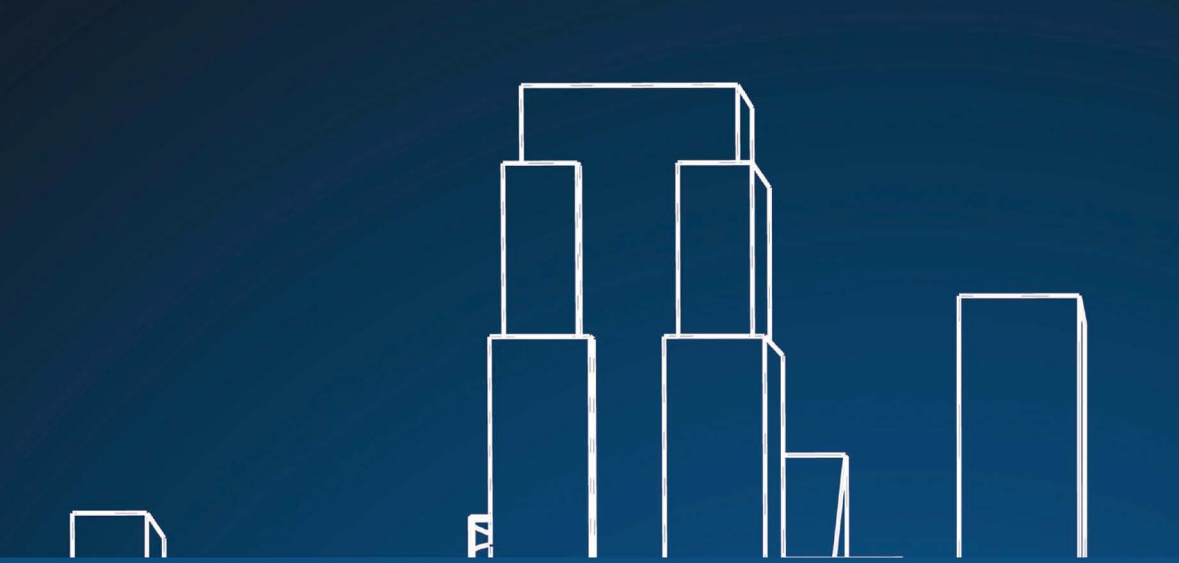

Routledge Contemporary Africa

MONUMENTS AND MEMORY IN AFRICA

REFLECTIONS ON COLONIALITY AND DECOLONIALITY

Edited by
John Sodiq Sanni and Madalitso Zililo Phiri

Monuments and Memory in Africa

This book investigates how monuments have been used in Africa as tools of oppression and dominance, from the colonial period up to the present day.

The book asks what the decolonisation of historical monuments and geographies might entail and how this could contribute to the creation of a post-imperial world. In recent times, African movements to overthrow the symbols and monuments of the colonial era have gathered pace as a means of renaming, reclassifying, and reimagining colonial identities and spaces. Movements such as #RhodesMustFall in South Africa have sprung up around the world, connected by a history of Black life struggles, erasures, oppression, suppression, and the depression of Black biopolitics. This book provides an important multidisciplinary intervention in the discourse on monuments and memories, asking what they are, what they have been used to represent, and ultimately what they can reveal about past and present forms of pain and oppression.

Drawing on insights from philosophy, historical sociology, politics, museum, and literary studies, this book will be of interest to a range of scholars with an interest in the decolonisation of global African history.

John Sodiq Sanni is Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

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Monuments and Memory in Africa

Reflections on Coloniality and Decoloniality

Edited by John Sodiq Sanni and Madalitso Zililo Phiri

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The idea to write *Monuments and Memory in Africa* was born in the doldrums of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic ravaged lives across the globe, epistemic and physical violence emanating from colonial modernity continued to amplify. The murder of George Floyd in the United States, the #FeesMustFall2.0 in South Africa, the intensified downing of statues in the United Kingdom and new articulations for reparations across the Caribbean states elicited questions on intersections in memory culture, museum studies, colonial violence, and philosophy. Staying true to Edward Said's intellectual oeuvre, 'ideas travel', led us to the position that global social justice is intricately linked to epistemic justice. The editors (John S. Sanni and Madalitso Zililo Phiri) bounced the original ideas during the tenure of their post-doctoral fellowships in the South African academy. It would be disingenuous for us to claim that these ideas stand on their own. We are indebted to many interlocutors across different strands of our academic vocations.

Firstly, the ideas expressed in this book were formed through the blood and tears of our scholarly pursuits, while teaching and researching courses cutting across disciplines of the academic community that we have come to deeply love and care for. We would like to thank those students who embody a rich plurality of thought, experiences, and non-disciplinary perspectives, whose conversations enriched and challenged us to ask questions that inadvertently led to this anthology. Such approaches to engaged pedagogy and research reflect our commitment to non-disciplinarity across the fields that we have become interlocutors in, such as philosophy, political theory, sociology, politics, history, and decoloniality. We honour and value these contributions.

Secondly, we are also indebted to scholarly mentors as well as ancestors of the African intellectual archive, whose thoughts, strivings, and poetics in myriad ways continue to aid us into defining new vistas towards engaged African scholarship for 21st-century challenges. We particularly wish to thank Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni for agreeing to write the foreword. He is an engaged scholar whose commitment to scholarship continues to transcend and transgress the trappings of violent colonial disciplinary boundaries in the contemporary era. We would also like to take this time to thank all the contributors to this

volume. Their indefatigable spirit and commitment to engaged scholarship through archival research, critiques of memory culture, and colonial pedagogy morphed into ideas that have shaped this anthology.

Finally, we would like to thank the editorial team at the Routledge Contemporary Africa series for giving us the opportunity to publish this volume. We also would like to thank *Philosophia: A Global Journal of Philosophy* (Springer Publishing) for granting permission to reproduce the chapter on 'Destruction of Historical Monuments and the Danger of Sanitising History'. Our hope is that this publication will generate questions in academia and civic spaces, leading to the flourishing of African lives (and all those racialised as Black) in a world that is predicated on anti-black racism. As with all scholarship, this volume will have gaps and limitations, but we hope that the book will contribute to a larger part of a missing piece in a puzzle in the longer genealogy of African freedom struggles.

Demonumentalisation Colonialism and Re-Membering Africa: A Foreword

The most dangerous monuments are the invisible ones. These invisible monuments are epistemic creations just like the physical ones (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). The typical example, and indeed the foundational one, is the constructed invisible social pyramid. This constructed social pyramid is made of three processes. The first is the social classification of the human population. The second is the racial hierarchisation of the human population. The third is the gendering of the human population.

The ultimate result is what scholars like Sylvia Wynter (2003) and Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) have termed coloniality of being. Race and gender are the organising principles of coloniality of being, which have given birth to differentiated ontologies. These range from full ontology (White), sub-ontology (brown, black, and coloured), to empty ontology (Indigenous). These invented categories became foundational to the dismemberment of Black and Indigenous peoples. The gendering of the human population cuts across all the categories. Therefore, the races, ethnicities, sexualities, classes, genders, and other modern human vectors of categorisation and hierarchisation are rooted in the invisible social pyramid.

The social pyramid is a foundational monument that has survived the anti-colonial, feminist and Indigenous struggles for re-existence and is troubling the current resurgent and insurgent decolonisation of the 21st century known as decoloniality. Etched and embedded in the minds and psyches of modern subjects, it is the most difficult monument to decommission and demonumentalise. It is the main technology that is sustaining what James Blaut (1993) termed the coloniser's model of the world.

The invisible social pyramid stands menacingly at the centre of the modern world. It performs various functions for the projects of colonialism and coloniality. Through this social pyramid, the colonialists were able to identify and justify which people had to be enslaved, subjected to genocide, colonial conquest, and reduced to perpetual providers of cheap labour. For example, Francoise Verges (2020) has convincingly argued that the cleaners of the world are mainly the Black, coloured, and indeed racialised women minorities of the world. The foundation of all this is the invisible social pyramid, which continues to stand as a monument at the centre of the modern colonial world.

Therefore, John S. Sanni and Madalitso Z. Phiri's book takes us into the intricacies of the constituent elements of monumentalisation and memorialisation as signatures of contesting civilisations. The central problem is what to do with monuments and memories within the context of resurgent and insurgent decolonisation in the 21st century. Sanni and Phiri's book does not minimise the complexities, as it brings the questions of archives, libraries, and knowledge into the centre of the scholarly debates. What emerges poignantly from this study are the contestations between proponents of preservation and those of destruction of those iconographies of enslavement, empire, racial capitalism, and heteropatriarchal sexism that are offensive to the descendants of enslaved, colonised, dispossessed, racialised, and gendered peoples in the world.

The emerging challenge within the context of resurgent and insurgent decolonisation of the 21st century is how to relocate those who have been ejected out of modern history and indeed how to re-member those who have been pushed out of the human family without falling into the colonial methodology of dividing and defining? Who defines the politics of re-existence and re-constitution of those whose very existence was denied?, and what material conditions have deliberately led to destitutitution as practiced within a modern colonial world decorated by monuments of racists, sexists, patriarchs, colonialists and capitalists?

This is where the fundamental question of decommissioning and demonumentalisation emerges poignantly as an essential pre-requisite for epistemological revolution. Should this revolution be predicated on the reconciliation of different recollections of the past? This is what Thabo Mbeki posited in his famous 'I am an African speech' of 1996, whereby he tapped into the painful and violent histories of enslavement, conquest, and resistance as the constitutive collective memories from which hybrid African personalities emerged. The approach of synthesising conflicting traditions and histories has been proposed before by such African thinkers as Edward Wilmot Blyden and his concept of 'African personality', Kwame Nkrumah and his concept of consciencism, and Ali A. Mazrui and his concept of triple heritage. The challenge is how adequate is this approach to what others have posited as the necessary transitional justice?

Sanni and Phiri's book opens the canvas wide for these difficult questions of transitional justice or epistemological revolution. The notions of transitional justice as largely reformist are predicated on the possibilities of reconciliation of irreconcilable histories and invented differences, which have fossilised and naturalised themselves. How pain, trauma, and destitution are to be remembered and memorialised as part of human history versus how to transcend these for purposes of healing and re-membering of the dismembered and dehumanised is proving to be a very difficult terrain to traverse scholarly-wise and even practically.

The advantage of the current generation is that they have a rich and diverse anti-colonial, feminist, and Indigenous archives to tap into in the search for resolution of 'sentences of history'. What is needed is a careful reading of the

complex archive and, indeed, deep listening to those histories emerging from struggles – written in blood and tears – for insights. What emerges from these archives is that colonial time cannot be reformed, it has to be suspended. The second is that there is a necessity to delink with the logics of colonialism and coloniality if a reworlding of the world from the vantage point of the subaltern position is to materialise (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2024). Colonial monuments and memorials as signatures of a death project have to be replaced by new signatures of those at the forefront of struggles for life (will to live) and indeed the re-existence of all peoples. This must take the practical form of re-founding new humanism, which involves re-membering as a process of picking pieces and reconstitution.

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni

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Introduction

Monuments and Memory in Africa: Reflections on Coloniality and Decoloniality

John Sodiq Sanni and Madalitso Zililo Phiri

Monuments and Memory in Africa provides a *non-disciplinary* (Mafeje 1991) approach to the reading and study of contemporary questions on decolonisation, decoloniality, colonial symbols, memory culture, violence, historicity, coloniality, and erasures of African intellectual archives, all achieved through ideas and practices enmeshed in the epoch of European imperial violence. That memory and knowledge were racialised and thereby hierarchical is an old-age debate that has animated scholars across the ages from the African continent, its diaspora, and critiques of colonial modernity (see Fanon 1961; Mudimbe 1988; Mafeje 1991; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018; Horne 2020; Elkins 2022). But what are monuments, and what is memory? Monuments are history, or histories, as well as archives, that bequeath to any people group living archives to provide contours of the outworking of a civilisational discourse. If the archive and the colonial library have long been deconstructed by, among others, Cheikh Anta Diop (1974, 1981), Mudimbe (1988), and Ifi Amadiume (1997, 1987), there remains the niggling question of how archives can be interpreted in the decolonial turn. The argument that archives are historically constituted, incomplete, and expressive of power relations is indisputable, yet it does not follow that the project of epistemic decolonisation can dispense with the archive as such. On the contrary, a major stumbling block in the endeavour to create decolonised institutions of knowledge across Africa has been the precarious economic and material conditions of what might be called custodianship of the past.

Monuments and archives, of course, are not just physical collections and libraries. They are equally a matter of how discourse is framed and of what is regarded as belonging and not belonging to the sphere of possible and authoritative knowledge. Monuments are the embodiment of the life and spirit of those who have gone before any people group. For it is in monuments that any people's philosophy and aesthetics are to be found, thereby providing foundational artefacts of spirituality, ontology, epistemology, and constitution into civilisational ecologies. Against this backdrop, then, it is the intention of this edited anthology to consider the archive beyond critique. If it is the case that the epistemic relationship with the past is in constant need of renegotiation – and nowhere more urgently so than in contexts of decolonisation – then

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what can contemporary African scholars advance to make sense of the current decolonial turn? This volume is informed by five pertinent questions: (1) What are monuments and what did they represent during colonial and postcolonial periods? (2) What is the nature of the memories that monuments evoke in the world today? (3) What might the decolonisation of historical monuments and geographies entail? (4) Can colonial modernity continue to coexist with the constructed global Black underclass without a decolonised future? (5) Should agitations for Black freedom and liberation articulate a new language to understand contemporary patterns of empire and dominance? These questions do not only look at the past, but they also engage the past in ways that point to the present and how the present challenges us to project a decolonial present. This volume proposes a *non-disciplinary* (Mafeje 1991) intervention in the discourse of monuments and memories. It also hopes to explore how various theoretical frameworks shed light on monuments in ways that reveal past and present forms of pain, marginalisation, and oppression.

When some European Enlightenment thinkers and philosophers, such as Kant and Hegel, declared that 'Africa does not have a history', they continued in a long durée of epistemic and historical processes and practices that had already relegated the continent to the doldrums of humanity. Africa was declared *persona non grata* on the global stage following the promulgations of imperial intimacies (Carby 2019), slavery, and violence that mutilated the continent from the canon of humanity. The constitution of Africans within the realms of colonial modernity meant their negation in the global human ecology. Against the imperial violence that was unleashed, those marginalised and racialised as Black, Coolies, and the so-called inferior peoples of the world agitated for a postimperial world order whose relations are predicated on what Getachew (2019) understands as *nondomination*. The fact that a new generation of scholars have returned to this age-old debate is a truism that the *colonising structure* (Mudimbe 1988), notwithstanding critiques levelled against it, remains intact in Africa and across the world. Colonialism did not only succeed in producing and reproducing a hierarchically racialised global political economy. Rather, colonialism functions(ed) as a consolidated system of thought and ideologies, the theft and appropriation of culture and art, and the distribution of violence. Europe declared itself the 'God of humanity', which meant those produced through its colonial historical archives as well as epistemic kernels could not have legitimate claims on their own humanity, history, literary perspectives, epistemology, ontology, and aesthetics.

European colonial modernity was only building on Judeo-Christian ethics, whose first crime in the 16th century, that of religious extremism and intolerance, was evidenced against two groups: the expulsion of Muslims/Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and the declaration of all people in the colonies as 'soulless creatures' who needed to be civilised through violence (Mamdani 2021; Grosfoguel 2013). For if the God of the Hebrews had intimated, 'So show your love for the *alien*, for you were *aliens* in the land of Egypt' [*Kemet, Miṣráyim/Mitzráyim/Mizráim, Africa*] (Deuteronomy 10: 19), European

colonial modernity obeyed the opposite. Colonial modernity disrupted love, hospitality, and belonging by unleashing the violence of empire and the nation-state on the so-called aliens, who constituted the global project of modernity's racialising mission. Legal codifications such as the 'Alien and Sedition Acts' engraved in the United States composition as the first settler colony in the world drew heavily from these pernicious histories of marginalisation for the purposes of restrictions on migration and speech. This is not only common to the United States, for Eurocentrism through ideas of domination created a 'Global Black Underclass', which has been silenced and erased, at times appearing as oppressed majorities (such as South Africa and Brazil), at times oppressed minorities (in the United States), and majorities across the Black Atlantic as well as the Black Pacific (Swan 2022, 2020) in countries such as Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands.

The beginning of the 20th century witnessed Europe's *mission civilisatrice* questioned as pan-African *worldmakers*, political actors, and activists rose against the constitution of global relations around slavery, peonage, and violence. Historically, African freedom struggles were inaugurated by the 18th- and 19th-century Haitian Revolution of Saint Domingue (Haiti). Sandwiched between two defunct bourgeois revolutions in the United States (1776) and France (1789), the slave revolt provided an alternative world order where former slaves inaugurated a sovereign Black republic that refused the ordering of global relations based on colonial violence. Commenting on the leader of the Haitian revolution, Scott (2023) accents Toussaint's vision,

> not given to him all at once but emerging stage by stage through the gradual assimilation and transformation of the experience of the White supremacist normativity of a slave empire, forged an inaugural idea of human freedom – namely, a freedom born of slave emancipation.

It is this idea that was carried out between 1900 and 1955, across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, that inaugurated a world order opposed to what had been cemented in the past 500 years: a global racial polity.

Monuments and Memory in Africa is also located in the dramatisation of political reconfigurations of imperial intimacies (Carby 2019), colonial monuments, domination, and machinations across Southern Africa over the past 50 years. Southern Africa as a region has experienced protracted imperial violence since the onset of colonial rule on the continent. While most countries (such as Egypt, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi) had shed off colonial rule in the 1950s and 1960s, Southern Africa was the bastion of imperial imaginations. To the southwest of Africa, Angola and Namibia remained under Portuguese control and apartheid South Africa's playground until a coup in Portugal altered the trajectory of colonial policy in the former. To the southeast, Mozambique remained a Portuguese colony until the proclamation of socialist rule by Samora Machel in 1975. The neighbouring countries of Zimbabwe and Zambia maintained contrary freedom

dreams, which made it seem possible that imperial violence would have the last dance. Zambia gained independence in 1964, with the then nationalist socialist leader Kenneth Kaunda providing refuge to liberation movements such as the African National Congress, the South West African People's Organisation, and the Zimbabwe African National Union. In Zimbabwe, the colonial regime of Ian Smith intensified imperial rule, but independence would be achieved in 1980, much to the chagrin of imperial powers that had wished to retain political control.

The triumph of liberation movements across the region was vexing towards imperial powers. The Cold War's fiendish policies led by the United States and Great Britain saw intensified support of terrorist groups, White Supremacist militia groups, and rogue regimes across Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe by providing reconnaissance, military aid, and training to entrench the West's grip on the region and safeguard its geo-strategic/economic/political interests. In the end, however, it was Third World internationalism and solidarity, through Fidel Castro's Cuban interventions, that pushed imperial powers towards negotiations after losing a second battle in Cuito Cuanavale (Gleijeses 2013; Blanch 2008). Such actions, culminating in the transformation of these neo-colonial global relations, reverberated across South Africa. This period of protracted colonial rule bequeathed to the region complex historical artefacts dating from the colonial period to the post-colonial period, when liberation movements came to power. The region therefore boasts intimate imperial intimacies, such as the Swakopmund Concentration Camp Memorial in Namibia, the Cuito Cuanavale Memorial in Angola, the Gukurahundi Memorial in Zimbabwe, the Samora Machel Monument in Mbuzini, South Africa, and the naming of street names after socialist leaders in Maputo, Mozambique. The dramatisations of these colonial legacies would be reverberated in South Africa, the final bastion where apartheid and imperialism collapsed. For this reason, it is worth exploring South Africa in the broader context of Black Freedom imaginations.

It has been 30 years since apartheid South Africa negotiated a political settlement with several Black nationalist movements such as the Pan-African Congress and the African National Congress. South Africa was the last country to be liberated within the longer durée of Black freedom imaginations on the African continent. The first imperial contact in South Africa was made by Portuguese colonial explorers, who represented the crown's interests in establishing colonial rule and trade relations with India in the 1490s. Contrary to the triumph that Portuguese settlers had experienced across the world, under the leadership of colonialist Francisco de Almeida, they were defeated by the !Uri‖'aekua Khoikhoi clan at the Battle of Salt River. The so-called discovery of the Cape of Good Storms/Hope paved the way for the dramatisation of monuments that became definitive to this newly found colonial polity. In subsequent centuries, processes of colonisation as well as accumulation through dispossession would be extended by two competing imperial powers, the Dutch and the British. These colonial legacies bequeathed to South Africa

visible as well as invisible imperial artefacts that position this postcolony at the nexus of paradoxical negotiations of symbolic power, resistance, as well as pending hopes and impediments (Achebe 1988) of a postimperial polity. Across South Africa's racialised geographical rural and urban spaces, colonial monuments linger. Legislated colonial and apartheid planning deployed potent symbols of power that define the intersections of geographical space, quotidian encounters of the marginalised 'native' as well as the disconnection of transportation networks, streets, and urban/rural infrastructure from the idea of the political as well as social aesthetics.

For instance, a city like Pretoria elicits a conversation between the Voortrekker Monument, the Union Buildings, and the University of South Africa as reminders of architectural and geographical violence rooted in colonial imaginaries. The aforementioned monuments continue to represent the very idea of South Africa, an untransformed settler colonial polity whose existence and political imagination oscillate between the imperial intimacies of Dutch and British colonialism. The Voortrekker Monument constitutes the eternality of Afrikaner identity's claims to geographical power, naming, and memorialisation. The University of South Africa is visibly present as a settler colonial ship, symbolising the cultural and military imperialism that has ensued since the Dutch settler colonists landed in 1652. The Union Building is the bastion of imperial power, reflecting unfinished contestations of political reconfigurations between Afrikaner and British political interests. The east and west wings, as well as the twin-domed towers, represent two languages, English and Afrikaans, and the inner court was designed and built to symbolise the Union of South Africa in 1910. It is worth noting that adjacent to the Union Buildings is a newly erected statue of the African Nationalist leader Nelson Mandela, depicted with arms wide open and a symbol of political reconciliation. How do symbols of colonial violence coexist with intimate accounts of a politically reconciled present? The simple answer is that the very idea of South Africa remains a 'political and constitutional impossibility' (see Ramose 2018; Modiri 2021), which manifests in social catastrophes that linger in the current democratic dispensation. The task of the next generation of scholars was to interrogate and go beyond what South African and global politics have taken for granted. This task involves writing about the histories of these monuments as incomplete, claiming international solidarity in the context of narrow ethnonationalisms that have left the South African academic and political communities looming on existential extinction to the very idea of a common humanity.

This volume takes into cognizance broader global struggles to make sense of the decolonial present. The volume is therefore located within a longer series of intellectual projects to critique and unmake the world of empire by questioning symbolic and institutional power present in colonial, monuments and artefacts that seek to reproduce the violence of colonial modernity. What began as an agitation for a decolonised curriculum birthed the #RhodesMustFall movement in South Africa in the year 2015. This move reverberated novel global articulations across Africa and the diaspora that questioned

the legitimacy and claims of empire and European colonial modernity seen in movements that agitated for Black freedom and liberation in the United Kingdom, the demand for reparations in Jamaica and Haiti, and the Black Lives Matter movement, which became more reified around the murder of George Floyd in the United States in the year 2020. The historical interconnectedness of Black life struggles and erasures can only make sense through assemblages of colonial violence that birthed alterity and Black suffering. Contemporary forms of resistance are directed not only towards historical pains, oppression, and injustice as such but also towards existing structures of systemic exclusion, oppression, and marginalisation in the various forms they present themselves and are sustained across the dispersed global Black community.

This volume begins an important public deliberation on the contestations of monuments, histories, archives, and decolonisation on quotidian encounters of Black life struggles. The contributions in this volume reflect, directly and indirectly, on monuments, memories, and/or decolonisation, and it applies them to themes within society, construed in the broadest terms possible to include, but not limited to, epistemologies of Blackness, Black Studies, Sociology and History of Race, politics, philosophy, anthropology, language, justice, political economy of poverty and inequality, dignity, psychology, aesthetics, reparations, museum studies, education, and aesthetics for Black freedom broadly defined.

Critical Overview of the Book

The book provides novel theoretical contours towards understanding imperial violence, memory culture, and colonial symbols on the African continent. It presents a critical account of various instances of colonial oppression and how monuments, in their visible and invisible states, feed into the narrative of colonial power, the justification of the marginalisation of the natives, and the self-ascribed notion of superiority. The volume also highlights particular instances of monuments and the moral questions that emerge from their existence. Some of the contributors, as the reader shall see, allude to statues in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Guinea-Bissau, among other African countries. We now proceed to present a critical account of the various chapters. The point here is to highlight the core arguments and explore their implications for future research.

In Chapter 1, 'The Ideology of Epistemicide' Madalitso Z. Phiri explores a philosophical account of ideological epistemicide. He highlights the realities of epistemic injustices in Africa and how they were legitimised and valorised by imperial epistemic geopolitics. To substantiate his point, he alludes to scholars like Immanuel Kant and Hegel, whose works repeatedly dismissed and undermined epistemological inquiries within African societies. In the same vein, he refers to scholars like Emmanuel Eze (2001, 1997), whose philosophical critique of Kant's works points to Kant's racism and the need to be weary of ascribing ontological universalism to Kant's categorical and hypothetical

imperatives. The point that Eze makes is very important for thinking about colonial epistemology in post-colonial African societies.

Essential to Phiri's engagement is the need to undo colonial dismissal of Africans' 'memory and knowledge ecologies'. His goal, therefore, in the chapter is to theorise from the positionality of the subaltern through the dialectics of liberation. He remains aware of the internal contradictions present in the colonially informed global knowledge production regime. Three areas of inquiry are presented as critical paradigmatic interventions for decolonisation from the hegemony of Eurocentrism: philosophy, language, and literature. His approach is rigorous and intellectually stimulating, and it sets the tone for the engagement in this volume. His reference to epistemic liberation sets the tone for future research on epistemology and epistemic liberation.

In Chapter 2, 'Genophilic Memory in Cape Town', Fazil Moradi, in a fascinating multi-disciplinary style, speaks directly to the reality of colonial monuments. He argues from the viewpoint of South Africa and its colonial legacies, which he refers to as 'the unimaginable cruelties of Dutch, British and apartheid imperialism in the 'non-racial' democratic South Africa'. He argues that these cruelties continue to live on in the fine arts – sculptures, statues, and paintings. This account is informed by a conception of imperial-colonial monuments as 'genosites – sites of "race" – that are formed around genophilia – love of "race" – the perpetuity of which both makes difficult the possibility of South Africa as a "community of survivors" in a "decolonised political community"' (Mamdani 2021). Moradi goes on to argue that Genophilia – genosites are sites where imperial valorisation and commitment to 'White race' and acts of annihilation co-habit. He concludes his chapter with the following profound words: 'The possibility of living in "a community of survivors" where hospitality is central is infinitely delayed and will have to come as a surprise, an epistemological revolution'.

The epistemological revolution is central in Moradi's chapter. He maintains that it is not only necessary for social and political justice but also fundamental to the obligations of the victims of historical injustice. This argument is important for an externalist perspective. The externalist perspective is used here to refer to an understanding of the challenges in Africa that owe their existence solely to colonial existence. The alternative is an internalist approach which argues that the challenge in Africa owes its origins to Africans themselves. There are combiners who maintain that the debilitating social, political, and economic realities in Africa are based on both internalist and externalist factors. Moradi's chapter provides an opportunity to further engage this distinction in relation to monuments and colonial oppression.

In Chapter 3, 'Monuments and Invisibility: Reclaiming Spaces of Colonial Transcendence', John S. Sanni engages monuments as sites of oppression, marginalisation, and colonial transcendence. Sanni argues that colonial transcendence was necessary for epistemicide in Africa, and remnants of this transcendence still linger in post-colonial African societies. While Sanni is empathetic to the decolonial project and its commitment to undoing colonial

invisibility and self-ascribed transcendence, he remains critical of a destructivist disposition towards monuments. He proposes a more transformative outlook on the way monuments are engaged. As the reader would notice, Mbebe's chapter, directly provides a counter to the preservationist's position. The point that Sanni makes is, in some ways, transformative in its preservationist outlook. He provides in this chapter an important framework for conceptualising an alternative disposition to monuments and the memories that they represent.

In Chapter 4, 'Irreconcilable Differences: The Statue Debate and Transitional Justice Discourse', Keolebogile Mbebe advances a stern destructivist position on colonial monuments. As the title suggests, there are 'irreconcilable differences' when one considers the statue debate as it relates to transitional justice discourse. She offers a counterargument to Sanni's (2021) position that the destruction of historical monuments is in some ways a sanitisation of history. Sanni, like other preservationists that Mbebe alludes to, attempts to justify the preservation of monuments because of the benefits of remembering them for society. The nature of monuments, as sites of memories, is not necessarily positive. In a country like South Africa, where Mbebe situates her chapter, the conception of collective memory is a myth. South Africa remains an untransformed settler colonial polity plagued by geographical and spatial inequalities, violence, and an unequal distribution of wealth and income predicated on racial capitalism. The call for decolonisation as it relates to monuments is pertinent. A destructivist's approach is of the position that the only path to decolonisation is to erase all traces of colonial power, including monuments.

On grounds of transitional justice, Mbebe argues that the destruction of historical monuments is not only necessary but also justifiable because monuments perpetrate racial epistemic oppression. She goes on to justify her position on the grounds of how historical narrative 'functions in transitional justice mechanisms, particularly those mechanisms that call for national reconciliation since they encourage the reconciliation of different recollections of the past'. While it is plausible to argue on the grounds that Mbebe proposed, one could justify a preservationist's position not only based on the educational value of historical monuments but also based on the fact that the social, political, and economic changes that are expected have not been realised. Therefore, we must continue to remember and engage; the least people risk normalising their situations because of the erasure of their reference points. Mbebe's chapter keeps the conversation open, and that is what makes it thought-provoking and relevant for future research on the topic.

Chapter 5, by Minka Woermann, is titled 'Monumental Transformations and the Re-Membering of Meaning'. In this chapter, Woermann argues that symbolic artefacts cannot be understood outside the philosophical framework of their production. In the case of colonial artefacts, she holds that their destruction or removal can contribute to undoing their signifying power. Woermann further justifies her position by reflecting on the works of philosophers such as Jacques Derrida and Achille Mbembe and artists like William Kentridge and Anselm Kiefer.

Woermann's chapter offers a very refreshing philosophical and political take on the Rhodes status at the University of Cape Town (UCT). She highlights how the fall of Rhodes statue symbolises, as most activists understood it, 'the fall of "Rhodes" [as] symbolic for the inevitable fall of White supremacy and privilege at our [UCT's] campus' (Pather 2015). She goes on to interpret the statement as 'recalls [of] both the colonial time of Rhodes (late 1800s) and the socio-economic conditions of contemporary time' (2015). Time plays an important role in Woermann's chapter: the colonial suspension of time and the need for decolonial projects to reinstate time. Drawing on Mbembe (2015), she notes that time 'is creation and self-creation – the creation of new forms of life'. African time, according to Woermann, is negated through erasure, while the logic of immortality is tied to colonial time through monuments. She goes on to conclude her chapter by highlighting the 'ethics of engaging history and politics, with an eye towards the future'.

In Chapter 6, '(Im)possible monuments? Gukurahundi and the Politics of Memorialization in Zimbabwe', Gibson Ncube focuses on the Gukurahundi, a military action against dissent in the provinces of Matabeleland and the Midlands three years into Zimbabwe's independence. Ncube poses an important question that adds to the discourse on monuments and memories. He writes, 'how, why, and which kinds of memories deserve memorialisation, and which are seen as undeserving of memorialisation'? The question is important because of the assumed collective and Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front's (ZANU-PF) deliberate decision not to memorialise Gukurahundi.

This chapter offers an important dimension to the discourse on monuments and memories. This unique African perspective sheds light not only on the realities of deliberate marginalisation, silencing, and oppression, but also on the existence of selective memorialisation that entails the sifting of memories. It is in this light that the question 'how, why, and which kinds of memories deserve memorialisation, and which are seen as undeserving of memorialisation', Ncube chapter is relevant and deserving of further engagement.

In Chapter 7, 'Colonial and Apartheid Legacy: Social, Economic and Political Inequality in South Africa', Frank A. Abumere explores how the Rhodes Must Fall protests in South Africa, a precursor to the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States and elsewhere, are symptoms of a large political problem. He argues that the main challenge lies in the reality of colonial and apartheid legacies of political domination and oppression. To resolve the problem and South Africa's structural conditions as the most unequal society in the world, he proposes that South Africa needs 'a distributive justice doctrine that when applied, . . . is simultaneously a theoretically plausible, practicably possible and morally reasonable political doctrine'. This is important because of South Africa's history of unfair distribution of resources. He concludes by proposing Robeyns' limitarianism (2019) as a plausible political framework for addressing inequality in South Africa.

The last chapter, by John S. Sanni, 'The Destruction of Historical Monument and the Danger of Sanitising History', highlights how the destruction

of historical monuments can be a form of historical erasure and silencing. In this chapter, he alludes to the monument of Cecil Rhodes in great detail and proceeds to justify the preservation of the monument. His preservationist position is not disconnected from the colonial project, as he suggests that the figure of Rhodes be brought down from its plinth and placed side by side with a statue of Steve Biko, an important revolutionary figure in colonial/apartheid South Africa. This, according to Sanni, captures the revolution and the reclaiming of spaces, which is not only necessary but also important for redefining conditions of colonial memorialisation. Destructivists' positions on monuments are critical of Sanni's position in ways that keep the conversation open and worthy of future engagement.

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1 The Ideology of Epistemicide

Madalitso Z. Phiri

1.1. Introduction

The call for decolonisation across the global social sciences and humanities has been met with conflicting responses. On the one hand, conservative and liberal scholarship purport that colonialism was 'a force for good' and therefore more colonisation of the world and Africa in particular is needed to achieve progress to arrive at the teleological goal of colonial modernity. Such approaches have been defended through publications of hagiographical texts on colonialism as well as historical negations of Africa's critical scholarly contributions through Eurocentric claims that imperial domination is intrinsic to human existence (Gilley 2022, 2018; Ferguson 2017, 2011, 2003a, 2003b). On the other hand, some African interlocutors trapped in colonial modalities have succeeded in convincing civic and intellectual publics that the continent needs policy interventions (Moyo 2018, 2012) to carve its own niches towards reaping the so-called benefits of an illusory global economy. Such positions jettison the quest for epistemic ruptures that are historically rooted in an imperial ideology of epistemicide. This chapter aims to problematise the dialectics of thought liberation for the African continent by engaging Black Radical Thought. What happens to a people group when both memory and knowledge ecologies are produced through an ideology of European epistemicide? Indeed, how does Black Radical Thought challenge Kant's racialised and racist categorical imperatives of knowledge hierarchies to achieve decolonisation in the humanities and social sciences on the African continent? That knowledge was colonised, violent, Eurocentric, and therefore racialised is not a new phenomenon (see Mamdani 2021; Gordon 2021, 2019, 2014); yet radical thinkers never viewed the European canon as a theoretical impossibility towards emancipation and liberation for the subalterns (see Mudimbe 1988; Cesaire 1972; Fanon 1961; Diop 1981; Mafeje 1991, 1971). In this chapter, I pivot Black Radical Thought as the primary categorical imperative to overcome the lingering legacies of epistemicide. Black radical thinkers in the 20th century imagined emancipatory knowledge ecologies that transcended the dehumanisation and brutality of colonial knowledge towards the realisation of a 'new human'.

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Intellectual inclinations in pursuit of decolonisation are not a new phenomenon. Rather, it is crucial to locate contemporary agitations within a long genealogy for Black freedom on the African continent as well as Black Atlantic diaspora communities, displaced through slavery, that aimed at achieving *nondomination* through what Getachew (2019) argued as a process of *worldmaking*. Imperial epistemic geopolitical configurations cemented a Manichean world (Fanon 1961), whereby the European continent was the epicentre of knowledge production achieved through perpetual bastardisation of the 'inferior' black 'body and mind'. The bourgeois social sciences were enmeshed in the project of imperial violence and a global hierarchical knowledge regime that went as far as questioning the canonical contributions of those racialised as Black (see Rabaka 2022, 2021; Nyoka 2020; Itzigsohn and Brown 2020; Burden-Stelly and Horne 2019). It is not that only certain disciplines were colonial; rather, all the bourgeois social sciences and humanities from anthropology, history, sociology, cultural/area studies, theology, philosophy, and political science (Said 1978, 1993; Mafeje 1991, 1992; Rabaka 2022, 2021, 2010) embodied knowledges that were built on White supremacy and hierarchisation of the races. Besides the economic impetus for colonialism, a *colonising structure* was responsible for producing marginal societies, cultures, and human beings (Mudimbe 1988). Black Radical theorists deployed alternative vocabularies to disband whiteness as an ontological category for ordering epistemic geopolitics. Whether that was a successful project is not the concern of this chapter; however, scholarship needs to tap into a rich repository of African knowledge archives (Nyoka 2023, 2020) and engage African thought as an interlocutor on its own terms. More so, if these emancipatory projects were failures, they are what Du Bois (1935) termed in *Black Reconstruction*, 'splendid failures'.

Calls for decolonisation have also been met with a resurgent White supremacy, narrow nationalisms, and ethnocentric perspectives based on exclusion and cementing difference that emanate from divisive discourses informed by colonial modernity itself. Given this polarising intellectual tide, it is crucial to draw on radical pan-African thought that provides a paradigmatic approach to make sense of the decolonial present. This chapter is organised into four sections. The first section discusses the contours of epistemicide, more particularly linking it to the historical and philosophical foundations of race and epistemology, as well as a problematisation of the colonial archive. The second section discusses the instrumentalisation of the ideology of genocide through cultural imperialism. The third section provides a paradigmatic pan-African response to achieve the demise of epistemic genocide. The fourth section discusses the contours of new knowledge to define the project of African humanities and social sciences as *worldmaking*.

1.2. The Idea of Epistemicide Through the Lenses of Imperial Genocide(s)

The idea of epistemicide is a European construct that was justified through colonial conquests, racialisation of knowledge as White, and philosophical

imperatives that culminated in global epistemic hierarchies and geopolitics. Imperial violence did not only succeed in birthing an unequal integration of Africa's positionality in capitalist modernity (Amin 2009 [1989]; Magubane 1979), leading to the commodification of the black body and a global hierarchical racialised political economy (Phiri 2020; Burden-Stelly 2023; Robinson 1983; Nyoka 2023). Rather, the onset of colonial modernity was achieved through an ideology of epistemicide, which justified the mutilation, theft, and dismemberment of Africans from Eurocentric 'epistemic revolutions', as well as memory and knowledge ecologies. But what does it mean to kill memory and knowledge? Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010) coined the term 'epistemicide', as the extermination of knowledge and ways of knowing. Epistemicide for Africans was achieved by the promulgation of a Eurocentric Cartesian dualism through ontology and epistemology. For kidnapped and enslaved Africans in the Americas, as Grosfoguel intimates, [were] forbidden from thinking, praying, or practicing their cosmologies, knowledges, and worldviews. They were subjected to a regime of epistemic racism that forbade their autonomous knowledge production. Epistemic inferiority was a crucial argument used to claim biological social inferiority below the line of the human (2013: 84).

The publication of Mafeje's (1971) challenged the categorical conceptualisation of Africans as tribal people. Mafeje intimates:

> I am inclined to think that the problem in Africa is not one of empirically diversified behaviour but mainly one of ideology, and specifically the ideology of 'tribalism'. European colonialism, like any epoch, wrought certain ways of reconstructing the African reality. It regarded African societies as particularly tribal. This approach produced blinkers or ideological predispositions which made it difficult for those associated with the system to view these societies in any other light.
>
> (1971: 253)

I borrow from Mafeje's idea of the ideology of tribalism. If the ideology of tribalism provided a false consciousness of contemporary Africa as a fragmented polity, then the ideology of epistemicide defined the physical and epistemic mutilation of Africans from the global memory and knowledge ecologies. This position is augmented by Mudimbe's (1988) argument that there are three keys to account for the modulations and methods of colonisation: firstly, the procedures of acquiring, distributing, and exploiting lands in colonies; secondly, the policies of domesticating natives; and thirdly, the manner of managing ancient organisations and implementing new modes of production. Thus, three complementary hypotheses and actions emerge: the domination of physical space, the reformation of the natives' minds, and the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective. These complementary projects constitute the *colonising structure*, which completely embraces the

physical, human, and spiritual aspects of the colonising experience (1988: 2). Gordon also accents,

> The formulation of knowledge in the singular already situates the question in a framework that is alien to times before the emergence of European modernity and its age of global domination, for the disparate modes of producing knowledge and notions of knowledge were so many that knowledges would be a more appropriate designation.
>
> (2014: 81)

The central argument in my chapter is informed by the idea of Africa itself as an epistemic locale as well as critiques that have problematised race and epistemology in European literary and philosophical traditions (see Eze 2001, 1997; Gyekye 1987; Wiredu 1996; Achebe 1988; wa Thiong'o 2003, 2012, 1986).

I achieve this task, however, by going back into the European intellectual archive to engage with the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). My choice of Kant is rooted in an understanding that the Kantian perspective is pivotal to knowing Europe as a fragmented epistemic locale, the epicentre of epistemic racism and geopolitics. Kant's comprehensive and systematic work in epistemology (the theory of knowledge), ethics, and aesthetics greatly influenced all subsequent philosophy, especially the various schools of Kantianism and idealism. It is the pronouncements of race and epistemology that need further problematisation, which continued a process of epistemic geopolitics that emerged in the long durée of the 16th century. Kant's categorical imperatives of thought disqualified all Africans from previous and subsequent 'epistemic revolutions' that had emerged in Europe since the 1500s. Kant makes two distinct allegations about blacks in *Beobachtungen*. Both occur in Section 4 of the book entitled *Of National Characteristics, so far as They Depend Upon the Distinct Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. The first one occurs at the beginning of Section 4 and deals specifically with 'the Negroes of Africa's' capacity for feeling (Rudy 1991: 9). It reads: the Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling (*Die Negers von Afrika haben von der Natur kein Gefühl, welches über das Läppische stiege*). The second allegation occurs in the same section when Kant recalls a report from a Father Labat and deals with the defining characteristics of 'the Negroes of Africa:' Blackness and stupidity (Rudy 1991: 9). Kant's observations contradict historical precedents that championed plurality of reason as part of ancient African civilisations that did not pivot race as an organising principle (see Diop 1974, 1981). The onset of European colonial modernity, however, inaugurated the 'colour of reason' that lingers on in the present epistemic order.

Building on the spread of Christianity, especially after the consolidation of the 'idea of Europe' in the 16th century, Europeans began to see themselves as the 'Second Hebrews', a 'chosen people' group that would usher is the *mission*

civilisatrice. This task would be consolidated across all 'epistemic European revolutions', starting with the late Renaissance, to 'voyages of discovery', the Enlightenment, as well as the Romanticism period of the 18th century. Colonial modernity cemented epistemicide by declaring its civilisational impetus the 'God of humanity'. Contrary to New Testament theological imaginaries that had attempted to transcend hierarchy and difference by declaring, 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11), the 'God' of White supremacy canvassed puritanical knowledges, civilisational discourses, and ideas of the nation-state that justified the obliteration of the 'bastardised other'. However, this is not surprising at all. Mamdani intimates that 'the genocidal impulse may be as old as organised power' (2001: 26). In the Hebrew Bible, Moses obeyed God's command to exterminate a foreign people. The Lord said to Moses, 'take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people'. So, Moses said to the people, 'Arm some of your men to go to war against the Midianites so that they may carry out the Lord's vengeance on them. They fought against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses, and killed every man' (Numbers 31: 1–3, 7).

Kant therefore only succeeded in building on genocidal intents that had already existed in the European knowledge archive, leading to the perpetual bastardisation of Africa. What was different about this Enlightenment philosopher was the declaration of memory that would render the African a creature and object of imperial violence. Kant had rhetorically observed,

> Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in *art or science* or any other praiseworthy quality, even though among the Whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world.
>
> (Rudy 1991: 9)

Some scholars have proposed to rescue Kant's racist categorical imperatives that he developed. Kleingeld, for example, notwithstanding the acknowledgement of scholars who critique Kant's racial limitations, argues that Kant did defend a racial hierarchy until at least the end of the 1780s, but that he changed his mind after the publication of 'On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy' (and most likely after 1792) and before the completion of *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795). Eze's (1997) expositions of Kant's works, however, point us to the forgotten fact that Kant not only was a moral philosopher but also offered more lectures on geography and anthropology. Eze's (1997) incisive prognosis still points out that throughout his academic career, Kant offered 72 courses in 'Anthropology' and/or 'Physical Geography', more

than in logic (54 times), metaphysics (49 times), philosophy (28), and theoretical physics (20 times). Thus, Kant is defined not only by one discipline but also by transdisciplinary perspectives that cross-pollinated to consolidate the disciplinary decadence that engulfs the contemporary epistemic era. As Mignolo (2015: xiii) has argued, instead of starting from Kant's major works and leaving aside his minor texts, Eze (1997) saw in Kant's minor works the racial prejudices embedded in his monumental philosophy.

Kant once again inadvertently succeeded in promulgating the idea that imperial/colonial genocides and epistemicide mirror each other, of course reinforced through an ideology. In Kant's disciplinary propositions, philosophy turned out to be not only a discipline for theoretical thought and argument (and love of wisdom) but also a tool to *disqualify*, that is, to disavow the act of classifying those people who do not conform to Western conceptions of philosophy and its rational expectations (Mignolo 2015: xiii). Physical genocides and epistemicides are premised on the elevation of the European man, anti-black racism, annihilation, and appropriation of all forms of human and non-human memory and knowledge ecologies, enforced through lexicography of marginality that eventually leads to the extermination of the Black race. Here again, Mignolo provides a useful observation:

> [A]t its inception, the modern/colonial racial system of classification (in the 16th century) was theological and grounded in the belief of purity of blood. Christians on the Iberian Peninsula had the epistemic upper hand over Muslims and Jews. Christians found themselves enjoying the epistemic privilege of classifying without being classified.
>
> (2015: xiii)

The eventual demarcation of epistemicide would be the promulgation of the nation-state. This imagined community was predicated on double ejection and purification, firstly the domestic expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Christian Iberia and then the pronouncement of anti-black racism abroad through colonial dominance (see Mamdani 2021; Grosfoguel 2013; Maldonado-Torres 2008). Epistemicide was predicated on anti-black racism as well as orgies of violence and historical negations that succeeded in presenting Africa as a zone of brutal savages, lacking religion, civilisation, history, and culture, therefore needing saving. Stripped of their agency to exist in this Eurocentric knowledge ecology, Africans faced the wrath of European objectification, classifying, social death through slavery, the imposition of bonded and indentured labour, and eventually the dismemberment of knowledge and memory in the human ecology. These patterns would be carried on in subsequent centuries.

In the 20th century, epistemicide was enacted through the first genocide of the 20th century, the Namibian Genocide. While colonial genocide was constitutive of the conquest mission, Namibia under colonial Germany was peculiar. Germany's colonial bent led to its quest for colonies, which in the 1900s led to the annexation of Namibia, Tanganyika, Cameroun, Burundi,

and Rwanda. Mamdani (2001: 28–29) suggests that in colonial Namibia, however, in 1904, the future of the colony seemed suddenly precarious; the Herero, a small agricultural people numbering some 80,000, had taken up arms to defend their land and cattle against German settlers. The governor of the territory attempted to negotiate with the Herero, but his subordinates persuaded Kaiser Wilhelm II to replace him. General Lothar von Trotha, as Mamdani (2001) documents, the Kaiser's choice, observed that

> The views of the governor and also a few old Africa hands on the one hand, and my views on the other, differ completely. The first wanted to negotiate for some time already and regard the Herero nation as a necessary labour material for the future development of the country. I believe that the nation as such should be annihilated, or, if it was not possible by tactical measures, have to be expelled from the country by operative means and further detailed treatment. This will be possible if the waterholes are occupied. The constant movement of our troops will enable us to find the small groups of the nation who have moved back westwards and destroy them gradually. . . . My intimate knowledge of African tribes (Bantu and others) has everywhere convinced me of the necessity that the Negro does not respect treaties but only brute force.
>
> (2001: 28–29)

The Namibian colonial genocide resulted in the physical extermination of the Herero and Nama nations. Every genocide needs an ideology, and in the Namibian Genocide, the 'othering' and construct of the Herero and Nama nations, not as a people belonging to the project of modernity, constitutes their annihilation, disposability, and thereby extermination. This theorisation has never gained traction, particularly in Genocide Studies, as the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide constitute units of study to the neglect of Africa's encounters with Eurocentric imperial violence. While the Namibian genocide is specific to the Herero and Nama people, technologies of violence such as medical experiments on the bodies, decapitation, and transportation of the skulls of the defeated to the metropole would be repeated in the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Dachau, when ideas of eugenics, racial hygiene, and phrenology informed the fiendish political project of the Third Reich. Mamdani provides linkages between the Holocaust and the Herero Genocide:

> The extermination of the Herero was the first genocide of the twentieth century, and its connection to the Jewish Holocaust is difficult to ignore. When Trotha sought to diffuse the responsibility for the genocide, he accused the missions of inciting the Herero with images 'of the blood curdling Jewish history of the Old Testament'. And it was in the Herero concentration camps that the German geneticist Eugene Fischer first investigated the 'science' of race-mixing, experimenting on both the Herero and the half-German children born to Herero women. Fischer

> argued that the Herero 'mulattos' were physically and mentally inferior to their German parents. Hitler read Fischer's book, *The Principle of Human Heredity and Race Hygiene* (I92I), while he was in prison. The Fuhrer eventually made Fischer rector of the University of Berlin, where he taught medicine. One of his prominent students was Josef Mengele, who would run the gas chambers at Auschwitz.
>
> (Mamdani 2001: 31–32)

The Third Reich only sought to enact what Eurocentrism is, a physical and ontological zone predicated on negation of Jewish, Roma, and queer humanity achieved through domination without consent. The connection of these early 20th-century acts of violence to the erstwhile colonised humanity challenges our imaginations of social and political theory. The violence of fascism in the Third Reich was the violence of colonialism. Colonialism is, in reality, a fascist social and political project. It is well documented across many museums in Germany that Hitler coalesced and congealed cultural artists, musicians, scholars, and architects to give birth materially to the Nazi vision of elimination of the weaker species. Contrary to what European humanists belief, the very idea of Europe as a civilisational ethos is one that continually seeks to dislodge, dispose of, and exterminate Black life in all its forms and existence. As Cesaire (1972) has lamented, what Europe cannot forgive in Hitler is the crime and humiliation of the White man, for the Third Reich, [a]pplied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa. European colonial modernity not only cements difference but also preserves White life through brute force and the dislocation of groups it deems disposable to sustain its self-referential civilisational project.

1.3. Epistemicide and Cultural Imperialism: The Nation-State

The ideology of epistemicide was not accidental, as it became much more pronounced with cultural imperialism. While colonisation of physical spaces is considered anachronistic, knowledge and power have always been organised across the boundaries of imperial cultural systems expressed through the nation-state. The historical construction of the nation-state is the artefact that epistemicide would be committed in. Against the ethno-linguistic puritanism associated with the nation-state, critical scholars have long intimated that nations are fictitious imaginations of cultural and political elites that provide divisive or uniting imaginaries of what constitutes memory and knowledge. Powerful religious and political elites have often tried to destroy their enemies by destroying their histories, their memories, and that which gives them an identity. Consider, for example, some of the lines in the national anthem of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: '*God save our gracious King/Queen, ... Scatter our enemies, And make them fall! Confound their politics. . . . Lord make the nations see, That men should brothers be*'. It is an

intellectual idiosyncrasy that 70 years after the attainment of flag decolonisation, the pattern of *church, monarchy, nation* remains the organising principle of contemporary Great Britain and almost all European constitutional monarchies. Fictitious 'imperial intimacies' (Carby 2019) that connect, discredit, and dispose of the erstwhile colonised people are rooted in the cultural imperialism and epistemicide that are a legacy of empire and the nation-state.

The hagiographical representation of empire was more dramatised with the recent demise of British monarch Queen Elizabeth II. Her 70-year reign (1952–2022) coincided with an age where post-colonial futures resonated with the erstwhile colonised people of the Global South. This was an age where anti-colonial nationalisms across Africa, the Caribbean States, and Asia proclaimed an alternative world to empire, a vision of *nondomination* (Getachew 2019). Contrary to *fraternity* that the second stanza alludes to in the national anthem, those that British imperialism deemed expandable are meted with the violent lexicography '*scatter our enemies, confound their politics*'. It is a forgotten historical precedent that the British monarchy benefited from the cumulative cultural and material advantages that were accrued through the institutionalisation of slavery, peonage, coercion, and indentured labour, land dispossession, and the preservation of a hierarchical political economy of settler colonial states such as South Africa, the United States, Canada, Jamaica, Australia, and New Zealand (Rodney 1972; Magubane 1979; Beckles 2013). The Elizabethan age was consolidated with a neocolonial idea, the Commonwealth of Nations, an association of erstwhile colonised states by Great Britain. Yet the idea of Great Britain cannot be abstracted from the contributions of racialised classes produced at the zenith of empire, such as the enslaved 'Niggers of Africa', the 'Coolies of India', and the indentured and coerced labour of the Malay. The very idea of Great Britain is predicated on hierarchy manifesting through difference and, thereby, the preservation of the latter. These racialised bodies, through their cultural and labour power, materially birthed modern Great Britain, yet what is distributed to them are cumulative material disadvantages that are reinforced in the global positionalities of their sub-humanity.

Contrary to what the national anthem proclaims as *fraternity*, the erstwhile oppressed peoples continue to live under monarchical and state violence that is foundational to the fictitious benevolent ideas of the *British Empire*. It is unsurprising that Queen Elizabeth II, upon her death, bequeathed fortunes to her heir, Charles III, while almost two-thirds of Commonwealth subjects are condemned to misery, destitution, inequality, and poverty. Through the crown, Elizabeth II controlled $28 billion in assets, much of which belonged to the Royal Firm, Monarchy PLC. The Sovereign Grant, an annual taxpayer payment to the British royal family, provided revenue to the monarch. The monarch also received 25% of the $28 billion in yearly income from the Crown Estate, a collection of royal properties, while the remaining 75% went to the *British Treasury*. In this line of reasoning, there are no considerations for a constructivist view of reparations (Táíwò 2022) to reorder the world to

move towards the inauguration of *nondomination*. However, support for this *ancien régime* is rooted in the violence of epistemicide as promulgated by the monarchy and state itself, through a false consciousness that these elites are indispensable to the sustenance of the very idea of Great Britain. The idea of Great Britain, as I have already emphasised, cannot be abstracted from an oppressed, racialised global underclass that materially produced it. The elites' reference point to this archaic institution seeks to serve what Gramsci (1998) had intimated: 'the historical unity of the ruling classes is realized in the State, and their history is essentially the history of States and of groups of States'. Both the idea and structure and superstructure of the nation remain within the hands of the ruling elites and powerful to the exclusion of those weaker members of this global racialised polity.

Gramsci (1998) would go on to note that every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level type that corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. Of course, Gramsci's understanding is not in defence of the state. In the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci had already been declared a *persona non grata* by the fascist Italian regime. This pattern has continued to be enforced in contemporary versions of fascism by those in search of alternatives to empire. The linkage between the monarchy and state is sustained by this epistemicide that I have described. But what is it about empire that produces conditions of continued marginalisation for the erstwhile colonised peoples? My default position is that empire is sustained by cumulative advantages through technologies of governance that reproduce a deculturalised native. However, to gain this appreciation, we need to carefully examine insights from Mamdani (2012) and Said (1978) to understand the role of culture in epistemicide.

Mamdani's theoretical rupture problematises what he coined as '*Define and Rule*'. His thesis traces changes in colonial governmentality when British imperialism faced a crisis in the politics of empire, more specifically, to govern the subjected natives. In this exposition, colonial governor Henry Maine proclaimed a new technology of governance that would transition British imperialism from direct rule to indirect rule. Rule Britannica had declared itself a successor to the Roman empire, as did the French. Mamdani suggests that, unlike direct rule, indirect rule is aimed at the reproduction of difference as custom, not its eradication as barbarism. It focused on colonised people, not just the colonised elite (2012: 44). Whereas imperial violence had relied on demarcations of 'civilized' and 'barbarism', the lexicography of empire shifted to accommodate the native on unequal terms, based on the distinction between an 'inclusive liberalism' and culture. He avers,

> The practice of indirect rule involved a shift in language, from that of exclusion (civilized, not civilized) to one of inclusion (cultural difference). The language of pluralism and difference is born in and of the colonial experience. Law is central to the project that seeks to manage

> and reproduce difference. . . . Direct and indirect rule were not two consecutive phases in the development of colonial governance. Though the accent shifted from direct to indirect rule, the two continues in tandem: the civilizing mission (assimilation) existed alongside the management of difference (pluralism).
>
> (Mamdani 2012: 44–45)

Imperial classification, through the deployment of culture, further produced the demarcation of *tribe* and *race*. This new colonial logic went beyond the traditional distinction between coloniser and colonised, rather enforcing a new social artefact demarcated between 'native' and 'non-native'. Non-natives were targeted as *races*, whereas natives were said to belong to *tribes* (Mamdani 2012: 47). Mamdani suggests that with races, the cultural difference was not translated into separate legal systems; rather, it was negotiated within a single legal system and enforced by a single administrative authority. However, the *tribe* experienced the opposite: cultural difference was reinforced, exaggerated, and built up into different legal systems, each enforced by a separate administrative and political authority. The fate of the natives had been determined through this new form of colonising structure. Thus, the native was produced on two fronts: historically removed from all memory ecologies and futuristically removed from the vision and sight of the racialised modernity that had emerged. Magubane went on to buttress this point with reference to the South African condition. He observes the following:

> The imposition of settler rule and the capitalist mode of production interrupted the historical unity of African societies. The African, estranged from authentic possibilities of the new order, had no new alternatives for growth: their *economy, technology, and culture* (emphasis added) became of marginal relevance. . . . Even the ideological elements which structure life – *philosophy, art, literature* (emphasis added), and the family – atrophied and became irrelevant. . . . Since the Africans have been subjected to settler rule, they have been born into a world where alienation awaits them. But present alienation is the result of the outrageous violence perpetrated by the agents of the settler state.
>
> (1979: 70)

The regime of violence that further alienated the aesthetics of African intellectuals across *philosophy*, *art,* and *literature* was facilitated by knowledge and power. Said's exposition of Orientalism provides contours of how colonial modernity dominated by asserting itself through imperial geographies. Said intimates that orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions. Rather, the Saidian exposition stresses the idea that Orientalism is a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts (1978: 12). Thus, epistemicide was also cemented through

colonial cartography that presented Europe as the centre of the world and Africa as marginally existing and always small and inferior in comparison to the metropole. Said further accents that orientalism is a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with political power (as with colonial or imperial establishment). Orientalism further manifests through cultural power, such as orthodoxies, canons of taste, texts, and values (Said 1978: 12). At the end of the 19th century, European epistemicide seemed to have triumphed. Africa was synonymous with the proverbial and literal 'dark continent', condemned to an abysmal status that satisfied imperial sadistic voyeurism that rendered black ontological realities invisible.

Colonial cartography further fragmented epistemic geopolitics when the continent was carved at the Berlin Conference, as well as the demarcation of Africa in the Maghreb (North Africa) from the sub-Saharan continent. This led to the production of another racist historiography, predicated on Kantian justifications, as the continent was divided across three historical epochs: pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial Africa. On colonial cartography, Mamdani avers,

> [T]oday, the most widely used world map has Western Europe at its center. Based on the Mercator projection, it systematically distorts our image of the world: even though Europe has approximately the same area as each of the other two peninsulas of Asia – prepartition India and Southeast Asia – Europe is called a continent, whereas India is but a subcontinent, and Southeast Asia is not even accorded the status; at the same time, the area most drastically reduced in the Mercator projection is Africa.
>
> (2004: 28)

Colonial cartography again negates epistemic possibilities and ruptures of 'Africa as a Thinking Space'. The divorce of sub-Saharan Africa from North Africa is a colonial creation; throughout his scholarship, Diop (1974, 1981) stressed the idea that the Sahel (Sahara) has always existed as a bridge to the world of trade, art, culture, and science. Figure 1.1 subverts the Orientalist discourse of racialised epistemic geopolitics. In Africa, colonial cartography emerged as an appendage of colonial imaginations; alternative imaginations should jettison this Eurocentric projection by positioning 'Africa as a Thinking Space'.

Instead of focusing on longer historical genealogies that transcend these three historiographies, sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa occupy two distinct histories and destinies. Zeleza argues 'the correlation of Africa with sub-Saharan' Africa is based on a racist construct intended to divorce North Africa from the mainstream of African history' (Zeleza 1993: 2). This approach negates trans-regional connections, trade, and geopolitical relations and

Figure 1.1 Can No-Europeans Think Poster.
Source: Madalitso Zililo Phiri (Author).

variations that forged trans-historical identities and states across the entire continent, as well as imperial and nonimperial contacts with diverse civilisations such as Rome, Greece, the Moors, the Arabs, and the Ottomans. The idea of precolonial Africa is a figment of the imagination of scholars, analysts, and political types, for whom Africa is a homogeneous place that they need not think too hard about, much less explain to audiences (Táíwò 2023: 2).

1.4. Thinking About the Humanities and Social Sciences as Worldmaking Across Africa

Global epistemic categories over the past five centuries have therefore existed within the ambits of imperial violence. With an understanding that ideology as well as colonial cartography created fixed epistemic geopolitics, Black intellectual forbearers fought against the characterisation of the continent in simplistic Eurocentric ideas. Magubane intimates, 'throughout history classes that exploit and dominate others have tried to find *theoretical* and *ideological* weapons to supplement their physical domination' (1979: 222). Palaeontologists have long provided fossil evidence that human life began on the African continent (see Diop 1974, 1981). Africans thus contributed to the aesthetics of knowledge pertaining to the arts, botany, biology, politics, sociology, economics, geography, world society, and civilisation. The historical epoch that European colonial modernity has dominated epistemic and world society is a shorter period of ruptures in a longer historical human durée; that produced variant epistemic revolutions, modes of production, as well as structures to order social life. Africa exists as its own civilisational discourse that produced its own modernity, yet it is not self-referential. Besides, no civilisation in human history has ever been self-referential, a fallacy only to be found in Eurocentrism.

The current humanities and social sciences are produced within the ambits of imperial violence; the only human produced in that epoch is violent. Decolonisation, as Fanon accents, sets out to change the order of the world, thereby inaugurating a programme of complete disorder (1961: 27). It is this idea of decolonisation that I would like to return to. Decolonisation does not solely aim to disband epistemic geopolitics but rather to locate Africa liberated as the centre of cognitive possibilities to produce a new humanity. Fanon avers,

> [D]ecolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that it is to say it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content . . . decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by *new men*, and with it a *new language* and a *new humanity*. Decolonization is the veritable creation of *new men*.
>
> (1961: 28–29)

Assuming that Fanon's writing was limited by the language of his time, the word (*new men*) is ontologically positioned to produce a 'new humanity' still predicated on the totalising violent European man. For it is the European man (biologically and ontologically) who births modernity by

inaugurating a global racial empire. Building on this Fanonian approach, I argue, the *raison d'etre* of the humanities and social sciences is a non-disciplinary (Mafeje 1991; Nyoka 2020) praxis of *worldmaking* (Getachew 2019) that disbands the idea of patriarchal, misogynistic, heteronormative, racist, violent, totalising European man who produces and displaces the 'bastardised Other' not to be constituted in his version of modernity. Epistemic decolonisation in contemporary discussion has been presented as an alternative or as a replacement for Eurocentrism. The idea of Eurocentrism is deeply ingrained in the ontological positionalities of a hierarchical, racialised modernity. What can emerge after the dislodging of the current racialised epistemic order? At the heart of this question is a conservative view that epistemic racism as well as Eurocentric epistemic ecologies should maintain the status quo of world society. Of course, I agree with Scott's (2004) exposition that we are trapped in what he coined as 'conscripts of modernity'. Scott stresses, for example, a more fruitful approach to the historical appreciation of prior understandings of the relation between pasts, presents, and futures is to think of different historical conjunctures as constituting different conceptual-ideological problem spaces, and to think of these problem spaces less as generators of new propositions than as generators of new questions and new demands (2004: 7). For the formerly colonised peoples, however, we are still left with the emergencies of a materiality of epistemologies of the colonised.

Within the ambits of European epistemicide, the idea of Africa as a place without civilisation was born. The early 20th-century South African nationalist and intellectual, Pixley Seme, had already provided the contours of Africa's civilisational discourse. Seme entered the University of Columbia's oratory contest and chose as his topic 'The Regeneration of Africa'. Seme invited his audience not to delve into a civilisational comparison. He says, 'I would ask you not to compare Africa to Europe or to any other continent' (Seme 1906: 1). Seme makes this request 'not from any fear that such comparison might bring humiliation upon Africa' (1906: 1). He, however, provides a point to highlight Africa's civilisational aesthetics and contributions to culture. He omits the civilisational comparison simply because, as Nabudere (2006: 15) has argued, 'a common standard to measure the achievements of each "race" or civilisation was impossible, hence for Africa to highlight its own achievements without fear or favour'. Seme instead inaugurates what Du Bois (1924, 1939, 1965) would later articulate in his scholarship as the Gift Theory, by pivoting Egypt as both an epistemic and an ontological possibility. Seme (1906) says, 'Come with me to the ancient capital of Egypt, Thebes, the city of one hundred gates. The grandeur of its venerable ruins and the gigantic proportions of its architecture reduce to insignificance the boasted monuments of other nations'.

For Seme (1906), Egypt and the entire African continent became epistemic locales. These spaces provide ontological, methodological, and spiritual praxis

that enhances the continuation of Black civilisational aesthetics. Seme's counterfactuals confronting epistemicide are worth noting.

> [T]he mighty monuments seem to look with disdain on every other work of human art and to vie with nature herself. All the glory of Egypt belongs to Africa and her people. These monuments are the indestructible memorials of their great and original genius. It is not through Egypt alone that Africa claims such unrivalled historic achievements. I could have spoken of the pyramids of Ethiopia, which, though inferior in size to those of Egypt, far surpass them in architectural beauty; their sepulchres which evince the highest purity of taste, and of many prehistoric ruins in other parts of Africa. . . . The regeneration of Africa means that a new and unique *civilization* is soon to be added to the world. The African is not a proletarian in the world of *science and art*. He has precious creations of his own, of ivory, of copper and of gold, fine, plated willow-ware and weapons of superior workmanship. The most essential departure of this new civilization is that it shall be thoroughly spiritual and humanistic -indeed a regeneration moral and eternal!
>
> (1906: 1, 3)

By pivoting *art, philosophy, and a unique civilizational* discourse, Seme (1906) challenges a racist historiography founded in Kantian and Hegelian discourses that disbanded Africa from all possible epistemic ecologies. Seme's observations are dually positioned on the same coin: (i) the centrality of monuments and (ii) the aesthetics of art. Eurocentric Egyptologists saw it fit to deny the centrality of Egypt's Black origins. In the latter half of the 20th century, Martin Bernal's (1987, 1991, 2006) three-volume study entitled Black Athena only served to buttress the work that Black historians and Egyptologists (Diop 1974, 1981; Williams 1974) a generation before the proposed beginning of the 20th century. Monuments are the life and spirit of those who have lived before us. Monuments are history, or histories rather, that bequeath to any people group living archives to provide contours of the outworking of any civilisation. For it is in monuments that philosophy and aesthetics are to be found, thereby providing structures of any people's spirituality, existence, and constitution into memory and civilisational ecologies. Senghor also accents 'African art; it gathers together social life, goodness, beauty, happiness, and the "knowledge of the world", expressing as much a sense of aesthetics as "meta-physics, ontology, and an ethics"' (Senghor 1956: 51, 57). On the other hand, wa Thiong'o (2003: 59) beckons us to see memory as the site of dreams and desire (2003: 59). Indeed, 'when we say that a person has lost his or her memory, we are talking of a real loss of those traces that individuals use to make sense of what is happening to them' (wa Thiong'o 2003: 59). The problematisation of this colonial torture and negation is what Moradi (2022) coined 'Catastrophic Art'. For Moradi,

catastrophic art 'calls for an opening up to heterogeneous and multiple epistemologies, that is, a profound change in the imperial and/or neoliberal educational system, including museums that curate colonialism *otherwise* while engendering a culture of silence' (2022: 247).

Black Egyptologists of the early 20th century, in particular Cheikh Anta Diop, invite us on a journey to problematise the colonial archive, museum, and memory culture. Bernal was only building on what generations of African scholars had already inaugurated. Diop's entire scholarly oeuvre exposited European civilisational decadence thesis, which perpetuated historical and archaeological falsifications, erasures, and misrepresentations ubiquitous in Eurocentric Egyptology. Of course, to the comfort of Eurocentric historians, Diop's historical counterfactuals have been dismissed as pseudohistory, ahistorical, and essentialist. Diop advocates a position that the ancient Egyptians called their land *Kemit*, which means 'black' in their language. Diop adopts the tools of archaeology, anthropology, and radiocarbon technology to provide Africa's civilisational existence as well as ideas of negation founded in the Eurocentric canon (Diop 1974, 1981). Diop observes the following:

> the interpretation according to which Kemit designates the black soil of Egypt, rather than the black man and, by extension, the black race of the country of the Blacks, stems from a gratuitous distortion by minds aware of what an exact interpretation of this word would imply. Hence it is natural to find Kam in Hebrew, meaning, heat, black, burned. That being so, all apparent contradictions disappear and the logic of facts appear in all its nudity. The inhabitants of Egypt symbolised by their black color, Kemit or Ham in the Bible, would be accursed in the literature of the people they had oppressed. . . . What we cannot understand however, is how it has been possible to make a White race of Kemit: Hamite, black, ebony. According to the needs of the cause, Ham is cursed, blackened, and made into the ancestor of the Negroes. This is what happens when one refers to contemporary social relations. On the other hand, he is whitened whenever one seeks the origin of civilization, because there he is inhabiting the first civilised country in the world. The idea of Eastern and Western Hamites is conceived – nothing more than a convenient invention to deprive Blacks of the moral advantage of Egyptian civilization and of other African civilizations.
>
> (1974: 8–9)

The earlier task is the unfinished business of what Nabudere coins as *Afrikology*. Drawing on a Diopian position, Nabudere stresses that *Afrikology* must proceed from the proposition that it is a true philosophy of knowledge and wisdom based on African cosmogonies because it is *Afro-* in that it is inspired by the ideas originally produced from the Cradle of Humankind located in Africa (2006: 20). Nabudere recognises pluralities, divergences, and competing visions of emancipatory imaginaries that people of African descent have

proposed across the world. For example, conscious of the United States' positionality as a prototypical settler colonial state, the African American Molefi Asante pivots on Afrocentrism and Afrocentricity as a philosophy and methodology of self-understanding. It was said to be a combination of philosophy, science, history, and mythology to give African Americans the clearest perspective on their existence. Asante (1996) defined *Afrocentricity* as 'the belief in the centrality of Africans in post-modern history', adding: 'It is our history, our mythology, our creative motifs, and our ethos exemplifying our collective will' (1996: 6–7). For Nabudere, however, Afrikology

> is not *Afrikology* because it is African but it is *Afro-* because it emanates from the source of the universal system of knowledge in Africa. The product is therefore not relativistic to Africa but universalistic with its base in Africa. It is *-(ko)logy* because it is based on *logos* – the word from which the universe arose. From the word emerged consciousness and from consciousness emerged humanity who produced language and script from the word.
>
> (2006: 20)

Following Nabudere's thoughts above, it stands to reason that the *logos* is the foundational base of a new African civilisation, let alone all world civilisations that are not self-referential. The *logos* is embodied in the oral and literary traditions of any people group. The question is which and whose *logos*. Eurocentrism killed and eliminated the possibility of the African philosophy of the *logos*. Africa came to be dominated by erasures and falsifications of modernity's linguistic mores, which were violently imposed on the African condition. Mignolo (2015: xvi) observes,

> Kant's epistemic racism was enacted on the basis of exclusive privilege of the White race, whose actors and institutions were located in Europe, their language and categories of thought derived from *Greek* and *Latin*, inscribed in the formation of the six modern/colonial European languages: *Italian*, *Spanish*, *Portuguese* (dominant during the Renaissance), *German*, *English* and *French* (dominant since the Enlightenment).

Thus, the divorce of Egypt from the possibilities of any civilisational discourse seeks to serve ideas that are entrenched in epistemicide. Through this materiality of epistemic geographies, knowledge is produced as hierarchically privileging the European man.

Discussions that problematise linguistic imperialism and the philosophy of the logos have been divisive on the African continent. Given the trappings of linguistic imperialism, critical scholars are split across diametrically opposed imaginaries (albeit there could be more): hybrid approaches (Achebe 1988) that draw from European languages to usher in a New African modernity and overthrow colonial languages completely (wa Thiong'o 2012, 2003, 1986). At

a writers' conference hosted in Makerere, Uganda, participants asked Achebe to provide a definition of African literature and the novel. Achebe responded that 'African literature would define itself in action; so why not leave it alone?' In Achebe's observations, the first point is that the African novel has to be about Africa. He thus sees Africa not only as a geographical expression but also as a metaphysical landscape – it is in fact a view of the world and of the whole cosmos perceived from a particular position (Achebe 1988: 92). Second, on the question of who an African novelist is, Achebe responded, as for who an African novelist is, it is partly a matter of passports, of individual volition, and particularly seeing from the perspective I have just touched with the timidity of a snail's horn (1988: 92). His position on language proposes linguistic cosmopolitanism. He accents,

> And then language. As you know, there has been an impassioned controversy about an African literature in non-African languages. But what is a non-African language? English and French certainly. But what about Arabic? What about Swahili even? Is it then a question of how long the language has been present on African soil? If so, how many years should constitute effective occupation? For me it is again a pragmatic matter. A language spoken by African on African soil, a language in which Africans write, justifies itself.
>
> (1988: 93)

On the contrary, wa Thiong'o (2003) jettisons Achebe's linguistic cosmopolitanism. He advocates writing in African languages and the establishment of world literature as vocabularies of resistance in what he calls globalectics (2012). For wa Thiong'o had already intimated, 'if the site of dreams, desire, image and consciousness is memory, then memory lies in language' (2003: 59). He addresses the literary challenge of how ideas are stored and processed in the community of artists, musicians, and intellectuals. He rhetorically asks,

> [W]hat fate awaits a community when its keepers of memory have been subjected to the West's linguistic means of production and storage of memory? We have languages but our keepers of memory feel that they cannot store knowledge, emotions, intellect in African languages.
>
> (2003: 60)

The task that wa Thiong'o (2003) seeks to achieve is to position South Africa as an interlocutor in the wider debates of the development of African literature. wa Thiong'o (2003) engages the New African Movement, distinguishing between the literary preferences of H.I.E. Dhlomo (1903–1956 – who wrote in English) and his younger brother R.R.R. Dhlomo (1906–1971 – who wrote in IsiZulu). He notes, the then editor of the *South African Outlook* Vilakazi (1938), engages H.I.E. Dhlomo's (1903–1956) disagreements with his Master's thesis, 'The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu'

(1938). wa Thiong'o observes, Vilakazi (1938), aligning himself subtly with the elder Dhlomo (1903–1956), is clearly unapologetic in his building on the literary heritage of the isiZulu language in form and content. Vilakazi (1938) makes the connection that isiZulu poetry is a contribution to isiZulu literature. Thus, the philosophy of the logos is contained in this literary tradition, as wa Thiong'o observes,

> In saying that isiZulu is part of Bantu literature and that Bantu poetry stands on the same parallel as European poetry, Vilakazi is arguing that isiZulu or any African language is to African literature what any particular European language is to European literature. He recognizes that there is no abstract African literature that is not rooted in specific African languages any more than there is an abstract European literature that is not rooted in specific European languages.
>
> (2003: 61)

The two different approaches to overcoming epistemicide continue to animate and polarise public and scholarly debates on the role of language and literature in Africa. Each position pushes for epistemic orders that challenge epistemicide while acknowledging colonial trappings. My contribution, however, forging a new path from these diverging views should pivot the African civilisational discourse. This was articulated by Nabudere, who notes that Afrokology draws its scientificity and uniqueness from the fact that it is based on an all-embracing philosophy of humankind originating in Egypt and updated by the lived experiences of all humanity, who still continue to draw on its deep-rooted wisdom. It is based on a philosophy that is conscious of itself, conscious of its own existence as thought, and which, although originally based in myth, was able to separate itself from myth to concept within its own development (2006: 20). It was William Blyden, the early 20th-century Pan Africanist, and Marcus Garvey who can be double-credited for coining the term *African personality*. It is in thinking with the African personality that a new humanhood, spirituality, and intellectual locales emerge.

Taking into account that the first form of puritanical racism in the nation-state was religious, that is, the ejection of Jews and Muslims/non-civilised barbarians from the Iberian Peninsula, religious liberation constitutes a foundational stone for overcoming epistemicide. As Nabudere accents, 'It is the task of Afrokology, applying the epistemology of *Thothism* (derived from Thoth, the African Egyptian God of knowledge) to bring this reality out and mainstream it' (2006: 21). The history of the church in Europe has not only been defined by the linguistic and cultural dualism of Greek and Latin. In the 9th century, when the church's mission expanded to Moravia, two brothers, Constantine and Methodius, encountered Slavic communities. The communities that these two clergymen encountered refused to relate to 'Divinity' in Greek or Latin. Rather, the two brothers (and subsequent followers) devised the Glagolitic alphabet, the first alphabet to be

used for Slavonic languages and manuscripts. On the African continent, the *African personality,* as suggested by Blyden, constitutes the philosophical, spiritual, political, and economic language that rejects both classic European languages (Greek and Latin) and the six languages of the Renaissance and Enlightenment (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, German, English). Nabudere makes these linkages with the African personality: from *logos*, we move to language, and from myth, we move to concepts that are created by the living word and tradition. This historical experience has never stopped since the Cradle of Mankind came into being. The *logos guides us up to a certain point, but thenceforth the divine intellect (nous)* takes over and must proceed on its own (2006: 21).

1.5. Conclusion

The central argument in this chapter is that the ideology of epistemicide produced Africa as a lifeless epistemic locale. Africa is a diverse physical, ontological, and epistemic locale, the world's second largest and second most populous continent, complex, with multifaceted spiritual, political, historical, and social artefacts. The continent currently has 1.5 billion inhabitants, covers 20% of Earth's land area and 6% of its total surface area, six time zones, and transhistorical identities that predate the modern period of imperial domination and imagination as experienced in the past 500 years. Some intellectuals described Africa as a 'Triple Heritage' (Blyden, Mazrui, and Nkrumah), citing three influences: African continental experiences, European colonial Christian civilising missions, and Islamic civilising missions. Yet, Africa also constitutes its diaspora, some as recent as the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993), across majority and minority countries such as Brazil, the United States, Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Jamaica, Bermuda, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, and Martinique. Africa is also across Oceania and Asia, some dating way back to over 70,000 years, as well as the Black Pacific, as Swan (2022, 2020) has articulated (Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands).

This chapter has demonstrated that the idea of the emergency of a new humanity is tied to the abandonment of disciplinary decadence and boundaries that are built in the racialised Eurocentric canon that starts with Kant. This is the perspective from which I argue Archie Mafeje's accents are *non-disciplinary*. I use the word *non-disciplinary* not to be confused with *trans* or *inter-interdisciplinary*. Interdisciplinarity, as many critical scholars have intimated, was introduced in the United States through the work of the Social Science Research Council through the so-called Area Studies in regions the empire wanted to know to exercise its neo-colonial control (Nabudere 2006; Alatas 2000; Burden-Stelly 2018; Phiri 2021). Non-disciplinarity refuses the disciplinary boundaries that are based on imperial imaginations. Secondly, by foregrounding questions of historiography and knowledge production, Africa is positioned in a longer genealogy of knowledge formation, with specific

histories, events, and cases, while at the same time querying the concepts, ideas, and categories used to study Africa. One outcome of this will be to problematise the concepts and categories that are used in the study of Africa, showing how they may be determined by specific histories – in the case of Africa, these may be histories, say, of colonialism, of the slave trade, or of post-colonial nationalism. Of course, my perspective on non-disciplinarity is not exhaustive, as in scholarship there are gaps that contemporary and future generations of scholars will return to make sense of the current decolonial present. However, this intellectual tide should always draw its inspiration from the Afrikologists, as exposited in the text. For it is the Afrikologist position that jettisons the formulation of knowledge in the singular, inadvertently challenging Eurocentric African Studies and Area Studies that have been produced through the violence of empire. For Cheikh Anta Diop had already accented, *vis-à-vis* black Africa, Egypt played the same role that Graeco-Latin civilisation played *vis-à-vis* the rest of Europe.

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2 Genophilia – Genosites in Cape Town

Fazil Moradi

2.1. Introduction

In his *Kitāb-Ul-Hind*, Abu Rayhan Biruni (973–1050) offers a socio-anthropological-historical account of how the experience of the politicised *other* or *foreigner* as the 'devil' is inevitably reconciled with obedience to politics, monolingualism, religion, social memories, kinship, and a naturalised claim to one's own beauty and superiority.

> In all manners and usages, [the Indians] differ from us to such a degree as to frighten their children with us, with our dress, and our ways and customs, and as to declare us to be devil's breed, and our doings as the very opposite of all that is good and proper. By the bye, we must confess, in order to be just, that a similar *depreciation of foreigners* not only prevails among us and [the Indians], but is common to all nations towards *each other*.
>
> (Biruni 1971: 20, emphasis added)

Many centuries later, we find ourselves within the context of C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins* (1989). In this context, James confronts Biruni's understanding that the *depreciation of foreigners* is a common trait among all nations. Instead, James directs our attention to the unfathomable and enduring cruelty of the Spanish, French, and British *empires* in the colonies as well as the transatlantic human trade. In the prologue, James writes,

> Christopher Columbus landed first in the New World at the Island of San Salvador, and after praising God enquired urgently for Gold. The natives, Red Indians, were peaceable and friendly and directed him to Haiti, a large island (nearly as large as Ireland), rich, they said, in the yellow metal. He sailed to Haiti. One of his ships being wrecked, the Haitian Indians helped him so willingly that very little was lost and of the articles which they brought on shore not one was stolen.
>
> (James 3)

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Following Columbus' genocidal violence (Tinker and Freeland 2008; Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Dussel 1995), the Spaniards conquered the island and named it 'Hispaniola'. Here, they introduced 'Christianity, forced labour in mines, murder, rape, bloodhounds, strange diseases, and artificial famine (by the destruction of cultivation to starve the rebellious)' (4). James underscores that these acts of destruction and annihilation, deemed requisites of 'the higher civilisation', led to a shocking destruction of the 'native population', reducing it from 'an estimated half-million, perhaps a million, to 60,000 in 15 years' (4). In their pursuit of colonisation, 'French, British and Spaniards slaughtered one another for nearly 30 years' (4) as they naturalised enslavement and the transatlantic human trade: the enslaved human beings were collected from Niger to the Cape of Good Hope to Mozambique to the eastern side of the African continent (4). 'On the slave ship the slaves were packed in the hold on galleries one above the other. Each was given only four or five feet in length and two or three feet in height, so that they could neither lie at full length nor sit upright' (8): 'No place on earth . . . concentrated so much misery as the hold of the slave-ship' (8).

The Spanish, French, British, and Dutch empires can be understood as designed networks that responded to *hospitality* in the 'New World', Africa, and Asia with organised acts of destruction and annihilation. These networks of imperial violence, James shows, were tangled with an imperialist-colonialist reason or epistemology that was to sustain colonialism *ad infinitum*. In the preface to the 1961 edition of his book, *History of Madness*, Michel Foucault writes:

> In the universality of the Western ratio, there is this division which is the Orient: the Orient, thought of as the origin, dreamt of as the vertiginous point from which nostalgia and promises of return are born, the Orient offered to the colonising reason of the Occident, but indefinitely inaccessible, for it always remains the limit: the night of the beginning, in which the Occident was formed, but in which it traced a dividing line, the Orient is for the Occident everything that it is not, while remaining the place in which its primitive truth must be sought.
>
> (Foucault 2006: xxx)

While Biruni, an imperial citizen, survived the imperial brutality of the Ghaznavid Dynasty, ruling under Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (998–1030) in the 11th century, Foucault, in his lifetime, experienced life as an imperial citizen-survivor amidst the colonial violence that shaped the very being of the French Empire, which, as C.L.R. James writes, the Haitian Revolution (1791–1803) brought to its knees and the subsequent struggles of decolonisation in other parts of the world. Throughout their lifetimes and continuing to the present day, we find ourselves born into imperial or political, legal, and social contexts that institute genophilia – love of 'race' and 'racial' belonging or a both calculated and affectionate attachment to 'our race', blood, history, people, nation,

language, land, or heritage. This imperial institution of genophilia thrives on the condition of putting out heterogeneity and heterogeneous histories, memories, and epistemologies for erasure, non-existence, or even destruction.

In what follows, I inquire into how certain imperial monuments such as British and apartheid colonial monuments such as memorials, statues of imperialists, and a painting of James Ford, currently exhibited at the South African National Gallery in Cape Town, claim to exist in an unchanging time and space, sustaining imperial performance or colonial violence and perpetuating an imperialistic relation to racialising remembrance and love in the 'non-racial' democratic South Africa. I propose that the monuments and the places they occupy, formed as they are around genophilia, are genosites – sites of 'race' – where the intimacies of colonialism come into existence but not as a passing passage, and consequently, sites where imperial science and love of 'White race' and acts of annihilation co-habit.

At issue here are genophilia – genosites that co-produce the identification of each imperial monument as a 'site of race'. Genophilia: genosites are not political imaginations beyond imperial 'White supremacy'; of a *love of race and racial identification* that act as a political memory but which does not originate and never has been made in the 'non-racial' democratic South Africa. Although always already crossed, these are imperial-colonial frontiers that translate each South African citizen into a genosite and situate South Africans between the past and the future, always in relation to colonialism and the imperial (apartheid) science of racial hierarchy and 'White supremacy'. If the imperial (apartheid) programme of annihilation and destruction in South Africa was carried out in the name of 'White only' that were turned into signs and planted all over South Africa to institute the love of an imaginary 'White race', nation and people, the genosites are narrations of racialised love, remembrance, and protection of the 'White only' memory or history from all future forgetfulness. In this chapter, genophilia – genosites are tangled and become tele-technologies that both safeguard the purity of the already defined 'White only' and show 'White' imperialism in South Africa as completely dead and yet completely alive (see also Moradi 2024). If the 'White only' signs are put on display in MuseuMAfricA (Museum Africa) in Johannesburg to speak of a colonialism long gone, genophilia – genosites – are an insistence on the living on of the colonial apartheid that institutionalised the 'White' identity or culture as self-same and never foreign to itself.

As such, genophilia[1] – genosites institute a hegemonic memory that naturalises the imperial frontiers of 'racial' and racialising identification, thereby annihilating the possibility of the experience of hospitality as *giving place* to peoples who are defined and identified as wholly others or undesired 'creatures' (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000; Bhabha 2021: x; see also Bhabha 2011). As James Baldwin (1985: xii) writes, '[w]hat the memory repudiates controls the human being. What one does not remember dictates who one loves or fails to love' or as we read in *Culture and Imperialism*, where Edward Said echoes Biruni, 'We are all taught to venerate our nations and admire our

traditions: we are taught to pursue their interests with toughness and in disregard for other societies' (Said 1994: 21). In the imperial-colonial world, the *not* remembered or loved, the disregarded, the target peoples, the colonised are confined to the colonising reason or epistemology, announcing them as the 'devil's breed', the perishable 'races', or *Les Damnés de la Terre* (Fanon 2004): 'The death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer' (Foucault 2003: 255). Martin Bernal (1991) traces this imperial-colonial commitment to the conquest and destruction of 'the bad race' or 'the abnormal' to what he calls the 'Aryan Model', where the genophilia for the 'White race' turns every person who is identified as 'White' European into an infinite genosite. This 'Aryan' call to become genophilic continuously narrates 'Africa, the Orient and the Americas' as 'inferior races' without archives and erases their historical import while simultaneously romanticising an imaginary Greece as 'the fount of European civilization' (Bernal 189). It is therefore important to note that the genophilia-genosites discussed in this chapter do not originate in South Africa, as they are not the cause but the effect of imperial-colonialism and colonising reason that tells of how what exists is the work of colonisation, by and through which 'White supremacy' as a genophilic memory is created in relation to the 'Oriental, African, Asian' as 'the devil's breed or the bad race', the foreign who is, then, subjected to infinite destruction and exploitation.

In the *History of British India* from 1817, James Mill assembles 'Indians, Chinese, Persians, Arabians, and Japanese, Cochin-chinese, Siamese, Burmans, Malays and Tibetans' as the needed 'inferiors' of the 'Western civilization' (Sen 2005: 147). According to Amartya Sen (147), 'Mill wrote his book without ever having visited India. He knew no Sanskrit, nor any Persian or Arabic, had practically no knowledge of any of the modern Indian languages'. It is no surprise, then, that Thomas Babington Macaulay, a member of the Supreme Council for India in the 1830s, was absolutely confident that 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. . . . We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue' (qtd. in Mamdani 2020: 10). In the same vein, Georg Hegel's *Über die Philosophie der Geschichte* lists China, India, Egypt, Persia, Assyria, Babylon, Medes, Syria, Western Asia, and Judaea, only to manufacture and play with his 'Oriental World'. This is then to declare that '[b]ei den Griechen fühlen wir uns sogleich heimatlich, denn wir sind auf dem Boden des Geistes' – 'Among the Greeks *we* feel ourselves immediately at *home*, for *we* are in the region of *Spirit*' (Hegel 1970: 273, 2004: 223, emphasis added). *Über die Philosophie der Geschichte* is calculated in its annihilation of the Orient as a place of knowledge production and labels Orientals as prisoners or non-'man' (Hegel 1970: 31, 2004: 18). Hegel's 'man' 'has his actual substantial life in the state, in learning [*Wissenschaft*], and so forth', and 'woman . . . has her substantial vocation in the family, and ethical disposition is to be imbued with family piety' (Hegel 2008: 168–169).

In the 20th century, Bertrand Russell happily repeated in his *Wisdom of the West* that

> Philosophy and Science, as *we* now know them, are Greek inventions. The rise of Greek civilisation which produced this outburst of intellectual activity is one of the most spectacular events in history. Nothing like it has ever occurred before or since.
>
> (qtd. in West 1993: 5)

This colonising epistemology is repeated, among other philosophers, by Massimo Pigliucci, who concludes that 'there is no such thing as Eastern philosophy' (qtd. in Van Norden 2017: 13), or, earlier, by Immanuel Kant (1997: 22), for whom 'philosophy is not to be found in the whole Orient'. Moreover, Russell's Greek civilisation, which ignites his *History of Western Philosophy* (1972), in which 'Mohammedan Culture and Philosophy' become a footnote to the *religious other* and Africa remains a foreign world to philosophy, also leaves out the oppression and control of women and enslaved people and the 'murder of new-born infants, [that] was a practice allowed in almost all the states of Greece, even among the polite and civilized Athenians' (Smith qtd. in Sen 2009: 130, 404; Smith 1984: V. 2. 15: 210). Yet, *The Problem of China* is a critical starting point for Russell to establish the notion of 'White supremacy': for China to be liberated and to 'progress', it needs 'to secure practical and intellectual training from the White nations without becoming their slaves' (qtd. in Argon 2015–2016: 168; Russell 1922: 58). That is, China cannot inhabit the world without turning to the 'White nations', who alone can offer the route to liberation of thought and progress (Russell 1922: 58). By anchoring the anthropocentric superiority of the 'White nations', Russell takes charge of dissecting China and the Chinese, to whom, he thinks, 'progress and efficiency make no appeal', just as Ernest Renan (1823–1892) had done before: China is 'crying aloud for foreign conquest' (Russell 1922: 13; Renan qtd. in Césaire 2000: 38).

The empires of Russell's 'White nations' turned the Americas, Asia, and Africa into *terra nullius*, crying for imperial capitalist conquest, systematic racism that materialised in slavery as dispossession, and destruction of people and knowledge systems (Marx 1906: 823; Robinson 2019; Grosfoguel 2013). Colonialism went hand in hand with sterilisation in the name of eugenics in western Europe and in the United States with 'the institutionalized rape of black women' and sterilisation of 'native American women' (Broberg and Roll-Hansen 2005; Carby 1985, 1992; Myrdal and Myrdal 1934; Smith 2015). The 'Euroman philosophy', the Bible, and new weaponry were designed to annihilate and dispossess 'native inhabitants' of the earth and 'all things Aboriginal' (Cordova 2007; Watson 2015). The burning of women alive on the charges of 'devil worshipers, evil beings' and 'witchcraft', 'considered a female crime' between 1550 and 1650 has been fundamental to the making of Russell's 'White nations' (Federici 2004: 179–180). According to Silvia Federici,

'*the witch-hunt was the first unifying terrain in the politics of the new European nation-states*' (169, emphasis in original).

Genophilia haunts Russell's Western philosophy, including Edmund Husserl's creation of Europe and European humanity as 'spiritual' and thus irreconcilable with the 'Eskimos, Indians, travelling zoos or gypsies permanently wandering all over Europe' (qtd. in Derrida 1989: 120), and it lives on in the anthropocentric *naked face* of Emmanuel Levinas, who, like Jan Assmann, has it clear to himself that 'western civilisation' is the 'humanity [that] consists of the Bible and the Greeks. All the rest can be translated: all the rest – all the exotic – is dance' (qtd. in Diagne 2018b: 20). The uninterrupted claim to pure blood, good race, and knowledge of salvaging skin or racial identity is first and foremost honed by producing and privileging the 'White' male's presence, language and love of race, masculinity, and imperial power to the making and exclusion of women, Orientals, Chinese, Africans, Indians, Indigenous Americans, and the so-called non-human animal life. Assmann, the living Egyptologist, faithfully repeats that the achievement of 'the West', starting with 'Greek metaphysics' and 'the Bible', including 'scientific, philosophical, and artistic discourse', is foreign to 'the Egyptian mentality' (Assmann 2006: 154). The aim here is not to reiterate the critique of how the colonial 'White male philosophers or thinkers' persist as the exclusive proprietors of colonising reason as opposed to being *open to reason* (see Diagne 2018a; Dabashi 2015).

This chapter draws on my ongoing anthropological or transdisciplinary inquiry in South Africa. It forms an integral part of a far-reaching anthropological study exploring Dutch and British imperial art from the mid-16th century to the early 20th century in the cities of Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Stellenbosch, and Pretoria. The second and third sections turn to how imperial genosites both conserve and affirm genophilic memory and fail to remember imperial acts of destruction and annihilation, such as the transatlantic human trade, slavery, and conquest of land, or love the histories of 'Indigenous, Black, Coloured, Indian, Asians'. In these sections, we learn how the existence of genophilia – genosites – is irreducible to actual citizen-state relations and survives the most extreme political organisations such as imperial-colonialism or colonial apartheid. The fourth and final section outlines how this naturalised genophilic memory delays what Mahmood Mamdani (2020) calls 'a community of survivors' in a 'decolonised political community' in 21st-century 'non-racial democratic' South Africa.

2.2. The Imperial-Colonial 'Garden'

During my daily journey from Lansdowne, where I lived from mid-February to early April 2023, to Cape Town, I gradually realised the complexities involved in unravelling the intricate tapestry of social and geographical memories interwoven with the expansion of empires from the 17th to 20th centuries. These memories, shaped by imperialism and the destruction and dispossession of

colonised peoples, firmly assert that the love of the Dutch and British empires lies within the renowned 'cape of good hope'.

Lansdowne occupies a space nestled between Athlone and Langa to the northeast, while its eastern borders are defined by townships such as Gugulethu, Nyanga, Hanover Park, Philippi, Delft, Mitchell's Plain, and Khayelitsha, among others. To the west, it is flanked by the affluent and safe Rondebosch, Claremont, Kenilworth, Constantia, and the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean.

To speak of Lansdowne is to speak of the existence of contrasting worlds created by the colonial apartheid state and the imperial imaginary of irreconcilable racial differences and 'White' racial superiority. The institutionalisation of love of race, blood, and skin colour, which dictated racial, historical, national, and religious identities, as well as geographical boundaries, laid the groundwork for the implementation of colonial apartheid. Embarking on a journey from Lansdowne to the city of Cape Town felt like transitioning from a colony to the metropolis, where the remnants of British imperialism and colonial apartheid's racialisation policies that materialised in the Group Areas Act, Urban Areas Act, Immigrants Regulation Act, Bantu Education Act, Bantu Authorities Act, Native Resettlement Act, Riotous Assemblies Act, Population Registration Act, Public Safety Act, Native Labour Settlement of Disputes Act, and others continue to curate the landscape. The urban backdrop of Cape Town and the preservation of 'townships' as segregated spaces for 'Indigenous, Black, Coloured, Indian, Asian, Muslims' inhabitants serve as constant reminders of the colonial violence that designed the world according to its 'civilising mission', that is, cleansing 'South Africa' of its inhabitants and the established life forms and making it a dominion of the imperial 'White only, White supremacy'.

Situated on the western side of Jan Van Riebeeck Road, which transforms into Voortrekker Road, ultimately guiding visitors to the attractive Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town possesses unique geographical features. Bounded by the majestic 'Indian Ocean' to the south and the historic colonial prison for the anti-imperial-colonial 'Indigenous/native' people known as 'Robben Island' in the vast Atlantic Ocean to the north, the city stands as a living testament to its imperial past, evident in the numerous landmarks, places, and streets bearing names like Victoria Wharf, Queen Victoria Street, Rhodes Avenue, Rhodes Drive, Jan Smuts Road, Jan Smuts Drive, Hertzog Blvd, F.W. de Klerk Blvd, D.F. Malan Street that meets with Nelson Mandela Blvd, and countless others.

In the heart of Cape Town, the imperial-colonial 'Company's Garden' surprises visitors. It was created by the imperial *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (the Dutch East India Company) in the mid-16th century with the purpose of nourishing both the early settlers and passing imperial ships. In 1848, the British colonial agents transformed it into a botanical garden and public park. The garden is preserved as a 'White' heritage site and therefore has not undergone transformation in the non-racial democratic South Africa.

Comprised of inviting lawns, fish ponds, some (cascading) fountains, imperial memorials, and the fragrant allure of a rose garden, the garden lies at the foot of the majestic Table Mountain. As such, it serves as a green and serene sanctuary amidst the vibrant city, inviting visitors to meander along its pathways, revel in the beauty of its roses, savour a leisurely lunch on its benches, drink or eat at its restaurants, delight in watching playful squirrels, and fully immerse themselves in the tranquil ambiance that disturbs any linear understanding of history in South Africa.

The garden is guarded by Queen Victoria Street on its eastern side, running parallel to Government Avenue, which cuts through the garden, and bordered by Avenue Street to the north, St. Johns Street to the west, and Wale Street/Adderley Street to the south. It is also embraced by a heterogeneous array of museums and institutions, enhancing its historical, political, and cultural significance. Among these are the Iziko South African Museum, the South African Jewish Museum, the Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre, the South African National Gallery, the Lodge de Goede Hoop (Good Hope), the Parliament of South Africa, and the National Library of South Africa. The blend of colonial history, politics, art, and architecture is difficult to avoid in this particular part of the city.

Upon entering the garden and in the direction of the South African National Gallery from Queen Victoria Street, visitors are greeted with several imperial monuments that seem to exude a timeless sacred aura. Facing the National Gallery and its back turned to the visitors entering from the eastern gate of the garden, there stands a life-size statue of 'Major General Sir Henry Timson Lukin', a prominent military figure committed to British imperial expansion in South Africa and Europe, opposing Nazi imperialism. The inscription on the pedestal, in both English and Afrikaans, bears the following claim about transgenerational memory: 'Born 24 May 1860. Died 16 December 1925. He served his King and was beloved by his fellow men'. Additionally, it proudly states, 'Major General Sir Henry Timson Lukin, KCB CMG DSO, Commander, Legion of Honour, Order of the Nile'. Adjacent to the Lukin statue stands the Delville Wood memorial, commemorating the imperial wars in Delville Wood, France, in 1916. This memorial is placed here because Lukin led the South African overseas expeditionary force during that particular imperial war between Britain and Germany, where a similar memorial is also erected.

The memorial takes the form of an octagonal stone tempietto, adorned with a bronze statue depicting two nude male figures atop it. These affectionate men are depicted holding hands over the back of a (war) horse. This artistic representation is said to borrow from the ancient Greek and Roman mythology of 'twin half-brothers' to symbolise the unity of the British and Afrikaners and their connection as a 'White race'. Next to this memorial, a bronze plaque bears the inscription:

> This monument commemorates South Africans who died in the great wars, 1914–1918, 1939–1945. The bronze group 'Brotherhood', is a

> replica of the group which surmounts the South African national memorial erected at Delville Wood in France. Their names shall forever liveth for evermore.

Given the pivotal role of both humans and technologies of mass annihilation and destruction during British colonialism and late colonial apartheid, a commemorative artillery memorial is 'erected to the memory of the officers, N. C. O^{s} & men of the SA heavy artillery who fell in the great war 1914–1918'. Another inscription reads: 'This memorial was further dedicated on 26 April 1970 by the S. A. M. A. association and the gunners association western province brunch to the memory of all artillerymen who laid down their lives for their country'. The memorial stands apart from the Delville Wood memorial, with a fountain nestled in between, while its gaze is directed towards the Jan Christian Smuts sculpture located on the western side of Government Avenue. There is a fountain situated just behind the Smuts statue, and further back lies the entrance to the South African National Gallery, which hosts colonial memories and exists as a site of national struggle (Tietze 2017; Ndhlovu and Rassol 2021).

On the southern side of the Delville Wood memorial, there lies a pathway leading to a bronze statue bearing the inscription 'Cecil John Rhodes, 1855–1902. Your hinterland is there' on its pedestal. Further down and opposite this statue stands 'Sir George Grey, KCB, Governor, 1854–1861', and behind him lies the neo-classical building that is now called the South African National Library. A granite plaque from the National Monument Council in 1979 placed on the entrance to the library carries an inscription in both Afrikaans and English:

> South African Library. This neo-classical building, based on Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, was designed by W. H. Kohler. The foundation stone was laid by Sir George Grey in 1858 and the building was opened by Prince Albert on 16 September 1860. It originally housed the library in the east wing and the museum in the west wing.

A security fence separates the library from 'Sir George Grey'. After his passing in Muizenberg on 26 March 1902, and in accordance with his last will and testament, Cecil John Rhodes was laid to rest atop a granite hill in Zimbabwe's renowned Matobo National Park, transforming into an unparalleled imperialist's monument in Southern Africa.

Besides the Rhodes Cottage Museum[2] in Muizenberg and his primary residence in Groote Schuur estate, another noteworthy memorial, the Rhodes Memorial, stands in Table Mountain National Park, just above the University of Cape Town (UCT). It is an imperial monument that was officially unveiled with great ceremony on 5 July 1912, nearly two years after the opening of his statues in the imperial-colonial garden. Comprising a Greek-style temple adorned with columns, the temple houses a contemplative bust

of Rhodes at its centre. Behind the bust is the declaration in capital letters: 'To the spirit and life work of Cecil John Rhodes who loved and served South Africa 1853–1902'. Beneath the bust, the four last lines from Rudyard Kipling's poem, *The burial*, dedicated to his friend Rhodes, continue to celebrate him as the imperialist who remains inseparable from the land he once ruled as a colonial agent: 'The immense and brooding Spirit still Shall quicken and control. Living he was the land, and dead, His soul shall be her soul!'

From the temple's expanse, broad steps cascade downwards towards the front, adorned with a striking statue depicting a nude male rider skilfully reigning a rearing horse with one hand while the other shields his eyes, gazing into the vast distance. Its pedestal bears the inscription 'Energy, the work of G. F. Watts R. A. and by him given to the genius of Cecil Rhodes'. Sitting on each side of the steps, four majestic bronze lions enhance the scene with their ready-to-conquer presence.

Despite the students' relentless 'Rhodes Must Fall' protests, which resulted in the removal of the 1934 Rhodes statue situated at the forefront of the UCT and the 1904 Rhodes bust from the main entrance of Rhodes University (see Sanni 2021), the collective struggle against the dominance of imperial monuments as symbols of historical, political, and epistemic violence and domination in South Africa at the turn of the 21st century is still awaiting widespread recognition as a part of public or future memory. Close to the entrance of the imperial garden from Adderley Street, a life-size statue of 'J. C. Smuts 1870–1950' is positioned on the left-hand side of the Iziko Slave Lodge. In contrast to the more artistic statue before the South African National Gallery, the Smuts statue here exhibits a conventional and 'realistic' design. On either side of the main entrance, two distinct banners are displayed, claiming a disturbing definition of slavery: 'From human wrongs to human rights'. On a pedestal, commanding an infinite political position before the Parliament and directly facing the Slave Lodge, we find the whitewashed statue of Queen Victoria.

Moving towards the fountain at the roundabout, located at the end of Adderley Street, the statues of Jan van Riebeeck and Maria de la Queillerie (Riebeeck's partner, who is also remembered as Maria van Riebeeck) are positioned on opposite sides of Heerengracht Street. An inscription on a bronze commemorative plaque attached to the pedestal of Van Riebeeck's statue reads: 'Johan van Riebeeck'. This statue was presented to the city of Cape Town by Cecil Johan Rhodes and unveiled by the then Mayor, Mr. Thomas Ball, on 18 May 1899. Continuing along Heerengracht Street, there is the statue of Bartolomeu Dias, renowned as the first 'European discoverer' of what he supposedly called *Cabo das Tormentas* (the Cape of Storms) in 1487. Located between Van Riebeecks and Dias stands a memorial adorned with, among others, inscriptions in English and Afrikaans: 'to the immortal honour of the South Africans who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War. This

memorial is dedicated in proud and grateful recognition by their countrymen'. The memorial also remembers the vast expanse of the British Empire, including South, West, Central, and East Africa, as well as Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Palestine.

Moreover, Dias arrived in the Cape before Van Riebeeck's arrival in 1652, the same year when the iconic 'Castle of Good Hope' was constructed. Today, this historical colonial fortress stands northwest of the statues of Van Riebeecks, serving rather as a site fulfilling different functions ranging from musical performance to the film industry to tourism. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, tour guides inside the castle consistently fail to acknowledge the inextricable connections between the arrival of the Dutch East India Company, the institution of slavery, the construction of the castle, and the genocidal violence perpetrated against the Indigenous peoples of the cape (Adhikari 2021; Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross 2010; Dlamini 2020). These historical links are systematically omitted from the streets of Cape Town, which are guarded by imperial and genophilic monuments.

Drawing a line from Dias to the Van Riebeecks and extending it to Queen Victoria both forms and narrates an imperial visual culture, while a triangle is formed by linking the Van Riebeecks, the 'Castle of Good Hope', and the statues of Queen Victoria and J.C. Smuts. The Grand Parade is located in front of the castle, and Darling Street acts as the historical line that divides the Grand Parade and the Cape Town City Hall. The two and a half metres tall marble statue of (king) Edward VII, which is inscribed on its even taller plinth, stands facing the more realistic statue of Nelson Mandela standing on the balcony of City Hall and greeting an invisible crowed with his raised right hand (see also Kros 2021).

A nationwide triangle of genophilia stretches across South Africa (Judin 2021; Freschi, Schmahmann and Van Robbroeck 2020). Beginning at the larger-than-life marble statue of Edward VII on the Grand Parade, it traverses through Stellenbosch, a guarded 'White' Afrikaner space, and leads to the bronze statue of King George V in front of Howard College at the University of Kwazulu-Natal in Durban. From there, it extends to Pretoria, housing the sculpture of Paul Kruger from the late 19th century and the monumental Voortrekker Monument, homering the Boer migration into the heart of the colony. The third line emerges from Pretoria, passing through Kimberley with its statue of the 'great imperialist entrepreneur' Cecil John Rhodes on horseback (Said 1994: 24), and eventually reaches the statue of Louis Botha, guarding the parliamentary grounds on St. Johns Street and Plein Street junction in Cape Town. In Cape Town, nothing exists outside the 'Aryan Model', disseminating 'White' genophilic heritage as the dominant and legitimate way of life. Indigenous peoples such as the 'Khoikhoi' and 'San', as well as 'Black, Coloured, Indian, and Asian' South Africans, are kept away from these genosites and are left with no possibility of asking, 'Where is our monument' (cf. Vahed 2021).

2.3. 'Holiday Time in [The "Whitened"] Cape Town' in *the 21st Century*

On a colossal plinth, the name 'Cecil Rhodes' stands out in bold capital letters, gilded in a radiant golden hue. Positioned just above the name, within the central portion of the plinth, lies an empty square space. Proudly resting upon the plinth is a consecrated marble statue of Cecil Rhodes, portraying him adorned in the attire of a Roman emperor. Adjacent to this imperial monument, a building reminiscent of the Palais Garnier in Paris, France, stands tall. The edifice's dome, crowned by the figure of Apollo, shelters 'Fillis' Circus' spelled out in prominent letters. Below these letters, a collection of 20 sculpted, nude female figures is celebrated and positioned above 24 paired columns. These columns, painted in a soft pink shade, are interspersed with faceless busts situated above large windows. The dome and facade of the building exhibit a captivating combination of dominant golden and White tones. To the right of the imperial monument, standing at an equal height, a fountain captures attention. The fountain features brass sculptures depicting nude women and children, albeit smaller in scale and less aesthetically organised compared to Rome's grand 'Fontana di Trevi'. The fountain is encircled by a low fence, defining its boundaries and occupying a notably larger area compared to the neighbouring monument. Both of these prominent features stand proudly in front of the Fillis' Circus building, providing an enchanting vantage point from which to behold the limitless expanse of the Atlantic Ocean.

To the left of Fillis' Circus, a stylish steel pedestrian and cycle bridge bears the inscription 'Saint George Street Pier and Promenade'. This elegant street serves as a boundary, demarcating the Fillis' Circus from the majestic 'City Hall' that was constructed in the year 1910. The City Hall showcases a splendid Renaissance architectural style and is adorned with Greek or Roman mythological sculptures. Standing alongside these marble sculptures is a towering structure boasting a Roman numeral clock and culminating in a prominent Christian cross at its pinnacle. On the right side of City Hall, one can find the welcoming 'Hotel one and all', which announces its availability 'all days . . . on Sundays'. Behind and adjacent to the City Hall, the 'boarding house for maidens only' is situated, sharing its proximity with both a mosque and a church, representing diverse faiths in harmony. Continuing further up on Saint George Street, one encounters a building bearing the name 'Cape Argus', standing next to the 'Cape Times' building.

Facing the Saint George pier is the 'Adderley Street Pier and Promenade', making a Venetian scene unfold right in front of the Fillis' Circus. Six naked men are swimming towards the Saint George pier, their determined strokes propelling them forward. On the metal bars of the pier stands another naked man, reaching out to assist a swimmer in distress. Their collective efforts are aimed at surviving the lurking shark that looms behind them. Alongside the shark's left side, a charming steamboat patiently awaits passengers eager to embark on a leisurely tour. To board the steamboat, there are two sets of stairs

available. One set is located in front of the imperial monument, where sailors are captivated by a mesmerising dance and musical performance. A man gazes through his binoculars, capturing the distant horizon that lies beyond the pool. In the foreground, circus-clad musicians can be seen near the boat stairs, standing just in front of the enchanting fountain. Decorated on the front side of the steamboat, a prominent inscription declares, 'The pride of Table Bay. Built for Cecil J. Rhodes'. The front side of the steamboat partially conceals another message on the left wall of the stairs. The visible part of the message reads, 'Steamers. Hourly to Blauwberg and through Muizenberg'. On this very side, a naked 'black' woman leans against a sturdy concrete balustrade, attentively observing the desperate efforts of the naked men as they strive to escape from the clutches of the menacing shark.

The second set of stairs is situated at the rear of the steamboat, where a man courteously helps a woman board. Meanwhile, three children delightfully indulge in the act of smoking cigars on the staircase. Amidst this scene, two White dogs, their necks tied together by a leash, curiously observe the children's activity. Elevated on the concrete column of the left wall, a momentous declaration comes into view: 'The foundation stone laid by Lady Milner in the presence of the Prince of Wales'. This is further accompanied by an additional declaration embellishing the right wall: 'The Milner-ozone promenade erected by the Cape Town Council A.D. 1903. J. Garlick, Mayor'. Adjacent to this, on the right side, an intriguing revelation awaits the observer, stating, 'Adderley Street pier. Formerly called the central wharf, Grand concerts daily and band nightly in the gigantic Rhodesian pavilion on the pier head. C. J. Rhodes' gift on his marriage day'. This captivating scene, set in front of Fillis' Circus, is completed with the presence of rowing boats that appear as 'gondolas' emerging from behind the shark.

Situated behind the Adderley Street pier and to the north of the fountain, a monument 'erected by A. Ohlsson A.D. 1904' stands, reminiscent of the renowned Scott Monument in Edinburgh, Scotland. Adjacent to it, the central railroad station rises, while in its backdrop, the extraordinary 'Bulawayo Hotel' and its accompanying 'Public Baths' catch the eye. Adding to this new captivating scene, a replica of the iconic Eiffel Tower emerges, offering a touch of Parisian charm. '120 Miles Tour. Railway to Rhodesia, Zambesi and Egypt', as well as 'Fast Trains Departure Daily for Egypt, France, and England' are celebrated on the front side of the triangular roof of the railroad station. Furthermore, nestled beside what appears to be a prominent governmental building, the station boasts an enticing 'Champagne Bar' that awaits the pleasure of its patrons. Moving further up and behind this scene, wisps of smoke rise from industrial chimneys, only to dissipate into the blue sky. The industrial zone finds its place on the outskirts of the city, abutting an imaginary green belt that separates the urban setting from the majestic Table Mountain. A railroad tunnel traverses the mountain, symbolising the city's endless quest for progress in industrial and technological advancements. On the left-hand side of the tunnel, in the distance beyond the city hall, billows of smoke emerge from a

steam train as it arrives, crossing the green belt and making its way towards the central station. Behind the A. Ohlsson monument, another steam train can be observed, parked, and ready for its next departure.

The green belt comes alive with scattered mansions, some displaying a 'native' charm while others exude 'exotic' allure, all subject to the English flag. Organised clusters of trees, including palm trees, grace the landscape alongside small and large fountains, serene lakes, and vibrant blossoming flowers. The surroundings are abuzz with elegantly dressed men, women, and children. Some engage in picnics, while others partake in joyful dances. Amidst the lush greenery, a lively spectacle unfolds, accompanied by an unexpected burst of colours in the form of a dazzling rainbow. Making its way from the tunnel towards the station, a lone crimson train carriage is heading towards the city. Along this railroad, some people move in the direction of the tunnel while others, including cyclists, venture into the bustling cityscape.

On Saint George Street, adjacent to the imperial monument, a group of British Cavalry members clad in their distinctive imperial red coats ride bicycles. Nearby, five girls and six boys join hands, dancing gleefully. Couples sway to the melodies played by a young violinist while circus-like musicians bring their flutes, frame drums, and plucked string instruments to life. Amidst the Victorian-clad men, adorned in top hats, frock coats, ties, and polished shoes, and women in voluminous skirts, tight corsets, and bonnets, one can spot a woman photographer capturing the moment. Another man carries a sizable fish while a fellow angler is engrossed in his fishing endeavour. A woman wearing a wide White hat with a red stripe boldly declares, 'All gentlemen wear Dr Jim's hats'. Meanwhile, a child diligently polishes the shoes of a Victorian-clad woman.

Within this vivid tapestry, one can observe three women donning headscarves, accompanied by a man wearing a green coat and a red fez. A solitary, barefoot 'Indigenous' woman carries a basket of flowers in her right arm. Standing nearby is another barefoot 'black' woman, cradling her child on her back, her attire wrapped in simplicity. Next to her stands a well-dressed 'black' woman, her gaze fixed upon the dancing children, couples, and musicians. Alongside them, three elderly 'black' women and an elderly 'black' man, each carrying a White sack atop their heads, gather with a young 'black' girl whose right leg is bandaged. A White English bulldog, carrying a White sack on a stick draped over its right shoulder, completes the group. Although present, this assembly seems on the brink of departure, not actively participating in the scene but passing through as a foreigner and observing it instead.

A group of Scottish pipers dressed in vibrant green and White socks stand in formation beside the Bulawayo hotel. It seems that a joyous gathering of men and women is swaying and twirling to their lively tunes. In the bustling scene, a male cyclist glides by a woman who is elegantly riding in a four-wheeled carriage drawn by two spirited horses. A skilled horse rider gallops behind them.

The vibrant mix of women and men cyclists adds a dash of colour and energy to this spectacle, with a mother pushing her child in a stroller cart and

cherishing the crowded space. With unwavering pride, a man fixes his gaze upon the pipers, all while gripping the lead of his majestic horse, showcasing his status and perhaps the profound connection they share. In the bustling midst of the crowd, two nuns stand in unity, shoulder to shoulder, their eyes drawn towards different horizons. Nearby, on the crowded Adderley pier, a man adorned in a turban captures attention, his attire resembling that of a revered Muslim mullah. Surprisingly, two women indulged in the pleasure of smoking cigars, each holding a sign that announced, 'Grand Theatre. The new woman and a girl of no consequence. Great success. Be sure you come. At 8:30' – these performances at the 'Grand Theatre to-night' are also advertised on the Milner Pier. Amidst the lively crowd, a child showcases entrepreneurial spirit, selling the Cape Times newspaper. A woman rides a two-wheeled carriage, effortlessly navigating through the bustling street. Alert policemen maintain order, skilfully apprehending a man while being surrounded by a curious and diverse crowd comprising men, women, children, and dogs of all breeds, filling every corner of Adderley Street and pier with an atmosphere of excitement and vitality.

There is a captivating sight unfolding in the vicinity of the railroad station and the neighbouring governmental edifice. A man engrossed in conversation with a lady, adorned in non-Victorian attire, firmly grasps the chain fastened around the neck of his bear. The magnificent bear stands on its hind legs, attentively observing a young girl who playfully extends her umbrella towards its inquisitive snout. To the right, 25 men and a woman, predominantly attired in Victorian garb, appear to be patiently awaiting the elderly painter, who is diligently applying the final touches to his canvas. Among the men, two notable figures emerge: Paul Kruger, the influential leader of the Boer forces and president of the Afrikaner Transvaal Republic, and Joseph Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies. 'Holiday Time in Cape Town in the 20th Century. Painted by James Ford. Began Nov 1891 Finished March 1899' adorns the rightmost edge of this painting. Beneath this painting, enclosed within a gilded wooden frame, lies an additional plaque shimmering with gilded elegance, bearing the following inscription:

James Ford's
Holiday Time in Cape Town in the Twentieth Century
in honour of the expected arrival of the Governor-General
of the UNITED South Africa
painted 1891–1899 (oil on canvas) On loan from R.J.V. Milner.
In memory of Mr R.J.
Verster Mayor of Cape Town 1922–1925

James Ford, a Victorian painter, spent nine years (1891–1899) to complete his artwork, just before the outbreak of the British-Boer War. Like the memorials in the imperial garden, this painting glorifies the British Empire and the 'White' as the 'master race' or 'White supremacy' as the law of nature. It narrates the

history of Cape Town as the history of the 'White race', which it deems worthy of remembrance and love. The painter exercises an imperial logic of sovereign power over the production of the 'White racial domination' and thus over the right to life and belonging in Cape Town. This supremacy has annihilated all the 'other undesired races', refusing them any *place*, even as memorials to honour their memories. The presence of 'Muslim' women and men, 'black' women and a man, and the 'coloured musicians' as entertainers in the painting appear as if lost and are kept both in and out of 'White imperial civilisation'.

The 'Holiday Time in ["the whitened"] Cape Town in the 20th Century' is now on display for the general public at the South African National Gallery in 21st-century Cape Town. Not far from it on the opposite side is an image of Sethembile Msezane performing the 'Zimbabwe bird', which currently stands in what was Cecil Rhodes bedroom at Groote Schuur, and on her right-side Marion Walgate's sculptural work of Cecil John Rhodes is being lifted from the UCT.

2.4. No Survivor Community, Not Now

It is common to hear that the University of Cape Town's John William Jagger Linear Library, built under the rule of the British Empire in the 1930s, was destroyed in the annihilating Table Mountain fire on 18 April 2021. Although some scholars prefer its formal name, the African Studies Special Collections Library, it widely continues to be referred to as the Jagger Library, even in postcolonial or post-apartheid South Africa. Not much of what the library housed – not only the African Studies collection but also many other collections of periodicals, manuscripts, visual culture, maps, and antiquarian books – survived the fire. But the fire was not the only instance in which knowledge in South Africa was burned and destroyed. Like British imperial-colonialism that preceded it, the colonial apartheid state not only banned books but also condemned all other knowledge systems and therefore peoples in South Africa to destruction. Yet, many young students hailed the fire for burning a 'White' colonial institution in contemporary South Africa, which reflects a future that neither the colonial apartheid state nor its allies could have anticipated. Almost three decades since the inception of a non-racial democracy, there is still no easy escape from political violence, no escape into a South Africa free of social injustice, economic dispossession, femicide, or racialised identification and belonging (Ngqulunga 2023; Gqola 2010; Phiri 2021). Over a phone call on 9 November 2021, writer and filmmaker Bongani Madondo tells me: 'This is South Africa, and, like America [US], Australia, United Kingdom, Brazil, heck, the width and breadth of Europe, that monster race thing will always hang around our neck. We cannot theorise it away'.

In a review of Mahmood Mamdani's (2020) *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities* for the South African *Mail & Guardian*, Sandile Ngidi (2021), a poet and then master's student in historical studies at the UCT, writes: '"Lost in 2021 fire". So reads the

bleak message on the UCT's online library search engine when I try to access Mahmood Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject*'. Throughout *Neither Settler nor Native*, Mamdani details how political modernity travels across centuries, taking the form of genocide in the Americas, of Nazism and fascism in Europe, of apartheid in South Africa, and of Zionism in Israel. At issue is the imperial-colonial or modern state, which Mamdani traces back to 1492, beyond the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that ended the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) within the Holy Roman Empire (Mamdani 2020: 1). He deploys 1492 as an evidentiary historic moment that testifies to how the birth and trajectory of the modern state or political modernity have been tied up with law, science, religion, technologies of conquest, and imperial-colonial violence of annihilation, destruction of knowledge, and infinite loss (see also Kiernan 2004; Hinton 2002; Moradi 2022, 2024; Ramaswamy 2004; Woolford, Benvenuto and Hinton 2014; Secher 2003). What is to be done to avoid similar political violence in the future/s to come?

Mamdani thinks 'epistemological revolution' to be central to what he elaborates as a 'decolonised political community'. It is, he writes, 'closely tied to internal political revolution – not throwing off outside rule but excising the ideology of political modernity internalized under colonialism' (Mamdani 2020: 34). South Africa under the apartheid state becomes the model for showing how the epistemological revolution that is necessary for political revolution occurs. It did not begin with the African National Congress or the South African Indian Congress, the former founded in 1912 (Ngqulunga 2017) and the latter in 1921, or the Coloured People's Congress or the 'White' Congress of Democrats, from the 1950s. All these anti-apartheid political organisations, Mamdani argues, suffered 'the apartheid imagination in their internal architecture' (Mamdani 2020: 31). Rather, it began only in the 1970s, when a heterogeneous liberative social movement introduced a foundational break with the apartheid order of violence and destruction of knowledge. 'Non-White' students and migrant workers organised themselves through the formation of South Africa's 'non-racial unions'; and 'African, Indian and Coloured students, inspired by the Black Consciousness Movement, were reborn as black' (Mamdani 31). *Black* would no longer be a fixed understanding of 'race' but rather an epistemological revolution, one pushed by the non-racialised United Democratic Front and Mass Democratic Movement, targeting the very existence of the apartheid state's biologism or genophilic memory. Through the circulation of knowledge, this epistemological revolution was as much connected to histories of struggle against political modernity and to the 1955 Freedom Charter, which insisted on equal rights 'regardless of race, colour or sex', as to technosciences and solidarity movements worldwide. Tele-technologies – books, images, newspapers, television, telephone, aircraft, car – were essential to the circulation of knowledge and documentary (visual) evidence as well as to the formation of anti-apartheid solidarity organisations in, for example, Japan, the Netherlands, Cuba, India, Ghana, Guyana, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States (Thörn 2010). The

dissemination of knowledge about apartheid state violence had turned the questions of what it means to be human, how to live together, how individual/human life becomes collective acts of solidarity across borders, or how to translate ethical responsibility into planetary political urgencies. These connections and movements unsettled established political, economic, and military relations between the apartheid state, the United States, some European states, and Israel. It was only in 2008 that Nelson Mandela's name was 'removed' from the United States 'terrorist list', more than a decade after his release and the move of South Africa to a non-racial democratic dispensation, illustrating this enduring unease. Or the development of nuclear weapons imagined to ensure 'minority survivalism', proposed by the Israeli state as policy for Israel and the apartheid state, 'threatened outposts of European civilization defending their existence against barbarians at the gates' (Polakow-Suransky 2010: 8).

With a 'South African-inspired model', Mamdani thinks of the community of survivors as always already marked by epistemological revolution that is central to the very possibility of a decolonised political community and not an 'imagined political community' (Anderson 2006: 6), a spiritual community, or irreconcilable racial communities, as in colonial apartheid. Non-racial democracy as political reform, therefore, becomes both an epistemological and a political revolution. As such, it is not only a 'necessary step in the struggle for social justice' but also fundamental to obligations towards those murdered, disappeared, raped, and tortured during colonial apartheid and addressing those who are yet to be born. Victims, perpetrators, survivors, beneficiaries, bystanders, and exiles all become survivors of apartheid and 'included in an expanded political process and reformed political community' (Mamdani 2020: 17). In a world that has survived and is haunted by the untranslatable cruelties of colonial apartheid, the community of survivors translates into an extrajudicial moment and a critique of imperial epistemology or political modernity at large. It becomes the enunciation of ethical justice and the decolonisation of legal justice and of the colonial civil and customary laws that assumed settler/native, race/tribe, majority/minority as naturalised political identities.

Survivors become an urgent call to openness towards ethical and political responsibility and *each* other or living together: 'we are all survivors' and 'can all *learn* to see ourselves as *survivors* of political modernity' (Mamdani 20, emphasis added). As such, 'we' are all situated beyond the juridical calculation of the victim/perpetrator binary: trial, legal proceedings, evidence-making, verdict, and punishment. For example, the Nuremberg tribunals and the politics of 'denazification' not only *individualised* the Holocaust and excluded the violence of the Allies but also depoliticised what was political violence and thus eradicated 'a revolutionary reimagining of modern political organization' (Mamdani 103). The ad hoc tribunals and the International Criminal Court continue to be tangled with global politics, confine state violence and justice to the law of genocide, and disregard how the political is 'twinned' with the

epistemological (see also Clarke 2019). But knowledge and politics do not occupy distinct spheres, just as humans and knowledge do not form a dichotomous existence. This is where we learn how genophilia was not born in the desert and how it is tied to imperial colonialism, that is, the destruction of knowledge systems and the people, who lived by them (cf. Spivak 1988: 280; Santos 2014: 92).

In the Preamble to the National Heritage Resources Act, published in the Government Gazette on 28 April 1999, which is written in only English and Afrikaans, we read:

> Our heritage is unique and precious and it cannot be renewed. It helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation. . . . Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs.
>
> (National Heritage Resources Act 1999)

'Our heritage' is predicated on 'White' imperial rights and the unrecognised destruction of the heritages of peoples who lost their lives, who were left with the lasting violence of colonial rule, and who have survived slavery, colonialism, and colonial apartheid. In other words, the celebratory narrative of 'our heritage' conceals its own role in the destruction of worlds, peoples, and knowledges that are yet to be remembered in the cities of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Durban. Learning to identify as a 'survivor' of Dutch, British, and apartheid colonialism and therefore to move away from genophilic heritage as the naturalised evidence of 'civilisation and progress' remains as necessary to any experience of a decolonised political community.

Learning to identify as a survivor of Dutch, British, and apartheid colonialism and consequently distancing from the genophilic heritage that has been uncritically accepted as evidence of 'civilisation and progress' is a foundational move towards cultivating a decolonised political community. The inevitability and unavoidability of survivorship thinking and memories are necessary in order to recognise the historical and existential responsibility of living and hosting the autobiographies, heritages, or archives of peoples who were kept as the main target of colonialism or imperial performances. This is a critical move against the world-destroying capacity that is constitutive of genophilia, retaining imperial-colonial violence as natural as necessary. The survivor community is also the pursuit of *unlearning imperialism* (Arzoulay 2019) as it lies in the acts of *giving place* to each other, providing space for critical imaginations and knowledges, heterogeneous life forms, and the existential need to cohabit the world. The possibility of living in 'a community of survivors',

where hospitality is central, is infinitely delayed and will have to come as a surprise – an epistemological revolution.

Notes

1 Genophilia is experiencing a global surge and undergoing a significant transformation driven by the rapid advancements in technosciences, which overwhelmingly influence 'the culture and politics of modernity' (Jasanoff 2004: 1; see also M'charek 2020; Benjamin 2019; Noble 2018). In the United States under the presidency of Donald Trump, 'White supremacists, neo-Nazis, Christian Identitarians, and the Klan were massed, torches in hand, chanting "Blood and Soil!" and "Jews will not replace us!" ' (Hinton 2021: 17). The same genophilic politics can be ethnographically witnessed in Israel, Turkey, Hungary, India, and Iran, among many others (Appadurai 2022, 2006; Butler 2021; Pap 2021; Forsberg 2017; El-Haj 2012; Moradi 2023).

2 The website celebrates Rhodes: 'The Rhodes Cottage Museum is a place of peace and learning – set on the False Bay, Muizenberg Coast. The Cottage represents many things, it is where a great South African Cecil John Rhodes died at just 49, an educational centre of early SA industrialization, and a study of Rhodes and his legacy that has created great countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi, as well as a place of natural local beauty'. Available at: https://rhodescottage.co.za (Accessed: 15 August 2023).

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3 Monuments and Invisibility

Reclaiming Spaces of Colonial Transcendence

John S. Sanni

3.1. Introduction

Monuments, in their present and historical forms, have direct consequences for the public space. What a state decides to do with them can contribute to decolonising that space, but also, and as I have argued in a different work, risk a potential forgetting through the sanitisation of history (Sanni, 2021). Monuments are not objects that are disconnected from political and social spaces, in the sense that they are mere objects subject to the interpretations of tour guides and the gaze of tourists. Conversely, monuments embody the past in ways that challenge the present and how, in the present, gazes, questions, concerns, and conceptions of history are formulated. Dispositions towards monuments go beyond the inclination to either preserve or destroy them; they present us with narratives that require critical thinking about spaces and symbols and their implications for understanding socio-political and economic realities in their societies. In other words, monuments are not mere statues and plinths; they are epistemologically loaded objects that stretch in a tripartite relationship from the past to the future. Understood as complex, discourses on monuments require a critical analysis of their role in society. The focus here goes beyond who should be remembered, forgotten, represented, or celebrated; I take the argument further by exploring the 'where', even after the statue has been removed in response to a public request or due to a commitment to decolonisation.

In this chapter, I also present a critical analysis of historical monuments from the view point of visibility and invisibility. I maintain that colonialism and its show of strength, control, and domination, through monuments, reveal a sense of transcendence that promoted conditions of superiorisation, thereby legitimising the invisibility of the natives. Dominant engagements with monuments have focused mainly on statues, plinths, and street names. Little or no rigorous engagement with spaces, understood here as sites of removed monuments, has been made, as far as I am aware. By focusing on spaces of removed monuments, I argue that it is important 'to focus on the processes that not only mediate past and present, but animate the present with emotion and desire' (White, 2017:21). I maintain that monuments must

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be understood beyond their visible state and propose that the path to rewriting history and the commitment to remembering, in the hope of decolonising, require a commitment not only to statues but also to spaces of colonial transcendence.

In what follows, I divide my engagement into three main parts. Firstly, I present critical colonial monuments in different African countries and how monuments embody notions of transcendence. Secondly, I argue that colonial monuments promote ideologies of visibility and invisibility. Visibility is understood here as a conception of existence that superiorises. Invisibility is understood here as a form of inferiorisation that is imposed on or assumed by a particular group of people. In the third section, I argue that spaces that promote or represent notions or ideologies of oppression and marginalisation, through the imposition of particular forms of transcendence, need to be reclaimed. The readers should note that I consider spaces, irrespective of the presence of a monument, be it in the form of a plinth or statue, to possess meaning that justifies and requires critical engagement and decolonising response(s). In this chapter, I focus mainly on spaces that once had monuments, or a form of commemoration or celebration of particular events or individual(s).

3.2. Colonial Monuments and Transcendence

The reality of colonialism in Africa had a devastating effect on Africa and Africans. These effects were not only social, economic, and political but also ideological in the sense that their presence was driven by a self-imposed notion of transcendence that legitimised oppression, dehumanisation, and marginalisation of Africans. This point is important as a background for understanding the role that monuments played in re-enforcing the notion of transcendence that colonialism imposed on Africans. My use of transcendence here is based on an immanent understanding of human self-glorification and elevation or superiorisation. Björn Freter rightly observes that even present-day Western thinking, as we observe it, has yet to realise that this ignorance stems from the fact that the colonial self-understanding as being superior has not yet been abandoned (2020:107), which is a position that indirectly resonates with Patrick Wolfe's argument that colonialism is not an event; it is a structure (Wolfe, 2006). Patrick Wolfe goes on to add: 'When invasion is recognized as a structure rather than an event, its history does not stop' (Wolfe, 2006:402). In some ways, the existence of these colonial monuments and names of streets, towns, and cities, etc. feeds into the narrative of the persisting colonial structure that Wolfe refers to.

Colonial transcendence was very important for the inferiorisation of Africans. Freter notes that 'The superiorization of the White man was what brought the inferior black man as a phenomenon into the world' (Freter, 2020:119). The reality of inferiorisation features in the transcendence that

spaces of monuments and their plinths describe during colonialism and in some post-colonial African societies. The crux of the debate is,

> whom should be represented, remembered, and celebrated in the public space relates to the constant redefinitions and reinterpretations of the past. Monuments can be removed or destroyed because some groups perceived them as celebrating foreign – to the nation – powers (Rhodes' statue in South Africa or Soviet monuments in post-communist countries). Monuments can also be contested because they celebrate colonial powers and structures. Their removal can then be part of a process of decolonization of the public space.
>
> (Cauvin, 2022:8; see Sanni, 2021)

In other words, who has the right to challenge the insulting characters of the representation in spaces that are ladened with historical injustice and despicable oppression? This question is layered, as Cauvin also highlights, with epistemological and hermeneutical questions. What are the epistemological justifications for considering a monument(s) as an epitome of colonial historical injustice in post-colonial African societies, and what hermeneutical frameworks justify this assumption?

The point here is that there is a need to critically engage how images, in this case monuments, of the past and recollected knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained through existing practices that bear on historical positions. In some ways, the goal is to ascertain how the existence of these monuments weighs on the social and moral negotiations of everyday life. By this, we ascertain the role they play in discussions about race, justice, socio-economic emancipation, gender, and African history, among others. These questions implicitly reflect the reality of power that originated from 'colonial difference'.

For Mignolo, 'The colonial difference is the space where coloniality of power is enacted' (Mignolo, 2000:ix). 'Once coloniality of power is introduced into the analysis, the "colonial difference" becomes visible, and the epistemological fractures between the Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism is distinguished from the critique of Eurocentrism, anchored in the colonial difference' (2000:37). What Mignolo refers to as 'colonial difference' is what I refer to as colonial transcendence in this chapter. In some ways, the superiorised difference that colonialism assumed was the ground for legitimising its transcendence. Monuments, understood as colonial transcendence, make 'reference . . . to things other than the object itself' (Auster, 1997:220). Colonial transcendence, in its various representations, 'is the space where local histories inventing and implementing global designs meet local histories, the space in which global designs have to be adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated, or ignored' (Mignolo, 2000:ix). Monuments do not only affirm; they also negate realities, worldviews, and positionalities.

By negating, '[t]he colonial difference creates the conditions for dialogic situations in which a fractured enunciation is enacted from the subaltern perspective as a response to the hegemonic discourse and perspective' (Mignolo, 2000:x). The transcending of colonial transcendence requires an initiative from the perspective of subalternity, 'from decolonization, and, therefore, from a new epistemological terrain where border thinking works' (Mignolo, 2000:45). Border thinking refers to alternative ways of thinking and alternative knowledge traditional to colonial epistemologies. This entails a move away from the disconnect of colonial spectators of our horrifying past, depressing present, and obscure future. An important part of this transition from the fractured terrain of colonial encounter is the reclaiming of spaces/places through the show of the power of communities, of 'the oppressed in constituting resistant meaning and each other against the constitution of meaning and social organization by power' (Lugones, 2010:746). The conditions of commemoration also play into the meaning and social organisation of power in societies.

Jill Edy, in her book *Troubled Past*, argues that 'commemoration is very important to the process of building collective memories. Commemorative stories pull together scattered references to the past to encourage both re-examination and integration' (Edy, 2006:95). In Louise du Toit's article, 'The South African Constitution as Memory and Promise: An Exploration of Its Implications for Sexual Violence', she avers that historical monuments refer to carved statues that remind a group of individuals of heroic figures in the past whose action is worthy of remembrance, collective celebration, and emulation (2016:5). There is something in and about this understanding of monuments that ignores the role of power in determining the conditions of commemoration, remembrance, emulation, and collective celebration. Françoise Choay (2001) also affirms, in her book *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, that the meaning of monuments has not been static because of how the meaning and motive behind their existence have changed over time. Choay observes that the reason behind the erection of monuments in the West in the 19th century was largely due to their connection to the creation of nation-states and national identities. Consider Trafalgar Square in Britain. Trafalgar Square was completed in 1840, and its purpose was to commemorate the British naval victory during the Napoleonic Wars (Choay, 2001). Monuments do not only encourage social cohesion and expressed values such as patriotism, loyalty, and duty, but they also represent a show of power, success, and strength in ways that draw attention to particular realities of transcendence.

In this discourse, invocations of history through monuments become a 'language by which individuals and groups struggle over their own identity and makes demands in the public sphere' (e.g. Berliner, 2005; Klein, 2000; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Levy, 2011). It is important to alert the reader to the fact that monuments are by nature loaded objects, and in light of their complex nature, the narrative around monuments should not be limited merely to whether they should be removed or retained. In their static nature,

they represent and beckon a tripartite motion of historical, present, and future interpretation. Assmann and Czaplicka (2008:130) also note that

> [c]ultural memory works by reconstructing; that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation. True, it is fixed in immovable figures of memory and stores of knowledge, but every contemporary context relates to these differently, sometimes by appropriation, sometimes by criticism, sometimes by preservation or by transformation.

Patricia Davison rightly avers, while referring to museums as spaces of monument, that they refer to a location where collective identity can be created, but she adds a caveat when she maintains that museums, rather than considering them as spaces of collective memory, only advance what she refers to as 'selective memory' (1998:146). The point here is that the commitment to memory cannot be entirely disentangled from the quest for transcendence in ways that promote selective memorisation, thereby fostering instances of invisibility. In fact, and different from Davison's view, any society where monuments that are not necessarily in museums represent spaces of contestation of memories (be it collective memory or selective memory).

To further substantiate the above point, consider the case of Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, like most African countries, gained its independence in 1960. Prior to this, monuments of King Leopold II (unveiled in 1928), his successor Albert I, and the Welsh founder of the city, Henry Morton Stanley, stood until 1967. These were colonial monuments in postcolonial and post-independent Congo. We notice that after President Mobutu Sese Seko became president in 1965, there was a commitment to the policy of authenticity. In the process of implementing this policy, colonial Belgian monuments commemorating colonialists, which were viewed in an extremely negative light from the point of view of the horrendous actions in Central Africa (mainly by Leopold II and Stanley), were removed (Tounsi, 2020). They were stored for decades and later returned in 2010 to Ngaliema Park, next to the presidential palace in Kinshasa (Tounsi, 2020). This decision was made despite the global push back against the structural and systemic reality of black oppression, such as the global 'Black Lives Matter' movement; other monuments of Leopold II, even in Belgian cities, were removed (in Antwerp) or devastated (in Brussels) in June 2020. Jose Batekele provided an explanation informing the decision to return King Leopold II to the centre of Kinshasa (Batekele in Tounsi, 2020:n.p.). He said, 'For us, the statue of Leopold II, it reflects a history, a memory. It is a reference for our children' (Tounsi, 2020:n.p.).

It is important to engage Batekele's justification, especially in light of how monuments embody conditions of visibility and invisibility. The removal of the monuments in Kinshasa is absolutely understandable from the point of view of Congo's colonial history. However, the return of the King Leopold II

monument and its justification raise a couple of concerns. Batekele appears to argue that amidst the dark side of history, there is a duty to the past that must not be neglected. This explanation is not unique. Scholars like Penny Enslin (2020:1343) argue, 'This monument offers both an instructive text for discussing and implementing postcolonial education as a means of countering imperialism in education, and also in inviting consideration of the ongoing influence of new forms of Empire, after decolonisation'. In other words, the reference to colonial monuments in postcolonial time aims at addressing the past in a way that deals with different emphases. I am going to delve into the other questions that arise when one further considers the stance of Batekele in a later part of this chapter. It is important to note, however, that the disposition towards monuments reveals not only instances of transcendence but also imperial justifications of visibility and invisibility.

3.3. Monuments: Visibility and Invisibility

On account of the historical injustices perpetrated by colonialism, as I have highlighted in the above section, monuments, especially colonial monuments, were considered figures of transcendence and imperial spaces of visibility. The point of this section is to determine the defining attributes of visibility and invisibility when one engages with historical monuments. The previous section explored how Africans' encounter with colonialism brought about conditions of inferiorisation. However, this section seeks to move beyond that point by reflecting on and critically engaging with particular instances of visibility and invisibility as they pertain to monuments.

While many African countries hold on to the names of streets, roads, towns, and cities, there has been an increasing disgust for colonial monuments. South Africa, among other countries, provides a peculiar example of what has been alluded to there. The move for decolonisation of public spaces, along with other social conflicts, remains a live process in South Africa. The most unique and globally known African act of critique of a monument was the *#RhodesMustFall* campaign, which was initiated in 2015. As a result of the public campaign, a statue of Cecil Rhodes, a British mining magnate, White supremacist, and prime minister of Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896, was removed from the courtyard of the University of Cape Town. The removal of this monument was mainly intended to challenge structures of oppression and the massive racial and economic inequalities in academic institutions and also in South African society at large (Chaudhuri, 2016; Murris, 2016; Newsinger, 2016; Sanni, 2021). These were very important contributing factors to the decolonisation of spaces in South Africa.

Similarly, an extensive debate has been going on for many decades regarding the Voortrekker Monument built in Pretoria in 1949. The monument was constructed to commemorate the Great Trek into the interior of South Africa. The monument, symbolising Afrikaner nationalism and mythology (Autry, 2012), has been the subject of discussions regarding its meaning and

relevance, especially with regard to its contemporary use (Delmont, 1993; Crampton, 2001; Moreeng & Twala, 2014) in post-apartheid South Africa. We also see instances in other parts of Africa. For instance, after the French withdrew from Dakar after independence, 'in Senegal, the monument of governor Louis Faidherbe was removed and transferred to the capital's museum, while in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, the monument of Cecil Rhodes was torn down in 1980' (Górny & Górna, 2022:79). Other instances include the removal of statues of Lord Delamere and King George VI in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1963 and 1964, respectively (Górny & Górna, 2022:78).

Removing or relocating monuments and symbols, such as plinths, can also reveal the deep intensity of contested memory and spaces. As David Dean observes in his book *Companion to Public History* (2022), when talking of the public with reference to public history, it is increasingly challenging to talk about a public, especially in light of societal diversity and complexity. Dean proposes that it is in fact more useful to think about 'publics' because 'speaking of publics rather than the public compels us to be more nuanced in our analyses of historical representations and also when we come to talk about agency in public history' (Dean, 2022:3–4). Dean's position must be understood in connection with the fact that historical monuments do not merely raise concerns pertaining to what they are used for. The purpose and relevance of monuments vary in light of societal complexities and diversity. Furthermore, even when you understand monuments to mark the relation of a society to its past, we see and can attest to the fact that 'the boundary between past and present used to be stronger and more stable than it appears to be today' (Huyssen, 2003:1).

Amidst the complexities that arise in determining the connection between the past and the present, monuments were built for particular purposes. I have indicated in the above section that monuments represent spaces of power, control, strength, etc. However, we also see that

> We erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and build monuments so that we shall never forget. . . . Monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualise remembrance and mark the reality of ends. . . . Monuments make heroes and triumphs, victories and conquests, perpetually present and past 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 in Snyman, 1998:317)

Danto corroborates the position of Molyneaux that '[I]t is difficult, even impossible, to distinguish the past from the objects, structures and institutions that carry it today' (Molyneaux, 1994:4). Monuments speak to and laud the events of heroes, triumphs, bravery, success, victories, and conquests. Monuments are often never erected for villains and societal disruptors. In other

words, the goal of monuments is to make and render visible the life of an individual(s) and/or events. The challenge, however, lies in the epistemic justification for the visibility of particular individual(s) and events. Molyneaux anticipates this concern when he notes that

> no amount of moralising or legislation can identify just what level of 'past' should be supported and promulgated, as the value of the presented past to the life and well-being of an individual or group depends on whose interest is at stake.
>
> (Molyneaux, 1994:7)

Bruggeman also notes that '[c]hoices made about which of these memories to enshrine, and which ones to erase, are the messages that memorials and monuments convey today. In this sense, then, memorials are never silent, and they certainly do not reflect consensus' (Bruggeman, 2020:465). The kind of bias highlighted by Molyneaux and Bruggeman does reflect not only inequality but also conditions of visibility and invisibility as they pertain to social justice and extreme inequality (as is the case in South Africa). Who people choose to honour with a monument, and the power to do so, reflect the interest and authority at stake.

On account of bias and unscrupulous memorialisation that glorifies a few for their victories, often at the expense of the poor majority, we see that the disposition towards colonial monuments has mostly leaned towards their destruction. It is only through the destruction of historical monuments that their power can be delegitimised. As Seth C. Bruggeman stresses, counter-monuments do so 'by insisting on the inclusion of people – and, sometimes, entire segments of . . . society – that have been persistently absented from public memory' (2020:469). There has been very little emphasis or inclination to formulate other counter-monuments that could be used to confront dominant models. In a different work, I have argued that a possible counter-monument is to engage existing ones by putting figures who represent the majority side by side with colonial monuments that represent systems of oppression and marginalisation (Sanni, 2021). The goal here is to confront an oppressive history of invisibility with a new narrative of oppressed visibility. By oppressed visibility, I mean the emergence of oppressed people from the margins into the light of recognition and value.

Apart from the power and authority referred to as instances of visibility and invisibility, another important aspect of monuments has to do with memories in the sense of what is being remembered. Through commemorative ceremonies of public figures,

> A community is reminded of its identity as represented and told in a master narrative. This is a collective variant of . . . personal memory, that is to say making sense of the past as a kind of collective autobiography.
>
> (Connerton, 1989:70)

Power is important for the legitimisation of narrative (this is why it has to be 'master narrative', and not any other kind of narrative); on account of what is at stake, the narrative is often biased, memories are distorted to suit the powerful, and further silence and render invisible memories of the marginalised. Therefore, the destruction or preservation of monuments must be approached critically because of the implications that particular preferences might have on the preservation or destruction of memory. In the previous section, we saw Batekele's justification for the preservation of a colonial monument. His position stems from a particular disposition towards monuments that is connected to memories. The fear of forgetting often hinges on the risk of repeating past mistakes. Remembering memories, as Batekele proposes, offers an important angle to the way that monuments should be engaged. In the often biased and distorted narrative of colonial monuments, Batekele suggests, as I have argued in a different work, that Congo's narrative must not entail a sanitisation of history (Sanni, 2021) in ways that the present becomes unrecognisable.

The argument there is that there needs to be a shift in the expression of grievances and dissatisfaction. Macdonald proposes that 'This shift of victimhood from being a denigrated status of the powerless and abject to providing a potentially powerful platform for articulating grievance and seeking redress, is part of a broader identity politics and discourse of "exclusion" ' (Macdonald, 2013:193–194). In light of her position, I argue, as I further develop in the next section, that monuments and spaces of colonial transcendence, displays of victory, control, and power, can be re-commemorated to capture the power, imposed invisibility, and voice embedded in the silence of the majority. The reader can tell by now that I am slowly hinting at a decolonial disposition, which I now turn to in the next section.

3.4. Decolonialising Colonial Transcendence: Reclaiming Spaces

The argument thus far is that monuments embody colonial transcendence. This section seeks to critically engage the various ways one might conceptualise decolonisation by reclaiming spaces of colonial transcendence and undoing conditions of invisibility. Decolonisation for scholars like Freter entails 'overcoming violence, both endured and perpetrated violence' (Freter, 2020:107). A more detailed definition of decolonisation can be found in the work of Ramon Grosfoguel, Frances Negrón-Muntaner, and Chloé S. Georas (1997:24), avers

> A decolonization project . . . cannot be understood only as a process of self-determination at a formal political level, but must be seen as a process of radical transformation of the old colonial hierarchies, that is, the eradication of the racial, gender, sexual, and class hierarchies built throughout a long colonial history.

The debris of colonial existence continues to linger in many African countries. A commitment to decolonisation requires an awareness of the complexities within African locations and actively engaging in formulating new models for addressing the challenges of neo-colonial subjugation. These models must be characterised by an active intent to eradicate racial, gender, and sexual accounts of memorialisation that hinge on colonial prejudice and bias. They must reveal and seek to eliminate colonial justifications of visibility and invisibility and the various ways they persist in contemporary African societies. We see, as Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni rightly observed, that many African leaders have repeatedly manifested the crises of repetition, and at the expense of workers and peasants, they have enriched themselves by abusing and blatantly undermining and ignoring the goals and intended aspirations behind juridical independence (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Understanding monuments as spaces of transcendence and a commitment to disrupt and undo colonial transcendence through decolonisation, is a complex task. According to Molyneaux, 'The restoration or recreation of an "excluded past", in the form of a more localized or specific knowledge, may possibly be disadvantageous because it fails to address the structural aspects of oppression' (Molyneaux, 1994:7). The structural aspect of oppression in contemporary African societies, as we have seen with Ndlovu-Gatsheni, is marred by political leaders' commitment to self-aggrandisement as opposed to the well-being of the people they govern. This reality plunges many into a state of ambivalence about what needs to be done with historical memories and the colonial transcendence that they represent.

Assmann and Czaplicka present two dominant responses to the monuments as sites of memories. They argue, 'One group remembers the past in fear of deviating from its model, the next for fear of repeating the past: Those who cannot remember their past are condemned to relive it' (Assmann & Czaplicka, 2008:133). The two dominant positions are preservationists and destructivists. Preservationists such as Sanni (2021) and Enslin (2020) maintain that there are various justifications for preserving monuments, one of which is the preservation of memories for posterity; the other, as Enslin argues, is for educational purposes. The risk of a selective prioritisation of monuments is dangerous for memory preservation. I have argued that 'historical monuments must not be destroyed. In the desire to selectively choose the lessons to draw from history, we must not lose sight of the whole picture by an unreflective sanitisation of history' (Sanni, 2021:1198). There is in fact an erosion of the value of the other memories around what are often considered authoritative monuments, or what I have considered in this chapter as monuments that represent colonial transcendence. Conversely, the destructivists' position seeks to justify the destruction of historical monuments on account of the historical injustices that they represent and continue to systematically endorse. Destructivists' position speaks directly 'against the authoritarian propensity in all art that reduces viewers to passive spectators' (Young, 2000:78). Taking into consideration the preservationists' position, Keisha N. Blain (2020) explains in

the *Washington Post* that the destruction of the Confederate monuments isn't 'erasing' history, it's learning from it. Several African Indigenous communities have sought to reclaim the spaces where monuments of colonial transcendence once stood or still stand (Gomez, 2002).

In view of the fact that the Europeans were designing African cities meant to reflect imperial values in their spatial structure (Silva, 2015), the destructivist's view presents a persuasive disposition towards monuments. As I have also shown in the sections above, the intention of colonial monuments of transcendence 'was . . . to legitimise White supremacy, organise and delineate the colonised-coloniser relationship and, first and foremost, maintain European control over the African soil and its native inhabitants' (Górny & Górna, 2022:81). It is fascinating to observe that referring to what to destroy and what to preserve is a constant negotiation between powers and stakeholders. The point here is that the challenges that emerge within the discourses on monuments cannot, as I have indicated, be detached from context. 'Contexts matter, which is why Cecil Rhodes' statue at the University of Cape Town in South Africa was removed while his bust at the University of Oxford (United Kingdom) was not' (Cauvin, 2022:29). In light of the African contexts, and its history, a destructivist's position appears plausible. The morality questions that also emerge further justify the destructivist account. While referring to Charles Taylor's observation that memory and a sense of self, identity, and collective existence are inextricably linked to one's 'sense of the good', Lambek further argues that 'the chronotype of memory must be a moral space' (Lambek, 1996:249). Again, on these grounds, one could argue that, considering the historical injustices of colonialism and the systemic structure that further justifies marginalisation and economic inequality, monuments that reveal colonial transcendence should be destroyed.

In contrast, preservationists hold that

> We need monuments, even despite their tendency to misrepresent. At their best, monuments can bind us together and fortify our communities in the face of tragedy or uncertainty. They can also remind us that to be great is worthy of aspiration.
>
> (Bruggeman, 2020:465)

Bruggeman's understanding of a monument depends on a community's collective memory of the monument. Consider a situation, as we have seen in previous sections, where memories are not shared or there is no consensus on how to respond to a monument because of the conflicting accounts. It becomes challenging to consider a preservationist's position. Is it then plausible to dismiss a preservationist's position? Not quite. Assmann and Czaplicka's account of cultural memory provides a hint of a preservationist account. Assmann and Czaplicka note that:

> Cultural memory works by reconstructing, that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation. True, it is fixed

> in immovable figures of memory and stores of knowledge, but every contemporary context relates to these differently, sometimes by appropriation, sometimes by criticism, sometimes by preservation or by transformation.
>
> (Assmann & Czaplicka, 2008:130)

Assmann and Czaplicka's position is not restrictive in the way preservationists and destructivists propose. They appear to suggest that there is a third option, which is the transformative account. To my mind, the transformative account does not necessarily have to be an option between the preservationist and the destructivist. On the contrary, it could entail a combination of both: destruction that is open to some preservation. For instance, and as I have indicated in a previous work (Sanni, 2020), rather than destroy the Cecil Rhodes' monument, bring it down from its plinth, and put a Steve Biko next to it. By removing or destroying the plinth that often describes and praises the figure, it does not imply destruction; it simply means that the narrative around the statue needs to be re-written. The introduction of Steve Biko next to Rhodes indicates a new narrative of inclusivity and a commitment to an African agency that frowns upon a colonial transcendence that justifies marginalisation. The point here is that '[d]ecolonising public understanding of the past also means challenging the structures used to remember so that they can become more inclusive of diversity of practice' (Cauvin, 2022:34). The margins that are created by conditions and spaces of oppression need constant engagement.

I will like to alert the reader to my reference to plinths. According to De Certeau and Patraka (quoted in Haskins & DeRose, 2003:179), '[s]pace occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent way'. Thus, space is created 'by the actions of historical subjects'. Plinths exist in spaces, and they play a particular role, which is mostly to describe the figure. The question here is whether plinths are monuments. This question is important because it speaks to the concerns raised by Górny and Górna (2022) on the status of empty plinths in Bissau. They note, 'In contemporary Bissau, there are a few more empty plinths which the Portuguese had once used to display themes meant to strengthen their symbolic and factual domination over the city' (Górny & Górna, 2022:81–84). The existence of plinths further complexifies the reality of spaces and monuments as colonial transcendence. Górny and Górna (2022) observe that at the beginning of colonial Bissau, there were many monuments to commemorate various colonialists. One of these monuments was that of Nuno Tristão, which was 'placed to commemorate the 15th century sailor, explorer and one of the precursors of slave trade'. However,

> [t]oday, instead of Nuno Tristão's monument, in the centre of Bissau, there is a bust of the "father of independence" of Guinea-Bissau – Amílcar Lopes da Costa Cabral, known as one of the main leaders in the

> fight against Portuguese imperialism in Africa, killed by the Portuguese intelligence in 1973.
>
> (Górny & Górna, 2022:81–82)

Amidst the change, Guinea still has empty plinths located around one of the city's main arteries. This is a testament to the centuries of change that have taken place in Guinea. Other plinths are located near the main Guinean port, close to Fortaleza de São José da Amura, providing a similar account of empty plinths (Górny & Górna, 2022:81–84). I argue that plinths and the very space where a monument stood are monuments. As such, spaces must be reclaimed. The removal of a monument without replacing it with a new narrative that justifies the removal of the old is dangerous for historical memory. Bissau provides us with a mixed account of how monuments are engaged in post-colonial society. Before decolonisation, the port was embellished with the figure of Diogo Gomes (1420–1500), a Portuguese soldier, explorer, and writer. Gomes is remembered to have 'explored the Atlantic coast of West Africa upon orders of Prince Henry the Navigator, reaching Senegambia and discovering Cabo Verde' (Górny & Górna, 2022:81–84). Resonating with my account of colonial transcendence, we also see that

> In 1941, after several years of construction, a stone and reinforced concrete monument to the Effort of the Race (Port. Monumento ao Esforço da Raça) was unveiled in this location (called Praça do Império at the time). It had been designed in 1934 by the Portuguese architect Ponce de Castro and made from granite imported from Porto. This monument was modelled on the monument to Portuguese Colonial Effort (Monumento ao Esforço Colonizador Português) in the Foz do Douro district of Porto. During colonial times, the monument in Bissau also referred to the 'effort' made by the Portuguese in the colonies.
>
> (Górny & Górna, 2022:87)

However, in 1973, the monument was rebranded when the PAIGC liberation army took control over Bissau (Górny & Górna, 2022: 87). The monument was rebranded as a monument to the heroes of independence (Monumento aos Heróis da Independência). In place of the Portuguese crest, which was removed from the monument, a five-pointed star was added: the same star appears nowadays on the national flag of Guinea-Bissau. 'Today, the date of the unveiling of the original statue – 1941 – still remains on the square, which has also been renamed from the Imperial to that of the National Heroes' (Górny & Górna, 2022:87). It is a fascinating and one-of-a-kind example in Guinea-Bissau of the adaptation, transformation, and kind of rebranding of a colonial monument to respond to contemporary needs and challenge colonial structures of invisibility and systemic marginalisation (Górny & Górna, 2022:87).

During the post-colonial period, contested monuments were removed from various spaces in Bissau (Milheiro, 2012 in Górny & Górna, 2022: 86). We still find that

> Today, it is difficult to determine when exactly they were dismantled, but it probably took place already in the first years of the existence of the independent republic. Their fate in the last quarter of the 20th century also remains veiled in mystery.
>
> (Górny & Górna, 2022:86)

In the 21st century, the memory of certain spaces in Bissau, in their obscurity and mystery, is still referenced to colonial domination of those spaces. The need for the transformation of spaces is urgent, and a commitment to spaces must not be limited to mere destruction. Most African societies, as Puri argues, are living with 'a great imperial hangover' (Puri, 2020, cited in Enslin, 2020:1343), as empires not only have influenced the past but new forms of empire also profoundly influence this century. The engagement with colonial structures, such as monuments, must not be merely reactive; it must be reflective and active, and in most cases, we have to face the dark side of the past with the bright aspiration of the future that we envisage.

3.5. Conclusion

I have highlighted that the destruction or removal of historical monuments and the erection of new ones date back centuries. In most cases, the 'Dismantlement of African colonial monuments and installation of the anti-colonial ones, on the other hand, are acts accompanying political changes caused by formal decolonisation (independence), continuing to this day in the post-colonial reality' (Górny & Górna, 2022:81–84). Many African countries are yet to experience the driving force behind the destruction of historical monuments and the memories that they embody. The needed changes, and here I refer to social, political, and economic changes that are expected to be associated with the removal of colonial monuments, remain aspirational. Increasingly, the destruction of monuments is promoting forgetting, which in turn leads to the re-emergence of new kinds of oppression and marginalisation. Davison argues that '[i]f public memory is to be more than a dominant mythology, new ways of evoking multiple memories will have to be found' (Davison, 1998:153). The commemoration of historical events must not be selective; it must be holistic. White proposes 'Shifting memory to a larger screen so that it, like emotion, might be examined in relation to the social worlds where people live [has] the effect of conjoining it with both politics and history' (White, 2017:20).

The truth that consists of the reality of our world must be preserved. That is what, at least to my mind, makes colonialism a crime, because it rejected the

truth of others and insisted on imposing its own truths. The destruction of historical monuments in some ways remains committed to erasing the various ways this ideal of these monuments continues to fizzle out of our society. Brian Ladd argues in his book on memory and monuments in Berlin that 'how these structures [monuments] are seen, monuments and architectural relicts from the past are seen, treated, and remembered sheds light on a collective identity that is more felt than articulated' (Ladd, 2018:2). Seeing is important for remembering, and a commitment to a transformative position to monument is a kind of seeing that is active.

The complexity of the monument discourse is sufficiently articulated in

> the countless distortions and falsifications to which recollections are subject . . . as well that even in the absence of these, one is inevitably remembering selectively, and perhaps conferring meanings on experience that did not possess these meanings at the time of their occurrence.
>
> (Freeman, 1993:90)

Moving further, the task is far from complete. There is a need to continue to explore new ways of 'weaving these meanings into a whole pattern, a *narrative*, perhaps with a plot, designed to make sense of the fabric of the past' (Freeman, 1993:9). On this account, there is a need for the past to be recognisable and not distorted, erased, or sanitised.

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4 Irreconcilable Differences

The Statue Debate and Transitional Justice Discourse

Keolebogile Mbebe

4.1. Introduction

Who, to the native, is your Louis Botha? That was my question as I approached the statue of Louis Botha on the sprawling lawns of the Union Buildings. This question is, of course, a play on the famous question articulated by former slave and African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass in 1852: '*What, to the slave, is your fourth of July*'? The 'your' to whom his question was addressed was White society in the United States of America. Further in his address (Waxman, 2019), he states

> Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. . . . What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim.

Further up the lawns, at the base of the stairs leading to the Union Buildings, stands a statue of another statesman, Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela. His figure towers over this section of the property. His arms are outstretched in what can be interpreted as a stance that is both victorious and welcoming. His face is emblazoned with a wide smile. As described by former President Jacob Zuma (2013), 'he rises majestically at the seat of government, as a symbol of peace, reconciliation, unity and progress'. Here, there are no plinths and no information around this figure. He needs no introduction, as this implies. But to whom does this subject need an introduction? Who, to the audience, is Rolihlahla Mandela?

How did these two antagonists, one a key contributor to the philosophy and politics that would one day inspire the genesis of apartheid and the other a leading figure in and symbol of the political struggle against apartheid and

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its defeat, come to be placed on the same historical site? This question is not unique to South Africa, but it is interesting partly because of South Africa, which has come to be regarded by many in the Western world as a moral exemplar of social cohesion after an authoritarian and brutal racial autocracy. The co-existence of these statues, some argue, demonstrates the possibility of peace and social cohesion even in countries with multiple cultural identities and political populations with different interpretations of history. In liberal democracies such as South Africa is purported to be, the statue debate assessing good reasons for preserving or removing public statues of controversial public figures is stuck between preserving the cohesion of the state while respecting the rights of citizens to dignity. This dilemma is purported to be the same as that faced by South Africa in the final years of the instantiation of a constitutional democracy in 1994. The official narrative of the present dispensation is that this dilemma was ameliorated by the implementation of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a transitional justice mechanism argued to be a 'third way' between the two often conflicting aforementioned interests scrutable in the dilemma. Perhaps, so goes the logic of the proponents of transitional justice, this 'middle ground' between citizens' individual rights and social cohesion that transitional justice promises to be may contribute helpful recommendations that ameliorate the complexity of the statue debate. My intention in this chapter is to contend that transitional justice discourse is quite impotent in offering a solution to this debate because it is a site of conceptual contention that illustrates the dissension between compromise and consensus in societies like South Africa.

To argue this, I begin by expounding on the nature and function of monuments such as statues and discussing them with regard to their aesthetic and political nature. Secondly, I will explain how the statue debate manifests in liberal democracies. In doing so, I outline the logic and main lines of arguments in favour of removing or preserving these kinds of statues. Next, I will show how this debate mirrors that of the field of transitional justice by discussing the philosophy of the field of transitional justice and its mechanisms. Then, I will show the limitations of transitional discourse and the statue debate in bringing about true justice for the populations of this territory because of their false assumption that South Africa exists as an ethical necessity. I argue, with Bronwyn Anne Leebaw (2008:106), that it

> may be strategically useful to confuse compromise and consensus as a way to legitimate compromises made in the name of a hoped-for political community. Yet it is a logical error to assume that compromises will result in consensus, let alone a transformed political community.

4.2. The Nature of Monuments as Literature

Public statues of public personalities form part of the types of monuments in the public landscape built to commemorate (Kerby et al., 2021:4).

Commemoration, explains Kirk Savage (2007:1), is a 'call to remembrance', to mark an event, a person, or a group by a ceremony, an observance, or a monument of some kind. Their key function is to 'prod collective memory' and 'preserve memory or knowledge of an individual or event' (Savage, 2007:1; Bonder, 2009:62). Monuments are markers of *memory* that tell a story or make a call to action. They are mnemonic devices with the quality of monumentality, which Martin Kerby et al. (2021:4) explain as 'the quality that some places or objects have to make us recall, evoke, think, and perceive something beyond themselves', as well as 'to be aware, to mind and remind, to warn, advise, and call for action' (Bonder, 2009:62). These synonyms point to the capacity of monuments to *express or evoke sentiment*, to *enlighten the audience*, and to *reflect social values* – all goals that fit in with the goal of commemoration and commemorating. Monuments like memorials are expected to have 'a sensory and emotional aspect' (Kerby et al., 2021:19). These kinds of monuments express and evoke sentiment or emotion as a means to elicit emotions such as pride, sorrow, joy, shame, or guilt. Memorials depict 'public trauma or mass murder' (Bonder, 2009:65). In this manner, they are often created and erected to process trauma for the sake of healing, catharsis, and empathy. These sentiments signify how an encounter with a memorial may invite the audience to a sentimental process based on an intersubjectivity – 'a dialogic relation' – between both the creator and the audience (Bonder, 2009:65). This characteristic indicates that memorials, as monuments, carry meaning for both individuals and social collectivities.

Historical monuments do not only prompt individuals to remember them, but society in general as well. Individuals are to engage monuments in as much as people are members of that society and partakers in its history. The display of these monuments in public spaces is a cue to collectively remember history in the hope that monuments 'collected memory is always historical (or narratological) and is always the product of some programme of being reminded' (Bonder, 2009:62). Tadhg O'Keeffe (2007:5) explains that this continuity between a community's past, present, and future demonstrates that 'collected memory is always historical (or narratological) and is always the product of some programme of being-reminded'. To this extent, monuments *enlighten* the audience as to the historical progression of their community; in essence, the community's story about what it is and who it includes and/or excludes. In this way, statues can be historical markers, and as the history told about their subjects contains memory, the collective history-writing process includes a social element. Monuments, as history markers and 'public noticeboards', can therefore be characterised as aesthetic plot points, 'roadmaps', or 'spatial typographies' in the community's story (Bonder, 2009:65).

The curation and placement of monuments are not arbitrary but influenced by a hegemonic, dominant, or, most aptly, the 'official' narrative. This official narrative, usually also touted as the national or collective narrative, 'provides an insight into the values and ideals of the society that constructed them, and which subsequently maintains them or allows them to fall into disrepair'

(Kerby et al., 2021:4). However, this national narrative is by no means fixed, and public monuments essentially invite 'collective engagement', 'dialogue', and contestation (Bonder, 2009:65). In fact, this aspiration towards dialogue and contestation is accompanied by the imposition of the idea of a national or collective narrative that gives the semblance of 'a unity of purpose – as if many different people somehow share a common mind' with common values and a common psyche (Savage, 2007:2). The task of monuments to be a reflection of a community's social values is a form of 'cultural reinforcement [which] helps to explain the continuity of public memory' as well as the continuity of a common public identity (Britton, 1997:15). This is the manner in which monuments *reflect* the social values of this 'common mind', the social values of the community, which reveal its governing ideology.

4.3. What Statues Say, and What Statues Do

Statues are controversial because of what they mean, and the meaning is comprised of what they say and what they do. Statues are meaningful in that they symbolise an interpretation that does not occur in a social vacuum but is made intelligible in the context of a story/narrative. Most often than not, the ambition of the creator or erector of the monument is for the audience to ascribe a particular meaning to the monument. However, Martin Auster (1997:227) argues that the 'layers of meaning embodied in the monument – or attached to it – are multiple', and thus there is no actual inherent meaning. Interpreting the meaning of a monument is a process of perceiving the monument as a 'reference . . . to things other than the object itself' (Auster, 1997:220). In this way, monuments have a symbolic element – a referential element positing a certain narrative or set of beliefs as true. But in what way? Auster (1997:224) argues that monuments are narratological, but instead of consisting of texts, they are pictorial depictions of a narrative. 'The viewer, as with any text', he contends, 'must participate in the filling in of gaps and the construction of coherence'. This task illustrates the extent of the 'intersubjectivity' between the creator of the monument, the monument itself, and the audience. The meaning of the monument deriving from this intersubjectivity consists of what the monument, as a commemorative sculpture, says and what it does. David Friedell and Shen-Yi Liao (2022:6) explain it as the distinction between *illocutionary force* and *locutionary content*, and Mikhail Kissine (1189) expounds the distinction through an exposition of the category of *illocutionary force*.

A locutionary act, Friedell and Liao (2022:3) explain, is one where the speaker utters a meaningful expression, a speech act, while locutionary content is the meaning conveyed in the content of the utterance. In contrast, the illocutionary force of the utterance is the extent to which it presents itself as a certain kind of speech act. Kissine (1189) explains it as 'acts we do by uttering sentences'. Examples of these acts are '[a]ssertions, guesses, orders, requests, suggestions, questions, threats, promises, [and] offers' (Kissine, 1189). To illustrate further, typically, if one asks someone else whether they can pass the

salt, it is a request, and so the utterance is intended to influence the hearer to pass the salt. What the speaker intends for the hearer to apprehend is that the speaker is requesting that the hearer pass the salt. The illocutionary force, if it aligns with the speaker's intention, means that the utterance is a request. However, at the same time, the hearer may interpret the question as an inquiry pertaining to their ability to physically pass the salt. In this case, if the hearer answers in the affirmative that they can indeed physically pass the salt, the illocutionary force is not that which is intended, and the utterance presents itself as an inquiry. While the locutionary content may stay the same, the illocutionary force of the utterance may change according to the context in which the utterances are made or in which they are heard. To expand, Friedell and Liao (2022:7) contend that leaving

> politically controversial statues to ruin does not change their locutionary content, but does change their illocutionary force: a statue that is allowed to ruin can still depict an dishonourable person as honourable, but it will no longer honour that person.

Similarly, the illocutionary force of monuments is what they are either intended or interpreted to be, such as a tribute to the subject, a memorial of mourning, or a condemnation of the subject. An illustration of this notion is the Botha statue mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. Recall that the statue is of a man on a horse facing forward. The aesthetics of the statue, along with the writing on the tablets, depict a visionary, a leader, and a moral exemplar. It is an important detail that the Botha figure is on a horse. It is clear to see that the Botha statue was intended to honour him. In the Western world, statues of men on horseback have long been associated with 'dominance, power, and virtue through strength' (Bonfitto, 2018). The aesthetics of the statue say something *through its design* but do something *through its placement* in relation to the audience. To use the example further, it is demonstrable that if the statue is placed in a different way in the public sphere, perhaps in the ground where the audience has to look down at it, the statue still says what the creator (or commissioner) most plausibly intended (that Botha is a visionary, a leader, and a moral exemplar who is worthy of honour). But if lowered into the ground, the statue does not honour Botha. On the contrary, the statue mocks or condemns Botha as opposed to honouring him, so its locutionary content remains the same, but the locutionary force has changed from a tribute to an indictment of his person and deeds.

The above illustration indicates how the interpretation of what monuments are depends on the context, so the context is meant to induce a determined meaning of the statue for the audience. The context for our specific inquiry is fundamentally about statues in public, with 'public' being the context. Monuments are in public to *do* something, to express something, to reflect or represent something public that is associated with a collectively accessible and collectively held location for a specific community. What makes a public

monument controversial is primarily its illocutionary force – what it does – and that is centred on the publicness of the monument. While the positioning and aesthetics of the monument have the capacity to give it illocutionary force, it is the publicness of a monument that subtends its locutionary force, without which the positioning and aesthetics of the statue do not matter for the community in general. An example is the difference between a public statue and a privately owned statuette. The illocutionary force of a monument is based on its fixed location and positioning – its *place* – among other aspects. Removing the statue from public view and access, while it may not change what the statue *says* or was *intended to say*, changes what the statue *does* at a public level. This appeal to a public space can be articulated as the difference between space and place. The public sphere is simultaneously a public *place* and a public *space*. According to Michel de Certeau and outlined by Vivian Patraka (quoted in Haskins and DeRose, 2003:179),

> Place refers to those operations that make its object ultimately reducible to a fixed location, 'to the being there of something dead, [and to] the law of a place' where the stable and 'the law of the "proper" ' rules. Place 'excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location'.

In contrast, according to De Certeau and Patraka (quoted in Haskins and DeRose, 2003:179),

> [s]pace occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent way. Thus, space is created 'by the actions of historical subjects'.
>
> (2003:111)

Using the Union Buildings as an example of the nuances between place and space, when one considers that they were built to symbolise the reconciliation – the union – of the Boer and English populations in South Africa and that each of the wings of the Union Buildings were created to represent one of these population groups, it is quite clear that the exclusion of the black majority was a premise of the logic behind these buildings (Zuma, 2013). For some South Africans, the Union Buildings *now* symbolise a *place* of reconciliation (a reiterated theme), but this time between the plural communities of South Africa, especially between Whites and blacks. One way in which this ambition is symbolised is through the *placement* of the Mandela statue, nine metres tall, just metres away from the stairs leading up to the buildings themselves. While Botha was a divisive figure, representing Afrikaner pride and exclusivity, the Mandela statue was erected to symbolise racial reconciliation. The *space* of the Union Buildings lawns, as envisioned through the erection of the Mandela statue, would be a *reconciliatory space*.

'Reconciliation', as discussed earlier, is a recurrent theme in the narrative of the political dispensation since 1994, a motif that is identifiable in the public

statuary. The goal is to frame South Africa as a reconciled nation untethered to its segregated past. This reformed identity is emphasised explicitly in the preamble of the South African Constitution. In the preamble of the South African Constitution, there is commemoration of an unjust past, a call to recognise, honour, and respect those who sacrificed and fought for the instantiation of democracy, if not the institution that is South Africa. The purpose of this recognition, honour, and respect is to 'heal the divisions of the past', and to 'lay the foundations' for a liberal democracy where people's human rights are legally and socially observed. A key part of the constitution that underpins much of the theme of the preamble is the sentence, 'Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity'. The aspirations of liberal democracy comprised 'a constitutional regime . . . [with] equal treatment under the law, individual rights and the rule of law'. The *basis* of liberal democracy is individual freedom, while the *goal* of liberal democracy is the creation and preservation of the conditions for individual freedom. To a large extent, these features of liberal democracy underlie the complexity of the statue debate. In what follows, I will turn to how the basis of liberal democracy and the goal of liberal democracy illuminate the kinds of political concerns underpinning the statue debate in multicultural societies like South Africa. This discussion is important for the sake of later showing that these concerns mirror those identifiable in transitional justice.

4.4. The Statue Debate in the Liberal Framework

With respect to the *basis* of liberal democracy, the conditions for whether a racist statue should be removed depend on whether its preservation violates or hinders the freedom of individuals, a right they hold as equals with others. Violation is harm, a degradation. The kind of harm that can occur against an individual, with regard to the statue debate, concerns the capacity of a speech act to violate the freedom of individuals and their equality, and their acceptability depends on whether they express respect for the individual freedom. Racism disrespects the equality of individuals and degrades their status as equal human beings. The locutionary content of racist statues is morally relevant because they disrespect equality by expressing the approval of the racist public figure and the values that they represent. Public statues, so goes the logic, should repudiate racist expression. Erecting or preserving racist statues depicting them as worthy of respect is a sanction of their racist ideologies. In contrast, an argument from the respect of the freedom of individuals in favour of preserving racist monuments prioritises the individual's freedom of expression, 'especially given the nuance that is typical of artistic intentions' (Friedell and Liao, 2022:7). For instance, the illocutionary force of statues of racists may not play the role of depicting racists as worthy of honour. In fact, so goes the argument in favour of preservation: the general public may not actually pay attention to the statue, or they may be unaware of the degrading message of the personality in whose image it is created. This ignorance of the

public figure may be due to a lack of education or lack of interest. Nevertheless, consequently, the message of the statue would not harm the audience. As a counter to this postulation of the harmlessness of unrecognised racist messages, racist statues violate individuals because of what they express (inequality), regardless of the interpretation of the audience.

Contrary to the emphasis on locutionary content expressing respect for individual freedom and equality, the *goal* of liberal democracy, which is the creation and preservation of conditions for individual freedom and equality (social cohesion), places emphasis on the illocutionary force of statues. A society that preserves the conditions for individual freedom and equality venerates tolerance for difference. Hence, if the virtue of such a society is tolerance for difference, the vices would be animosity towards those who are categorised as 'other' with regard to the norm (free individuals) and ignorance of the equality of those categorised as 'other' in relation to the norm. Liberal democracies pursue 'stabilizing society, realizing justice, diminishing dependence, and cultivating moral personality' (Charles Lesch, 2022:1). Solidarity is a means to achieve these goals. Solidarity, argues Lesch (2022:1), 'refers to our normative commitment toward some person or set of people as well as our psychological motivation to act on that commitment'. Racism weakens solidarity by treating some populations as inferior, which leads to the erosion of the psychological motivation to invest in the idea of a collective identity. Racist statues should be removed in order to preserve and promote social solidarity and cohesion, without which the conditions for the attainment of a stable liberal democracy are impossible. As animosity threatens social cohesion, so does the dismissal of the psychological distress of communities that are victims of the subject or symbol of the statue and are continuously confronted by it in public. The ignorance of the hegemonic culture about the experiences of historically marginalised and oppressed people in society is a threat to the solidarity of the members of that society.

The creation and preservation of conditions for individual freedom and equality also yield arguments that support the preservation of racist statues. If the goal is to avoid social division and the potential of threatening solidarity, then racist statues should be preserved if the desired social conditions are threatened. Some argue that racist statues 'might have negative or positive impact on society, and they represent narratives that must be engaged rather than erased' (Sanni, 2021:1187). In this context, 'the destruction of historical monuments is a violation in the sense that it risks creating obscure representations of history in the supposed attempt at sanitising history' (Sanni, 2021:1187), or removing offensive monuments. To extend the argument, racist statues have educational value because they may serve the function of a historical marker or an identity marker for collective solidarity or cultural identity. This educational value, according to this logic, would serve as a deterrent to ignorance of history and the present. However, the weakness of this argument is that the depiction of a racist historical figure, either as not racist or as someone whose racism is secondary to the role they played in producing

that society, is in itself a misrepresentation of historical events and figures. It is itself a sanitising and dismissal of the horror of historical injustice. The tension between respecting the equality and right to freedom of individuals in liberal democracies while also pursuing social cohesion is demonstrable, especially as it pertains to historical injustice. This tension of censuring the violation of the dignity of sections of the population while maintaining social cohesion is mirrored in transitional justice discourse. More interestingly, transitional justice is often argued to offer a way out of the dilemma.

4.5. The Statue Debate and Transitional Justice Discourse

Transitional justice discourse is centred on 'the problem of how to restore the rule of law after a period in which the rule of law has been negated, suspended, or violated' (Sitze, 2013:251). There is no consensus on what transitional justice is, the form in which the justice is transitional, or what makes the transition just (Turgis, 2010:15). While it is an ill-defined field, the common theme is the idea of transitional justice, which comprises juridical processes and procedures during times of political change from oppressive social orders to address the perpetration of large-scale human rights violations committed by previous regimes. The common theme is the idea of transitional justice as comprised of (1) juridical processes and procedures, (2) times of political change from oppressive social orders, (3) addressing the perpetration of large-scale human rights violations committed by previous regimes. These legal processes and procedures are in the main tribunals, trials, truth commissions, and reparations, all of which are borne of certain philosophies about the nature of justice. Of particular interest to our inquiry are two of the goals of transitional justice, namely, 'finding, prosecuting, and punishing those responsible for past human rights abuses . . . [and] stopping violence and consolidating stability' (Eisikovits, 2014:708–710).

4.6. Transitional Justice and Reconciliation

South Africa's TRC is often depicted as an example of a third way between censuring the violation of the dignity of sections of the population (evoking the need for accountability through retribution) and maintaining social cohesion (evoking the need for restoration). Put in simpler terms, victims need to have the violation of their rights acknowledged and the perpetrators punished, but '[p]rosecuting the guilty can harm political stability' (Eisikovits, 2014:710). The perception of a third way is based on how the TRC incorporated perpetrators taking/admitting blame as a way to hold them accountable while also offering victims recognition and respect for their pain and loss through hearings and some reparations. In this manner, the TRC was considered a model example of political compromise in the interests of peace and justice.

The legal processes and procedures that characterise transitional justice are found in the main tribunals, trials, reparations, and truth commissions. Trials and tribunals consist of prosecutions for past atrocities and may occur at the local and international levels (Yusuf, 2021:7). Trials and tribunals are underpinned by the idea of justice as retribution. The standard view of justice as retribution is that justice is the punishment of a criminal offender for having committed a wrong. In essence, trials and tribunals in transitional justice discourse *express the equal moral worth of victims and offenders*, and punishment signifies the values of equality of persons, people's desert of fair treatment, and accountability, which are typically embodied by punishment of wrongdoers (Rachels, 1997:475).

The TRC is regarded in transitional justice discourse as embodying restorative justice because of its emphasis on reconciliation, the reconciliation of relationships between racial groups, and the reconciliation of different cultural narratives into a 'plural truth'. The aims of restorative justice are to 'involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible' (Gohar and Zehr). In light of this, 'justice is not based on punishment inflicted but the extent to which harms have been repaired and future harms prevented' (Gilbert and Settles, 2007:32). As Desmond Tutu (1999:51–52) explains, with restorative justice,

> the central concern is . . . the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships. This kind of justice seeks to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he or she has injured by his or her offence. This is a far more personal approach, which sees the offence as something that has happened to people and whose consequence is a rupture in relationships.

A significant execution of this aspiration towards 'involve[ing] . . . those who have a stake in a specific offense to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible' was the granting of amnesty to perpetrators who gave a full disclosure of their apartheid-era violations of victims. Amnesty was considered a compromise that straddled both the need for the accountability required by retributive justice and the communal healing required by restorative justice. This aspect of truth commissions as a third way between redress for the violation of individual rights and the need for social cohesion is attractive to those who would aspire towards the restorative justice model as a means by which to resolve or at least ameliorate the tensions in the statue debate. In the statue debate, this model is referred to in order to make the point that the 'long-term movement towards peace and justice requires compromise on all sides' (Joanna Burch-Brown, 2022:812).

4.7. A Compromised Justice and a Comprised Narrative

The logic of the necessity of compromise (as explained earlier) is employed by Dan Demetriou and Ajume Wingo (2018:341), who argue that, for the sake of 'civic sustainability' (social cohesion) in society, some statues should be preserved and others should be removed. '[W]hen concerns of civic sustainability are put on moral par with those of fairness and justice', they assert, 'something like a Mandela-era preservationist policy is best (Demetriou and Wingo, 2018:341)'. This Mandela-era policy maintains that '. . . trying our best to accommodate each other's culture heroes means tolerating to some extent the veneration of tribalistic ancestors and heritage' (Demetriou and Wingo, 2018:351). If statues indeed function as texts, as I argued earlier in the chapter, then, in the statue debate, 'accommodat[ing] each other's culture heroes' takes the form of creating one cohesive text to historicise the nation (Demetriou and Wingo, 2018:351). At the bottom is a historiographical project to write and rewrite South Africa's history to be inclusive and reconcile the narratives of the collective identities that are oppositional to one another. Statues therefore act as texts that contribute to the visual historiography of society as a means to create a cohesive collective historical narrative and, consequently, a cohesive collective identity. As commemorative artefacts, they not only aim to give a version of history, as argued earlier, but they also acknowledge and demonstrate the relationship between history and memory and their place in the collective identity produced by the compiling of a cohesive narrative, a historiography. For a truth commission like South Africa's, both perpetrators of violence during apartheid and victims testified, with the aim being to create a more complete picture of the context of historical injustice. In this manner, truth commissions serve as historiographical projects through which states construct and reinterpret their history. Monuments form part of the literary figures in this history. In what follows, I will discuss the way in which South Africa's official governmental narrative about the country eventually illuminates how monuments are employed as aesthetic tools to achieve political ends through their narrativising capacity. Essentially, I aim to show how monuments are also story-telling devices used to promote a certain agenda, which, in South Africa's case, is that of a people at peace with their history and existing in the form of a reconciled nation.

4.8. Deconstructing the Official Narrative

Historical accounts of past events are, in some way, always a creative output of the historian (Munslow, 2006). Events do not have an inherent link, so the historian has to create that link of continuity in order to form a historical narrative about the development of a certain past or present state of affairs (*how things came to be the way they were or are*). Eviatar Zerubavel (2003:40) contends that historical continuity is an illusion in that it is the 'mental integration of otherwise disconnected points in time into a seemingly single historical whole'. It is

the product of what he terms 'mental bridging', which is 'a mnemonic "editing" . . . geared to deliberately overlook actual temporal gaps between non-contiguous points in history' (Zerubavel, 2003:82). Correspondingly, the mental bridging involved with creating the illusion of *discontinuity* in history is 'specifically designed to help transform actual historical continua into series of seemingly unattached, freestanding blocks of time' (Zerubavel, 2003:82). These constructed continuities and discontinuities of temporal phenomena in a *historical* narrative make up a certain 'time map' that periodises historical occurrences. Each community or social collective has a time map. In much the same way that geography maps show the topography of a certain territory – its natural features and how they are organised in relation to one another – time maps depict the temporal organisation of the temporality of the past, present, and future in relation to one another (Zerubavel, 2003:109). In the same way that the geography map has selected boundaries around the territory that it represents, the time maps represent select temporal boundaries around the history of the community. That which comes before the beginning of the narrative is considered temporally real but historically irrelevant (Zerubavel, 2003:94). Geography maps answer the question: where am I in *space*? Time maps answer the question: in which period am I in *history*, and what is the temporal relationship between this period and others? To this extent, periodisation plays the role of defining historical origins, continuities, discontinuities, and closures. Historical continuity and discontinuity are imperative for narrative formation because they demarcate the nodal points at which the historical narrative develops from one stage to another. The organisation of beginning, middle, and ending in the narrative is called the narrative emplotment, and it is a way to explain or create the meaning of the story.

When constructing a historical narrative, argues philosopher of history Hayden White (1973:5), the historian uses certain narrative tools to explain how and why historical events unfolded the way they did. One of the ways the historian does this is by using a narrative emplotment type. 'Providing the "meaning" of a story by identifying the kind of story that has been told', White explains, 'is called explanation by emplotment' (White, 1973:7). The official narrative in South Africa is explicated in legislation such as the Constitution as well as in governmental projects such as the TRC. The TRC employed three narrative emplotments: one of triumph, one of hope, and one of mourning. The story of triumph relayed by the TRC is that South Africans have overcome the obstacle of an unjust and segregated past embodied in apartheid, and there is cause for celebrating that achievement, and thus the meaning of South Africa is concretised as a place of triumph. The story of hope relayed by the TRC emphasises constant political progression as a primary goal of the country. In the legislation mandating the TRC, the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, it is provided that the TRC would be implemented partly as a means to prevent the repetition of human rights violations of the kind experienced during apartheid. Thus, the other side of this story of hope is a story expressing anxiety at the threat of regression to apartheid-era

political and ethical norms. South Africans, according to this narrative, must look to the future with hope and vigilance. In the context of transitional justice discourse, the aim is to look for certain patterns in society in terms of behaviours and ideologies that can lead to a return to the proliferation of ideologies reminiscent of a society that is based on racial conflict and injustice. There is a duty to remember and prevent this repetition; South Africans must learn from the past. The story of mourning relayed by the TRC emphasises the irreversibility of the apartheid past. This fact calls for mourning and lamenting. The law of history is such that South Africa cannot escape the past; so South Africans should forge a strategy to master it. For proponents of this view, the past is in the past; it cannot be reversed. It is not possible to travel back in time. Thus, South Africans have to accept that what happened and that while apartheid is over, injustice is inevitable. The focus of these three narrative outlooks and the attitudes they promote is on dealing with the past as *past* – gone, irreversible, inaccessible. These emplotment strategies are employed in different ways to craft the official narrative of South Africa as a country that has undergone a political and social transition and is currently undergoing a transition, the direction of which depends on whether South Africans uphold the culture of human rights observation. The achievement of a South Africa that upholds the culture of human rights observation depends on a unified effort from all its citizens.

Commemoration of South African history, in the framework given earlier, would rightly take the form of celebration, enlightenment, and lamentation/memorialisation. Monuments endorsed by the state that depict public figures, therefore, take on these dimensions in the official narrative of which they are a part. Monuments, as conduits and markers of history, are also conduits and markers of the public memory that is involved in commemoration. Not only must South Africans know the history of the public figures that are portrayed in statues, but they are also called to remember them. Memory has a collective social dimension and can be used to foster social cohesion. There are various views on the nature and kinds of collective memory. Jan Assman and John Czaplicka (1995:133) call attention to two kinds of collective memory: communicative and cultural memory. Like oral history, communicative memory is the kind of collective memory that is constituted by everyday communications (Assman and Czaplicka, 1995:127). Assman and Czaplicka call it 'an everyday form of collective memory' in that it does not transcend generations but is transmitted through every day communications between members of a social collective (Assman and Czaplicka, 1995:127). An example of communicative memory in the TRC context would be the victims' hearings, where each individual memory was meant to add to the grand narrative of the injustice of apartheid but would not be an intergenerational text that each person in the social collective would have to remember as a pivotal part of their identity, just as a constitutive element. In terms of cultural memory, which creates a more rigid collective experience in groups, it does not fade or change as time passes but rather takes on a certain fixity according to the historicisation of the

events that constitute it. These may be chronicled in cultural formations such as 'texts, rites, monuments' and institutional formations such as 'recitation, practice, observance', which Assman and Czaplicka (1995:129) term 'figures of memory'. Cultural memory, in essence, 'comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose "cultivation" serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image' (Assman and Czaplicka, 1995:129). Public statues serve as figures in the memory of the collective public.

4.9. Demolishing the National Narrative

While the concept of 'the public' is widely used, it does not have a collectively approved denotation. The perception of the public as comprising some sort of collectivity is called into question given that the illocutionary force of a monument presents itself homogeneously or heterogeneously in accordance with the extent to which the identity of a particular society is fragmented privately and publicly. For Sarah Igo, even the idea of 'the public' itself is not settled, not even from a social science perspective that strives to 'reveal the mysteries of the public mind . . . [as perhaps a] collective wisdom and intellectual autonomy' (2018:21). This perception of a collective mind called 'the public' is mistaken. This pursuit of plurality and cohesion does not overcome the problem of conflicting and antagonistic identities. The goal of an official narrative in this context will always require the privileging of some narratives and the marginalising of others. The call of the official narrative for citizens *to remember* also serves as a call to forget, that is, to dismiss certain events and people in history who are not incorporated as significant parts of the narrative being told through the statue. To forget, consequently, is to lose the ability to use the right historical framework to interpret the present for what it is in relation to the past. The resistance of memory to marginalised groups gives rise to the construction and promotion of counter-memories. Counter memories express, enlighten, and reflect the sentiments, historical knowledge, and values of marginalised sections of the community and point to the offensive, incorrect, or morally corrupt depiction of the official historical narrative. These marginalised narratives, these counter memories and counter narratives, will always resist the attempt to impose on them a certain interpretation of history and, thus, of the identity of the people to whom they belong. In the arena of monumentality, counter narratives are expressed through counter monuments. For instance, in occasions where the monument focuses on military triumph, counter monuments 'recognize the suffering victims of conflict or persecution and admonish the perpetrators'; that is, they show the victims respect and condemn the exclusionary, politically motivated, and elitist focus on perpetrators (Kerby et al., 2021:51). Moreover, counter-monuments seek to disrupt the official narrative by publicly exposing the ways in which the official narrative distorts, excludes, and marginalises sections of the population. Counter-narratives reveal how memory is abused in official narratives by their

positioning in public as a direct exposure of the politically motivated abuse of memory in official narratives. Thus, they function as *counter narratives* that portray the official narrative as miseducating and misinforming the public. In essence, monuments and counter monuments jostle for their spot in the public eye and the public imagination in order to 'shape social relations and cultural beliefs' (Savage, 2007:3).

Is the Mandela statue a counter-monument to the Botha statue? In the final analysis, it is not. For the curators of the public space of the Union Buildings, the placement of the statues indicates the importance of the figures for South African history and therefore its identity. The placement communicates the prominence and relevance of the figures to the audience's (citizens) own subjectivity and that this subjectivity is part of a larger social and political collectivity. The public statues are meant to contribute to the inclusivity and pluralism of a public space, a space that recognises the value of the contributions of different populations to South Africa's history and values. Bonder contends that (2009:64) 'a monument's ethical function arises from its capacity for establishing dialogues with, and presenting questions about, the past (and the future)'. These two statues and their relationship have the capacity to enable these dialogues. Nonetheless, as Haskins and DeRose (2003:380) aver,

> a more inclusive test for public art may require that the work create a public space where the experience of seeing is not monopolized by a single artistic or political agenda but offers an opportunity for a plurality of responses.

In this sense, the placement of the statues at the Union Buildings and the existence of the Union Buildings themselves uphold an oppressive and exclusionary space. There is one narrative that these statues are expected to support: that South Africa is indeed a new society that has transcended an unjust past and is now in a period of democracy where the rights of its inhabitants are respected regardless of social position.

To the contrary, in South Africa's context, as reiterated and demonstrated in the discussion on transitional justice and the peace versus justice paradox, there are compromises being made in order for the state of South Africa to be preserved. The compromises were on the part of the Indigenous and conquered populations of the territory, for whom the injustice did not begin with apartheid but rather with the commencement of conquest and colonisation and its continuing reiterations in apartheid and into the present day. The main point is that transitional justice discourse, especially as it pertains to a 'third way' offered by a dominant implementation of truth commissions, cannot provide a solution to the problem that liberal democracies face when confronted with the statue debate. In fact, transitional justice discourse illuminates even further that certain histories, identities, and memories cannot be reconciled by virtue of the fact that they exist because of the antagonism towards others.

South African identity continues to be fractured along lines of racial oppression and victimisation.

4.10. Conclusion

We return to the question: who to the native is your Louis Botha? As I continue to scrutinise the structure, my mind is fascinated by the way the aesthetic and height of the statue are intended to cause me, a native of this territory whose ancestors were dispossessed and conquered for the purpose of creating and preserving a racist state, to marvel in wonder and aspiration. The artist invites me to celebrate this man, yet I mourn; I lament. As I take my pictures of the statue, an Afrikaans-speaking family of European descent makes its way to the sculpture. I make way for them to take pictures with the sculpture as they smile and wave to the camera, taking pride in their association with Botha. I greet, they greet back, and we part, tolerating each other's perception of the artwork. It does not escape me how, like our conflicting cultural memories and resulting identities, we are together in this place yet carved apart by this space, an immeasurable distance between us.

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5 Monumental Transformations and the Re-Membering of Meaning

Minka Woermann

5.1. Introduction

Finding an entry into this chapter was challenging. While the title of *Monuments and Memory in Africa* promised an exciting (and necessary) reflection, it was also very clear to me that there are many other contributors to this collection who could speak more authentically to questions of epistemologies of Blackness, Critical Race Theory, and Black freedom.

The first seed of an idea for this chapter arose during a conversation with my art teacher, South African artist Hermann Niebuhr, who, during a discussion on the vandalism of monuments, asked 'What would happen if we were, for example, to take the bronze bust of Verwoerd and move it to a quarry in the Karoo? How would this transform the meaning of the statue?'. This question sparked thoughts on the properties (beyond the obvious representational nature of statues and monuments) that endow these artefacts with meaning, and these questions resonated well with insights from the field of critical complexity. In critical complexity, the identity of a given node in a system is determined by both temporal and spatial dimensions. In other words, identity is understood as a process of becoming within a contextual network of relationships (Cilliers and Preiser, 2010).

Following this complexity insight, I shall argue, in the first part of this chapter, that the meaning of a given symbolic artefact cannot be comprehended properly without accounting for the philosophical framework of its production, its temporal dimension, and its contextual dimension. In the second part of this chapter, I argue that destroying colonial and apartheid artefacts need not equate with vandalism (i.e., the obliteration of their signifying power), but can instead open a generative space for rethinking the past in ways that could serve the decolonial project. I also investigate the political and philosophical nature of intervention, as well as the role of artist-activist and the conditions under which intervention would be justified. I conclude the chapter with a brief reflection on the ethics of engaging history and politics, with an eye towards the future.

Before beginning the analysis, I offer a quick note on style to orientate the reader's engagement with this chapter. Each section constitutes an independent

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reflection that draws on philosophical, artistic, and popular sources. Although these sections build on an overarching argument, the primary aim is to stimulate thinking on the signifying power of monuments, the nature of destruction, and the appropriate conditions and means of intervention. The primary philosophers guiding these reflections are Jacques Derrida and Achille Mbembe, whose works feature in the fields of post-structuralism and post-colonial studies, respectively. Although their approaches are informed by different methodologies and different sets of questions, there are instances of deep resonance between them. My aim, however, is not to defend an account of their philosophical systems of thought but rather to borrow insights from their respective oeuvres to motivate the insights offered. Similarly, I draw on contemporary German and South African artists, Anselm Kiefer and William Kentridge, to provide insight on the role of the artist-activist in intervening with history and colonial artefacts. Benjamin Buchloh (in Kentridge, Drawing Lesson 3[1]) argues that both these artists are engaged in a counter-modernist project aimed at 'seduc[ing] the spectator to open up their armour of cultural and political repression after traumatic rule'. Buchloh further argues that these artists offer 'mnemonic cures against social and political disavows that have governed the particular nation-states of these artists, post-fascist Germany and post-apartheid South Africa'.

Aside from the bust of Verwoerd mentioned earlier, two monuments of Rhodes – the statue previously situated on the campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the bust displayed at the Rhodes Memorial Garden in Cape Town – will be referenced in the reflections. The figure of Rhodes became the central target during the Must Fall Movement of 2015 (and beyond) because, as Mbembe (2015) notes, '[d]uring his time and life in Southern Africa, [Rhodes] used his considerable power – political and financial – to make black people all over Southern Africa pay a bloody price for his beliefs'. Examples of the memorialisation of Rhodes are thus illustrative of the problematic nature of colonial artefacts and can inform critical reflection on how to deal with these artefacts.

5.2. The Meaning of Monuments

In this section, I discuss the philosophical leitmotif defining the symbolism inherent to colonial and apartheid monuments and explore how time and space/place impact this symbolism. After each section, a claim is forwarded that captures the essence of the reflection. The first claim is that Platonic hubris serves as the leitmotif of both colonisation and its embedded memory in monuments. The second claim is that the embodied memory of history becomes thick and layered with time, while simultaneously negating time via strategies of erasure and transcendence. The third claim is that the texts of monuments (i.e., their signifying potential) are always already codetermined by context and that, as such, contextual transplantation can alter their signifying potential.

5.2.1. Symbolism (Or: the Platonic Truth about Colonial Artefacts)

In 2012, Kentridge presented the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University and titled them 'Six Drawing Lessons'.[2] These mesmerising drawing lessons not only provide a glimpse into the life and space (studio) of the artist but also offer a piercing political and philosophical reflection on the organisation of history and place.

Plato's Allegory of the Cave informs the subject of Drawing Lesson 1 (titled, 'In praise of shadows').[3] Herein, Kentridge recalls the allegory, wherein Socrates asks his interlocutor to imagine a group of prisoners chained together in a cave. Behind the prisoners is a fire, and between the fire and prisoners are moving puppets, the shadows of which are reflected on the cave's wall. Socrates further asks his interlocutor to imagine what would happen if one prisoner were to escape the cave and behold not only the fire and the puppets, but the dazzling light of the sun. If the freed prisoner were to return to the cave, Socrates speculates, not only would his eyes not readjust to the darkness, but those still shackled in the cave would be unlikely to believe him and would subsequently try to kill him.

For Kentridge, this allegory, wherein the sun represents the ideal of Truth, serves as 'the pivotal axis of political and aesthetic concerns'. Kentridge argues that for Plato, the relationship between knowledge and power is central to the construction of the ideal state, wherein the philosopher gains the right and obligation to be king, which also implies the moral and political right to employ violence (as legitimised through his proximity to truth). In this case, the philosopher has a responsibility to forcibly drag others out of the cave. The philosopher king, moreover, has the right in terms of *what is seen* and *what is*, whereas the prisoners in the cave are shackled in such a manner that they can only look forward (a type of forced looking). In their subjugation, they become subjects who are looked at, rather than looking subjects.

It is exactly this Platonic idealism to which Kentridge takes exception, arguing that 'it is in the very limitations and leanness of shadows that we learn; in the gaps, in the leaps we have to make to complete an image'. Kentridge wants to return the artist to the generative act of *constructing* an image, which, according to him, is a task of finding the mediated space between what is and what seems to be. It is the act of both receiving projections and projecting ourselves onto the world as we try to make sense of the world. The artist becomes both viewer and maker, and truth becomes discovery and creation rather than revelation.

The history of colonial rule (or what is referred to in Drawing Lesson 2[4] as 'a history of enlightenment under domination') is the history of the Western subject as philosopher king. The subject, who self-assured in his Platonic aspirations and later the modernist belief that knowledge is power (over both the Other and nature), had forgotten the lesson of Icarus. Moreover, this subject had cast out his own shadows and imposed them on his double: the oppressed African, reduced to a crouched figure. Kentridge depicts this logic

of oppression in his 1999 work, 'Shadow Procession' (see Drawing Lesson 1[5]), a video installation of an endless loop of silhouetted, subjugated figures.

Compare this notion of a subjugated shadow procession to the representational nature of the Rhodes Memorial in Cape Town (Figure 5.1).[6] This monument was designed by Sir Herbert Baker and modelled after a Greek temple. At its base is a bronze statue of a horseman, and eight lions flank the step leading to the bust of Rhodes. Inscribed below the bust is a stanza from Rudyard Kipling's poem, 'The Burial':

> The immense and brooding spirit still
> Shall quicken and control.
> Living he was the land, and dead,
> His soul shall be her soul!

This monument not only celebrates Rhodes but, through the imaginary and the inscription, also immortalises and celebrates his legacy of control and domination. Yet, and with reference to the Rhodes sculpture that previously stood on the UCT campus in recognition of his patronage to the university, Mbembe (2015) remarks that

> nobody should be asking us to be eternally indebted to Rhodes for having 'donated' his money and for having bequeathed 'his' land to the University. If anything, we should be asking how did he acquire the land in the first instance.

Figure 5.1 The Rhodes Memorial, Cape Town[7]

The conditions under which Rhodes acquired the land are tied up with a colonial history of domination and subjugation, which, in turn, was produced and legitimised by a philosophical framework that we should both recognise and account for.

Claim #1: Platonic hubris serves as the leitmotif of both colonisation and its embodied memory in monuments.

5.2.2. Time (Or: there are More Things in the Present, Horatio, than are Dreamt of in Your Philosophy)

One of Zeno's famous paradoxes is that of the arrow. Zeno argues that an arrow flying through space must be at rest at every instant to occupy space. If everything is at rest in an instant and time is composed of a series of instants, motion becomes impossible. Jonathan Culler (2008), a Derridean scholar, argues that while the paradox is intended to demonstrate the impossibility of motion, what it illustrates more convincingly is the divided nature of time. The present position of an arrow is always relative to its past and future trajectories. The present is thus the product of the relations between past and future, with the consequence that the present is characterised by difference and division rather than presence. As stated in the introduction, the meaning of symbolic artefacts cannot be understood without reference to their temporal dimension. Symbolic artefacts exist in time, but, as with Zeno's arrow, the temporality of symbolic artefacts is always already divided, recalling both the past and the future.

However, as Roberto Poli (2011), a complexity theorist specialising in anticipation, argues, we should not be fooled into thinking of the present merely as the thin interface between past and future. Poli (p. 71) speaks instead of a 'thick present', which refers to the present as a modality 'that has both some duration and some depth – and therefore a rich and multifariously complex series of structures'. Poli illustrates the claim concerning the duration and depth of the present with reference to psychological time, natural time, contemporary time, and social time, the latter ranging from momentary interactions to cultural practices stemming from hundreds of years ago. Moreover, concerning the structure of the present, Poli argues that the present is defined by both visible and latent elements, as well as by seeds of the future (which allow for anticipation).

In Drawing Lesson 2 ('A brief history of colonial revolts'),[8] Kentridge also reflects on the nature of time with reference to his brilliant visual interpretation of Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*, which premiered at the Theatre Royal de la Monnaie in 2005. Kentridge notes the following modalities at play in this opera: the era in which it was written, the supposed time in which the opera was set, the production itself (performed in the 19th century), the three hours from the opera's start to finish (which represents a day), the expansion of a moment or thought into a seven-minute aria, and, lastly, the current time.

Although Kentridge does not reference the notion of 'a thick present', he is sensitive to the multifarious and complex set of structures that define aesthetic pieces, including, by extension, monuments.

Indeed, the same analysis can easily be undertaken with regard to the Rhodes statue at UCT that was targeted during the Rhodes Must Fall movement in 2015. Activists described 'the fall of "Rhodes" [as] symbolic for the inevitable fall of White supremacy and privilege at our [UCT's] campus' (Pather, 2015). This statement recalls both the colonial time of Rhodes (late 1800s) and the socio-economic conditions of contemporary time (2015). Moreover, as argued in Section 5.2.1., the symbolism of this colonial artefact is also intimately tied to a philosophical history dating back to Plato. The present signifying potential of the Rhodes statue is, therefore, also contingent on a very distant past that informed the colonial project and that was instrumental in shaping the current path trajectories that were the object of revolt during the Must Fall Movements. Lastly, we can also refer to the time (1934) when the monument was cast by Marion Walgate, as well as the present day, in which this reflection is undertaken. Time, in other words, is complexified, with the consequence that the simple trajectory of the arrow, the teleology of truth, is revealed to be nothing more than a metaphysical construction.

In addition to the ladened present (and presence!) of colonial monuments, it is also worth looking at how colonisation suspended time and how the decolonial project can reinstate time, understood, as per one of the opening premises, as the process of becoming. Following Frantz Fanon (1961/2004), Mbembe (2015) argues that '[b]ecoming human does not only happen "in" time, but through, by means of, almost by virtue of time. And time, properly speaking, is creation and self-creation – the creation of new forms of life'. Mbembe further notes that, to the extent that we can speak of a Fanonian theory of decolonisation, it exists in undoing the negation of time that characterised colonisation and replacing it with 'dialectic time, life, and creation', which should be understood as synonymous with the de-colonial impulse of 'self-appropriation'.

Regarding colonisation, Fanon (in Mbembe) argues that time was negated in three ways: (1) natives were viewed as people outside time (not simply as people without a history); (2) 'the future' was categorically closed-off to natives in that the future belonged solely to Europe; and (3) natives were viewed as incapable of change (and hence creation) and were therefore not only doomed to a logic of repetition but became 'the instantiation of the very law of repetition'. Kentridge poignantly captures this last point in his video loop, 'Shadow Procession' (referenced in Section 5.2.1), which demonstrates not only the underbelly of Platonic idealism but also the relentless repetition that subjugation brings to bear on the African subject. In contrast, decolonisation opens time and hence the possibility of becoming human. It is, as Mbembe (2015) summarises, 'the permanent possibility of the emergence of the not yet', which has the potentiality 'to reconstitute the human after humanism's complicity with colonial racism'. Fanon (1961/2004 in

Mbembe, 2015) writes that the goal of decolonisation is 'the replacing of a certain "*species*" of men by another "*species*" of men'. Mbembe notes that etymologically, '[t]he Latin term "species" derives from a root signifying "to look", "to see". It means "appearance", or "vision" '. For Fanon, this species of man would erase the gap between *image* and *essence*, and herein lies a decolonial moment.

This argument has interesting affinities with the logic of Section 5.2.1. Note that Platonic idealism (and the concomitant authority of the philosopher king) is also premised on the distinction between *what is seen* (appearance) and *what is real*. Read against this insight: decolonisation is the deconstruction of this binary in service of an emerging African subjectivity. Indeed, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1981, p. 87 in Mbembe, 2015) states as much in arguing that ' "decololonizing" . . . [is] an ongoing process of "seeing ourselves clearly"; emerging out of a state of either blindness or dazziness'. Decolonisation, in the terminology of Section 5.2.1., is about escaping the *illusion* of Plato's cave.

Considering the above, one could argue that colonial artefacts both do and do not recall time. Colonial artefacts recall time insofar as they embody a thick present and thereby draw attention to the complex layers of history-as-time. However, these artefacts also negate time in two ways. Firstly, and as explained, these artefacts denote a time in which the African's time was philosophically negated through erasure (in other words, they recall a time in which the opening on time – and, hence, becoming subject – was denied). Secondly, the logic of monumentality is intimately tied to the logic of immortality (a desire that is explicitly reinforced in the Rhodes Memorial by the Kipling stanza). Mbembe (in Mbembe and Nuttall, 2018, p. 112) explains that

> Because they are the expression of humans' longing for eternity or immortality envy, in principle they defeat and transcend time as such. Through them we delegate to the inert, the geological, the mineral, and the indestructible that which otherwise might be but ephemeral, in this case life itself.

The logic of this double negation – one of erasure and one of transcendence – is very forceful and requires intervention through a type of temporal transplantation. As will be argued, such a temporal transplantation amounts to destabilising time by consciously relegating these artefacts to a state of limbo.

Claim #2: The embodied memory of history in monuments becomes thick and layered with time, while simultaneously negating time via strategies of erasure and transcendence.

5.2.3. Space/Place (Or: Between Municipal Buildings and Quarries)

An important shift that took place in the history of meaning concerns the move from intentionality to context as the source of meaning. In the

traditional Platonic view, thought represents the realm of philosophy, which is then conveyed in speech. The relationship between thought and speech is assumed to be unproblematic and unmediated; I speak my thoughts clearly. From Plato through Rossouw to Saussure, the materiality of writing had always been viewed as an obstacle to philosophy (although the traditional representational view was refined over time). This is due to the way that writing disseminates into the world and thus severs thought from the intentional subject. Indeed, Plato refers to writing as a bastardised form of communication because it is separated from the Father or the moment of its origination (Culler, 2008).

The analytic philosopher J.L. Austin's (1975) speech act theory constitutes an attempt to move the source of meaning from the intentionality of the speaker to the context within which speech acts (performatives) occur. Austin argues that all utterances are performative because they are enacted in context. Austin attempts to specify the conditions under which speech acts lead to successful outcomes. He thus distinguishes between serious or successful speech acts and non-serious or failed speech acts.

Derrida (1972) follows Austin in arguing that meaning is always contextualised. However, what he contests is Austin's understanding of context. For Derrida, one can never conclusively specify the criteria (conventions) for successful speech acts, because context can always intervene. In other words, Derrida argues that the conservative moment in Austin's speech act theory is exactly his attempt to bring context under our intentional control by specifying the conditions of success. According to Derrida, meaning takes place in context, but context is boundless. Following from this, Derrida argues that meaning is not only repeatable (subscribing to necessary identity conditions and conventions across contexts) but also iterable. Iterability ties repetition to alterity, and this alterity is a consequence of the context in which a certain speech act is uttered. Context always introduces a difference that cannot be tamed by intentionality, and, by implication, context renders signification excessive.

This Derridean understanding of the iterable nature of meaning also applies to monuments. Indeed, and as noted by Sabine Marschall (2017), semiotic and discursive analyses of public memory are common. In these analyses, the focus is on 'processes of signification, how "messages" are encoded in monuments and decoded or "read" by members of the public, often in unpredictable ways, and how meanings are framed and constructed through socio-political discourses' (p. 676).

Marschall draws our attention to the fact that monuments are objects in space. In her words, 'Monuments structure public spaces, direct our gaze, and channel us along specified paths' (p. 679). Mbembe (2015) adds that monuments claim 'ownership of space that is a public, common good'. However, monuments not only take up space and appropriate public spaces but also exist in space. Although there is relative stability to the meaning of

monuments (determined by their materiality and the materiality of history), the signifying potential of monuments (including their intended symbolism) can be radically altered by changes to context. Take, for example, Niebuhr's question regarding the bronze bust of the architect of apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd. This bust was previously on display outside the municipal building in Meyerton (in storage since 2011). How the bust is decoded and read by the public in this institutional and political setting is vastly different from its signifying content in a Karoo quarry. With reference to the appropriate context for problematic colonial and apartheid artefacts, Mbembe (2015) muses that a new kind of institution should be created, one that is 'partly a park and partly a graveyard, where statues of people who spent most of their lives defacing everything the name "black" stood for would be put to rest'. The desolate and harsh landscape of a Karoo quarry strikes me as an apt embodiment of Mbembe's hybrid graveyard-park. Within such a context, the representational quality of the monument remains unaltered (we recognise it as the same bust), but the symbolism and meaning of the bust – indeed its signifying strength – change with its contextual transplantation.

Thus, we see that the meaning of monuments, as with speech acts, is iterable. It is also important to note that the dimensions of space and time do not exist as exclusive categories; contextual shifts take place in time, thereby further complexifying the signifying potential of monuments.

Claim #3: The texts of monuments (i.e., their signifying potential) are always already codetermined by context and, as such, contextual transplantation can alter their signifying potential.

5.3. Meaningful Destruction

In Section 5.2.1., I argued that the symbolism of colonial artefacts is steeped in a philosophical history dating back to Plato. This section addresses the destruction of colonial and apartheid monuments. As an opening remark, note that all acts of destruction of these monuments are aimed at disempowering or undoing Platonic hubris and the history of colonisation that followed in its wake. In the first section, I address the question of whether destruction necessarily equates to vandalism aimed at the obliteration of monuments. I conclude that some forms of destruction, unlike vandalism, can open a generative space for rethinking the past and can thus serve the decolonial project. In the second section, I argue that generative destruction must involve more than a political act of destroying colonial monuments; it must also seek to challenge the philosophical conditions that gave rise to the colonial legacy. In the last section, I investigate the role of the activist-artist in dealing with colonial monuments, paying specific attention to the conditions under which intervening in monuments and historical artefacts is justified.

5.3.1. Destruction as Obliteration versus Destruction as Re-Generation (Or: 'God Does Not Forget')

Marschall (2017, pp. 674–675) states that

> [t]he term vandalism was first used in the context of the French Revolution with reference to the destruction of symbols of the *Ancien Regime*. Robespierre had argued that the destruction of the monarchy must be followed up with the radical clearance of any signs of despotism from the spaces of the new republic.

As reported by Alex von Tunzelmann (2021), similar waves of vandalism took place during the English Reformation and the fall of the Soviet Union.

This early understanding of vandalism accords well with my first intuition regarding the nature of the destruction of monuments, namely, that such destruction *is a political act of signification intended to stop all future signifying potential of a given monument*. In this regard, vandalism is synonymous with the *obliteration of the monumental*.

The destruction of symbolic artefacts with the intention of negating the public memory of a given history is a practice that dates back to the ancient world. This practice is referred to as *damnatio memoriae*, which translates as 'condemnation of memory'. One example from Ancient Egypt concerns Queen Hatshepsut, a self-declared Pharaoh who was almost exorcised from history by her stepson and successor, Thutmose III (Rattini, 2019). Shortly before his death, Thutmose III ordered that her monuments be destroyed and her name and image chiselled from her cartouches and the list of kings (the reasons for his actions have not been established conclusively). Although Hatshepsut's extraordinary reign remained a secret for centuries, her identity was revealed by archaeologists in 1822, and her tomb was found in 1903 (ibid.). Contemporary examples of *damnatio memoriae* also abound. For example, Josef Stalin 'rewrote history using photo alteration' (Blakemore, 2020). His political enemies were routinely executed and scrubbed from photographs. Stalin famously ordered that Leon Trotsky be exiled and removed from all photos. Citizens were so fearful of Stalin's purges that they began to deface photos of Stalin's known enemies in their own books and magazines with ink or scissors (ibid.).

While both of these examples point to the often dubious intent behind decrees of *damnatio memoriae*, an argument for the obliteration of apartheid and colonial artefacts may well be forwarded based on the atrocities committed during these historical periods. Returning to Egypt, in 2011, courts ruled that images of the then-ousted Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, and his wife be removed from 'public squares, streets, libraries and other public institutions around the country' (Bond, 2011). Sarah Bond argues that the erasure of figures from public artefacts could serve cathartic purposes if the population

engages in the obliteration. This would also constitute a strong reason for the obliteration of colonial artefacts, even if such obliteration is not aimed at *damnatio memoriae* in any complete sense. However, Bond notes that if such erasures are ordered by the state (as was the case in Stalin's Russia and ancient and modern-day Egypt), then they constitute a further repressive practice. In Bond's words, [e]rasing the crimes of the past doesn't help us avoid them in the future'.

It is exactly this state-driven drive towards collective amnesia that artist Anselm Kiefer resists and challenges in his art. As reported in the documentary 'Remembering the Future' (2014), Kiefer was born in Donaueschingen, Germany, in 1945. His childhood playground was thus constituted by the ruins of war, a fact that he was too young to fully appreciate at the time. For him, the devastation held a certain aesthetic quality, which is still evident in his work today. As a young artist, Kiefer began to probe excessively at the open wound of German history. At the age of 24, he met with controversy for photographing himself in his father's *Wehrmacht* uniform while doing a Nazi salute (which was banned). The only teacher to come to his defence was a professor who was interned at Auschwitz during the war. This professor, like Kiefer, understood the dangers of silence and denial.

It was only after watching several documentaries on and interviews with Kiefer that I came to realise the mistake in my reasoning: *destruction is not necessarily obliteration. Destruction can also open a generative space for rethinking the past.* In 'Remembering the Future', Kiefer speaks of this dialectic between creation and destruction. He argues that the nature of the cosmos is one of construction and demolition. Stars explode, but all the material goes back into the cosmos, only to be recomposed as new stars via the force of gravity. God does not forget. Like the exploding stars, Kiefer regularly destroys what he has created, but as with the cosmos that retains the traces of its history, so too does Kiefer keep it all: all the destroyed creations and broken materials are meticulously stored.

What is striking about all recorded acts of *damnatio memoriae* is their relative failure. Despite concerted efforts to obliterate a given history, traces always remain. In Drawing Lesson 3 ('Vertical thinking – a Johannesburg biography'),[9] Kentridge reflects on the nature of charcoal: no matter the extent of erasure and redrawing, traces of the artist's past decisions always remain on the page. Once the mark is made, charcoal does not allow the artist to return to the clean page. Perhaps the same is true of history; in Kentridge's words, 'time is thickened with material'. Bond (2011) writes that the ancients knew how difficult it was to break free from the past. She notes that '[s]culptures and carvings were sometimes recycled; after one emperor's face was obliterated, the stone could be recut into the likeness of the new one. Sometimes the new ruler was an improvement on the old'. Thus, while the destruction of monuments may not, as stated, always be aimed at full-scale *damnatio memoriae*, the challenges and implications of this practice lead to further reflection on the generative potential of destruction as an alternative to obliteration.

In 'History and Mythology' (2016), Kiefer argues that 'History does not exist. You cannot do it objectively. So, for me, history is a clay . . . to build with'. As with the histories that they symbolise and in line with ancient practices, colonial artefacts can also be viewed as clay, a malleable material that can be transformed and rethought in an attempt to deal with our own open wounds. Transforming (even destroying) these monuments need, therefore, not simply be negative acts of vandalism; rather, there is a potentially generative quality to transformation and destruction that opens new meanings that feed back into the past and forward into the future. As Mbembe (2015) remarks, decolonisation includes changes to 'the economy of symbols whose function, all along, has been to induce and normalize particular states of humiliation'. Thus, monuments are not passive and should not be treated with apathy. Rather, and as noted in a conversation with Niebuhr, political questions concerning *what* is remembered and *who* is doing the remembering always remain and may thus call for active intervention.

5.3.2. The Conditions for Generative Intervention (Or: Materiality, Mimesis, and Meta-Frames)

Marschall (2017, p. 676) notes that 'it seems that ideologically motivated vandalism is targeted far more frequently at statues than any other kind of monuments and symbols'. She attributes this to the mimetic quality of people commemorated posthumously; vandalism, she writes, 'becomes a form of posthumous punishment of the despised, and an attempt at figuratively killing the legacy of their deeds and ideologies' – often in a condescending or obscene fashion. For example, before the Rhodes statue was removed from the UCT campus, it was defiled with human excrement. Similarly, the nose was cut off the bust of Rhodes at the Rhodes Memorial in 2015, and the statue was decapitated in 2020 (the head, which was found nearby, was reattached on Heritage Day of the same year).

Note that two levels of resistance are at play here, namely political resistance and resistance to the philosophical (or ideological) conditions that enable a given history. Derrida (1982), with reference to the political force of deconstruction, reminds us that deconstruction (or intervention) is never only concerned with signified content (in this case, the statues of Rhodes that commemorate and hence signify the man himself). Rather, this 'politico-institutional problematic' is imbricated in a larger set of challenges that question 'the codes inherited from ethics and politics' (i.e., the philosophical framework).

Whereas the political act of destruction or defilement is immediate, challenges to the philosophical conditions that give rise to a certain legacy are more deep-seated and complex to address. Indeed, the decolonial discourse is aimed at the latter. Mbembe (2015) also recognises the philosophical challenge inherent to the decolonial project in writing that 'the questions we face are of a profoundly intellectual nature. They are colossal'. Furthermore, Derrida (1982) argues that a necessary gap must exist between the political and

philosophical deconstructions. To conflate the two risks bathos. Again, a resonance is found between Derrida's and Mbembe's views, with Mbembe (2015) arguing that 'if we do not develop a complex understanding of the nature of what we are actually facing, we will end up with the same old techno-bureaucratic fixes that have led us, in the first place, to the current cul-de-sac'.

This point is well illustrated by the toppling of figureheads (and their commemorative statues) during times of revolution. Often, the immediate political challenge is not accompanied by an investigation of the philosophical conditions that led to a certain regime, with the consequence that the regime remains mostly unaltered post-revolution: one figurehead is simply replaced with another. Perhaps the most iconic example of this is the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue in Firdos Square on 9 April 2003, effectively signalling the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom, which, according to George W. Bush, had three aims: 'to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people' (in von Tunzelmann, 2021). However, despite announcing the cessation of operations in Iraq on 1 May 2003, American soldiers remained in Baghdad until 22 October 2011. Thereafter, Iraq 'remained divided, damaged and unstable' (ibid.), which effectively created fertile soil for the rise of ISIS. In 2016, Kadhim al-Jabouri, who actively partook in the toppling of the statue, lamented, 'I ask myself: Why did I topple the statue? . . . Saddam has gone, but in his place we now have one thousand Saddams' (ibid.).

To facilitate true transformation, the space for philosophical challenges must remain open, since it is exactly the deconstruction of the hierarchical oppositions dominating Western thought from the time of Plato that 'open possibilities of change that are incalculable' (Derrida, 1976, p. 158). For this reason, Derrida argues that we should continue to 'struggl[e] as always upon two fronts, on two stages, and in two registers – the critique of current institutions and the deconstruction of the philosophical oppositions – while nevertheless contesting the distinction between the two' (p. 159).

While I argued that there is a generative potential to defilement and destruction that is not captured by equating destruction with vandalism, it is, however, often the case that destruction simply amounts to vandalism (i.e., to an immediate political deconstruction). Here, I think, artists like Kiefer, who are attuned to the potentiality of destruction, can help us move beyond an immediate political deconstruction. In Drawing Lesson 3,[10] Kentridge reflects on the nature of monuments. He argues that the monument and the sign – erected in memory of an event – are an admission of defeat, in as much as 'we hand the responsibility of memory to the object . . . Memory becomes a kind of canned memory'. In other words, the monument remembers on our behalf, and we are let off the hook. To intervene in monuments – to actively engage their performative potential – is, I would argue, a way of taking up our responsibilities in re-membering the histories of symbolic artefacts. The question that now arises is: under which conditions can and should artists and sculptors intervene?

5.3.3. The Role of the Artist-Activist (Or: to Intervene or Not to Intervene)

In Drawing Lesson 2,[11] Kentridge recalls the status of a Khoi-San diorama that was displayed in the Natural History Museum for over 20 years. This diorama, which depicts a Khoi-San family cooking around a fire, and which was exhibited between other dioramas of animals such as lions and quaggas, elicited much debate concerning the colonial influence on the hunters and herders of the Cape, as well as on whether the figures of the Khoi-San were stuffed or cast. Kentridge argues that although it was established that the figures were indeed cast, in another sense they were also stuffed specimens – akin to Sarah Baartman, who, dubbed the 'Hottentot Venus', was exhibited across the world before being dissected and displayed posthumously (restitution of her remains only took place in 2002). Here, we see another colonial operation at play, namely, that of 'epistemic coloniality', which is 'a process of knowing about Others – but a process that never fully acknowledges these Others as thinking and knowledge-producing subjects' (Mbembe, 2015).

According to Kentridge, plans were put in place under the democratic dispensation to move the diorama to the Museum of Cultural History, where it could be viewed alongside other traditional ways of living. However, a spokesperson on behalf of the descendants of the Khoi-San family argued that they would rather have the casts of their forefathers kept at the Natural History Museum because their beliefs and self-conception resonate better with the dioramas at the Natural History Museum than those of the Cultural History Museum. Today, the diorama remains in storage at the former museum.

Kentridge describes this storage as limbo – a space and time of indeterminacy as the diorama awaits further reclassification. Limbo, he argues, always renders understanding limited, contested, and inadequate. It is the unstable point between here and there, between what was and what is to come; it is the gap between two certainties that challenges certainty.

In a further conversation with Niebuhr, he noted that aside from the grid of signifying properties determining the meaning of a given artefact, a similar grid (constituted by time, space, and the politico-aesthetic impulse of the artist-activist) also defines the moment of intervention. Both grids are live, but a certain configuration is needed to justify intervention. He argues (rightly, I think) that the diorama of the Khoi-San should stay in storage because presently the creative impulse is too weak to overcome the immense struggle to classify appropriately the status of the diorama, despite the degree of artistry that any intervention may involve. In other words, the two signifying grids (that of the diorama and that of the artist-activist) are not commensurate enough to allow for productive engagement because the appropriate time and context for such engagement have not yet arrived. In this case, *limbo is vigilance to the question of the other*.

Let us return to the Rhodes statue at UCT. Like the Khoi-San diorama, this statue is also now in storage, and the meaning of its symbolism is arrested in time and in this non-space. However, here, *limbo constitutes the destabilization of the temporal and spatial signifying power of the statue*. In a way, the statue's limbo functions metonymically as the colonial membrane that haunts the gap

between Europe and Africa, the outside and the inside, and that serves to render both these constructions unstable. Interestingly, African philosopher, Leonhard Praeg observes the same instability governing the meaning of the Must Fall Movement in general. Praeg avers,

> it . . . must remain undecided whether #MustFall is better described as 'protest' or 'revolt', whether its violence was legitimate or illegitimate, morally justifiable or not, because precisely these ambivalences or undecidabilities are what [also] typifies the [Constitutional] Founding and its iteration.
>
> (Praeg, 2019, p. 20)

Disempowering the signifying potential of the Rhodes statue by keeping it in storage is, however, not the only possibility for challenging its meaning. There is a second option. Unlike the Khoi-San diorama, I would argue that *the time and place for actively intervening in the Rhodes statue have arrived*. We can, in other words, remake its signifying potential to 'demythologiz[e] . . . certain versions of history' (Mbembe, 2015). To find the proper place of history and subjectivity today sometimes implies identifying the generative space from which something new can emerge. This emergence is always simultaneously an act of creation and destruction, in which the imagined permeance of the monumental is de-monumentalised. Regarding this imagined permeance, Mbembe (in Mbembe and Nuttall, 2018, p. 112) writes:

> What strikes me these days is the sheer vanity and stupidity of almost every single public monument, as well as the vacuity of the concept and practice of monumentality. Indeed, there is nothing, no material artifact on this Earth, that cannot be defeated by time. In relation to time, there is no immunity.

Recycling, re-sculpting, and reinscribing monuments are ways to put them in their place. Transforming or even destroying these works disempowers the idealism (indeed, the hubris) defining these artefacts and draws renewed attention to their materiality and, hence, their provisionality. Furthermore, and in contrast to Platonic idealism, creative intervention can draw attention to what Mbembe (2015) refers to as 'pluriversity', that is, 'knowledge production that is open to epistemic diversity'. This is because the visual transformation of monuments can open that which has been closed to the future because, in their very monumentality, these monuments reify a certain epistemic conception of the past.

5.4. Open Endings: A Bracketed Ellipse onto the Future

The preceding reflections dealt with the signifying properties of monuments and the ways in which the meaning of monuments can be transformed by

actively engaging these properties. Examples of contextual transplantation, relegating problematic colonial artefacts to the limbo of storage, or actively reworking these artefacts as a type of generative destruction were investigated. These interventions are all political acts, but each intervention also works against the philosophical framework that enabled colonisation and apartheid (including their visual hierarchies and their spatial and temporal logic). As such, intervening in this economy of problematic symbols supports the decolonial project, which aims to enable the becoming of the African subject, which, to recall, Mbembe (2015) describes as 'the permanent possibility of the emergence of the not yet'.

It is interesting to note that when the Rhodes statue was removed, its empty plinth remained. This plinth has become a powerful signifier in its own right. It stands in space, but as a bracketed ellipse [. . .] that opens to the future. It is, in other words, an empty signifier, which speaks in silence against the weight of the statue that it previously upheld, against the weight of history, and for the emergence of the not yet.

The idea of an empty signifier (which, at first take, is a contradiction in terms) is employed extensively in Derrida's philosophy. For Derrida, these empty signifiers (what is sometimes referred to as 'limit concepts') have no positive content; that is, they are neither a present entity or order nor a reality or a regime. As such, they exceed the future present and the horizon of possibility (Caputo, 1997). Yet, although they do not have positive meaning and although they cannot be realised in time, they are not meaningless. Rather, we should think of these impossible aconceptual concepts together, and in tension, with the realm of the possible (i.e., the realm of present and potential meaning). Moreover, the work of these limit concepts is 'to push against and beyond the limits of [a given] horizon' (p. 133) with the goal of opening this horizon to a future that is always yet to come but that never arrives.

'Racism's Last Word' is one work in which Derrida (1985) alludes to the aporetic relationship between the realm of the possible and the realm of the impossible. 'Racism's Last Word' was originally written in 1983 as the prologue to the catalogue of an art exhibition that was assembled by the *Association of Artists of the World Against Apartheid*. Herein, Derrida interrogates the violent force of apartheid and the West's complicity in apartheid. The complicity of the West is analysed in terms of the theoretical framework of apartheid (i.e., the inherited legal and theological infrastructure that supported apartheid), as well as the West's role in maintaining apartheid (to secure their own economic and political interests). Derrida further contrasts the brute force of apartheid with the silent force of the travelling exhibition (which would come to find its home years later in a democratic South Africa). Derrida likens this exhibition to a satellite sent wandering in space to act as a guard, bear witness, and give warning: 'Do not forget apartheid' (p. 293).

Although paintings, like monuments, do signify, Derrida is making an ethical point by juxtaposing what he calls 'the silent gaze of the paintings' with 'the materiality of discourse and politics'. In his argument, the silence of the

paintings thus functions as a limit concept (an empty signifier) that haunts our politics and institutions, and in so doing, recalls an opening onto the future.

Concerning the silent gaze of the paintings, Derrida (p. 299) writes:

> And their silence is just. A discourse would once again compel us to reckon with the present state of force and law. It would draw up contracts, dialecticize itself, let itself be reappropriated again.
>
> This silence calls out unconditionally; it keeps watch on that which is not, on that which is not yet, and on the chance of still remembering some faithful day.

The call of this open-ended future – this just silence that summons us from afar – impels us to watch over our monuments, our memories, and our politics in order to keep totalitarian thinking at bay, to draw attention to the provisionality of all meaning, and to instil in us the humility that comes from recognising our ontological condition of being in relation. Perhaps this too is the work of the plinth, which, unlike monuments, is indeed a silent signifier. It brings to light the permanent possibility of the emergence of the not yet.

Notes

1 www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVTrSr7T_bM; see footnote 2.
2 Specific drawing lessons are referenced with their corresponding URLs. The drawing lessons are also collated in a printed publication, the details of which are as follows:

Kentridge, W. 2014. *Six Drawing Lessons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

3 www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdKkmSqYTE8.
4 www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EUN4Kl0JF0.
5 www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdKkmSqYTE8.
6 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodes_Memorial.
7 Photo source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rhodes_Memorial_Cape_Town_01.jpg.
8 www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EUN4Kl0JF0.
9 www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVTrSr7T_bM.
10 www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVTrSr7T_bM.
11 www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EUN4Kl0JF0.

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6 (Im)possible Monuments? Gukurahundi and the Politics of Memorialisation in Zimbabwe

Gibson Ncube

6.1. Introduction

Three years into Zimbabwe's independence, the government of Robert Mugabe faced dissent in the southern provinces of Matabeleland as well as in the Midlands. To deal with and quell this dissent, the government sent to the southern regions of the country a North Korean-trained Praetorian army named the Fifth Brigade. Instead of dealing with the dissidents, the Fifth Brigade carried out a violent campaign that targeted civilians. More than 20,000 people died between 1983 and 1987, and many more were maimed physically and psychologically. This genocide has come to be called Gukurahundi, which is a Shona term meaning 'the early rains that wash away the chaff' (Sithole & Makumbe 1997, p. 133).

In the aftermath of this genocide, the state preferred to encourage collective forgetting of Gukurahundi. Remembering or commemorating Gukurahundi has been quasi-criminalised. By pushing a grand national(ist) narrative of unity, the state has considered any ideas that diverge from this narrative to be counter-revolutionary. Discussing Gukurahundi was one such idea that was seen as going against the national desire for unity. In addition to the open discussion of Gukurahundi, the state has also censored and banned works of art that represent the genocide. In this chapter, I will analyse how an art exhibition by Owen Maseko was banned in 2010. Shepherd Mpofu explains the reaction of the state to Maseko's art exhibition:

> Maseko's exhibition was open to the public for a few hours before it was shut down and Maseko was immediately arrested for undermining the authority of the president in March 2010. The exhibition was finally closed in April 2015 after a Supreme Court upheld a decision to ban Maseko's art from being exhibited anywhere in Zimbabwe.
>
> (2019a, p. 12)

In addition to collective amnesia being enforced and commemoration being forbidden, the erection of memorials has also not been allowed by the state.

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I will show in this chapter that in instances where memorial plaques have been erected, these have been clandestinely demolished.

In this chapter, my interest is in examining how the state in Zimbabwe has made it impossible for the Gukurahundi genocide to be remembered and commemorated. Despite such conditions, I will also examine creative ways in which Zimbabweans have been able to remember and commemorate the genocide in a way that challenges the culture of silence and forgetting that is supported and instilled by the successive ZANU-PF governments.

6.2. Trauma, Memorialisation, and Monuments

Caswell, in her book *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (2014), examines the effects of violence meted out by the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia in the 1960s and 1970s. In the aftermath of the violent and traumatic experiences, Caswell highlights 'the complex layering of silences' (2014, p. 12), 'silences in that no or very few records are left behind, making the task of creating credible facts about these victims difficult' (2014, p. 11). Photographs taken and kept by victims become a form of witnessing, and this witnessing is important in 'transforming records that document an unspeakably violent past into agents of social change for the future' (Caswell 2014, p. 7). Caswell's study is important for the way in which it interrogates silences and attempts to create narratives from these silences. As pointed out earlier, the silences are multiple and often overlapping and overarching, feeding into each other. On one level, there is the silence of the victims, who are unable to use words to make sense of their experiences from a traumatic past. There is also silence at the level of the state-controlled archives, which do not contain any, or very little, narratives that offer the perspectives of the victims and confer agency on their experiences. There is also silence in the fact that traumatic experiences are themselves unspeakable, by either the victims or the perpetrators. These diverse forms of silence and 'unspeakability', 'of those victims not recorded, those records not archived, those archives not used' (Caswell 2014, p. 21), need to be undone in order to understand the traumas of the victims and, at the same time, infuse these narratives of the victims into the master narratives and archives of the traumatic experiences.

I find Caswell's idea of 'archiving the unspeakable' to resonate with Mbembe's concept of the 'unarchivable'. Mbembe explains that the main objective of archives is to capture different facets of lived human experiences and that these facets can be assembled to offer a coherent narrative:

> No archive can be the depository of the entire history of a society, of all that has happened in that society. Through archived documents, we are presented with pieces of time to be assembled, fragments of life to be placed in order, one after the other, in an attempt to formulate a story

> that acquires its coherence through the ability to craft links between the beginning and the end.
>
> (Mbembe 2002, p. 21)

As Mbembe further explains, the process of archiving is a political act in which there are diverse power dynamics at play: 'the archive, therefore, is fundamentally a matter of discrimination and of selection, which, in the end, results in the granting of a privileged status to certain written documents and the refusal of that status to others, thereby judged "unarchivable"' (Mbembe 2002, p. 20). In this line of thinking, certain documents and the lived experiences that they describe can be included in archives, while other documents are refused the possibility of being archived: 'Archives are the product of a process which converts a certain number of documents into items judged to be worthy of preserving and keeping in a public place, where they can be consulted according to well-established procedures and regulations' (Mbembe 2002, p. 20).

In addition to the political nature of how documents enter archives, accessing the archives is an equally political process:

> Several factors are involved in this subjective experience of the archives: who owns them; on whose authority they depend; the political context in which they are visited; the conditions under which they are accessed; the distance between what is sought and what is found; the manner in which they are decoded and how what is found there is presented and made public.
>
> (Mbembe 2002, p. 23)

The question to ask, then, is what happens to these 'unarchivable' documents and the experiences that they hold. How can these 'unarchivable' experiences be remembered? I raise these questions because they have a direct impact on how past experiences, especially those that are traumatic and involve gross human rights violations, can be evoked in the present moment.

Brett et al. argue that one way of making sense of the past, especially when archives make it impossible to offer spaces for such memory-making, is to commemorate it through the erection of monuments: 'in vastly different contexts communities see public memorialisation as central to justice, reconciliation, truth-telling, reparation, and coming to grips with the past' (2007, p. 1). Brett et al. point out that memorials are supposed to be non-sacred sites that seek

> to tell a story about the past that is meant to influence the way we think and act in the future. Not only are they located in public spaces but they are by and large open to – and even actively invite – strangers and people who do not understand or may even disagree with their messages.
>
> (2007, p. 6)

More than being sites of remembering and commemoration, monuments also play an important role as they function as a form of public acknowledgement of the past, especially in instances where a traumatic experience took place. Public acknowledgement can thus be seen as a central process of ensuring that the past is not erased but that it is discussed and negotiated in the public sphere.

I will make use of the above theoretical frameworks to think through the case of Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe and how memory-making and monument-making have been rendered dauntingly difficult, if not possible, by the state.

6.3. (Im)possible Gukurahundi Memorialisation and Monuments

In this section, I want to examine how efforts at memorialisation and erecting monuments have been thwarted by the state in Zimbabwe. I will look at how the state has made it difficult for communities affected by Gukurahundi to erect monuments that form part of commemorating the dead and ensure that their memory is not erased. I will also look at how artists who have tried to create art pieces that depict Gukurahundi have also seen their efforts banned and heavily censored.

In January 2022, Ibhetshu LikaZulu, a pressure group from Matabeleland, held a memorial service at Bhalagwe. Bhalagwe is the site of mass burials of people killed during Gukurahundi. During the genocide, Bhalagwe was a concentration camp where people were tortured, killed, and then dumped in disused mines. During the memorial service in 2022, Ibhetshu LikaZulu erected a plaque with the names of people who died at Bhalagwe. The following day, the plaque had been destroyed and bombed during the night. This, of course, was not the first time that a memorial plaque had been desecrated at Bhalagwe.

I want to think through what the erection of memorial sites and their subsequent destruction mean when considered in relation to memorialisation of Gukurahundi. Lisa Moore explains that monuments function as 'pedagogical instruments' that have the capacity of 'instilling the lessons of "never again" in future generations or threaten a nascent peace by inciting retaliation through an inflammatory rendering of the past' (2009, p. 48). If memorials have this pedagogical function, their destruction in the case of Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe can be read to suggest that the perpetrators of the destruction do not see any value in remembering and memorialising Gukurahundi. Ndlovu rightly acknowledges how there are diametrically opposed forces as far as the memorialisation of Gukurahundi is concerned:

> Although there are growing calls in Matabeleland to commemorate Gukurahundi victims, to exhume bodies from mass graves and to perform cleansing ceremonies, the government continues to employ repressive mechanisms to muzzle and silence these dissenting voices.
>
> (2018a, pp. 276–277)

Such antagonism can possibly be understood by considering that memorials are 'socio-political forces that wield tremendous symbolic influence' (Moore 2009, p. 49). While memorials might be viewed as ways of coming to terms with a traumatic past, for the aggrieved, perpetrators might see such efforts at memorialisation as an attempt to bring up the past in a bid to retribute for the violences of the past. This could make sense in the case of Gukurahundi, given that some of the chief architects of the genocide have been and continue to be central leaders of the ruling ZANU-PF government. Moreover, one of the reasons why these chief architects of the genocide, who have held and continue to hold positions of power and authority, have not allowed memorialisation of Gukurahundi is that by acknowledging the genocide openly and honestly, they would incriminate themselves. Unsurprisingly, these people who were directly involved do not want to be held accountable for their role in the genocide.

In the introduction of this chapter, I referred to the visual art of Owen Maseko. In 2010, Maseko intended to showcase visual art pieces in an exhibition entitled 'Sibathontisele'. 'Sibathontisele' is a Ndebele word that means 'we drip on them'. According to Maseko, ' "we drip on them" in Ndebele refers to one of the most notorious torture techniques employed by the Fifth Brigade – dripping hot, melted plastic on victims' (2011, p. 94). This art exhibition focused to a large extent on representing Gukurahundi and its atrocities. Ncube and Siziba explain that this exhibition

> was composed of a series of vignettes with paintings and other paintings with graffiti or simply graffiti on red backgrounds. The common feature of these vignettes is the colour red (an obvious allusion to the blood that was spilled during Gukurahundi) that accompanies often ghoulish faces.
>
> (2017, p. 244)

This exhibition, for the duration of its life at the Bulawayo National Art Gallery, had the potential to be a kind of memorial that compelled viewers to consider face-to-face the bloody horror that was Gukurahundi. In this way, the exhibition could have engendered not just remembering but also a commemoration of the lives lost and maimed by the genocide. However, 'Sibathontisele' failed to achieve this potential because it was banned. The exhibition was suppressed, and the artist was arrested and charged under the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act (Cinematography and Publications, Production of Pictures and Statues). Maseko's art pieces were considered offensive and were seen to have an ethnic undertone, which went against the state's attempts to foster national cohesion.

I will move on to look at a street art mural that was drawn on a toilet found at the City Hall in Bulawayo, the second-largest city in Zimbabwe. On 22 January 2022, a street artist named Leeroy Spinx Brittain drew a life-size mural of king Lobengula (a Ndebele king and son of the first Ndebele king Mzilikazi) with his hand around the neck of Mbuya Nehanda (a Shona spirit medium).

Brittain uses the archival images of the two figures to compose this mural and adds the phrase, 'Love is greater than Shona and Ndebele. Africans unite'!!! A day later, the Bulawayo City Council erased the images of Lobengula and Mbuya Nehanda by whitewashing the two figures and only leaving the words. A day later, new words were added to the whitewashed mural, which read 'GUKURAHUNDI. We will not forget'. This new layer to the mural resonated with the artwork of Owen Maseko, given the ghastly use of the colour red. Of course, this new layer was also erased. This time the erasure was definitive, as even the words were painted over, concealing completely all traces of the different layers of the palimpsest that was the mural. I find that the whitewashing of the mural is very symbolic. The literal whitewashing of the mural symbolises the deliberate attempt at concealing and making impossible efforts to commemorate and memorialise Gukurahundi. If the mural embodies a form of remembering and memory-making, its literal whitewashing represents a move towards memory-forgetting on the first level and memory-erasure at the ultimate level.

In all the examples that I have evoked earlier, I find that there have been possible ways in which Zimbabweans, especially those from the afflicted regions of the country, have tried to remember Gukurahundi and to commemorate it through monuments. This, however, has been thwarted by the state. What we see in these instances is the friction between two opposing forces: the force of memory-making and the force of memory-forgetting. In my consideration, the state has posed an aggression on memorialisation and memory-making by extending the idea of memory-forgetting to the erasure of all forms of monuments, temporary and otherwise, that seek to remember the genocide.

The question to ask is why the state in Zimbabwe has been against the idea of remembering and commemorating Gukurahundi. During his long reign, Robert Mugabe refused to acknowledge Gukurahundi, referring to it simply as 'a moment of madness' (Ellis 2006, p. 40). Although he instituted two commissions of inquiry (the Dumbuchena and the Chihambakwe Commissions), the reports and recommendations of these commissions remain unknown and sealed to the general public. Khumalo argues that 'the silencing of genocide voices is aimed at ensuring that the narratives of the victims cannot be transmitted across time and that their stories disappear from history' (2019, p. 800). Indeed, the whitewashing of Gukurahundi speaks to the silencing and subsequent erasure of memories and memorialisation of the genocide, which, according to Nyambi, invokes 'state induced culture of silence over the Gukurahundi' (2014, p. 7). The culture of silence could thus be read as a way in which the state sought to ensure that it was not held responsible for what happened during Gukurahundi:

> Any frank acknowledgement of the crimes would have probably led to legitimate demands for restorative justice, the release of the suppressed reports on the massacres, compensation of the victims, and most poignantly, the disruption of the patriarchal narrative of national unity and

> the perpetual celebration of national resistance against the tyrannies of colonisation and imperialism.
>
> (Mafu 2017, p. 229)

From these words by Mafu, the state certainly had more to lose than gain from allowing Gukurahundi to be remembered and commemorated.

What is, however, interesting about whitewashing, both literal and metaphoric, is that traces of the memories continue to linger. Zimbabwe's 'original sin' (Tshuma 2018a), as author Novuyo Rosa Tshuma refers to Gukurahundi, continues to linger and haunt the nation even from beyond the whitewash. Given such a situation in which attempts are made at remembering and commemorating Gukurahundi, in the next section, I will examine alternative avenues Zimbabweans have adopted in engaging monument and remember the Gukurahundi genocide.

6.4. Counter Monuments, Memorials, and Memorialisation

Considering the difficulty and, at times, impossibility of remembering and commemorating Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe, there have been ways in which Zimbabweans have found ways to challenge the logic of silence and forgetting. I will focus on two specific examples of counter-memory-making and memorialisation: the role of fictional literary texts and also the role of social media platforms. These two examples are important because they have managed to escape, so to speak, the control of the state.

There has been, over the years, a burgeoning and eclectic body of literary texts that have represented Gukurahundi in different ways. Yvonne Vera's novel *The stone virgin* (2002) stands out as one of the first texts to offer a literary representation of the genocide. The novel recounts the brutality and violence of Gukurahundi by focusing on the lives of two sisters: Thenjiwe and Nonceba Gumede. The first part of the novel concentrates on building the characters and situating them within their contexts. The second part recounts Gukurahundi: 'The war begins. A curfew is declared. A state of emergency. No movement is allowed. . . . Roadblocks. Bombs. Landmines. Hand grenades. Memory is lost. Independence ends. Guns rise. Rising anew' (2002, p. 59). I find two things interesting in these words. Firstly, Vera refers to Gukurahundi as a 'war', which suggests that there were two opposing and fighting parties. But of course, Gukurahundi was not a war because the Fifth Brigade harassed and killed unarmed civilians. Secondly, almost prophetically, Vera refers to the loss of memory. This, as I have shown, is how the state has reacted to the aftermath of Gukurahundi, instituting forced collective amnesia. In spite of being groundbreaking in its representation of Gukurahundi, *The stone virgins* remains quite ambivalent in its characterisation, offering specificities of the roles of different characters in the unfolding 'war'.

After *The stone virgins*, there have been novels that offer more direct representations of Gukurahundi. These include Christopher Mlalazi's *Running*

with mother (2012) and, more recently, Novuyo Rosa Tshuma's *House of stone* (2018b). I find Tshuma's novel very productive for the argument that I am making in this chapter because of the way in which the novel discusses the idea of memory and remembering. The novel tells the story of a young man named Zamani who wants to understand Gukurahundi. Zamani is an orphan. His mother was raped during Gukurahundi, and he has never known his father. A character named Dumo explains how 'when our government started controlling every facet of our lives, including what part of our history to remember and what part to forget, it is proof that it's not what's true that matters, but what you can make true' (Tshuma 2018b, p. 292). Dumo highlights how the government has had a specific role in determining what part of history could be remembered and what part needed to be forgotten. The protagonist-narrator points out from the very beginning that he is on a mission to understand the past and make sense of how it affects the present: 'I am a man on a mission. A vocation, call it, to remake the past, and wish to fashion all that has been into being and becoming' (2018b, p. 1). He explains later in the novel that understanding the past is a heavy burden: 'The past was an overpowering presence, too present and not past, as it should have been, cannibalising our present, mutating our future' (2018b, p. 321). These words are especially interesting when considered against a contemporary Zimbabwe in which the memory of Gukurahundi has an 'overpowering presence' in what happens in the present day.

Dodgson-Katiyo clarifies that literary works such as the ones that I have examined earlier 'create a space for . . . the otherwise forgotten or absent to be commemorated, documented, narrated and even felt' (2012, p. 17). Similarly, Ncube contends that literary narratives

> offer a privileged space that is more than just a metalinguistic and autonomous edifice – more importantly, these texts offer a means through which individual, societal and cultural self- assessment and comprehension can be affected in the domain of quotidian life.
>
> (2014, p. 477)

Ncube explains elsewhere that

> [c]ultural products such as *House of stone* are therefore able to lay bare the ghosts and traumas that continue to haunt the survivors of Gukurahundi. Such writing of traumatic pasts can thus be read as a process of not just remembering the past but also commemorating the lives of the departed and demanding that their lives and the ways in which they died be acknowledged.
>
> (Ncube 2022, p. 145)

What is fascinating about literary texts is that the state has not banned them. This, of course, is different from how the state has reacted to visual art and

the erection of memorial plaques. In what ways are literary texts different from visual edifices like plaques and visual art pieces? One reason could be that visual edifices pose a more palpable threat because they make the idea of memorialisation and commemoration of Gukurahundi very visible because the visual has a greater impact than the literary. Literature, on the other hand, has a less poignant effect given that there isn't a very pronounced reading culture in Zimbabwe. Moreover, buying books remains a luxury that many cannot afford, given the economic hardships faced by many in the country. Relating to the lack of a culture of critical reading, Nyamfukudza comments that

> it has been suggested that one of the best ways to hide information in Zimbabwe is to publish it in a book. Certainly, to judge by the sales of non-mandatory – that is, non-educational – books that Zimbabwean publishers achieve, it would appear to be so.
>
> (2005, p. 23)

Ncube and Siziba further explain one reason why there has been a ban on visual memorials and monuments:

> Whilst literary works such as that of Vera appeal to the intellect, visual arts like Maseko's exhibition charm and immediately solicit emotional reactions of the spectators. Literary works, through the use of metaphors, metonyms, and other stylistic devices, create self-protecting uncertainties. Maseko's visual art on the other hand is bold even to the point of foolhardy recklessness.
>
> (2017, pp. 244–245)

The state has thus appeared to not be bothered by literary works as forms of memorialisation because their impact is palpably minimal. Another area of memorialisation that has hitherto escaped the suppressive power of the state has been in the memory-making practices enabled by social media platforms. The rise of Mnangagwa to power has seen a rise in the discussion of Gukurahundi on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. This could be explained by the increasing access to the internet through smartphones. Ncube, discussing the same issue of the increased discussion of Gukurahundi online, explains:

> This increase can be explained, especially after Mnangagwa became Head of State, by the fact that Mnangagwa is considered to be one of the chief architects of Gukurahundi, given that he was Minister of State Security during the time that this genocide took place. The death of Perrence Shiri in July 2020 also saw Gukurahundi trending on social media platforms, since he was the commander of the praetorian army that perpetrated the atrocities in Matabeleland and the Midlands.
>
> (2022, p. 141)

I hasten to point out that the amplified discussion of Gukurahundi in virtual spaces speaks to how social media offers alternative spaces of remembering, memory-making, and memorialisation away from the direct control of the state. Although the state has the capacity to control the Internet by blocking the airwaves, as it has done in the past, the state cannot block the Internet for sustained long periods. Moreover, the availability of virtual private networks means that citizens can also circumvent the blocking of the Internet. Social media platforms also offer a sense of security given that people can adopt anonymous identities through which they are able to discuss Gukurahundi freely. Mpofu concludes in this line of thinking that 'the ubiquity of the internet and its accessibility to a number of people make it a powerful tool for identity and protest politics where certain versions of history are claimed, challenged or rejected' (2019b, p. 126). On Twitter, for example, there are numerous accounts that are dedicated to creating Gukurahundi counter archives. YouTube has allowed for audiovisual material to be shared with survivors and other forms of memory-making practices to be rendered visible. The work of investigative journalist Zenzele Ndebele is important in this respect. Ndebele has produced numerous documentary films on Gukurahundi, and most of these are available to watch on YouTube. Ndlovu expounds on the importance of social media platforms:

> Through interactive facilities such as YouTube, new forms of witnessing are emerging as Gukurahundi survivors are using new technologies to preserve and disseminate the knowledge of the traumatic past events. Given the repressive political environment in Zimbabwe, new media are playing a key role in widening the democratic space, promoting freedom of expression, and preserving and circulating new witness accounts.
>
> (2018b, p. 304)

It should be pointed out, though, that the majority of Gukurahundi interlocutors are young Zimbabweans who did not personally experience the genocide or were too young to have known what was happening. This highlights how trauma and the experiences of genocide are transmitted from one generation to another through a process that Hirsch calls 'post-memory' (1992, p. 18).

If the state has control over the public sphere and what happens in this public sphere, its control over the evanescent sphere of social media platforms is indeed minimised. It is on social media platforms that memorialisation is taking place. Of course, this memorialisation is being done by young people who did not experience the genocide but whose lives are marred by its effects and afterlives. Social media platforms thus make it possible to create memories and erect virtual monuments in remembrance of the dead and the victims of the genocide. What time will tell is whether these virtual edifices will be translated and transferred to the real world of everyday life and be visible to those without access to the Internet.

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that attempts to commemorate Gukurahundi have been made impossible by the state, which has been more concerned about its grand nationalist narrative of a united Zimbabwe. This myopic focus on this nationalist narrative has seen the commemoration of Gukurahundi as having the potential to engender division in the country. Khumalo points out in this regard that by shutting down all possible avenues of remembering Gukurahundi, the state has given the impression that the genocide is 'a closed chapter, whose memorialisation and documentation are viewed as threatening unity and peace' (2019, p. 796). As the current president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, said in his inauguration speech, 'we should look into the future. The thrust should not be for us, in this new dispensation, to go and engage with the past' (2017). The president further elaborates in that speech as follows:

> Whilst we cannot change the past, there is a lot we can do in the present and the future to give our nation a different positive direction. As we do so, we should never remain hostages of our past. I, thus, humbly appeal to all of us that we let bygones be bygones, readily embracing each other in defining a new destiny of our beloved Zimbabwe.
>
> (Mnangagwa 2017)

The grand nationalist narrative of a united country that does not look to the past has, however, not stopped the question of Gukurahundi from coming up ever so often in national discourses. As Tshuma points out in an interview with fellow writer Brian Chikwava, embracing silence by letting bygones be bygones has done little to deal with the wound of Gukurahundi, which instead of being healed has continued to fester and suppurate:

> Well, we can ask ourselves if forgetting the past has created national unity. Has it? Has keeping quiet about Gukurahundi fostered unity in Zimbabwe? No. It has instead contributed to creating the authoritarian and tyrannical culture that became prominent, especially over the past two decades. Had we faced our past about Gukurahundi a long time ago, would this authoritarian culture, this culture of dealing violently with any non-Zanu (PF) supporters, of deeming others non-Zimbabweans and expelling them from the Zimbabwean imagination, have bloomed? That is one way of understanding the past's relationship to the present. This goes to matters of the nation's spirit, to its legacy, which goes beyond the material – to the spiritual, the emotional, the philosophical, the psychological, the cultural; all those elements that make us more than just our bodies – that make us human beings.
>
> (2018, p. 49)

Monumentalisation and memorialisation are important ways that allow, especially the victims, to remember those who they have lost and also for the

survivors to find catharsis in coming to grips with the horrors that they experienced. I muse, in conclusion, if a time will come in Zimbabwe when remembering Gukurahundi will be allowed and if it will be permitted for monuments and memorials to be erected in commemoration of the lives lost during the genocide. Of course, time will also tell if the commission of inquiry instituted by Mnangagwa in 2019 will yield any different results and if the recommendations of this commission will be made public.

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7 Colonial and Apartheid Legacy

Social, Economic, and Political Inequality in South Africa

Frank A. Abumere

7.1. Introduction

Recently, the Rhodes Must Fall protests, a precursor to the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States of America and elsewhere, drew attention to the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. The standing statues of Cecil John Rhodes, the quintessential colonialist in Southern Africa, including Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), and Malawi (Nyasaland), were only a symptom of the main disease, which is the enduring legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Destroying the statues of Rhodes is a symbol of what the protesters actually want, namely the eradication of the enduring legacy of colonialism and apartheid as represented by social, economic, and political inequality (see Sanni, 2021). In order to resolve the problem of inequality in South Africa, we need a distributive justice doctrine that, when applied to South Africa, is simultaneously a theoretically plausible, practicably possible, and morally reasonable political doctrine.

The apartheid regime in South Africa allocated arable land to Whites and arid land to Blacks. Apart from the allocation of arable land to Whites and arid land to Blacks, apartheid in South Africa meant that while White people had the freedom of movement and the freedom to live in economically viable places, Black people lacked the freedom of movement and could not live in economically viable places. Currently, in South Africa, it is still 'highly advantageous to be White. The average White person there earns five times as much as the average Black person' (Levy, 2019, s.p.).

South Africa is the most economically unequal society in the world. According to the World Bank (2000), South Africa has the highest Gini coefficient, 63% – the highest economic inequality gap – in the world. In the Gini Index, a coefficient of 0% represents perfect equality, while a coefficient of 100% represents perfect inequality. The Gini coefficient is a spectrum of 0 and 1. 0 represents perfect equality; that is, everyone is at the same level of income. 1 represents perfect inequality, that is, one person receives all the income while others receive none. The Whites are better off, while the Blacks are worse off. Even worse than South Africa, Zimbabwe is almost a failed state – at its best, it is a very weak state.

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Half a decade ago, in her Fair Limits project, in order to resolve the problem of inequality such as South Africa's, Ingrid Robeyns formulated a distributive justice doctrine she calls economic limitarianism (hereafter, limitarianism). In the doctrine, Robeyns (2017) advocates that

> it is not morally permissible to have more resources than are needed to fully flourish in life. Limitarianism views having riches or wealth to be the state in which one has more resources than are needed and claims that, in such a case, one has too much, morally speaking.
>
> (1)

Matthias Kramm and Robeyns (2020, 954) found proto-limitarian claims or justifications for limitarianism in four moral domains: moral psychology, moral reasoning, virtue ethics, and political morality. They argue that although currently limitarianism sounds too radical, 'throughout history, many influential philosophers made limitarian claims, including many intrinsic arguments for wealth limitarianism' (Robeyns, 2017, 1).

Limitarianism is simultaneously similar to sufficientarianism in one respect and different from it in another respect. Basically, sufficientarianism holds that 'If everyone had enough it would be of no moral consequence whether some had more than others' (Frankfurt, 1987, 21). In its positive thesis, sufficientarianism posits that there is a threshold of (economic) advantages that is necessary for people to reach in order to flourish. While in its negative thesis, sufficientarianism posits that there is a threshold of (economic) advantages above which concerns about distributive justice do not rise (Huseby, 2019, 1).

Just as sufficientarianism, as a doctrine of distributive justice, claims that there is an amount of economic resources everyone must possess or have access to because below such a threshold no one can flourish, so too does limitarianism claim that there is a certain threshold of riches and it is not morally permissible for anyone to have any riches above such a threshold because a world in which no one is above the threshold is a morally better world than a world in which some persons are above the threshold (Robeyns, 2019a, 252–253). As Robeyns et al. (2021) say:

> Identifying a riches line can be seen as a symmetrical exercise from identifying the poverty line. Anyone situated below the poverty line has not enough resources to enjoy a minimal standard of living, whereas anyone situated above the riches line has more resources than one needs to maximally flourish (116).

Sufficientarianism thinks that whether persons in a society possess or do not possess, or have access to or do not have access to, enough of some (economic) goods or advantages is the principal determinant of whether the society is just or unjust (Shields, 2020, 1). Conversely, limitarianism thinks that whether persons in a society possess or do not possess, or have access to or do

not have access to, surplus money is the principal determinant of whether the society is just or unjust.

In this chapter, applying Robeyn's limitarianism to South Africa, I examine the doctrine like a medical doctor carrying out a general check-up on a patient. The result of the examination is twofold. Firstly, the doctrine withstands the incentive, efficacy, and unequal opportunity objections. Therefore, it is simultaneously a theoretically plausible, practicably possible, and morally reasonable political doctrine. Secondly, nevertheless, the doctrine has a problem of scope or extensity, which I refer to as an asymmetric argument. I show that the problem can be resolved by fully, rather than partially, extending limitarianism to non-democratic states by explaining the relationship between surplus money and political inequality through various avenues. The list of avenues is by no means exhaustive; it is only representative of the possible avenues we can explore. Nevertheless, it suffices for its purpose. The full extension of the doctrine to non-democratic states makes it more robust.

I conduct the remainder of the discussion as follows. In Section 7.2, I present the doctrine and the arguments based on which Robeyns justified the doctrine. In Section 3, I discussed the objections that have been raised against the doctrine and how the objections have been successfully rebutted. Then, in Section 7.4, I explain what I think is the problem with the doctrine and then suggest ways in which the problem can be resolved.

7.2. The Political Doctrine of Limitarianism

Robeyn's focus is on financial resources. Using a monetary metric, she says that there is a threshold above which money is not necessary for human flourishing and below which money is necessary for human flourishing. She considers those below the threshold to be non-rich, while she considers those above the threshold to be rich. Since money is not necessary for flourishing above the threshold, the rich who are above the threshold can be said to have surplus money; that is, any money above the threshold is surplus money; any money that is not necessary or required for flourishing is surplus money. Since surplus money represents the difference between a rich person's financial resources and the threshold that separates the rich from the non-rich, it follows that only the rich have surplus money. Since limitarianism claims that it is morally wrong to have surplus money (Robeyns, 2017, 4), then limitarianism is concerned with the rich.

Robeyns (2017) explains:

> Limitarianism is only a partial account of distributive justice, since it can be specified in a way in which it is agnostic regarding what distributive justice requires for those who are not maximally flourishing. It could, for example, be combined with one of the many versions of equality of opportunity below the limitarian threshold . . . there are several different

> versions of limitarianism, and different versions may have different views on what morality requires below the line of riches.
>
> (1)

In defence of Robeyns, Tammy Harel Ben Shahar (n.d.) argues:

> [L]imitarianism can be both an exclusive and a partial theory of justice . . . it could be framed as a principle that exhausts all the requirements of justice, so that as long as people do not have 'too much', . . . society is just and there are no further demands of justice. The more plausible approach, however, is the one adopted by Robeyns according to which limitarianism is but one component of a pluralist theory of justice, in which further requirements of justice apply bellow the riches line.
>
> (5)

Although there are arguments for the position that being rich is intrinsically morally bad, Robeyns is not concerned with such arguments. Rather, she defends limitarianism on instrumental grounds. In other words, she is concerned with non-intrinsic limitarianism rather than intrinsic limitarianism. Intrinsic limitarianism claims that being rich is intrinsically morally wrong, while non-intrinsic limitarianism claims that for some instrumental reasons that are predicated on other values, being rich is morally wrong (Robeyns, 2017, 5). Even in an ideal world, intrinsic limitarianism would claim that it is morally wrong to be rich. But, in an ideal world, non-intrinsic limitarianism would claim that in such a world:

> [W]here all important intrinsic values are secured, riches are not morally objectionable. Non-intrinsic limitarianism will limit its claim that riches are morally objectionable to a world where certain intrinsically important values are not secured, and where limitarianism is instrumentally valuable to securing those ultimate ends.
>
> (Robeyns, 2017, 5–6)

Although Robeyns is concerned with non-intrinsic limitarianism, her instrumental justification of limitarianism is a derivative of certain intrinsic values. In other words, for her, limitarianism is only instrumentally justified because it is a means to achieve certain ends, which are in themselves intrinsic values rather than instrumental values. Predicating her instrumental defence of limitarianism on intrinsic grounds, she argues that in our existing non-ideal world rather than in a non-existing ideal world, that is, in our world as it is rather than in a world as it ought to be, limitarianism as a doctrine of distributive justice is justified based on the grounds that it is instrumentally necessary for the protection of the intrinsic value of political equality and the intrinsic value of meeting unmet urgent needs (Robeyns, 2017, 3).

Robeyns explains that limitarianism is simultaneously a moral and political doctrine. On the one hand, as a moral doctrine, limitarianism stipulates that people have a moral obligation to refrain from being wealthy. However, such an obligation is merely a moral norm and not a politico-legal obligation or law. If persons neglect such obligations and then become wealthy, there is no (political) entity that can use its coercive apparatus to coerce them to comply with the moral norm. On the other hand, as a political doctrine, limitarianism stipulates that the state must impose 100% taxation on the surplus money of wealthy people or ensure that social and economic institutions are reformed in such a way that people are not able to acquire surplus money in the first place (Robeyns, 2017, 30).

Robeyns stresses the point that limitarianism is not merely a moral doctrine but also a political doctrine. This point is very important for her because limitarianism is also a political doctrine, that is, except the state deploys its coercive apparatus to implement the stipulations of limitarianism, the doctrine is likely to have no impact on political equality or on the reversion of the subversion of political equality in democratic states. She emphasises that:

> If the grounding of limitarianism were a virtue-ethical account of the good life, then it could be argued that limitarianism is merely a moral and not a political doctrine. Yet the justifications I have developed . . . are political justifications, concerned with the value of democratic equality and with social and distributive justice. Since on this account limitarianism is a distributive rule of justice rather than of beneficence or personal virtues, there is a prima facie case to be made for understanding limitarianism as a political doctrine. After all, following Rawls, justice is generally regarded as the first and most important virtue of society, and if justice includes limitarianism (whatever other distributive rules may additionally apply below the wealth-line), then limitarianism should be a political doctrine.
>
> (Robeyns, 2017, 31)

Robeyns offers two justifications for limitarianism: the first argument is what she calls the democratic argument, and the second argument is what she calls the unmet urgent needs argument. In reverse order, I shall first explain the latter argument and then explain the former argument. On the one hand, she predicates her unmet urgent needs argument on the premise that, morally, the value of surplus money is insignificant for the rich person who owns the surplus money (Robeyns, 2017, 13). On the other hand, the unmet urgent needs argument justifies limitarianism on the grounds of what she refers to as circumstances of limitarianism, namely the empirical conditions of extreme global poverty, local or global advantages, and urgent collective action problems (Robeyns, 2017, 10–11).

Extreme global poverty, that is, the first empirical condition or circumstance of limitarianism, refers to 'a world in which there are many people

living in extreme poverty, and whose lives could be significantly improved by government-led actions that require financial resources' (Robeyns, 2017, 10). Local or global advantages, that is, the second empirical condition or circumstance of limitarianism, refers to 'a world in which many people are not flourishing and are significantly deprived in some dimensions and whose lives could be significantly improved by government-led actions that require financial resources' (Robeyns, 2017, 10). Urgent collective-action problems, that is, the third empirical condition or circumstance of limitarianism, refers to 'a world that is faced with urgent (global) collective-action problems that could (in part) be addressed by government-led actions that require financial resources' (Robeyns, 2017, 10–11).

In the democratic argument, Robeyns (2019a), taking her cue from Thomas Christiano, argues that 'massive inequalities in income and wealth undermine the value of democracy and the ideal of political equality in particular' (254). Robeyns' argument that it is morally impermissible for some people to be very wealthy because they can and are likely to use their surplus money to subvert political processes is based on the premise that it is morally reprehensible for very wealthy people in a democracy to spend their surplus money on political processes because 'The political equality of citizens is the cornerstone of free and democratic societies. The constitution should guarantee political equality, but it does not protect our right to be extremely wealthy' (Robeyns, 2019a, 256).

Christiano (2012) outlines four mechanisms in which the rich can, and are likely to, leverage their wealth to influence the democratic process and outcome. Relying on Christiano's argument, Robeyns adopts the four mechanisms to support her democratic argument. According to Christiano (2012),

> there are four basic mechanisms by which the expenditure of money can influence the political system: money for votes, money as gatekeeper, money as means for influencing public and legislative opinion, and money as independent political power. These four basic mechanisms correspond roughly to the four basic aspects of the democratic process. The first relates to the process of law and policymaking, the second to the setting of the agenda of this decision making, the third to the formation of opinion and preference, and the fourth to the independent social and economic constraints on successful policymaking.
>
> (242)

Firstly, in terms of money for votes (Christiano, 2012, 243), the rich metaphorically or indirectly buy votes by funding politicians and political parties. Secondly, in terms of money as gatekeeper (Christiano, 2012, 245), the rich become gatekeepers when they use their surplus money to set agendas for the citizenry, thereby determining the process and outcome of collective decision-making. The crux of Christiano's gatekeeping argument as adopted by Robeyns is that agenda setting by the rich negates equality of persons, since equality of persons is a key tenet of democracy; therefore, agenda setting by

the rich negates democracy. Democracy considers all citizens to be equal and therefore allows them to have an equal say in the process of collective decision-making, which in turn makes the outcome of collective decision-making reflect or at least approximate the collective views of the citizens. However, through agenda setting, the rich, through their surplus money, which they expend on subverting the process of collective decision-making, erode the opportunity for the non-rich to have an equal say and thereby negate the political equality that is supposed to exist among citizens (Robeyns, 2019a, 255).

Thirdly, in terms of money as a means for influencing public and legislative opinion (Christiano, 2012, 248), in other words, the workings of money as an independent power influencing opinion (Robeyns, 2017, 8, 2019a, 255), the rich, using their surplus money, can influence opinion in two ways. In one way, the rich can use their surplus money to purchase or control media outlets. In another way, the rich can use their surplus money to pay for the lobbying of politicians and political officeholders. Fourthly, in terms of money as independent political power (Christiano, 2012, 251), given the investment of surplus money in companies by the rich and the economic power that accrues to them due to such investments, they can use their economic power to undermine democratic goals. To illustrate how such use of economic power undermines democratic goals, imagine that through a democratic process, the government and citizens agree that costly environmental regulations must be imposed on companies:

> a large company or group of companies can take their capital elsewhere (increasing unemployment) if the society imposes costly environmental regulation. In other cases, the government can anticipate the actions of the powerful group and decline to pursue an otherwise popular policy and aim.
>
> (Christiano, 2012, 251)

In the institutional view, formal institutional mechanisms can be deployed to prevent or counteract the power of surplus money to subvert the democratic process and outcomes. However, Robeyns (2019a) argues:

> Vast inequalities in income and wealth and the possession of surplus money, in particular, will pose a threat to political equality even in societies where the four mechanisms mentioned above have been weakened as much as possible through institutional measures. Therefore, if we hold that the values of democracy, and political equality in particular, are cornerstones of just societies, then we have valid grounds in favour of limitarianism.
>
> (256)

In a nutshell, Robeyns (2017) thinks that 'imposing formal institutional mechanisms in order to break the impact of money on politics is . . . feasible only to

a limited extent' (10). Therefore, while she concedes that formal institutions may be helpful to some extent, she avers that due to the limitations of formal institutions, the only option left is limitarianism.

7.3. The Incentive, Efficacy, and Unequal Opportunity Objections

For Alexandru Volacu and Adelin Costin Dumitru (2019), Robeyn's proposal in the democratic argument that income above a certain level should be taxed at 100% is tantamount to what they refer to as strong limitarianism. Instead of strong limitarianism, they argue for what they refer to as weak limitarianism, a position that the best fiscal policy regarding surplus money is the adoption of tax policies that will maximise revenue.

Empirically, as economists found out and as Robeyns acknowledges, 70% is the optimal tax rate; that is, 70% is the rate of taxation on income and wealth at which and below which tax payers will still be incentivised to remain productive. Above this rate, tax payers will be disincentivised to remain productive, and then they will become unproductive. Therefore, Volacu and Dumitru (2019) argue that

> taxing individuals at 100% after a certain level of income would constitute a disincentive for productive work after they reach that level, leading to less economic resources available for redistribution to the worse-off. Consequently, in a world where all urgent needs are not met, strong limitarianism would make it harder to move towards the goal of meeting them, since the fiscal policy it prescribes would not be revenue-maximizing. To the extent that we are fundamentally concerned with ensuring that no one is left facing condition of extreme poverty, such a fiscal policy would have importantly deleterious effects.
>
> (256)

Volacu and Dumitru go on to argue that even in a hypothetical ideal world in which there are no unmet urgent needs, taxing people 100% above a certain level of wealth or income could still remain a bad fiscal policy. They invite us to imagine the following idealised scenario:

> some wealthy people are strongly engaged in activities associated with combating climate change, from dissemination of scientific studies to the general population, to research in renewable energy etc.; others are fundamentally interested in funding great artistic endeavours; . . . others, still, use their wealth in order to contribute to the establishment and development of democracy-building non-governmental organisations in countries that are in a process of transition from autocratic or totalitarian regimes to democratic ones. And so forth. Now, assume that such persons have great economic skills and would be extremely

> rich, if permitted by the fiscal policies of the state. Suppose also, that most of what Robeyns defines as surplus money would be donated by these benevolent rich persons to causes with which they deeply identify. Under the fiscal policy required by strong limitarianism, none of the above mentioned transfers would be possible, due to the fact that instead of having an ample amount of surplus money which they could donate to these causes, the benevolent rich would have to relinquish all of it. If that is the case, it is possible that some of these people could prefer to be much less productive and therefore refrain from generating income above the riches line to begin with.
>
> (Volacu and Dumitru, 2019, 256)

The democratic argument is conditional on the rich using their surplus money to subvert the democratic process and therefore determine the outcome. If the rich do not subvert the process, then the implication is, it seems, that there should be no limitarianism. In this case, people like the Gupta brothers who influence the democratic process in South Africa should be bound by limitarianism. While people like Michiel Scholtz du Preez le Roux, whose The Millennium Trust fights illiteracy, unemployment, and corruption, should not be bound by limitarianism, as Rob Reich (2018, 152) suggests, the activities of private trust foundations, The Millennium Trust, among others, 'can be oriented to support rather than subvert democratic aims'. Even Robeyns (2019b) admits that:

> Democracy is an inherently fragile political system that is not suited to protect the interests of those not part of the electoral system. . . . Some political problems are so wicked that they are extremely unlikely to be solved by democratic institutions. . . . Some of these wicked problems, such as the current state of climate change, require such urgent and far-reaching interventions that go against the short-term interests of the voters. . . . This leads to a unique justification for wealthy philanthropists, because they can make instant decisions to fund such political movements. . . . In short, philanthropists can use their plutocratic power to save humanity from an urgent and severe crisis that democratic institutions, as we currently know them, are structurally unable to address. Philanthropic power can then be used to rescue one form of democracy (defending the interests of all affected parties) from another form of democracy (policy making by majority voting).
>
> (1176)

Nevertheless, Robeyns addressed what she referred to as the unequal opportunity objection and the incentive objection. On the one hand, the crux of the incentive objection is that 'limitarianism entails a very strong disincentive for almost-rich people to contribute more to the creation of the social product by working harder, innovating smarter, and doing more business' (Robeyns,

2017, 35). On the other hand, the unequal opportunities objection posits that limitarianism ought to be rejected on the grounds that it deprives people of equal opportunities (Robeyns, 2017, 33). Considering the weight of the incentive objection, disagreeing with the objection but not outright rejecting it, Robeyns (2017) thinks the objection should make us

> adapt limitarianism as applied to fiscal policies in line with optimal taxation design, to the extent that we weight the value of meeting the unmet urgent needs higher than the effects of surplus money on the undermining of political equality (37).

However, she rebuts the unequal opportunity objection by arguing that

> in the highly unjust . . . world in which we live, limitarianism would curtail some opportunities for the best-off, but in order to increase the opportunities for those who have a far more restricted range of initial opportunities. In ideal theory, the unequal opportunities argument may perhaps have some force, but in the non-ideal circumstances in which we live, limitarianism would move us closer to equality of opportunity, rather than moving us away from it.
>
> (Robeyns, 2017, 34)

Volacu and Dumitru (2019) argue that it seems we cannot achieve political equality through strong limitarianism by simply drawing a riches line beyond which any money owned by an individual will be considered surplus money and is morally impermissible to own. Stopping people from having surplus money above the riches line does not stop them from spending some of the money they have below the riches line on the subversion of democratic process and outcome, and thereby political equality (Volacu and Dumitru, 2019, 258). This argument reminds one of Robert Nozick's (1974) Wilt Chamberlain argument, 'how liberty upsets patterns (of distribution)', in which he attempted to demonstrate that patterned principles of distributive justice are incompatible with individual liberty. In distribution D1, suppose that following a patterned principle of distributive justice, everyone has an equal or comparable amount of money. Then suppose that in distribution D2, the following happens:

> Wilt Chamberlain is greatly in demand by basketball teams, being a great gate attraction. . . . He signs the following sort of contract with a team: In each home game, twenty-five cents from the price of each ticket of admission goes to him. . . . The season starts and people cheerfully attend his team's games; they buy their tickets, each time dropping a separate twenty-five cents of their admission price into a special box with Chamberlain's name on it. They are excited about seeing him play; it is worth the total admission to them. Let us suppose that in one season one million persons attend his home games, and Wilt Chamberlain

> winds up with $250,000, a much larger sum than the average income and larger sum than anyone else has.
>
> (Nozick, 1974, 161)

While Nozick (1974) argues that Wilt Chamberlain is entitled to his income, the point here in relation to Volacu and Dumitru's objection is not whether Wilt Chamberlain is entitled to his income or not, and it is not whether Nozick is right or wrong (161). Rather, the point is that, similar to the D1 and D2 scenarios in the Wilt Chamberlain argument, in the limitarian case, some persons who have already been stopped from having surplus money, that is, money beyond the riches line (let us call this Distribution D1), can freely choose to expend part of their money below the riches line on activities that subvert political equality (let us call this Distribution D2).

For the sake of analogy, without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing with Nozick's argument, imagine that Wilt Chamberlain is the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, while the basketball spectators who pay Wilt Chamberlain – that is, redistribute part of their distribution (D1) to Chamberlain (D2) – to watch him play basketball are those who spend part of their money below the riches line to subvert political equality; in this case, they donate the money to the ANC in order to have influence over the party. Since by paying to watch Wilt Chamberlain play, the basketball spectators' are simply exercising their freedom of choice, any attempt to prevent them from redistributing their holdings (D1) to Chamberlain (D2) is tantamount to an infringement on their freedom of choice. So too, since the Republicans who donate part of their money below the riches line to the ANC are simply exercising their freedom of choice, any attempt to stop them from doing so will be tantamount to an infringement on their freedom of choice.

Ben Shahar (n.d.) weighs in on the debate by suggesting that

> In order to ensure that excessive wealth does not jeopardize political equality, the threshold should be set at the point where this risk materializes. There is no reason to assume that this will always (or ever) be the point of flourishing satiation. Political inequality could happen even when people do not have enough resources for leading a fully flourishing life; and conversely, political inequality, of the kind and severity that limitarians aim to limit, might happen only in cases of extreme wealth, that far exceeds satiation.
>
> (9)

Dick Timmer (2019) calls Volacu and Dumitru's objections the incentive objection and the efficacy objection. Following Timmer, I will stick with these terminologies. To reiterate:

> Volacu and Dumitru's Incentive Objection holds that limitarianism places an excessive and inefficient burden on the rich in ensuring political

> equality. The Efficacy Objection holds that even if limitarianism limits excessive wealth it still fails to ensure the preservation of political equality.
>
> (Timmer, 2019, 1331)

Timmer (2019) argues that, on the one hand, 'the Incentive Objection fails because one could appeal to limitarian policies that are different from the ones discussed by Volacu and Dumitru and which escape the problem of reduced productivity' (1331). Then, on the other hand, he rebuts the efficacy objection by arguing that 'limitarian policies are a partial but highly valuable step towards establishing political equality, and that they can and should complement or be complemented by other strategies' (Timmer, 2019, 1331).

Timmer gives three possible reasons why limitarianism can be justified, specifically why redistributing the wealthy's surplus money is justified. Firstly, one can argue that surplus money does not have any moral value; therefore, no one can derive any moral value from the possession of surplus money. Ceteris paribus, morally speaking, there is no reason to prefer a world or society in which people have surplus money to a world or society in which people do not have surplus money (Timmer, 2021, 2). Secondly, one can concede that surplus money is morally valuable, but then argue that

> this value is lexically outweighed by some other normative concern(s). This does not deny that something morally valuable can be gained from having surplus wealth, nor that, all else being equal, sometimes people should be allowed to have surplus wealth. But whatever can be gained from having surplus wealth is less valuable, morally speaking, than other normative concerns.
>
> (Timmer, 2021, 2)

Thirdly, one can argue that, on the one hand, permitting the possession of surplus money is, in moral terms, practically less important than other normative concerns. On the other hand, permitting the possession of surplus money, in moral terms, theoretically outweighs other normative concerns (Timmer, 2021, 2).

As shown by the responses to the incentive, efficacy, and unequal opportunity objections, what is really wrong with Robeyns' political doctrine of limitarianism, if at all there is anything really wrong with it, are not those objections. Although prima facie, Volacu and Dumitru's incentive and efficacy objections seem intractable, Robeyn's, Ben Shahar's, and Timmer's responses to the objections demonstrate that they are not only tractable, they are also not what is really wrong with Robeyn's limitarianism, if at all there is anything really wrong with it. I think there is something wrong with the political doctrine, and I think what is really wrong with it is a problem of scope or extensity, which I refer to as an asymmetric argument. This problem of scope or extensity, that is, the asymmetric argument, is the subject matter of the next section.

7.4. The Problem of Scope or Extensity (the Asymmetric Argument)

The unmet urgent needs argument is global in scope, while the democratic argument is not. So, the question is, what is the scope or extensity of Robeyn's political doctrine? The gap between Robeyn's unmet urgent needs argument and the democratic argument is what I would like to refer to as an asymmetric argument. I call it an asymmetric argument because, in terms of scope or extensity, the unmet urgent needs argument has a broad reach; that is, it applies to all states, both democratic and non-democratic states (it is a universal, general, or global argument). While, in terms of scope or extensity, the democratic argument has a narrow reach, that is, it applies only to democratic states (in contradistinction to the universal, general, or global argument, it is a particular, specific, or restricted argument).

The problem of scope or extensity – the asymmetric argument – has consequences for the democratic argument and not the unmet urgent needs argument because, while the former applies to only democratic states, the latter applies to both democratic and non-democratic states. Since the democratic argument applies only to democratic states and does not apply to non-democratic states, the rich in non-democratic states like apartheid South Africa would not be bound by limitarianism, whereas those in democratic states like post-apartheid South Africa would be bound by limitarianism.

In other words, the asymmetric argument may have a perverse incentive, that is, an unintended negative consequence, for non-democratic states. Since limitarianism, at least as far as the democratic argument is concerned, only applies to democratic states, non-democratic states can argue that since they are not democracies, therefore limitarianism does not apply to them. Consequently, since limitarianism, at least as far as the democratic argument is concerned, does not apply to non-democratic states, the rich in non-democratic states can argue that since they live in non-democracies, therefore limitarianism does not apply to them. The implication of the democratic argument for non-democratic states can be succinctly put in a syllogism. Major Premise: The democratic argument applies to democratic states; Minor Premise: States such as apartheid South Africa are non-democratic states; Conclusion: Therefore, the democratic argument does not apply to states such as apartheid South Africa.

While limitarianism fully applies to democratic states because both the democratic argument and the unmet urgent needs argument apply to them, limitarianism at best only partially applies to non-democratic states because only the unmet urgent needs argument applies to them. Except Robeyns intended limitarianism to be applicable to only democratic states (while the democratic argument suggests this, the unmet urgent needs argument suggests she wants it to be universally applicable to both democratic and non-democratic states), the problem of scope or extensity must be resolved by fully extending (applying both the unmet urgent needs and democratic arguments) rather than only

partially extending (applying only the unmet urgent needs argument) to non-democratic states. Robeyns' own argument that political equality is morally valuable supports my position that limitarianism should be fully extended to non-democratic states.

In both democratic and non-democratic states, to resolve the problem of scope or extensity, one can use Robeyns' political equality argument sui generis rather than her democratic argument. Rather than Christiano's four mechanisms (as adopted by Robeyns) in which surplus money subverts the process and outcome of democracy, one can use other ways to argue for how surplus money subverts political equality. For instance, one can see the relationship between surplus money and political inequality as either causal, constitutive, or both causal and constitutive. I see the relationship between surplus money and political inequality as both causal and constitutive. It is in this light that, like Christiano and Robeyns, I see the relationship between surplus money and political inequality, in which the latter is a consequence of the former. In view of the causal and constitutive relationship between surplus money and political inequality, one can first argue that the consequence of such a relationship is structural injustice. Secondly, one can argue against the possession of surplus money on the grounds that it engenders structural injustice. Then, thirdly, in view of structural injustice, one can argue that limitarianism is needed to mitigate the negative effects of surplus money. I illustrate this structural injustice argument in the next two paragraphs.

In 2011, the Occupy Movement claimed that American society is divided into two groups: the comparatively or relatively poor majority (99%) and the extremely wealthy minority (1%). The movement claimed that this division of wealth is unfair to the 99%, while the 1%, presumably, claimed the division is fair. Firstly, on the one hand, assuming the 1% is right, then the division is fair and the status quo should not be changed. On the other hand, assuming the 99% is right, then the division is unfair and ought to be changed. This fair division problem is particularly important because government policies are only responsive to the opinions of the citizenry when there is a consensus among the citizenry. Absent such consensus, when there is an agreement between the rich (understood as the best-off, better-off, upper class, or 1%) and the poor (understood as the worst-off, worse-off, middle class, lower class, or 99%), government policies will be responsive to the former and not the latter (Gilens, 2005), thereby advantaging the former and disadvantaging the latter.

Prima facie, the fair division problem seems intractable to resolve. One way to attempt to resolve it is, for instance, by applying the Broomean theories of fairness (Broom, 1990) to the fair division problem. However, since the Broomean theories of fairness require that claims should be satisfied in proportion to their strength, what ought to be the fair division of wealth between the 1% and the 99%? Secondly, when the possession of extreme wealth by some citizens engenders structural injustice from which other citizens suffer, that is, one group gains and another loses, how do the Broomean theories of fairness resolve this problem since the theories say that fairness entails a proportional

satisfaction of claims? I think the Broomean theories of fairness are problematic in resolving the aforementioned fair division problem.

When the possession of extreme wealth by some citizens engenders structural injustice from which other citizens suffer, the government ought to limit the possession of wealth to a threshold that does not engender structural injustice. In view of the above conditions, the possession of surplus money by individuals causes or engenders structural injustice in the sense that it undermines the value of political equality. I aver that: once it has been established that the possession of surplus money by individuals causes or engenders structural injustice, then the government should limit the possession of surplus money by individuals in spite of the fear of unintended negative consequences, that is, perverse results, such as Volacu and Dumitru's incentive objection.

I think my structural injustice argument aligns with Robeyns' fundamental objective because she says that limitarianism can be defended:

> [F]rom the relational egalitarian point of view, arguing that citizens cannot relate to each other as equals if their financial differences are too large, or from the value of freedom as non-domination, arguing that securing non-domination requires that no one should have too much money to allow them to exert genuine and structural power over other citizens.
>
> (Robeyns, 2019a, 253)

Finally, one can also see the relationship between surplus money and political inequality as systemic. One can argue that surplus money is a systemic cause of political inequality and the latter is a systemic consequence of the former, just as surplus money engenders structural injustice and the latter is a consequence of the former. In this case, just as in the structural injustice case, I aver that: once it is obvious or understood that possession of surplus money by individuals is a systemic cause of political inequality and the latter is a systemic consequence of the former, then the government should mitigate the possession of surplus money by individuals in spite of the fear of unintended negative consequences, that is, perverse results, such as Volacu and Dumitru's incentive objection.

7.5. Conclusion

I consider Robeyns' limitarianism to be simultaneously a theoretically plausible, practicably possible, and morally reasonable political doctrine when applied to inequality in South Africa. After all, it withstands the incentive, efficacy, and unequal opportunity objections. Nevertheless, I think the doctrine has a problem of scope or extensity, which I refer to as an asymmetric argument. I showed that the problem can be resolved by fully, rather than partially, extending limitarianism to non-democratic states such as apartheid South Africa by explaining the relationship between surplus money and

political inequality through various avenues such as causal and constitutive explanations, structural injustice, and systemic causation. This list of avenues is by no means exhaustive; it is only representative of the possible avenues we can explore. Nevertheless, it suffices for its purpose.

Moreover, Robeyns (2019a) says that, apart from the democratic argument and the unmet urgent needs argument, limitarianism can be defended on other grounds (253). In support of Robeyns, persons such as Danielle Zwarthoed (2018) and Timmer (2019, 2021) have defended limitarianism on grounds that are different from Robeyns' in the case of the former and on grounds that are similar to Robeyns in the case of the latter. Zwarthoed (2018) argues that: firstly, 'Above a certain wealth ceiling, a person's having more material resources does not always increase her autonomy'; secondly, 'Above such wealth ceiling, material possession might even be detrimental to the development and the exercise of rich people's autonomy, or at least some rich people's autonomy' (1183). Even Volacu and Dumitru (2019), who criticised strong limitarianism, defended weak limitarianism. Therefore, it is not out of place, and I am in good company, to defend limitarianism through the aforementioned avenues.

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8 The Destruction of Historical Monuments and the Danger of Sanitising History

John S. Sanni

8.1 Introduction

The destruction of historical monuments has received lots of attention in recent times. On the one hand, the growing dissatisfaction and repugnancy with which the perpetrators of these destructions are perceived show the urgency with which academics must address the issue. On the other hand, perpetrators often claim to have 'permissible' motives and intentions which justify their actions. The destruction is largely based on the desire to annihilate, challenge, eradicate and suppress the ideological and emotional attachments that are often connected to these historical monuments. Monuments communicate various figures and events in history that bind or divide. The memories that monuments evoke are elements to be considered when looking at the symbolic role that monuments have in every society. To disengage these important dimensions is to undermine the crucial roles that monuments play. There is always a justification for the destruction of any monument. However, it is important to examine the reasoning behind the act in every situation where it is proposed or carried out.

I argue in this article that the destruction of historical monuments is a violation in the sense that it risks creating obscure representations of history in the supposed attempt at sanitising history through the destruction of monuments. The argument proceeds as follows: first, I will present an analysis of recent destructions of historical monuments. Secondly, I will give particular attention to the destruction of Rhodes statue at the University of Rhodes, South Africa. With the first and second sections in mine, the third section will explore the ethical questions that might be raised in the analysis of the destruction of Rhodes statue, and then proceed to engage the plausibility of the view that the destruction of historical monuments is a violation of human connection to historical narratives.

8.2. Destruction of Historical Sites

This section explores particular instances where the destruction of historical monuments has taken place. This will help inform our understanding of the

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implicit and explicit motives behind the destruction. In order to avoid any misconception, I use the word 'destruction' from the viewpoint of physical damage or demolition of a thing(s). Nicola Lambourne in her book, *War Damage* in Western Europe, presents an apt account of the destruction of historical monuments which directs one's thoughts to how the Nazi regime had two significant ways of looking at monuments: firstly, they destroyed monuments in Poland and Russia after many objects of values have been pillaged. The second dimension, according to Lambourne, has to do with Nazi admiration for French culture. She writes, 'Admiration of French culture was a German tradition and an additional motivation to preserve rather than to destroy the architectural heritage of the invaded France was that the country, with all its historic monuments, was intended as part of Greater Germany' (Lambourne 2001:2). Lambourne traces the destruction of historical monuments as a war strategy when she maintains that 'The years 1870–1945, and beyond to the immediate post-Second World War years, form a continuous period of war damage, payment of indemnities for this damage, followed by reconstruction and restoration, then a repeat of the damage' (Lambourne 2001:12). The relevance of her account is that the destruction of churches, castles, cultural sites, and other structures with historical monuments is not a new occurrence. Destruction has been a war tactics not only to subdue but also to erase memories. The attempt at restoration implies an effort of victims to revive that which perpetrators seek to obliterate. The discourse about the wrong in the destruction of historical sites has been disdained for decades. The moral questions attached to the destruction of historical monuments in the twenty-first century is not entirely a new occurrence.

In The Wall Street Journal, Eric Gibson points to the destruction of a historical monument saying that the '. . . Islamic State [ISIS] posted a five-minute video of men destroying ancient Mesopotamian sculptures in the Mosul Museum, Iraq's second-largest museum, with sledgehammers and power tools. Their stated reason was that these works of art promoted idolatry' (Gibson 2015). This incidence along with other occurrences in the past have been received with public denunciation '. . . from cultural leaders such as Thomas P. Campbell, director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova' (Gibson 2015). Gibson observes that the world has looked at these happenings with so much helplessness, dissatisfaction and repugnancy (Gibson 2015). Why now? One might ask. What is unique to recent destruction of historical sites that was not the case when George W. Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq? The question can be posed in light of Donald Trump's recent invasion of Iraq. How is the destruction of a building with the statues of historical monument, by the United States different from the pillage and destruction of historical monuments by ISIS? Even though it will be overly ambitious to make war between the United States and Iraq a component of this article, I consider it important to at least highlight the fact that little or no consideration was given to the United States destruction of historical monuments in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Returning to the issue, why might displeasure and pain be responses to the destruction of historical monuments, especially in cases where there is no danger to life? According to Louise Du Toit's article, 'The South African Constitution as Memory and Promise: An Exploration of its Implications for Sexual Violence', a historical monument refers to carved figures (statues) which remind a group of individuals of a person in the past whose actions have been considered heroic and deserving of remembrance and collective celebration (2016:5). Historical monuments can also point to an event in the past. Reference to the past does not mean that people live in the past, what it means is that people and their cultures are partly defined by their past (Molyneaux 1994:1). History is a social burden in the traditions and cultures and they inform actions, reactions and interactions.

Andreas Huyssen presents a rather complex variant in her understanding of what historical signifiers are said to represent when she argues that, 'Historical memory today is not what it used to be. It used to mark the relation of a community or a nation to its past, but the boundary between past and present used to be stronger and more stable than it appears to be today' (Huyssen 2003:1). Huyssen, although creative in her understanding of historical monuments, does not explicitly justify the change that has brought about a twist in our understanding of historical monuments today. Nonetheless, she states that historical monuments retain the narratives about the past. Huyssen goes on to add that historical signifiers, monuments for instance, do not hold all historical event. As such, she proposes the need to include a memory archive as a supplementary storage of past events (Huyssen 2003:6). Historical memories will be further discussed as this article progresses.

Referring to Post Enlightenment Europe and the United States after independence, Huyssen writes,

> Progress and historical teleologies were embraced across much of the political spectrum, but this inevitably meant shedding the past. The price paid for progress was the destruction of past ways of living and being in the world. There was no liberation without active destruction. And the destruction of the past brought forgetting. From the beginning, modernity was Janus-faced in its negotiations of cultural memory. The Romantic lament about a world lost under the onslaught of industrialization, urbanization, and modernity only goes to show how fast and intense the transformations toward the future had already become by 1800. The other side of this loss was what Nietzsche, in his Untimely Meditations, called the nineteenth century's hypertrophy of history, which he countered with his seductive call for creative forgetting.
>
> (Huyssen 2003:2)

Huyssen tries to justify her argument for supplementary mechanisms of retaining memories when she suggests that there is a sense in which progress has tinted, and somewhat dimmed, people's understanding of the past. What is

implicit in her argument is that the connection that was earlier made about the past flowing into the present and then reaching actuality in the future is an idealistic connection. She presents this claim in order to advance the inclusion of archives in the attempt to 'adequately' preserve cultural memories. Huyssen seeks to propose a position that sees the need to augment existing historical signifiers to enhance the promotion and preservation of memory.

Huyssen's argument, although significant and relevant, is not the task which I seek to pursue in this article. Therefore, for the purpose of this article, Du Toit's under-standing of historical monuments as a record of shared memory will underline the arguments that will be further explored in the rest of this article. The definition of historical monuments that Du Toit advances is that they possess a nature that is not a pre-discursive isolated reality, rather they have attributes which are not disassociated from the location within which they are erected. Put differently, the past of every society is made visible in the stability of monuments within its environ.

Recent times have seen the deliberate destruction of historical monuments. Arguably, the memories that these historical monuments summon and the past that the monuments are expected to preserve and re-enact in the minds of those who behold them are also destroyed. As observed by Gibson, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has a case on trial of a man implicated in the destruction of some historical monuments, and this has raised awareness among academics on the ethical questions that might be raised regarding the destruction of historical monuments (Gibson 2015). The destruction of historical sites often aims at pillage and looting. Besides the intention of pillage, there are ideological justifications for the destruction of historical monuments which are religious or political or both religious and political. A case in point concerns the activities of the religious extremist group, Islamic State (ISIS), whose members used heavy machinery (pickaxes, sledgehammers, and dynamites) to destroy some historical sites (Temple of Baalshamin, Palmyra Temple, dedicated to an ancient god Baal, centuries old Christian Churches and Muslim shrines) in different parts of Syria. They hinge their actions on religious beliefs with the intended motive of eradicating idolatry (a venture which can be traced back to Muhammad, the Prophet) and any religion which is not considered to be the 'true' religion (Curry 2015).

On a political front, the destruction of historical monuments has been used as propaganda intended to eradicate the history of a past regime and the cultural memories associated with these monuments. The idea behind this is to destabilise the psyche of the 'opponents' and to make them think that there is nothing left of their idolised past. Thereby leaving opponents with no option than to embrace the new regime. Another motive that can be deduced from the acts of destruction is that it could be incited with the aim to instate a new ideology that is different from the previous one with the sole motive of hegemony. In the case of ISIS, the destructions are intended as a means to gain control of some parts of Syria (Curry 2015). It is also plausible to argue, as I have done earlier, that the destruction of historical sites is partly to loot

and pillage valuables in order to finance political agenda. In fact, religion is sometimes used as a justification to advance political intentions.

In the year 2020, the world has seen a more aggressive take on the destruction of status and historical monuments. In the wake of an increase in racism in the United States of America (U.S), especially the one sparked by the death of George Floyd, the world witnesses an increase in the challenge of structures of oppression, domination and racism. This challenge has served as a justification for the destruction of historical monuments and status. For instance, the U.S has recently reported the destruction of status protesters toppled a statue of the Civil War-era industrialist and Confederate Navy captain Charles Linn in a park named for him in Birmingham, Alabama (Angeliti 2020; Woods 2020). Other monuments and public sculptures, like General Robert E. Lee, Christopher Columbus, and Edward Carmack (a controversial law maker), among others have been reported vandalised across the U.S amidst the protest and riots following the murder of George Floyd, and for the Black Lives Matter campaign. Similar cases have been reported in the United Kingdom; the statue of Robert Milligan (a Scottish slave owner) was reported removed from London. These vandalizations speak to a challenge of systemic inequalities and racism characterised by White supremacy in the U.S, U.K and the world in general.

8.3. The Destruction of Cecil John Rhodes' Statue

Given my location and in light of the above, I will like to draw on the destruction of Cecil John Rhode's statute. The destruction of Rhodes' statue is an incident which has been pertinent in South Africa. Rhodes was a British born Businessman, a mining magnate, and a politician in South Africa. He is also a colonialist whose imperialist worldview played a huge role in the advancement of colonial rule and apartheid in South Africa. His statue used to be within the premises of Rhodes University, a school named after him, until it was destroyed in 2015 after a protest against memories of oppression, subjugation, and domination which the statue was thought to represent.

The growing decolonisation agenda in South Africa has sparked enormous debates on how to deal with existing colonial structures which still depict and promote oppressive mentality. #RhodesMustFall was one way, among many other mechanisms, of eradicating colonial tendencies of White superiority in South Africa. This superiority is seen in the socio-economic disparity in South Africa where the black majority are worse-off, and the Whites are well-off. Post-apartheid South Africa has seen the management of memories of oppression as a necessary path to healing. The fact is that 'The enlightened notion that one can learn from history has been so violently disproved both at the social and the political levels as well as in its experiential dimension that the very legitimacy of the historical enterprise is shaken' (Huyssen 2003:5). Black South Africans were beginning to get worried about the part of history to rely on. This confusion resulted in an eruption, perhaps an outcry, in academic

institutions geared towards creating a future that is not crafted in the image of an oppressive structure of White domination.

Furthermore, the architectural composition of Rhodes' statue points to his interest in some British colonies. One could add that the granite base and bronze statue indicate his interest in mining, an occupation which at the time relied largely on cheap labour. The elevated position of the statue can also be considered as a figure of superiority, domination, and oppression of which people must look up in order to see (Molyneaux 1994:10). This elevation almost deifies him. Arguably, South Africa's decolonization agenda will not reach its full potential if structures which advance the glorification of colonial oppressive heroes are made to stand.

The destruction of Rhodes monument received conflicting opinions in South Africa. Some saw it as the destruction of that which meant White supremacy, academic emancipation, as Rhodes created a scholarship scheme in Rhodes University. Considering the gross social and economic inequality in South Africa, the move for the destruction of historical monument has emerged as a challenge to the systematic inequality and economic marginalisation of black South Africans. This challenge of historical injustices, represented in the move for the destruction of historical monument, is a response to the disengaged disposition to retributive and distributive justice. Others saw it as a victory against a structure of oppression. The rightness or wrongness of these conflicting positions depends entirely on the narrative or script that is considered among the multiple meanings that his statue depicts. This point will be further explored as I proceed.

Before proceeding to the next section, which looks at the ethical question of human beings and the destruction of things that reminds human beings of their history, it important to pass a cursory look at the moral dissonance that is glaring when one critically engages the relationship that exists between #RhodesMustFall protest and the cases of xenophobia in South Africa. The recognition of a collective humanity, dignity and justice must be understood in universal terms. In other words, the fight against oppression is conflicted when those asking for change become perpetrators of oppression themselves. While this is a discussion for another project, it is important to briefly highlight it here.

8.4. Ethical Questions on Human Being and Destruction of Monuments

Is there a justification for the criminalisation of the destruction of historical monuments? If one is to consider the fact, as already highlighted, that no physical harm is directly inflicted on anyone, will it still be viable to hold someone accountable for the destruction of historical monuments? These among other concerns are pertinent. Having in mind our understanding of the connection between human being and things like historical monument, let us attempt some responses to these questions. Braver notes that 'We are

constantly differentiating types of beings by treating particular beings differently, which means that we have an understanding of a number of different ways to be' (Braver 2015:11). The way things are treated are always based on our pre-understanding of the value attached to the things. For instance, when one decides to genuflect before a person, a gesture which could be interpreted as a sign of respect, there is an understanding that is often attributed to this act. Genuflecting before a person is entirely different from genuflecting before a Pencil; if a person genuflects before a Pencil, it might be interpreted to mean 'madness' because the nature of the Pencil is not one deserving of genuflection. Another example might further illuminate this point. Take the phrase 'right to life' for instance, it is often connected to living things and not to non-living things. The way we relate to things is entirely different from the way we refer to human beings. When we relate to human beings, we anticipate a response (passive or active), and when we relate to a thing, there is a passive/programmed relationship on the part of the thing. It is noteworthy that somethings aggravate active response. For the purpose of argument, I argue that we relate to things as equipment, *potentia:* things, in their passive states, are to be used by human beings. Why then does the dormancy in the relationship between human beings and things warrant an ethical consideration?

The significance that we attribute to a thing is often the basis for raising moral questions about its usage. In the case of historical monuments, Molyneaux argues that 'It is this diverse and ever-changing past, part of the multifarious world of ideas and personal and collective agendas of a society, that we encounter in our daily lives and through which we must work' (Molyneaux 1994:2). The desire to understand the past has not only fanned archaeologists' discontent about the obvious and glaring representations of the past, it has also increased the desire to also unearth, in a literal sense, hidden elements that further enlighten our understanding of the past as they are related to the present. There are always further explanations underlying the obvious. This is an endeavour which has '. . . dramatically transformed the archaeological concept of the past and made this discipline more relevant to contemporary concerns' (Molyneaux 1994:1). The relevance that are allotted to things determines their worth. If one is to hold the claim that the significance of a thing is the only justification for its worth, then it is plausible to argue that there is a relational dimension to sculptures, status and monuments. This is based on the fact that amidst the seemingly passive and immobile stance of historical monuments, we find existing relational connotations in the memories that their static state evokes.

What is implicit in the above argument is that monuments illuminate all forms of historical relationality, events that entail human encounters. Put differently, the priority that human beings accord to things show the relevance that has been designated to them. If this is the case, might it be tenable to argue that the destruction of a monument does not affect human beings, or the destruction of static realties is the destruction or distortion of history? What is implied in this question is that aware of the intertwined nature of

monuments and human history, the destruction of one is the destruction and distortion of the other. This will be a gross misjudgement as the destruction of the human being is not the destruction of historical monument. The argument here is that the destruction of monuments is the distortion of human history. We must consider the relationship that exists between historical monuments and human history, and how the destruction of monuments is necessarily the destruction and distortion of human history. We cannot talk about the statues/monuments without talking about human history. The significance of the sculptures and monument weighs heavily on the relevance that is attributed to it by the human history.

Even when we speak about memories that are often attributed to the nature of historical monuments, we refer to these memories in relation to human beings. Memories are embedded in historical monuments not because in and of themselves they possess memories. The significance accorded to monuments emerge from the memories human beings have attributed to these monuments. According to Jonah Bromwich (2020), statues/monument are made to glorify people and ideas. The connection here is that monuments, in their static state, give us better understanding of human history. As such, I think there is a moral ground for questioning the destruction of a historical monument. The idea that is advanced here is that the destruction of a historical monument is the destruction of human beings' attempt to better understand their history as it is stretched in the tripartite connection between the past, present and future.

It will be simplistic and false to maintain that the destruction of historical monuments goes against the imperative which obliges individuals not to destroy monuments. However, it is important to engage the necessarily conditions for the destruction of historical monuments, and will this destruction also diminish human understanding of itself. Take for instance a historical monument which gives an understanding of the past that people want to erase from their memory as they consider this 'past' detrimental for their present and future, would it be wrong to destroy such a historical monument? According to Huyssen, there are situations whereby what is '[a]t stake . . . is not only a disturbance of our notions of the past, but a fundamental crisis in our imagination of alternative futures' (Huyssen 2003:2). Huyssen reiterates the connection which the past has to the present in human beings' attempts at imagining a future. What she does, however, is to place an emphasis on the future, the worries and fear of replicating an undesirable memory from the past. The question here is, how does one seek a future amidst the weight of undesirable burdens of the past?

The destruction of Rhodes' statue in South Africa is a clear indication of the possibility of an eruption of violence in the attempt to fashion a future with an understanding of the past. Molyneaux maintains that, '. . . the problem is that the national infrastructure may still reflect the priorities and practices of colonialism' (Molyneaux 1994:10). The colonial past remains a lingering nightmare in the life of oppressed blacks in South Africa. What to do with past

oppressive structures raise ethical questions which academics have tried and are still grappling with. The tripartite understanding of human connection to monuments proffers a suitable solution on how to address the moral issues it evokes. The past is not a series of isolated experiences which must be discarded because of the emergence of new ideas. Contrary to destruction, I propose a conscious awareness of the past in order to keep track of the paths which have led to the present and are now stretching to future prospects.

The memories that historical monuments evoke give a different perspective on how to deal with the moral questions surrounding the destruction of historical monuments. The nature of the social and political circumstances that warrant the destruction of a historical monument remains a puzzle. In the case of South Africa, where the intention behind the destruction of historical monuments is to eradicate oppressive colonial past, might it be erroneous to legitimise the destruction of oppressive structures? A historical monument cannot be destroyed even when the memories pose a real problem to the minority. The point here is that decision should be made on majority and minority votes. But how does one hold this as a justification for not destroying a historical monument? In view of arguments such as Molyneaux's: '. . . this is the problem: the past that is presented may be that of a single, dominant group in a society or, as is so common in countries now independent but with a colonial past, one that still reflects the colonialist view' (Molyneaux 1994:3). This makes it difficult to justify an argument on preserving or destroying a historical monument based on a collective decision as most 'collective decisions' are simply decisions of the majority. It is difficult, say, in a country like South Africa, to come up with a collective decision. The irony is that the destruction of a historical monument does not remove the memory it once evoked. In fact, the space retains the memory in the absence of the monument. However, this memory is represented differently and influenced by the discourse which led to its removal.

I argue that it is important to also enquire about whose narrative is considered when one seeks to validate the rightness or wrongness of a destruction. Returning to the #RhodesMustFall! incidence, the statue of Rhodes means different things to different people. For some blacks, it is a symbol of colonial oppression, and for some Whites, it brings the memory of a person who contributed enormously to South Africa's education system. If we are to adopt the understanding of memory as stemming from communication, as Assmann & Czaplicka (2008:126) suggest, how then can we attain collective memory when the knowledge of this memory is fractured along perspectival lines of the oppressed and the oppressor? Assmann and Czaplicka object to the arguments that when there is a transition from an oral (communicative) presentation of memory to an objective culture in the form of monuments, buildings, rites, among other forms, memory falls (Assmann & Czaplicka 2008:128). To talk about cultural memory as opposed to the oral-communicative memory, according to Assmann and Czaplicka, presents a conception of memory which distances itself from the everyday. In distancing itself from

the everyday, cultural memory assumes a stance which is fixed and a horizon that is unchanging with the passing of time (Assmann & Czaplicka 2008:129). They go on to argue 'that a group bases its consciousness of unity and specificity upon this knowledge and derives formative and normative impulses from it, which allows the group to reproduce its identity. In this sense, objectivized culture has the structure of memory' (Assmann & Czaplicka 2008:128). The formative and the normative are products of a particular worldview; even if they are influenced by the relationship they had with others, the uniqueness which makes them stand out is always evident. In view of this analysis, historical monuments, and their cultural nature, authenticate a culture-specific narrative which makes a collective narrative untenable.

The moral stance that one assumes largely depends on the narrative which is espoused. Assman and Czaplicka write, "The objective manifestations of cultural memory are defined through a kind of identificatory determination in a positive ('We are this') or in a negative ('That's our opposite') sense" (Assmann & Czaplicka 2008:130). Cultural memory presents a sharp cleavage between those who belong and those who do not belong. Patricia Davison shares this intuition when she maintains that in the creation of memory in museums, there exists inclusion and exclusion because the memory represented in museums are 'official memories' (Davison 998:145). If one decides to take an ethical position based on the level of degree of those who consider destruction to be right or wrong, we might end up advancing an imperial system whereby 'collective decision' is based on the decision of a majority or an elite minority group. In order to resolve this dilemma, it might be important to further explore what memory means. Snyman argues that there is need to evoke the politics of memory as a way of battling the struggle which exists between memory and forgetting (Snyman 1998:312). Snyman in her attempt to find a connection between monuments and memory refers to Arthur C. Danto, who establishes some reasons why monuments are erected.

> We erect monuments so that we shall always remember and build monuments so that we shall never forget . . .. Monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualise remembrance and mark the reality of ends . . .. Monuments make heroes and triumphs, victories and con- quests, perpetually present and past 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 in Snyman 1998:317).

If one is to consider Danto's postulation as accurate, what then are the justification for the destruction of historical monuments? Danto, although salient in his presentation of what monuments symbolise, misses a significant dimension of an authoritative connotation which monuments can also have. As will be argued shortly, the hermeneutical symbolic representation conferred on

any monument always depends on the narrative of the agents. As illustrated earlier, a monument can either evoke positive or negative memories. Referring to the extermination of Jews in Poland, Snyman argues in the same line as Danto when she observes that historical memories sometimes promote the politics of forgetting because they reduce the historical palette of wars (Snyman 1998:319). She refers to the way the Polish government underplayed the issues of extermination of the Jews in Poland and had sculptures representing how Polish people were affected by the genocide (Snyman 1998:320). The point which has to be extracted from this is the fact that historical memories are sometimes laden with political agenda. To adequately understand any historical monument and the memory they evoke, I argue that it is important to debunk the political motives embedded in these symbols. This agenda points to the advancement of the interests of a few making it difficult to arrive at a collective decision.

With the aforementioned in mind, the same old question remains: under what circumstances should one be punished for destroying or damaging a historical monument? I will like to propose two major justifications for punishing perpetrators: (1) Intentional acts of destruction and (2) unintentional acts of destruction. The intentional acts involve a deliberate destruction of a historical monument by an individual or a group of individuals. In this case, there is often a justification of which the plausibility might be contestable. In the second instance (unintentional acts of destruction), the group has no intention to harm or destroy a monument. This distinction, although significant, does not really resolve the issue at stake, as it is difficult to determine the intention of an individual with regard to the destruction of a historical monument. Hence, the question remains.

A lingering difficulty in arriving at an ethical parameter for judging the rightness or wrongness of the destruction of a historical monument remains. Despite the challenges that might arise in advancing collective decision as the ethical ground for legitimizing the destruction or preservation of a historical monument, I still consider it a plausible stance for measuring the ethical implications of the destruction of historical monuments. The credibility of collective decision has to be based on sufficient representation of the collective.

Persisting on arriving at collective memory calls for a continuous attempt at deciphering this puzzle. How we arrive at what is called 'collective' remains an issue. Jill Edy in his book, *Troubled Past*, argues that '. . . commemoration is very important to the process of building collective memories. Commemorative stories pull together scattered references to the past to encourage both re-examination and integration' (Edy 2006:95). Patricia Davison also refers to museum as a location where collective identity can be created, but she refrains from this when she maintains that museums, rather than present collective memories, only advance 'selective memory' (Davison 1998:146). Based on popular opinion, it is difficult to arrive at collective memories. It is indubitable that those who advance the commemoration or make official a particular memory are connected to that memory and often shape the narratives

informing these cultural event(s). Perhaps we might have to rely on Davidson's suggestion when she writes, 'If public memory is to be more than a dominant mythology, new ways of evoking multiple memories will have to be found' (Davison 1998:153). The next section seeks to advance arguments which will lead me to hold the position that multiple memories can only be reconciled through dialogue. The difficulty in coming up with collective decision does not mean that we wait ad infinitum until collective decision is achieved.

8.5. The Danger of Sanitising History

Considering the relational dimension that has been linked to historical monuments, how then must we conceptualise the past in the present such that destroying the past (historical monuments) seizes to be an option to be considered? According to Molyneaux, '. . . [I]t is difficult, even impossible, to distinguish the past from the objects, structures and institutions that carry it today' (Molyneaux 1994:4). If the destruction of a historical monumental implies a damage to the past, I argue that a problem immediately emerges in our understanding of the present and our prospects for the future. The way the pass is conceived always informs how memories are received: they can either promote disharmony or harmony.

The ethical stance remains problematic especially when one advances the claim such as Molyneaux's that '. . . no amount of moralizing or legislation can identify just what level of 'past' should be supported and promulgated, as the value of the presented past to the life and well-being of an individual or group depends on whose interest is at stake' (Molyneaux 1994:7). Is the problem immediately resolved when we differentiate between monuments and structures of oppression? According to Molyneaux, 'The restoration or recreation of an 'excluded past', in the form of a more localized or specific knowledge, may possibly be disadvantageous because it fails to address the structural aspects of oppression' (Molyneaux 1994:7). Does Molyneaux suggest that there exists a sharp contrast between actual structures of oppression which must be eradicated from historical monuments? If this is true, then there is a gross implausibility in his line of argument. As earlier underscored, historical monuments sometimes serve the purpose of an oppressive structure.

Molyneaux's admonishment is noteworthy: 'In practical terms, those involved in representing and teaching about the past must not only consider the diversity of peoples and histories within their own societies in order to widen the scope of their presentations but also be aware that no past is necessarily sacrosanct, that tradition can also be a burden and a form of control' (Molyneaux 1994:10). There is an implicit challenge in the non-sacrosanct way in which historical monuments must be understood. The point here is that historical past should not become a burden such that it is imposed on people in a way that it hinders them from moving with the changing world. This should not legitimise the destruction of a historical site either.

Turning to historical monuments and the human relational connection which has been emphasised in this article, the role that monuments play in the understanding of the human history must not be taken for granted. We can use this model in our understanding of historical monuments and the ethical questions that can arise from their damage and destruction. Arguably, the destruction or damage of historical monuments leaves a gap in the self-understanding of any particular group. However, the fact that the memory about a monument is not lost in the destruction of the monument, a different meaning is introduced, and this new understanding replaces the old understanding attributed to the monument. Sometimes, the memories attributed to historical monuments are suppressed in the hope that they are not transmitted. Memories end up lost and forgotten after a while as the narrative seizes to be publicly recognised. It is on this basis that historical monuments must not be destroyed. In the desire to selective choose the lessons to draw from history, we must not lose sight of the whole picture by an unreflective sanitisation of history (Woods 2020).

Even though historical monuments are said to symbolise the past, this past is always viewed in relation to the present. Assman and Czaplicka put this concisely when they argue that 'Cultural memory works by reconstructing, that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation. True, it is fixed in immovable figures of memory and stores of knowledge, but every contemporary context relates to these differently, sometimes by appropriation, sometimes by criticism, sometimes by preservation or by transformation' (Assmann & Czaplicka 2008:130). Looking at Assmann's and Czaplicka's assertion in light of the forgoing position that there exists a relationship between status and human history, I argue that rather than destroy historical monuments for the purpose of eradicating past memories, the memories should be juxtaposed with new ideas. In order to further explicate my point, I will like to return again to the destruction of Rhodes statue.

The architectural explanation of Rhodes' statue as already presented portray an oppressive past, and recent attempts at eradicating the existing structures of the oppression seem to justify the removal of a colonizer's statue in a post-colonial context. However, the intention should not be that of annihilating the memories that these structures evoke, rather these memories should be in dialogue with the new invitations for change. As opposed to removing the statue of Rhodes, a better approach would have been to bring his statue down from the granite base and put it on the ground, at a human height. This is a gesture which I believe demystifies his once elevated position in the society and creates a new narrative in South Africa's attempt at neo-colonial emancipation. Another alternative is to put other statues in dialogue/conversation with the Rhodes' statue. This dialogue will help the narrative continue and present posterity with an adequate understanding of the past, and how the past, in dialogue with current structures of change and revolt, have given birth to the new. Removing the statue seem to reduce the historical palette of oppression in South Africa and forges a South Africa which might become oblivious of the past in centuries to come.

Generally speaking, human relation to the past does not entail an emanatory act in the sense of freeing oneself from the past. Rather, it involves an awareness which does not promote stagnation in the past. It also entails authentic engagement with history in such a way that promotes a significant and accurate knowledge of the past, present and future that this awareness potentially opens. It is in this light that I argue that the destruction of Rhodes' statue creates a missing link is the historical narrative of colonialism, apartheid and White supremacy, among other narratives that pertain to the post-colonial agenda in South Africa.

8.6. Conclusion

In the analysis presented above, one cannot but arrive at a dilemma regarding parameters that can be used in determining whether the destruction of a historical monument is ethically wrong or not. Arguing from the relationship that exists between monuments and human beings, it does appear clearly that it is wrong to destroy historical monuments as they play a major role in explaining and revealing human histories. When one shifts from the monuments and what historical monuments symbolise to human beings, we return to the same difficulty in determining the ethical ground for legitimizing moral rightness or wrongness in the destruction of historical monuments.

Historical monuments are often looked at from different horizons, as articulated by Assmann and Czaplicka: "The basic attitude toward history, the past, and thus the function of remembering itself introduces another variable. One group remembers the past in fear of deviating from its model, the next for fear of repeating the past: Those who cannot remember their past are condemned to relive it" (Assmann & Czaplicka 2008: 133). This dilemma puts this debate in a box and reduces the chances of objectivity in the attempt to determine which memory is more valuable than the other or which memory should be superimposed on the other. Regardless of the lingering dilemma, I argue that the destruction of historical monuments is ethically wrong. I also argue that considering the need to retain historical narratives, even if the intent is to eliminate oppressive historical past, historical monuments should not be destroyed. Historical monuments are agent of memories, and it is the task of individuals is to continue to engage these memories in order to shape orthodox views which seek the modern (Davison 1998:158). The destruction of historical monuments, with the hope of sanitising history, only reduces the complex realities of the past and plunges human beings into an obscure knowledge of history.

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