

TRANSFORMATION OF HERITAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON APARTHEID STATUES AND MONUMENTS

- ▶ Historical Context:
- ▶ **Colonial justification...**
- ▶ *“Central Africa... is without a history. In that savage country...we find no vestiges of the past-no ancient architecture, neither sculpture, nor even the one chiseled stone to prove that the Negro savage of this day is inferior....” (Sir Samuel Baker, 1874)*
- ▶ *If you read the history of any part of the Negro population of Africa, you will find nothing but dreary recurrence of tribal wars, and an absence of everything which forms stable government, year after year, generation after generation, century after century, these tribes go on obeying no law but force....” (Sir Bartle Frere)*

Justification of conquest

This justification led to the conquest, destabilization and disintegration of African societies and African families, and obliteration of African values, culture, heritage and symbols through violent colonial means.

Thus, whenever colonialism and imperialism finds its expression, it does that, firstly, through violent means, secondly, by putting new cultural and political symbols which entrench colonial dominance and fear in the psych of the subjugated.

African Voice challenges Eurocentric stereotypes

- *‘For a long time, all kinds of myths and prejudices concealed the true history of Africa from the world at large. African societies were looked upon as societies that could have no history...the continent of Africa was hardly ever looked upon as a historical entity’* (Amadou-Mahter)
- Amadou-Mahter draws a historical context that gives us a perspective on why colonialists and imperialists labeled Africa as a dark and primitive place.
- Therefore her peoples deserved to be conquered, enslaved and colonized and new symbols and tools of cultural dominance have to be put up to justify new order.
- In South Africa, the apartheid system was the most convenient political system used to entrench colonial and imperial symbolism through new symbols and tools of cultural dominance like statues and monuments

South African colonial context

- ▶ The “Settler [occupation] and colonialism in Southern Africa” was a catalyst to put up;
- ▶ New political order,
- ▶ To install new “cultural tools [that] foster[ed] imperialism” ,
- ▶ To entrench political dominance and subjugation.
- ▶ To inscribe our indigenous landscapes with new symbols, interpretation and colonial psych to the subjugated

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Thus, Settler occupation did not only foster;

- ▶ colonial dominance and subjugation but it imposed new symbols on the indigenous landscape, like the construction of colonial statues and monuments and military forts which were symbols of colonial might and cultural imperialism.
- ▶ Colonial names for towns, rivers and mountains and new ways of life

Argument

Thus, I would argue that the Colonial and apartheid statues and monuments in Africa/South Africa that flourished during colonialism and imperialism settlement are 'tools of cultural and political dominance' that must be dealt with in the context of heritage transformation.

My argument is underpinned by the following questions;

- ▶ Why do we still embrace these colonial symbols, 'tools of imperialism' that are constant reminders of enslavement, imperialism and subjugation knowing very well that they were constructed to justify imperialism, apartheid and racism?
- ▶ Are these statues and monuments add value to social cohesion or they continue to exacerbate the social and political divides?
- ▶ Whose imperative it is to construct a post-apartheid master narrative?
- ▶ Why questions to remove these colonial statues and monuments are raised?

Fortification of the Eastern Frontier

The colonial encroachment and the wars against land dispossession led to the massive 'Fortification on the Eastern Frontier'. For instance the establishment of the following Forts in the Eastern Frontier;

- ▶ Fort Hare,
- ▶ Fort Brown,
- ▶ Fort Cox,
- ▶ Fort Jackson,
- ▶ Fort Murray,
- ▶ Fort Owen, Fort
- ▶ Warwick and
- ▶ Fort White was a true manifestation of colonial military might, 'cultural tools to foster imperialism' and institutionalization of colonial authorities over African authorities.

Fortification of the Eastern Frontier



Martello
Fort



Fort
Brown



Double
Drift
Fort

Ruins of Fort Hare UFH in Alice



Fort Hare
at
University
of Fort
Hare

Inscription on the Fort Hare



MILITARY TOOLS TO FOSTER IMPERIALISM



Thus the fortification of the Eastern Frontier and systematic colonial monumentalization was a deliberate inscription of indigenous landscape with colonial landmarks and symbols in order to obliterate the shared memory of the subjugated.

It was a serious political statement by colonial authorities to impose new order, to instill Eurocentric psychological orientation.

CULTURAL TOOLS TO FOSTER IMPERIALISM OF A SPECIAL TYPE



The construction of colonial monuments in South Africa imposed a new political order, new Victorian and Voortrekker imperialist culture. They were symbolic and visual representations of colonial victories over the indigenous people.

And other monuments as imperial cultural tools were presented as pinnacles of cultural progression informed by Voortrekker values like the Afrikaans taal monuments in Paarl

The Afrikaans Taal Monument in Paarl 'commemorates the semi centenary of Afrikaans being declared an official language of South Africa separate from Dutch'

A STATUE THAT DEPICTS WHITE SUPREMACY



Cecil John Rhodes is a clear and true depiction of a white man believing in white supremacy to rule the world.

“I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. I contend that every acre added to our territory means the birth of more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into the existence.

Added to this, the absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule simply means the end of all wars.”
(Rhodes to W.T. Stead, 19 August 1891)

PAUL KRUGER; EMBODYMENT OF APARTHEID IDEOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA



Paul Kruger, was known as boer political and military leader and President of the South African Republic from 1883 to 1900. He laid a foundation for the apartheid laws and policies to flourish.

Hence “David Motsamai branch of ANCYL in Sunnyside, Pretoria said it was “making all the necessary logistical arrangements to get a date to march to the Church Square to hand over a memorandum that the statue of Paul Kruger must be removed....”

ANC Draft National Cultural Policy

Against this background I would concur with the view that;

- ▶ *“Colonialism and apartheid neglected, distorted and suppressed the culture of the majority of South Africans.*
- ▶ *The freedom of expression was destroyed and systematic efforts were made at stifling creativity.*
- ▶ *Communities were denied resources and facilities to develop their own cultural expressions, unless they coincided with the aims of the colonial masters.*

▶ ***BUT***

Why do we still embrace colonial symbols, 'tools of imperialism' that are constant reminders of enslavement, imperialism and subjugation knowing very well that they were constructed to justify imperialism, apartheid and racism?

As South Africans, we embraced these statues and monuments because we are persuaded by South African constitutions that advocates that;

- ▶ We, the people of South Africa,
- ▶ Recognise the injustices of our past;
- ▶ Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
- ▶ Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity...to heal the divisions of the past...on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;

Are these statues and monuments add value to social cohesion or they continue to exacerbate the social and political divides?

- ▶ Some of the statues and monuments do not add value to social cohesion nor to the project of building a new and united nation because of their inaccurate design.
- ▶ They do not have a content and context that promotes one single South African identity
- ▶ They do not help to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights....” (Preamble of South African constitution)
- ▶ “In heritage we talk about those things that we would love to embrace going forward, our identity” (Sonwabile Mancotywa)
- ▶ Therefore if heritage does not “heal the divisions of the past...” but exacerbate the social and political divides, it must be taken away from the public spaces to the dark museum stores

Whose imperative it is to construct a post-apartheid master narrative?

- ▶ In South Africa we have a challenge of an ideological and state driven post apartheid master narrative
- ▶ In South Africa, it has become a mandate of the state through pieces of legislations to construct a post-apartheid master narrative.
- ▶ These legislations have superseded the voices of communities in terms of re-imagining, constructing a post apartheid master narrative
- ▶ For instance National Heritage Act of 1999, Section 4 makes it clear that the objectives of the council is to construct heritage and further impose to communities what post apartheid master narrative should be like with respect to heritage
- ▶ I want to submit that construction of post apartheid master narrative is state driven and monitored and communities are at the receiving end of these products

Why questions to remove these colonial statues and monuments are raised?

- ▶ Presence of these colonial statues and monuments in the public domain do not resonate with the founding principles of the democratic constitutions of South Africa
- ▶ These statues and monuments invoke sentiments of racism and white supremacy in the public domain
- ▶ They continue to remind South Africans about heritage transformation that is compromised, stagnant and state driven
- ▶ Continue to remind that South Africans believed in transformation than in radical change of the heritage landscape and status quo
- ▶ South Africans are still trapped in racism and in racial wars, and the architects of that racism in the form of statues and monuments are still haunting South Africans

What type of Statues and Monuments that South Africans need?

- ▶ South Africans do not need controversial statues and monuments that continue to tear off the social fabric
- ▶ South Africans need statues and monuments that will be embraced and protected by everyone irrespective of creed and cultural background
- ▶ They need statues and monuments that do not remind them about their troubled past
- ▶ They need statues and monuments that will entrench social cohesion and minimize dangerous political divides
- ▶ They need statues and monuments that promote the founding principles of our constitution

Cont:

- ▶ Statues and Monuments that will construct one South African identity, a sense of South Africaness irrespective of the challenges that we face as a nation
- ▶ South Africans need statues and monuments that will promote “unity in diversity”
- ▶ The “road to independence” did not only liberate South Africans in particular Africans from the wretched of apartheid but it also freed white people from being prisoners of racism and of themselves.
- ▶ This is the reason why we need new national memory, new cultural symbols that will bind us together as a nation

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- ▶ To what extent the state can influence the production and transformation of heritage?
 - ▶ How do we arrest the ideological under current in the production of statues and monuments?
 - ▶ Should the future statues and monuments be politically and ideological neutral?
 - ▶ What could be the new ways of remembering and celebrating our collective past without being offensive
 - ▶ Do the colonial statues and monuments that are state and ideological driven unite a fragmented nation like South African nation?

- ▶ Transformation of heritage in South Africa will always have negative repercussions on the existing colonial statues
- ▶ Transformation in South African is a political and ideological charged notion
- ▶ Transformation is of heritage in South Africa is not community driven but state driven and state monitored
- ▶ The post apartheid master narrative has strong state narratives and messages which have a potential to divide than uniting the nation
- ▶ The voices and role of previously disadvantaged communities has been superseded by the voices of various councils established through the Act
- ▶ The question may be; who heritage is it that is transformed
- ▶ Is it the state or community heritages?



Never, never and
never again shall it be
that this beautiful land
will again experience
the oppression of one
by another and suffer
the indignity of being
the skunk of the world
- Nelson Mandela,
Inaugural Address,
Pretoria 9 May 1994.