under the headline 'Who the hell was Tshwane anyway?' that two Ndebele chiefs, King Makhosoke II and King Mayisha III, also said that they had never heard of a Chief Tshwane, despite the fact that the name is linked to Ndebele tribal dynasty. They suggested that Pretoria should rather be named Musi or KwaMyamana (Anonymous 2005; Jenkins 2007: 159). The fact of the matter is that the presence of the

[31] According to press reports (Hlahla 2006), the current representatives of the Tshwane royal house 'obtained oral information from their grandfathers and verbal and written information through the late Tom Andrews, who was a founder member of the Names Society of Southern Africa and the Pretoria Historical Society'.

statue now gives legitimacy, increased power and possibly future resources to the remnants of the so-called Tshwane Royal House, to the detriment of other potential contestants, for instance, said Ndebele chiefs.

At the statue's unveiling the chairman of the Tshwane Royal House, Phistos Tshwane, was quoted as saying: 'We've heard arguments that Chief Tshwane never existed. But the fact that we are here (at the unveiling), shows he did (Hlahla and SAPA 2006). A council official added to this as he unveiled the statue on behalf of the mayor: 'In this statue, we can see and feel the pulse of our history beating. We can see how far we've come to building ourselves as a nation' (ibid., see also Hlahla 2006). In other words, the tangible presence of the statue legitimates claims to the existence of the man, implicitly supports the case of those in favour of the name change, and progressively constitutes a building block in the development of a new (Afrocentric) nation.

Created by Pretoria sculptor, Angus van Zyl Taylor, at a cost of R 900 000, the bronze statue of Chief Tshwane shows a middle-aged standing male on a high plinth. According to information provided by the Tshwane Metro council and cited in the media, his face and physical build are generic, with features considered typical of a Tswana/Ndebele male, and he is clothed in the traditional costume and accessories of a headman or chief of the 17th and 18th centuries (Hlahla 2006). The chief is caught in a spontaneous-looking pose of readiness with a determined look on his face. The style, materials, and scale of both sculpture and plinth are clearly inspired by the two existing statues in the same public space, namely those of Andries Pretorius (on horseback) and his son, former ZAR President Marthinus Wessel Pretorius. Among the different locations that were initially considered for the new statue, Pretorius square was a preferred option, because

> … the accommodation of a new statue in honour of Chief Tshwane – in juxta-position (sic) with the statue of Andries Pretorius after whom Pretoria was named – has powerful reconciliation potential. … The square could possibly be renamed Tshwane square, since it is rightly the square of the City of Tshwane. The precinct is of course within a most prominent and dignified location which is frequented by large numbers of tourist bus operators (Council Minutes 20 May 2005).

When Arnoldi (2003) interviewed people in Bamako to canvas public opinion about the new monuments and statues, many were supportive, describing the monuments as attractive landmarks and good for tourism, but critics considered them a waste of resources and expressed concern over an emerging personality cult. In South Africa one might find similar responses, but there is almost always another layer of complexity in evidence, namely one determined by racially based allegiances. If the name change was already a sore point for many Pretoria residents, the statue and its bold

affirmation of the existence of the African chief was too much for the ultra conservative white minority. Only one week after its unveiling the statue of Chief Tshwane was vandalized, evidently by white right-wing extremists,[32] and such attacks have recurred on numerous occasions ever since.

But opponents also hail from the black community. One wonders how many share the sentiments of a black security guard working in city hall, who was outraged about the statue and railed against it as a 'waste of money' in the face of 'people going hungry' (site visit in January 2007). For those in support of the statue, however, the historical facts surrounding Chief Tswhane, including the question of his very existence, are arguably less important than the symbolic value of the name and the statue as a powerful assertion of a new Afrocentric identity, as well as the public representation of counter-narratives contesting the Eurocentric discourses which have so long dominated the public arena.

## Conclusion

Based on the international recognition value of historical personalities and key events in South African history, post-apartheid monuments are widely anticipated to become powerful drawcards for foreign visitors, whose perceived economic power is in turn expected to lead to development and income generation for impoverished local communities. Yet, virtually no research has been conducted to ascertain to what extent new monuments, once completed, indeed attract tourists and – if they do – who precisely benefits and in what way. I would venture to suggest that by and large the tourist potential and especially the supposed community empowerment outcomes of post-apartheid commemorative monuments are vastly over-rated. The tourism argument is conveniently mobilised to legitimate projects primarily driven by psychological, social and especially political agendas.

However, some heritage developments around monument sites are without doubt successful tourist attractions and have become focal points in local community development (e.g. the Hector Pieterson memorial). If tourist interest exceeds expectations a host of problems can result, typically pitching heritage conservation forces against the tourism sector and economic forces. While the former attempts to preserve the authenticity of the site or protect the integrity of a historical personality from excessive commodification, the latter is forever intent on maximizing the number of visitors, developing essential amenities and utilising the iconic status of the

[32] The colours of the old South African flag (blue, white and orange) were spray-painted onto the sculpture along with the letters BB, used during the apartheid era to denote 'Black Bastard'. There were also signs that the culprits had urinated around the statue and on the plinth (Nthite 2006).

heritage resource for purposes of branding and commercial exploitation. The most significant example within the heritage field (although not involving a commemorative monument) is Robben Island, where key stakeholders worry about the impact of the overwhelming tourist interest since the island first opened for public visits on 1 January 1997.[33] As the cultural and heritage tourism sector in South Africa expands, more monuments and heritage sites are likely to be privately initiated, implicitly promoting the sponsor, but ostensibly empowering the community. This trend is likely to open up a minefield of contestation and conflict over memories and their representation, especially when powerful commercial interests backed by private investment funds push for a particular interpretation of the past against ideological agendas endorsed by the state or those held by relevant stakeholders.

What is most disturbing about heritage tourism in my own experience is the fact that historical 'knowledge' is increasingly transferred and acquired through the products of the heritage tourism sector. In a societal climate where the academic study of history is on the decline and where the majority lacks a culture of reading, heritage tourist sites with their easily comprehensible, simplified narratives of the past, constitute an attractive, easily accessible and visually orientated means by which especially the youth and school children on field trips can 'learn' about 'history'. This is accompanied by a trend – prevalent even among university students – towards a somewhat gullible absorption of information and a lack of critical distance towards whatever 'the authorities' have chosen to present to the public. This attitude is unlikely to change, as long as the state, directed by the ruling party, has a vested interest in protecting political memory, and especially the heritage of the Struggle.

[33] Robben Island reportedly attracts well over 300 000 people per year (Anonymous 2004c). In response to this popular interest, the maximum number of daily visitors to the island initially recommended by heritage management structures was considerably increased and crucial tourist amenities, such as a curio shop selling Robben Island branded souvenirs, were added (Coombes 2003).

# Conclusion

It is no coincidence that the practice of erecting public monuments and statues gained popularity in Europe during the Enlightenment and Romantic periods and began to flourish tremendously during the course of the 19th century in conjunction with the emergence and development of the nation state. National monuments are closely associated with the belief in the idea and ideal of the 'nation'. They celebrate foundational moments and enshrine heroic leaders in the chosen narrative of the nation. In the spirit of liberal humanism, local monuments and statues of respected personalities, both from the political arena and from the field of arts and culture, champion morally elevated causes and contributions encapsulating national values to serve as models of aspiration and identification.

In Europe and elsewhere in the world the end of the nation state has long been predicted, yet the concept of the nation remains strong and is often shored up in response to new configurations of political administration and economic organisation, accompanied by the threat of cultural homogenisation through globalisation. Monuments and memorials are frequently dismissed or ridiculed – memorials have been called 'dumping ground for wreaths' ('*Krantzabwurfstelle*') in Germany (Kirsch 2003) and monuments are 'nothing but big nationalistic phalluses', quipped Alex Dodd (1999) in the South African context – yet their popularity is thriving throughout the world. Monuments and memorials, along with museums and other products of the heritage sector, are established to assert specific political and cultural values, but also (in some countries more so than in others) to come to terms with previously denied, neglected or shameful aspects of the past.

In this international context, the South African government's vigorous investment in the commemorative sector, often castigated by critics, is neither unusual nor surprising. Just as the newly established democracy in South Africa and the government's project of building a non-racial multicultural nation are influenced by international models of governance and societal politics, the products of the commemorative sector, too, draw inspiration from past and present trends in international practices of memorialisation. 'Show me who your friends are and I tell you who you are', says an old proverb. With some caution, one might go so far as to say

that South Africa's closest political and economic allies within the international community of nations also provide the most dominant models for both the treatment of contested heritage and the construction of new monuments and memorials.

In societies undergoing fundamental socio-political change, the immediate post-change period is often characterised by a desire to demonstrate a marked break with the past, accompanied by a radical iconoclastic onslaught on the symbolic reminders of that past. In Germany during in the immediate post-World War II period, for instance, persistent talk about Zero Hour (*Stunde Null*) was meant to indicate a complete new beginning, but in hindsight this concept has been largely discredited and historians today instead highlight the continuities with the past. Similarly, in many post-socialist societies in Eastern Europe the persistent continuities with the old order are sometimes seen as more striking than the disruptions thereof (Verdery 1999: 24). South Africa has been admired for the miracle of its 'soft revolution', the negotiated transition of power. In this spirit the post-apartheid government has largely refrained from radical measures and acts of retribution, including radical measures taken against existing monuments as symbolic representations of the old order. In a sense South Africa is caught in a delicate balancing act between continuity and discontinuity, an emphasis on a radical break with the past and a simultaneous continuity with it in the interest of reconciliation, the cultivation of its international image, and the principles of the new Constitution.

This balancing act is reflected in its monuments, which both continue and emulate the commemorative practices of the past and emphasise their discontinuity from the latter. In other words, the postcolonial/post-apartheid heritage, while officially positioned in ideological opposition to the colonial/apartheid heritage, is in reality often characterized by a complex and sometimes symbiotic interweaving with the latter. As McEachern (2002: 1) observed, the South African imaginings of the post-apartheid nation, in the media and elsewhere, are themselves deeply grounded in the colonial experience and the apartheid past, and the state-endorsed nationalism of Afrikanerdom is being replaced with the state-endorsed nationalism of the liberation movements, notably the ANC.

'Dying for the revolution also draws its grandeur from the degree to which it is felt to be something fundamentally pure', notes Anderson (1983: 132). Commemorative monuments are a means of upholding the aura of 'purity' and disinterestedness of the cause for which people died and ensuring that the history of this 'revolution' is remembered untainted. Post-apartheid monuments (and the heritage sector in general) strive to represent the South African success story, the miracle of a peaceful transition of power, inspiring narratives about resistance against oppression and injustice and the ultimate attainment of freedom. These monuments testify to the inherent humanity of the black people of South Africa, their idealism and

hope, but also their resilience and power to change the conditions under which they live. This is important for the sake of the new nation, restoring a sense of dignity to the previously marginalised and forging a positive model of national and especially community identification. It is also important for the sake of the world, counteracting historically rooted stereotypes of racial inferiority, violence and anarchy, which are still perpetuated in the prevailing Afro-pessimist attitudes. 'Ours is a narrative that has captured the imagination of the world. How we resolve the problems of racism, bigotry and economic inequality in our country will be an example to the world community', stated a press report about the development of Freedom Park (Mamaila 2000). One might say the 'liberal dream of history-making' is South Africa's contribution to the world. Although the tendency to romanticise the past, sanitise history, omit ambiguities and contradictions, and suppress unwanted memories is considered common in heritage internationally, in the South African case it is not least motivated by the desire to present to the world a moving, coherent narrative of moral excellence that supports (rather than stains or destroys) the celebrated success story.

There is certainly no shortage of critics – covering the racial and socio-economic spectrum – of the current post-apartheid commemorative effort. Some view the construction of monuments as a waste of public resources. Others consider them mere government propaganda and are concerned about the selective and biased representation of the past. Others again believe that the construction of new monuments falls short of truly transforming the heritage landscape. Yet others take issue with their aesthetic design and deem inappropriate the specific visual language in which new commemorative markers speak to the nation and the world. However, there is also widespread support for new monuments on multifarious grounds and from a variety of quarters. Nothing would be further from the truth than to suggest that post-apartheid monuments are merely imposed on the populace from above. Some may even argue that an endorsement by those wronged in the past lifts any monument above the critique emanating from scholars, tourists or members of privileged communities. Nevertheless, I believe that a critical analysis of the post-apartheid commemorative effort is valid and important, because the memory landscape not only symbolises and represents but actively constitutes and authorises interpretations of the past and the role that different individuals and communities played in it.

Every act of official remembrance is accompanied by countless acts of *damnatio memoriae* – the obliteration of memories that are not aligned with the authorised narrative of the past. In this sense, monuments always empower some and simultaneously disempower others, even within the same (e.g. previously marginalised) community. In the South African context, as evidenced in this book, the struggle over the ownership and control of memory and especially key icons of the Struggle is only just emerging, often

strongly aligned with party-political allegiances. As said earlier, to some extent such contestation and debate can be considered a normal and indeed desirable practice in a democratic, multicultural society, but in South Africa monuments and memorials are generally built to accomplish very explicit aims around representation and empowerment, and any evidence of the lack of a sense of ownership and identification throws a questionable light on these objectives and the public funds that have been spent on the venture.

Burke (2005) observed the strongly instrumentalist nature of public debate around monuments in South Africa. The government invests in monuments to achieve specific objectives, hence justifying allied expenditure. To some extent, the notion of making an input at a particular cost to attain a specified set of outcomes is generic to nation states. But in South Africa, the government tends to assume a particularly strong and somewhat paternalistic role, where government officials see themselves as public representatives who must develop strategies and make decisions on behalf of and in the interest of 'the people' who elected them. This occurs in a context where the majority of the population – owing to a long legacy of marginalisation and disempowerment – strongly relies on the government to provide development and services, and where individuals often lack the capacity and experience to actively participate in decision-making processes and especially to take initiative and follow through with the implementation of proposed projects, including those in the heritage field.

It can be anticipated that the dominant role of the state in the development of new monuments and heritage sites will wane over time. Private sector initiatives, such as the *Sunday Times* Heritage Project, are likely to proliferate with the increasing trend towards the commodification and commercial appropriation of icons of the struggle. More desirable would be a stronger contribution from community organisations and possibly a funding model based on public subscriptions. This is obviously contingent on economic growth and more widespread prosperity among the South African population, as well as on capacity building, a strengthening of civil society and a firm entrenchment of the new democratic order. It is also contingent on a truly shared identification with the very concept of monuments as lasting, solid objects, which I argue does not sufficiently prevail at the present moment, or the development of alternative, more meaningful commemorative practices to replace or complement monuments. More importantly, perhaps, it is contingent on a more widespread identification with the narrative of the nation and the development of a genuine sense of citizenship.

Along with these changes one may anticipate a waning emphasis on political memory and a gradual shift from the current almost exclusive focus on political leaders (including tribal chiefs) and activists of the struggle to the public memorialisation of prominent figures from the wider fields of arts, culture, science or even the economic arena. Also likely to diminish is the

present urgency to commemorate historical events and campaigns related to anti-colonial and anti-apartheid resistance, when all major events are 'covered' and large numbers of victims are acknowledged through various types of tributes.

International examples illustrate that problems often occur when the process of public memorialisation commences very shortly after a tragic event (e.g. the Oklahoma Bombing or the 9/11 Attack on the World Trade Centre in the United States) or relatively soon after a war or a decisive historical era has come to an end (e.g. the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland). In such contexts, many principle role players, participants, victims or other stakeholders are still alive, the memory of events is still vivid in their minds, and they may have vested interests in and conflicting opinions about how the past should be represented. If this suggests a less hurried, more considered and longer-term approach to the transformation of the official memory landscape, it does not take into account the psychological need for monuments and memorials. The rush for memorialisation is frequently an integral part of the desire for healing and establishing the truth, because commemoration involves the development of a coherent narrative, which helps people to understand what happened and to come to terms with the past. Through commemoration the memory of an event becomes institutionalised, hence allowing people to attain a sense of control over it. In South Africa there is an additional factor warranting the current sense of urgency in establishing monuments, memorials and statues, namely the long deferment of such official memorialisation in a context where people were implicitly prevented from establishing permanent, official commemorative markers in public spaces immediately after the events occurred.

As stated earlier, monuments and memorials are habitually legitimated as tributes to those who died or in honour of those who made an important contribution in the past, but in reality monuments are primarily built for the sake of the living, and for future generations. Monuments are attempts at irrevocably anchoring selected interpretations of the past for future generations. They are stages for the enactment of public commemoration, for the dramatisation of the past, for the telling of emotional narratives and their transferral to the younger generation, hence controlling how those in the future will perceive the past and the role that specific communities, organisations, political parties and individuals played in it. 'Whoever manages ceremonies (public ritual) in the most effective way, so that adult generations enact and embody their policy aspirations in the most emotionally significant way for children' – observed Tomaselli et al. (1996: 53) – 'has the best opportunity of securing the symbolic ground for the next generation'.

Considering the important role accorded to the youth as the intended audience for post-apartheid monuments, it is somewhat ironic that youngsters (in my observation) are often particularly disinterested in and ignorant

of the new symbolic markers in their midst. Youngsters are also rarely invited to contribute to the design of these structures (among the exceptional cases is the Solomon Mahlangu statue discussed in Chapter Four). Not only should we ask to what extent monuments are really meaningful and attractive to the younger generation, but also what else could be done to preserve, and not least to problematise, the memory of the past and effectively pass it on to a generation for whom the apartheid period is already ancient history, whose general political apathy, lack of interest in (and knowledge of) history and waning sense of enthusiasm for national holiday celebrations (even Youth Day) are frequently lamented.

Monuments always represent and to some extent construct group identities. They can represent existing communities, but they also have the potential to introduce new discourses and forge new group identities around them. Various scholars problematise the fact that heritage in post-apartheid South Africa tends to celebrate exclusive, racial or ethnically based 'community' identities, thereby ironically fortifying the fixed and often artificially constructed identity categories promoted during the colonial and apartheid eras. To some extent, monuments and memorials too follow this trend (e.g. the Ncome project or statues of tribal chiefs). Whether such initiatives are likely to achieve their purported reconciliatory aim or rather replicate separatism and foster division is a matter of debate and remains to be seen.

However, this book has also shown that many monument initiatives explicitly attempt to bridge community boundaries by focussing on historical events that involved multi-racial role players. They aim to provide symbols of identification for diverse viewers across racial and ethnic lines, encouraging people to think of themselves as South Africans first, and only in the second instance as Indian, Zulu, Xhosa, or Afrikaner. Such monuments are designed to serve as an integrating force even for those who had no personal involvement in the events or once occupied the opposite ideological ground. The latter are invited to empathise and encouraged to identify with morally superior values, thereby allowing them to have a sense of belonging and a share in what purports to be the internationally celebrated South African success story.

How successful this strategy is likely to be in a context where the vision of a unified nation still clashes with the reality of the persistent divide between black and white and the ambiguous positioning of the Indian and 'coloured' minorities in relation to an increasingly hegemonic African nationalism remains to be seen. Of concern is also the increasingly violent xenophobic treatment of the sizable and growing African immigrant population, which supports McEachern's (2002: 1) criticism that South Africa attempts to construct the nation as a territorially grounded unity, while globalisation encourages other kinds of collective identities, transcending national boundaries. In fact, it is precisely on the basis of a shared

heritage, especially in the Southern African region, that the existing state entities could be reconstituted as truly African states, but the firm belief in the nation-state as a bounded territory, irrespective of its arbitrariness and colonial origin, in South Africa and all African countries, renders this option impossible. Perhaps the current investment in monuments is a temporary phenomenon which is motivated by the desire to address specific psychological, social and political needs. After all, how else can one redress the overwhelmingly skewed heritage field, the blatant absences of representation in the South African landscape of memory? Focusing on the museum as a site of cultural representation, Rogoff (2002: 64) proposes that we must move beyond 'the supposition that absences need to be compensated for by the constitution of symbolic presences, and beyond the understanding that memory can directly or indirectly be recovered'. This, she concludes, leaves us with the uneasy task of working and living with absence. Rather than focusing on compensatory projects of replacing voids, Roggoff suggests that the museum should move to a performative approach in which loss is enacted and made manifest from within the culture that has remained a seemingly invulnerable dominant (ibid.).

Rogoff refers to societies, in which the previously absent or marginalised culture still constitutes a minority (e.g. Australia, North America, some European countries), unlike South Africa, where the previously marginalised is now the dominant power. However, a useful lesson that might be drawn from her argument is her advocacy for a shift away from the symbolic object and current strategies of compensatory visibility to a focus on alternative approaches that deal with the effects of past elisions and distortions of history on all cultural groupings. The current approach of 'redressing' or 'correcting' the memory landscape in the museum, as well as in the field of public commemoration in South Africa, without doubt succeeds in achieving a 'feel-good' mood for its initiators and selected audiences, especially during the official unveiling and on other celebratory occasions. But can such structures really atone for the absences and injustices of the past? Are monuments and memorials perhaps mere trappings, covering up for the lack of truly meaningful symbols of integration and identification?

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# Table of Post-Apartheid Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary

| Place | Province | Description | Date | Artist/architect/ Designer | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alice<br>Amatole District Municipality | Eastern Cape | Nkonkobe Garden of Remembrance | 2003 | | |
| Bethal<br>Gert Sibande District Municipality | Mpumalanga | Bronze statue of Gert Sibande | 2008 | Angus van Zyl Taylor | |
| | | | | | |
| Bethlehem,<br>City Hall | Free State | Youth Memorial | 2001 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Bisho<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Bisho Massacre Memorial | 1997 | | |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bizana<br>OR Tambo District | Eastern Cape | Oliver Tambo bust | 2002 | | |
| Bizana area<br>OR Tambo District | Eastern Cape | Oliver Tambo Garden of Remembrance | 2007 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Bloemfontein,<br>Botshabelo<br>Mangaung Municipality | Free State | Youth Memorial | 2002 | | |
| Bloemfontein<br>City Centre<br>Mangaung Municipality | Free State | Poelanong - Cleansing, Healing and Reparation Memorial | 2003 | Roodt Partnership | Linked to Freedom Park initiative |
| | | | | | |
| Bulhoek<br>Chris Hani District Municipality | Eastern Cape | Bulhoek massacre memorial | 2001 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Bumbane<br>King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality | Eastern Cape | Bust of King Sabata Dalindyebo | 2006 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Burgersdorp<br>Gariep Municipality | Eastern Cape | Ikusasa Lethu (Our Future) Heritage Memorial | 2001 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Cape Town<br>Athlone | Western Cape | Trojan Horse memorial plaque | 1995 | | |
| Cape Town<br>Company Gardens | Western Cape | Aids Memorial | Undated | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cape Town<br>Gugulethu | Western Cape | Memorial for Amy Biehl | Undated | | |
| Cape Town<br>Athlone | Western Cape | Trojan Horse memorial | 2000 | Tyrone Appollis | Removed |
| Cape Town<br>Gugulethu | Western Cape | Memorial for the Gugulethu Seven | 2000 | Lungile Maninjwa | Removed |
| Cape Town<br>Gugulethu | Western Cape | Memorial for the Gugulethu Seven | 2005 | Donovan Ward & Paul Hendricks | |
| Cape Town<br>Athlone | Western Cape | Trojan Horse memorial | 2005 | ACG Architects | |
| Cape Town<br>V&A Waterfront | Western Cape | Nobel Peace Prize Laureates | 2005 | Claudette Schreuder & Noria Mbasa | |
| Cape Town<br>Athlone | Western Cape | Robert Waterwitch & Coline Williams Memorial | 2005 | Guy du Toit & Egon Tania | Removed and re-installed |
| Cape Town<br>City Centre | Western Cape | Memorial for Cissie Gool | 2007 | Ruth Sacks | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Cape Town<br>Gordon's Bay | Western Cape | Memorial for Ingrid Jonker | 2007 | Tyrone Appollis | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Cape Town<br>Kalk Bay | Western Cape | Memorial for Olive Schreiner | 2007 | Barbara Wildenboer | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Cape Town<br>City Centre | Western Cape | Memorial for Abdullah Ibrahim | 2007 | Mark O'Donovan & Francois Venter | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Cape Town<br>Newlands | Western Cape | Memorial for Basil d'Oliveira | 2007 | Donovan Ward | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Cape Town<br>Youngsfield | Western Cape | Memorial for the First Trans-Africa Flight | 2007 | Strijdom van der Merwe | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cape Town<br>City Centre | Western Cape | Race Classification Board memorial | 2007 | Roderick Sauls | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project, Removed |
| Cape Town<br>University of Cape Town | Western Cape | Memorial for Reverend Isaac Wauchope | 2007 | Madi Phala | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Cape Town,<br>City Centre | Western Cape | The Purple Shall Govern | 2007 | Conrad Botes | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Cape Town<br>City Centre | Western Cape | Slave memorial | 2008 | Wilma Cruise and Gavin Younge | |
| | | | | | |
| Cradock<br>Chris Hani District Municipality | Eastern Cape | Memorial for the Cradock Four | 2000 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Blood River/Ncome Amajuba District Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Ncome monument and museum | 1998 | | National Legacy Project |
| Isandlwana<br>Umzimyathi District Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Isandlwana battlefield memorial | 1999 | Gert Swart | |
| Rorke's Drift<br>Msinga Muncipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Rorke's Drift battlefield memorial | 2006 | Peter 'Abbo' Hall | |
| | | | | | |
| Durban<br>Harbour<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of the Lady in White | 1995 | Barbara Siedle | |
| Durban<br>Wentworth<br>Ethekwini Muncipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Plaque commemorating Nelson Mandela's visit | 1995 | | |
| Durban | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze bust of Vasco da Gama | (1997) | Barbara Siedle | Not publicly installed; |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethekwini Municipality | | | | | currently in storage |
| Durban<br>Gugu Dlamini Park<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Gugu Dlamini | 2000 | Jeremy Wafer & Georgia Sarkin with Bronwen Findlay & Jane du Rand) | Severely vandalized |
| Durban<br>Gugu Dlamini Park<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Aids Ribbon | 2000 | | Installed on top of the 'Pleasure Dome' fountain |
| Durban<br>Chatsworth<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi | 2001 | Maria Smith Williams | |
| Durban<br>City Hall<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Starwalk (King Cetswhayo African Image Awards) | 2001 | | Slightly extended in subsequent years |
| Durban<br>Umbilo<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Resistance Park | 2002 | Architecture: Ravi Jhupsee. Relief sculpture made in India by Shree Kumar | Fenced in at a later stage |
| Durban<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of Prophet Isaiah Shembe | (2004) | Andries Botha, Greg Streak & Peter 'Abbo' Hall | Not publicly installed; currently in storage |
| Durban<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of John Dube | (2006) | Andries Botha | Not publicly installed; currently in storage |
| Durban<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of Nelson Mandela | (2006) | Andries Botha & Ledelle Moe | Not publicly installed; currently in storage |

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| Durban<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of Dorothee Nyembe | (2006) | Andries Botha | Not publicly installed; currently in storage |
| Durban<br>Botha's Park<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of King Dinuzulu | 2008 | Peter 'Abbo' Hall | Completed and installed in 2006 |
| Durban<br>Hillary<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Bessie Head | 2008 | Jane du Rand | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Durban<br>KwaMashu<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Ladysmith Black Mambazo | 2008 | Magwa Langa | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Durban<br>International Convention Centre<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Albert Luthuli | (2008) | Nontobeko Ntombela and Monli Mdanda | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project; not publicly installed, currently in storage |
| Durban<br>International Convention Centre<br>Ethekwini Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Papwa Sewgolum | (2008) | Sharlene Khan | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project; not publicly installed, currently in storage |
| | | | | | |
| East London<br>City Hall<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Bronze statue of Steve Biko | 1997 | Naomi Jacobson | |
| East London<br>Duncan Village<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Duncan Village Massacre memorial | 2008 | Maureen Quin | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| East London<br>Beach Front<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Multicultural Man | 2006 | Francesco Perilli | Donation from Italy |
| East London<br>Beach Front<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Eastern Cape Heroes Park | 2005 | | |
| East London<br>City Hall<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Memorial for Archbishop Desmond Tutu | 2007 | Anton Momberg | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| East London<br>Beach Front<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Eastern Beach | 2007 | Zach Taljaard | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project, removed after vandalism; in storage |
| East London<br>Mdantsane<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Happyboy Mgxaji | 2007 | Andrew Lindsay & Luyiso Makilipi | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| East London<br>Museum<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Coelacanth | 2007 | Graham Jones | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| East London<br>Egerton Station Mdantsane<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Egerton Bus Boycott memorial | 2005 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Ginsburg<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Bronze bust of Steve Biko | 1997 | Naomi Jacobson | |
| | | | | | |
| Giyani | Limpopo | Statue of King Nghunghunyani | 2005 | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greater Giyani Municipality | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Glencoe<br>Glencoe Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial stone for Mahatma Gandhi | 1993 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Graaff-Reinet<br>Camdeboo Municipality | Western Cape | Khoisan Genocide Memorial | 2005 | | |
| Grahamstown<br>Makana Municipality | Eastern Cape | Egazini monument | 2001 | Herholdt & Wagner Architects | |
| | | | | | |
| Greytown<br>uMvoti Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Statue of King Dinuzulu | 2007 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Greytown area<br>uMvoti Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Ambush Rock memorial | 2000 | | |
| Greytown area<br>uMvoti Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bambatha memorial | 2008 | Angus van Zyl Taylor | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| | | | | | |
| Hammanskraal<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Nelson Mandela | 1998 | Phil Minnaar | |
| | | | | | |
| Hankey<br>Kouga Municipality | Eastern Cape | Grave site of Sarah Baartman | 2002 | | |
| Howick<br>Umgeni Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Nelson Mandela capture site | 1996 | | |
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| Ixopo<br>Sisonke District Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Alan Paton | 2008 | Andrew Verster | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project; not yet installed, currently in storage |
| | | | | | |
| Johannnesburg<br>Orlando West<br>Soweto | Gauteng | Hector Pieterson memorial stone | 1992 | | In 2001 incorporated into the new Hector Pieterson memorial and modified |
| Johannesburg<br>Kagiso<br>West Rand | Gauteng | Kagiso Monument | 1993 | Johannesburg,<br>West Rand,<br>Kagiso | Kagiso Monument |
| Johannnesburg<br>Avalon Cemetery<br>Soweto | Gauteng | Memorial for the SS Mendi | 1995 | | |
| Johannesburg<br>Sebokeng | Gauteng | Memorial for Christopher Nangalembe | 1996 | | |
| Johannesburg<br>Braamfontein Cemetery | Gauteng | Memorial for Enoch Sontonga | 1996 | William Martinson | |
| Johannesburg<br>Kempton Park<br>East Rand | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Mandela with two children | Undated | | |
| Johannesburg<br>Thembisa<br>East Rand | Gauteng | Garden of Remembrance (Heroes monument) | 1998 | | |
| Johannesburg<br>Katlehong<br>East Rand | Gauteng | Katlehong Memorial | 1998 | | |

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| Johannesburg<br>Thokoza<br>East Rand | Gauteng | Thokoza Memorial | 1999 | | |
| Johannnesburg<br>Orlando West<br>Soweto | Gauteng | Hector Pieterson memorial and museum | 2001/<br>2002 | Mashabane Rose Architects | |
| Johannnesburg<br>City Centre | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi | 2003 | Tinka Christopher | |
| Johannnesburg<br>Sandton | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Nelson Mandela | 2004 | Kobus Hattingh and Jacob Maponyane | |
| Johannesburg<br>Kliptown<br>Soweto | Gauteng | Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (Freedom Square) | 2005 | StudioMas Architects | |
| Johannnesburg<br>Newtown | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Brenda Fassie | 2006 | Angus van Zyl Taylor | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Johannnesburg<br>City Centre | Gauteng | Simakade (John Vorster Square memorial) | 2006 | Kagiso Pat Mautloa | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Johannnesburg<br>City Centre | Gauteng | Duma Nokwe memorial | 2006 | Lewis Levin | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Johannnesburg<br>Braamfontein | Gauteng | Memorial for Raymond Dart | 2006 | Marco Cianfanelli | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Johannnesburg<br>Fordsburg | Gauteng | Memorial for Mohandas ‘Mahatma’ Gandhi | 2006 | Usha Seejarim | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Johannnesburg<br>Jabavu<br>Soweto | Gauteng | Memorial for Teboho Tsietsi Mashinini<br>(June 16 memorial) | 2006 | Johannes Phokela | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |

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| Johannnesburg<br>Mzimhlope<br>Soweto | Gauteng | Memorial for Lilian Ngoyi | 2006 | Stephen Maqashela | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Johannnesburg<br>Orlando East<br>Soweto | Gauteng | Memorial for Bethuel Mokgosinyana<br>(Orlando Pirates) | 2006 | Sam Nhlengethwa | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Johannnesburg<br>Rosebank | Gauteng | The *Sunday Times* Centenary memorial | 2006 | Theresa-Anne Mackintosh | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| | | | | | |
| Kimberley<br>Sol Plaatje Municipality | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Sol Plaatje (seated) | 1998 | Johan Moolman | Never installed, currently stored in local art gallery |
| | | | | | |
| Kimberley<br>Sol Plaatje Municipality | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Sol Plaatje (seated) | 1998 | Johan Moolman | Never installed, currently stored in local art gallery |
| Kimberley<br>Galeshewe<br>Sol Plaatje Municipality | Northern Cape | Mayibuye memorial | 2002 | Clive van den Berg | |
| Kimberley<br>City Centre<br>Sol Plaatje Municipality | Northern Cape | Malay Camp memorial | 2006 | | |
| | | | | | |
| King William's Town Zinyoka<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Memorial to Benjamin John Peter Tyamzashe | 2005 | | |
| King William's Town<br>City Centre<br>Buffalo City Municipality | Eastern Cape | Memorial for the Prophetess Nonthetha Nkwenkwe | 2007 | Lynnley Watson | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |

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| Krugersdorp<br>City Hall<br>Mogale City Municipality | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Chief Mogale wa Mogale | 2004 | Adam Madabe | |
| | | | | | |
| Ladysmith<br>City Hall<br>Emnambithi Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Mahatma Gandhi | 1993 | J.S. Thulsie | |
| Ladysmith<br>Emnambithi Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Freedom Monument | 1999 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Libode<br>Nyandeni Great Place<br>Nyandeni Local Municipality | Eastern Cape | King Victor Poto Ndamase memorial | 2005 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Louis Trichard/ Makhado<br>Vhembe District Municipality | Limpopo | Statue of King Makhado | 2005 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Matatiele<br>Matatiele Muncipality | Eastern Cape | Maseru Massacre memorial | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Mbuzini<br>Nkomazi Muncipality | Mpumalanga | Memorial for Samora Machel | 1998 | Jose Forjaz Architect | |
| Middelburg<br>Kwanonzame<br>Chris Hani District Municipality | Eastern Cape | Memorial for the Middelburg three | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nkandla<br>Nkandla Muncipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for Inkosi Sigananda Shezi | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Orania<br>(Municipality disputed) | Northern Cape | Koeksister monument | 2003 | Jan-Otto du Plessis | |
| | | | | | |
| Paarl<br>Drakenstein Prison<br>Drakenstein Municipality | Western Cape | Bronze statue of Nelson Mandela | 2008 | Jean Doyle | |
| | | | | | |
| Pietermaritzburg<br>City Centre<br>Msunduzi Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi | 1993 | Phil Kolbe | |
| Pietermaritzburg<br>City Hall<br>Msunduzi Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Carbineer's Garden of Peace | 2004 | | |
| Pietermaritzburg,<br>Imbali<br>Msunduzi Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for<br>Mandela's speech in Imbali | 2008 | Gert Swart | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| | | | | | |
| Pniel<br>Stellenbosch Municipality | Western Cape | Ubuntu memorial | 2007 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Port Durnford<br>uThungulu District Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial for King Cetshwayo | 2004 | | |
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| Port Elizabeth<br>New Brighton<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | Memorial for the<br>SS Mendi | 1997 | | Restoration of older (1937) memorial |
| Port Elizabeth<br>New Brighton<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | Emlotheni Memorial Park or Heroes Acre (Vuyisile Mini Memorial) | 1998 | | |
| Port Elizabeth<br>New Brighton<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | Memorial for Lumkile "Sheya" Kulati | 2001 | | |
| Port Elizabeth<br>Harbour<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | Freedom Tower | (2005) | Equilibrium Studios | Competition in 2005<br>Construction not yet begun |
| Port Elizabeth<br>New Brighton<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | Memorial for Raymond Mhlaba | 2007 | Mxolisi 'Dolla' Sapeta &<br>Andrew Lindsay | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Port Elizabeth<br>St.George's Park<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | Memorial for Athol Fugard | 2007 | Mark Wilby | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| Port Elizabeth<br>New Brighton<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | George Pemba memorial | 2007 | Andrew Nhlangwini | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| | | | | | |
| Pretoria<br>Mamelodi<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Umkhonto memorial | 1991 | | Slightly relocated in context of recent upgrading of the site |
| Pretoria<br>Mamelodi Cemetery | Gauteng | PAC memorial | 1992 | | |

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| Tshwane Municipality | | | | | |
| Pretoria<br>Mamelodi<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Stanza Bopape memorial | 1998 | | |
| Pretoria<br>Attridgeville<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Memorial for the SS Mendi | 1998 | | Original bronze sculpture stolen and replaced with fiberglass copy |
| Pretoria<br>Union Buildings Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Monument for the Women of South Africa | 2000 | Wilma Cruise & Marcus Holmes | No longer accessible |
| Pretoria<br>City Centre<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Monument to Refugees from East Germany | 2001 | | |
| Pretoria<br>City Centre<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Jacaranda monument | 2002 | | |
| Pretoria<br>Mamelodi<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Solomon Mahlangu | 2005 | Angus van Zyl Taylor | |
| Pretoria<br>City Hall<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Bronze statue of Chief Tshwane | 2006 | Angus van Zyl Taylor | |
| Pretoria<br>Salvokop<br>Tshwane Municipality | Gauteng | Memorial to the SADF Veterans | 2007 | | Privately initiated ‘counter memorial’ |
| Pretoria<br>Salvokop | Gauteng | Freedom Park | 2009 | Mashabane Rose, Mpheti Morejele and | National Legacy Project Under construction |

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| Tshwane Municipality | | | | GAPP | |
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| Queenstown<br>Chris Hani District Municipality | Eastern Cape | Enoch Mgijima memorial<br>(Bulhoek Massacre) | 2007 | Mgcineni Sobopha &<br>Michael Barry | *Sunday Times* Heritage Project |
| | | | | | |
| Richmond<br>Richmond Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial to the Richmond Twelve | 2006 | Peter 'Abbo' Hall | |
| | | | | | |
| Sebokeng<br>Vaal Triangle<br>Emfulemi Local Muncipality | Gauteng | Nangalembe Night Vigil Memorial | 1996 | | |
| | | | | | |
| Sharpeville<br>Emfulemi Local Municipality | Gauteng | Human Rights Precinct<br>(Sharpeville Massacre memorial and museum) | 2002 | Gabriel Greeff<br>architect | |
| | | | | | |
| Stanger / kwaDukuza<br>Ilembe District Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Memorial to the Train Disaster Victims | 2002 | | |
| Stanger / kwaDukuza<br>Ilembe District Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Bronze statue of Albert Luthuli | 2004 | Gert Swart | National Legacy Project |
| | | | | | |
| Tjate<br>Greater Sekhukhune District Muncipality | Limpopo | Statue of King Sekhukhune I | 2004 | | |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Uitenhage<br>KwaNobuhle<br>Nelson Mandela Metropole | Eastern Cape | Langa Massacre memorial | 2000 | | Upgrading currently underway |
| Ulundi area<br>Zululand District Municipality | KwaZulu-Natal | Spirit of eMakhosini Monument | 2003 | Peter 'Abbo' Hall &<br>Nkosinathi Khanyile | |

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