

MEMORY, PLACE AND NATION-BUILDING: REMEMBERING  
IN THE 'NEW' SOUTH AFRICA

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this project was to look at memory and memorialization in Cape Town in order to better understand the role of sites of memory and memory initiatives in the making of the 'new' South Africa. This study focuses on connections between memory and place and memory and identity. It also looks at the Cape Town landscape, the ways in which it has changed over time and contestations over sites on this landscape.

This project was conducted as a social analysis project over the period of one month. Visits to monuments and museums, interviews with people involved in memory and heritage work, and attendance at a public seminar regarding the memorialization of recently discovered human remains near the city center were all central to this project. Secondary research was also conducted in carrying out this study.

The findings of this project show that processes of remembering the past are increasingly viewed in the context of building a 'new' South Africa and shaping more inclusive identities. Yet who gets to remember the past and how this is done are hotly contested issues. Struggles over how the past is remembered and by who play out on the landscape and are indicative of wider power struggles that lie at the heart of Cape Town and South Africa's struggle to create a unified nation.

## **Introduction**

Recently I arrived in South Africa as one of a growing population of American study abroad students. Much of my interest in coming to this part of the world was based on the desire to explore 'a country in transition' and see the changes in the 'new' South Africa as they occurred. While I expected to explore the country's past and history of apartheid in my courses, I found that the 'legacy of apartheid' is very much a reality in today's South Africa. Since my arrival I have found a very deep sense of the past in the present, so to speak, and the importance of memory in the process of 'creating' the 'new' South Africa. I have come to see memory as very much related to the present and the future, and not the sole domain of history and the past. As a cultural geographer (or one in the making anyways), I had been introduced in my studies at home to new ways of seeing landscapes, what they do, what they may indicate, and how they are contested (Mitchell 2000). I had looked very briefly at aspects of how the South African landscape under apartheid, and indeed long before, had been racialized and literally inscribed with the dominant ideologies of racial segregation, even as this was contested long before the fall of the apartheid government in 1994 (Western 1996, Mitchell 2000). Recently, there has been growing work in geography related to the study of memory (Said 2000, Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). It has been here in South Africa that I have come to see memory and landscape as interrelated and both as important in processes of nation building and identity formation.

This study is particularly relevant because South Africa is internationally recognized to be at the forefront of issues of reconciliation, and within that memory. This is in large part due to the international attention that the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission received as it strove to bring out the realities of the apartheid era in the interest of healing. The politics of memory: how the past is remembered, by whom and why (and how that is contested) are central issues to South Africa today as it struggles to create a "non-racial

democracy” coming out of its divided past. In this, the power of memory and heritage, and how it plays out in the material form of the landscape, are central to South Africans and South Africa as a country. As a representative from the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, an initiative that came out of the TRC, recently told me, memory is “like a smokescreen for so many other things” (Jaynes 27 November 2007, personal communication).

The central objectives of this social analysis project from its conception have been the following: First, I have set out to explore the role of memory in the ‘new’ South Africa in regards to constructing a ‘South African’ identity. Within this, my objectives were specifically to understand questions of how the past is memorialized and by whom. On a more personal level, it is my goal that this small project may contribute in some small way to discourses around South Africa’s past that allow space for the creation of more empowering identities without glossing over the complexities of the past. Furthermore, I hope that this small project will serve to educate and better inform myself and my peers in the U.S.A. about South Africa and how it is dealing with the legacy of apartheid. In this sense, I hope to take some of the debates, lessons and theories around processes of remembering I have encountered here to make myself and others think more creatively and critically around similar issues in my home and university communities.

In following from these objectives I have structured my paper into eight sub-sections. To begin, I explore some of the discourse I have encountered in South Africa around the idea of nation and the creation of a post-apartheid national identity(ies). In doing this, I draw on my learnings in the central seminar of my study abroad program, *Multiculturalism and Social Change*. In this section I argue that memory is central to the nation-building process. In the following two sections of the paper I look at memory and landscape, two of the main foci of this project. In the section on memory I discuss the interrelatedness of memory, heritage and history and ways of viewing these concepts. I then turn to landscape and its value in social

analysis, giving a brief history of the Cape Town landscape. This section draws heavily on John Western's *Outcast Cape Town* (1996) as well as theory presented in Don Mitchell's *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (2000) and the work of Edward Said (2000). In following from this brief look at the concept of landscape, I turn to an analysis of the Cape Town landscape in regards to sites of memory, those physical markers on the landscape that commemorate the past. Next I look at such sites along with the District Six Museum and the Robben Island Museum and argue that memory as it relates to these sites and projects is selective. This section, too, shows how memory relates to nation-building. The next two sections explore debates around how the past is remembered and who has the power to make memories known.

The final section serves as somewhat of a case study of where South Africa, or rather Cape Town, is at in terms of memorializing the past. Here I look at interactions between the following three groups: memory and heritage; nation-building and rights to the city; and place and landscape. This is done through an analysis of the events and discourse that have taken place regarding the discovery in 2003 of an 18<sup>th</sup> century informal burial ground at Prestwich Place in the former District One, officially known as Green Point (PPPC Public seminar 17 November 2007). This section draws on both primary and secondary material and was especially influenced by a public seminar I attended held by the Prestwich Place Project Committee on 17 November 2007. The interviews I conducted with those involved with the site also provide much of the information here. The struggle over this site is illustrative of the broader contestations and power struggles present in South Africa today.

Of course, this study is not without its limitations and biases. To begin, I was only able to visit a limited number of sites and memory initiatives during my time here in South Africa. Furthermore, while all six of my interviews provided valuable insights into my project, this study could have been greatly improved with more time to conduct interviews. It

should be pointed out that all interviewees except one have some connection to the District Six Museum, even as many of them are involved in other projects as well. This obviously may have led to some biases in my findings. In regards to the Prestwich Place site in particular, it is recognized that no representatives presenting the viewpoints of developers or the city were interviewed, which could have made this study more complete. As an American student who has been in South Africa for only a mere three months at the time of this project, my lack of knowledge around ways South Africa has engaged with memory and history is probably the most stark limiting factor of this study. Indeed, this project has been very much a learning experience for me and I make no claim that this is a thorough analysis of the role of memory in post-apartheid South Africa. Undoubtedly, my understandings are affected by the largely Western scholarship I have encountered in all of my schooling. It is in spite of these limitations and probably many more that have not been mentioned that I present my project.

## Literature Review

As I've found out since starting my project, the study of memory and memorialization as they relate to the landscape and 'forging' national identity(ies) is anything but straightforward. And in reality, what research in cultural geography isn't fraught with complexity, footnotes, abstract notions and complex definitions? This is not to mention that coming into the field of studying memory in South Africa one finds that much research has already been conducted, even as there is call for more.

Many scholars, and geographers amongst them, have contributed to discourse around nations and nationalism. Probably most famously was Benedict Anderson and his view of nation as "imagined community" (Mitchell 2000). In his book, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*, Don Mitchell (2000) takes a critical look at 'nation' and nationalisms as changing, fluid and linked to structures of power. The work of Dr. Neville Alexander (1997) speaks specifically about constructing a South African identity and what that might entail. In the process he critiques notions such as rainbow nationalism. Literature on landscapes was also reviewed. Looking at mall culture, Mitchell (2000) describes landscapes as sites of struggle and as forms of social regulation. John Western's *Outcast Cape Town* (1997) helped provide a framework for understanding Cape Town's racialised landscape under apartheid. The introduction to Barbara Binder and Margot Winer's (2001) book, *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place* further enhanced my knowledge of landscape and also how memory is connected to place. In his article, *Identity, Place, Landscape and Heritage*, Christopher Tilly (2006) also explores the contested nature of landscapes as well as the role of landscape in shaping social identities and the role of memory and heritage in nation building. Finally, in *Invention, Memory, and Place*, Edward W. Said (2000), without whom many cultural geographical analyses would be incomplete, explores the relations between power, memory, and place in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Many writers have written on memory, place, and identity in the South African context. Works by Ciraj Rassool (2000; 2007), Crain Soudien (1990; 2007; forthcoming), and Charmaine McEachern (2002) discuss the work of the District Six Museum as well as the relevance of memory and the past to South Africa today. Annie Clarke and Chris Johnston's (2003) work on memory in Australia provided useful ways of looking at memory and heritage. Lucien Le Grange's (2001) article, *District Six, Urban Place and Public Memory* demonstrates the centrality of place to the ways in which people remember the past. The work of Nick Shepherd and Christian Ernsten (2007; 2006) was invaluable in analyzing the events around Prestwich Place. Similarly, Antonia Malan's (2003) paper prepared in light of the discovery of the burial ground at Prestwich site provided both a timeline of events and also highlighted many of the critical debates around the remains. In their article, *Memory and place: Geographies of a critical relationship*, Steven Hoelscher and Derek Alderman (2004) look at the Robben Island Museum and the role of memory and place in the construction of modern identities. Ryan (2005) provides a critical analysis of Cape Town's Waterfront arguing that the area chooses to market a particular way of remembering the past.

I thought it worthy of note to point out that many of the geographers I cited were 'Western' scholars, coming predominantly from the United States and Europe. I applied many of their theories and ways of seeing to the South African context, a method itself that might be critiqued. I did utilize some of the vast research done by South African academics on memory and heritage. Some of South Africa's models around memorializing the past, such as the District Six Museum in Cape Town, are known to be influential elsewhere in the world (Abrahams 26 November 2007, personal communication).

The literature reviewed for this ISP has by no means been thorough; rather it is only a sampling of the many contributors to the study of memory, place and identity.

## **Methodology**

This independent study project was carried out as a social analysis project over the course of four weeks. Approximately three weeks were spent collecting information. While a practicum may have provided useful insights, I felt that the route I chose allowed for an analysis with a wider scope that took in various memory sites and projects in the Cape Town area. In my research I chose to combine participation and visiting sites and ongoing projects, secondary research, and conducting interviews. In this project I draw on various components of our program such as visiting Robben Island and participating in the two-day peace workshop with the Direct Action Center for Peace and Memory, an organization based in Cape Town and made up of former combatants of Umkhonto Wesizwe, the ANC's military arm during the apartheid years. I also spent time visiting the District Six Museum and utilizing the resources there. One of the key contributors to this project was attending a public seminar on the 17 November 2007 at the Prestwich site which was organized by the Prestwich Place Project Committee. This event was recommended to me by my advisor, Dr. Crain Soudien. The four hour seminar, which involved a walk around District One, a viewing of a new ossuary on the site, and a discussion, played a major role in generating my interest around the site. It also provided me with several contacts and a better perspective on heritage issues in Cape Town. I feel that to some extent, these methods were effective means of addressing the central question of the role of memory in the 'new' South Africa.

In addition to visits and research, I conducted six interviews. In what follows I provide a brief background of each interviewee. One interviewee wished to remain anonymous and that interviewee's name has been left out.

Dr. Crain Soudien is a founding member of the District Six Museum and is currently Chairperson of the Museum Board of Trustees. He is a professor in the Department of Education at the University of Cape Town.

Natalie Jaynes is an intern in the Memory, Art and Healing Project of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation<sup>1</sup>.

Stan Abrahams is a founding member of the District Six Museum, a lay preacher in the Methodist Church, member of the District Six Beneficiary Trust, and actively involved with the Prestwich Place Project Committee. He is also a lead facilitator for the Institute for Healing of Memories.

Noor Ebrahim is a founding member of the District Six Museum and active in the Museum where he gives tours and educates youth.

Bonita Bennett is Acting Director of the District Six Museum and also involved with the Prestwich Place Project Committee

The final interviewee (cited in text simply as ‘personal communication’) is part of the District Six Museum staff.

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<sup>1</sup> The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation was established after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission ended in order to carry out the unfinished work of the Commission. The Archbishop Desmond Tutu is the patron (IJR Web site).

**Glossary/ Acronyms**

DACPM: Direct Action Center for Peace and Memory

IJR: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

PPPC: Prestwich Place Project Committee

NHRA: National Heritage Resources Act (NO. 25 of 1999)

SAHRA: South African Heritage Resources Agency

### **Nation-building, identity and memory in the ‘new’ South Africa**

As Dr. Neville Alexander (1997; 5 November 2007) has noted, any comment on nation building in the ‘new’ South Africa must take into account the power of metaphors. Arguably the most dominant metaphor has been that of a ‘rainbow nation’ first applied to the South African context by the famous Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Alexander 1997). This metaphor stresses multiculturalism and the creation of a more harmonious society where race and ethnicity are not sources of discrimination. Dominant discourses around South Africa and the construction of a ‘South African identity’ and what that means have revolved around ideas of ‘diversity’, ‘reconciliation’ and the ‘miracle’ of the political transition (Rassool 2007, 114).

Yet the notion of a rainbow nation has been widely critiqued (Alexander 1997, Erasmus 31 October 2007). Even if well-intentioned to begin with, it is seen as too simple, as reifying difference, failing to acknowledge the past and lacking a critical analysis of power dynamics (Alexander 1997, Erasmus 31 October 2007). Despite the shortcomings of such discourses, many see the creation of a national identity as crucial to the success of working towards a more inclusive and just society: “Our primary identity should be that of being South African, not in an exclusivist or national-chauvinist sense,” argues Alexander (1997).

Drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson, many scholars have recognized the notion of nation as “imagined community” (Mitchell 2000, Tilly 2006). Nations are seen to be always in formation, maintained, changed, and contested (Mitchell 2000, Said 2000). Mitchell (2000) argues that we must understand ‘nation’ “as both an abstract construction (an imagined community) and a historical reality (a struggled-over people and place)” (269-70). Similarly, identities must be understood as social constructions that are constantly in flux, contested, and hybrid (Mitchell 2000; Said 2000; Alexander 1997; Erasmus 31 October 2007). It is in this context that the question of the role of memory and heritage in the process of constructing a unified South African identity can be examined.

In the Preamble to the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999), current president Thabo Mbeki stated that

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...It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution...

Mbeki is right to recognize the central role of memory and heritage to the present and future of South Africa. The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) establishes the use of the term 'heritage resources' in place of 'monuments' in order to include the following:

places of natural beauty, buildings, street landscapes, objects of historical importance, geological, paleontological and archaeological sites and objects, rock art, shipwrecks, and graves of historical figures and victims of conflict (section 5(14)).

Similarly, Tilly (2006) argues that museums and heritage sites play a major role in nation building through their ability to 'solidify' culture (17). While in the past, heritage had been used in the domination of one group over another (i.e. colonizers over those colonized, white South Africans over black South Africans), the role of heritage now is seen to be that of healing and unifying the nation (Soudien 2007; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). It is those aspects of the past that are deemed relevant to the nation building process that are selected to be remembered (Soudien 2007; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). Before continuing, it is helpful to examine what is meant when we talk about memory.

## Memory, heritage, and history

In studying the ways in which the past is remembered, memory, heritage, and history often become intertwined. The purpose of this section is not to define these abstract terms as such or distinguish between them. However, a brief background of some of the ways in which memory, heritage and history are understood can prove useful to understanding wider debates on processes of remembering the past. Indeed, I recognize that throughout the analysis that follows, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, which I also found to occur in my research. This is perhaps indicative of the vague boundaries between these concepts and their inherent interrelatedness.

Rassool (2000) argues that heritage and history are often seen as opposing forces, with historians claiming the higher ground, that history is more rooted in academia, more accurate and valid (3). Heritage is often seen as more inventive and created (Rassool 2000, 3). However, history itself is also a creation and influenced by “particular times and places” (Rassool 2000, 4). Clarke and Johnston (2003) see heritage as “*an expression of social identity and as a location for community action*” (2). This is an important way of viewing heritage that suggests its connection to people and how they see themselves as well as a medium through which they can exercise agency.

One way memory has also been understood is as “the past in the present” (Clarke and Johnston 2003). This suggests the influence of the present context in which the act of remembering occurs. Writing on collective memory, Edward Said (2000) writes that collective memory is not static or definite, rather it is “a field of activity in which past events are selected, reconstructed, maintained, modified, and endowed with political meaning” (185). As will be shown, the process of selection is particularly relevant in the South African context in understanding the role of museums, heritage sites, and memory initiatives in the nation-building process. *Place* is seen as central to memory and remembering (Bender 2001;

Tilly 2006; Clarke and Johnston 2003; Le Grange 2001). Le Grange (2001) describes the interplay between memory and place, saying

Memory is partially informed by place. Our recollections of past experience are often linked to places w/in the built and natural environment, places that constitute the broader cultural landscape in which we live our lives (106).

Speaking to members of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation's Memory Project, Judge Albie Sachs Sachs (2005) argued that those sites of memory established with a direct connection to the location they are in, such as the Robben Island Museum, are the most powerful whereas places like the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg lack this direct link to a past event or people on site.

## **Landscape as a medium for social analysis**

Drawing on the work of Barbara Bender, Christopher Tilly (2006) sees landscape as “a medium for the analysis of social identities and as wide as the social and political perspectives of those who use and embrace it” (6). Indeed, Bender (2001) herself argues that the study of landscape is more than an academic task, it also is an indicator of “the complexity of people’s lives, historical contingency, contestation, motion and change” (2). The Cape Town landscape is one with a history of contestation and change and can be used to understand some of the broader social issues and struggles in South Africa today. In particular, a look at the memorials and monuments in Cape Town mirrors some of these issues.

Under the apartheid government of the white National Party, which came into being in 1948, the Cape Town landscape became a highly radicalized space (Western 1996). Based on the assumption that segregation was good for all race groups, which generally consisted of the categories Coloured, Indian, Black, and White, Cape Town was subject to the process of ‘social engineering’ (Western 1996). The Group Areas Act of 1950, which divided the city into separate zones for racial groups was a key component this process. Tens of thousands of residents were forcibly removed in the process of carrying out this plan and the physical landscape was reworked (District Six Museum; Western 1996). But far from a complete process, this was contested and complex (Western 1996). In District Six, for example, 60,000 people, predominantly classified as ‘Coloured’ by the government were forcibly removed over a period of 15 years after the District was declared a White Group Area in 1966 (District Six Museum; Abrahams 26 October 2007). Yet, the area was never inhabited by a white population as evicted residents refused to allow this last act after seeing their community literally bulldozed to the ground (McEachern 2002; Abrahams 26 October 2007).

With the transition to a democratic government in 1994, racist legislation has been made illegal. While in theory blacks may live where whites live and vice versa, the legacy of the apartheid years lives on and can be seen in the black workers who come in from townships like Langa, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha to work in the city each day before commuting home and in the gentrified, affluent and trendy (and very white) areas of places like Green Point or the Waterkant near the inner city. The landscape of Cape Town today is indicative of continued inequality in the country its relationship to the racism of the past. Yet the landscape is also changing. One way of seeing this is through looking at sites of memory in Cape Town.

### **Sites of memory: re-working the Cape Town landscape**

Talking about history and memory, Stan Abrahams remarked that in Cape Town, one can find many memorials, from statues of Jan van Riebeeck and the colonial times to the French and Portuguese monuments but “there was no memorials of the people who lived here...it’s such a tragedy and an indictment on our country that there is no memorialisation of the people, the ordinary people...” (26 November 2007). At the University of Cape Town, a statue of Cecil Rhodes himself gazes out over the rugby fields, symbolically overlooking the Cape Flats. A brochure of the *UCT Heritage Trail* states

Rhodes’ imperialist and racist attitude towards Africa causes much controversy and resentment today, but without this section of the Groote Schuur estate which he donated for the founding of the university, UCT would probably not have come into existence in 1918...

The University is an historically white-only university that is probably one of the most beautifully situated campuses I have ever seen, with Table Mountain at its back and the city at its foot. Yet this imposing statue seems at once to belong in this majestic environment and to be a out of place. The University today is a place of study for students of all racial backgrounds. Similarly, in a walk through central Cape Town, one finds monuments to various colonial personas, among them Jan Smuts, Bartholomew Dias, and Jan van Riebeeck (see also Western 1996, 140). As Dr. Lize von Robbroek has observed, “the South African landscape is literally littered with monuments to Afrikaner nationalism” (von Robbroek 24 October 2007).

The landscape, while there for everyone to see and make meaning of, is related to hierarchies of power in the sense that people do not all have equal ability or access to influencing the landscape and the meanings it conveys (Mitchell 2000). In many ways, these remnants of South Africa’s divided past serve as reminders of the power held by whites of European descent, who first arrived at the Cape in 1652. Yet, landscapes are dynamic and constantly changing (Mitchell 2000, Bender 2001, Tilly 2006). Indeed, the very fact that

today you can find monuments to ‘the struggle’ shows that historically disadvantaged groups have been able, to some extent, play a more active role in the politics and the public sphere in South Africa.

In recent years there has been a growth of monuments and memorials commemorating ‘the struggle’, as anti-apartheid activists refer to the events and time of resistance to the apartheid government that eventually led to a new democratic ANC-led government in 1994. In September, my peers and I attended a two-day Peace Education Workshop with Direct Action Center for Peace and Memory. The DACPM is based in Cape Town and is made up of former combatants of the military wing of the African National Congress, Umkhonto Wesizwe (MK). The *Journey of Remembrance*, part of the Western Cape Action Tour Project (WECAT) was a central component of the workshop. The Journey is a project that brings “history to life with the sites, stories, and memories at the heart of Cape Town’s resistance to Apartheid” (DACPM pamphlet). Beginning on the barren land of what was once the lively community of District Six, we traveled through Cape Town to Crossroads, stopping in townships of the Cape Flats including Langa, Gugulethu and Athlone. Among the memorials visited was that of the Gugelethu Seven, young men brutally shot dead by members of the South African police in 1986 as well as a statue of Robert Waterwich and Coline Williams in Athlone near the public toilets. One finds out that Robert and Coline were young anti-apartheid activists thought to be killed by state security agents as they plotted to place a mine at the magistrate’s court to protest whites-only elections (DACPM workshop, Grunebaum 2001). Nearby, the Trojan Horse memorial commemorates the killings of three young boys shot dead by security forces in 1985 (DACPM workshop, Grunebaum 2001, Khoisan 2001). These monuments to the struggle are newer additions to Cape Town’s landscape and in many ways seek to claim the city as a space not only for colonial and apartheid-era powers to commemorate their leaders and their history, but also for those who have been excluded in the

past to put their mark on the land, tell their story and shape social consciousness. Yet the erection of such monuments is not without their complexities, some of which will be explored in the next section.

### **What is remembered: selective remembering and the ‘new’ South Africa**

Using the phrase ‘selective remembering’ is somewhat repetitive because all memory is selective by nature. Memory is always an ongoing process that, crucially, is shaped by the present context in which events and people are remembered (Soudien 27 November 2007; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004). The present context of a ‘new’ South Africa struggling to overcome the divisions of apartheid is highly influential on processes of remembering and inserting memory into the public consciousness.

The many ‘struggle monuments’ such as those incorporated in the DACPM’s Journey of Remembrance do not stand without controversy. Far from being simply a way to include ‘lost voices’ and tell stories that were absent from official narratives, these ‘struggle monuments’ are not without their own forms of exclusion and biases. In the construction of the current Trojan Horse Memorial, for example, the artist of the original memorial was never consulted before his work was taken down to make room for a more official plaque which pays tribute to the young lives lost (Soudien 27 November 2007). Furthermore, such monuments can be problematic in the sense that they commemorate the struggle and are supported by the ANC government yet the violence and injustices committed by ANC activists are rarely spoken of. This sanitized way of remembering the past serves to support the government and runs the danger of failing to address the complexities of the past. Bender (2001) cautions that

Silent voices can become more audible. But again, we need to be wary of romanticizing these voices or turning them into victims, dissenters, purveyors of radical alternatives. There is as much variety, as much potential for good and evil, for suppression and omission, among those ‘without history’ as among those whose history is trumpeted” (5).

One of the accusations of the TRC was the lack of accountability of the ANC on the part of the violence and injustices carried out by its own members in its camps outside the country and in its actions within South Africa. While it is important to make known the bravery and

struggle of anti-apartheid activists, there is a definite danger that remembering the struggle will become a sanitized story, all of its complexities simply glossed over.

The District Six Museum was founded in 1994 out of the Hands of District Six movement, which was active in protesting redevelopment of the District and was successful in this (McEachern 2002, 69). Everywhere in the Museum one sees evidence of the connections between memory and place: from the street signs that were recovered from a man who helped demolish the District to the large map on the main floor where former residents can locate where they lived and sign their names. The emptiness of the land only minutes away also serves as a powerful provocation of memory for former residents.

While the museum was established with a primary focus on being a place of memory for former residents of District Six, it is increasingly also a place for other South Africans, international visitors (Americans constitute 75 percent of Museum visitors) and school children (Ebrahim 4 December 2007). It consciously situates itself in the discourse of creating more inclusive identities and acting as both a model and a motivator for a more inclusive and just South Africa (McEachern 2002, Rassool and Jeppie 1990). Through the work of the Museum, District Six becomes a reminder of the brutalities of apartheid and forced removals, a model for a new South Africa and, through its involvement in getting former residents back to the land, a symbol of healing for the new nation (Rassool and Jeppie 1990). In doing this, the museum intertwines many different memories of the District from former residents. Yet, there is a particular way of telling the story of District Six, of which members of the museum themselves are conscious. Broadly, this narrative presents a representation of the former District Six as a place where people lived together regardless of race or religion, an almost idyllic community that was destroyed by the violence of apartheid but has not been forgotten.

Noor Ebrahim, a former resident of District Six and a founding member of the Museum recalls

But you know, District Six was an amazing place. It was a place where people loved each other, cared for each other and most importantly they respected each other, especially religion...I think the most wonderful memory for me of District Six was, you know, I'm a Muslim but I celebrate Christmas! I celebrate a Hindu holiday...In District Six we had about two synagogues and I used to go and pray with the Jewish community. It didn't bother us. When our Christmas comes we call it Eid ul-Fitr and all my Jewish friends, my black friends...you name it. They will put on [a fez] and they will go with me...That was life. That was what made District Six. We were all one big happy family (4 December 2007).

Another former resident who is also actively involved with the Museum, Stan Abrahams, echoed many of Noor's sentiments on life in the District:

We grew up in a society that didn't really make a big difference whether you were fair-skinned or dark-skinned...All that was of course destroyed in 1996...But we did have a very rich community. I remember seeing lots of Jewish people very near where I lived, the African Xhosa people...I think in District Six we had this model of multiculturalism, of nonracialism, it was actually working, you know, and that is why, for the architects of apartheid this place had to be destroyed. A lot of my friends at school, I would go to their churches and they would come to mine. The Muslim people who lived next door to me would send food or cake... (26 November 2007).

The notion of District Six as a moral example of people living together and a model to follow is present in both of these recollections, which echo representations of the District in the main exhibit, *Digging Deeper*. As Noor explained, education is a central part of the Museum's work (4 December 2007). The use of these memories, along with the more painful ones of homes being bulldozed and people being forcibly evicted is a powerful tool. Whereas District Six was once constructed in the media and by the government as a 'slum' that needed to be demolished, and also as a place solely for 'Coloureds' former residents have taken the initiative to present their own stories and representations of the District as a place of community and diversity. As McEachern (2002) has noted, the narrative of the Museum seems to make the claim that "District Six is the *future*" that what the District once had is

what South Africa is trying to become- a place where people can live together (McEachern 2002, 81).

In this process of remembering, the District is effectively being reconstructed as a model for the new South Africa, a particular way of remembering that is rooted in the reality of the District's past. Yet this power to remember, especially with the intention of shaping more inclusive identities, is complex. It is relevant, too, to understand memory work as a selective process, whether this selection is ill-intentioned, or as appears to be the case with the Museum, good intentioned. Not all memories are seen as conducive to healing and restoration, some have argued (Jaynes 28 November 2007). Yet it is often in the very grey areas of our past, the complexities and often painful memories that we are able to learn the most.

Related to this way of telling the past is the focus of some sites of memory in Cape Town on commemorating the 'big names' of the past. Probably the site that is most well known for this is the Robben Island Museum. The museum is now a World Heritage Site visited by many world leaders and international tourists (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004, 347). Here, visitors take a tour of the prison, often with a former political prisoner who was imprisoned there, with the highlight of the trip being a visit to the cell where Nelson Mandela spent the majority of his 27 years in prison. While it is arguably important to pay tribute to the leaders such as Mandela, who played a central role in resisting apartheid and pushing for a democratic South Africa, some argue that simply telling 'grand narratives' which focus solely on these 'heroes of the past' fall short of the potential that memory work has to be more inclusive (District Six Museum staff member 29 November 2007). Furthermore, narratives such as the one presented on Robben Island tend to glorify these heroes, overlooking some of the complexities of the past.

## **How best to remember?**

As the majority of this project was conducted speaking to South Africans actively involved in memory work through museums, memory projects, and education, a central question was that of how the past is commemorated. My interviews, observations, and research yielded many different ways of bringing out histories under apartheid and working with memories of that time period. These ranged from constructing monuments to collecting oral traditions, to creative ‘arts and healing’ initiatives. However, there are many strong opinions regarding the best way to engage with memories in the ‘new’ South Africa.

One source of contention around commemorating the past in South Africa is the dominance of Western forms of remembering. Much of my discussion thus far has focused on statues and monuments, these physical markers on the land which commemorate past people and events. It would be inaccurate to state that there are two categories of memorializing the past, Western and non-Western. Yet some distinctions can be drawn between ways South Africans see memorialisation versus the more Euro-centric methods of those who supported the erection of statues like the Cecil Rhodes one mentioned above. Judge Albie Sachs (2005) has spoken of the need for more creative and meaningful ways of remembering the past, with an emphasis on traditional African methods such as oral tradition. Speaking to members of the Cape Town Memory Project in June 2005, he said

One has to think of memorialisation on more creative ways that simply putting up big monuments...I’m not against stones and monuments and physical monuments but those are perhaps the least significant forms of memorial that a city needs...[T]he oral tradition is the richest, most powerful recorder of the past.

The collection of oral history has played an important role in the District Six Museum since its conception (Ebrahim 4 December 2007). Another member of the museum related to me the concept of ‘intangible heritage’ describing it as everything “which is not written, which is not a monument, which does not have a statue attached to it” (District Six Museum staff member, 29 November 2007). Intangible heritage encompasses oral history as well as music and

traditional forms of dance, among other things (29 November 2007). The ideas of performance and interaction are important to places such as the District Six Museum. The Memory, Art and Healing Project of the IJR is one project that seeks to involve members of “grassroots communities, many of whom remain marginalized, enabling them to tell their stories” (IJR Annual Report 2006). Dance groups, storytellers, oral history, and craft initiatives are all components of the project (IJR web site). Finally, establishing community or youth centers or bursaries or awards instead of putting up a monument or memorial to commemorate a person or event are other ways of keeping memory alive but making it meaningful and relevant (Khan 2007).

Since 1994, there has also been debate around the colonial and apartheid monuments of the past and whether they should be incorporated into the ‘new’ South Africa. Regarding the Rhodes statue at UCT, the Heritage Trail brochure states that “today, many students question the ways in which these figures continue to be memorialized”. The new government in 1994 chose to allow the many controversial monuments and memorial sites to remain standing after 1994. As Albie Sachs (11 June 2005) said, “You can not, should not, try to wipe out history...But the idea is not that you preserve it just as is, uncritically, as a neutral museum piece.” Nationwide, many of these sites of memory are being reinterpreted and inscribed with new meanings. The Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria, which commemorates Afrikaner pioneers and their defeat of the Zulu army in 1838 at the Battle of Blood River, is one example. Today visitors can take a tour with black tour guides and even hear concerts by black musicians (Bickford 2007).

### **Who can participate in memory and heritage initiatives?**

Finally, another source of contention that I became aware of through my interviews was that of who can contribute to memory work. Natalie Jaynes of the IJR's Memory, Art and healing initiative, noted that many of the people involved in the Memory Project were older and had been actively involved in the struggle (28 November 2007). She spoke of her own experience as a newcomer to the project:

For me to go in and participate as a young, white, English-speaking South African it was incredibly incredibly difficult. I felt very excluded and very much ashamed and unbearably white. It just made me think...Do I really fit in here? And I said yes, of course I fit in here...there's a whole community of people like me and if not like me, moving away from the whole race issue. But young people need to be able to feel that they could attend any of these Memory Project meetings and actually feel that they are able to contribute. But it's a huge challenge and I don't really know how we'll be able to get it right (28 November 2007).

At issue here is the dominance of those involved in the struggle in memory initiatives such as the Memory Project to the exclusion of those without direct links to the struggle. Where can white South Africans fit in helping to tell the histories of marginalized groups? How can young people contribute to this? Jaynes pointed out that getting youth involved is a challenge. When asked about learning about the past in school, she remarked that history has not been taught in a dynamic way in schools, that students often get tired of hearing about 'the struggle' (28 November 2007).

The increasing 'profesionalisation' of the heritage industry also serves to exclude people from contributing to memory projects (Johnston and Clarke 2003). Furthermore, while in the realm of academia there is much literature on these concepts, members of the public do not always speak in the same way about these abstract concepts (Jaynes personal communication 28 November 2007). The ability to get the public involved can be a difficult task, both in the sense of getting people interested in initiatives and in facilitating ways for them to participate which often must overcome barriers around inadequate transportation and lack of time, among other things.

## **Whose City? Memory and Identity at Prestwich Place**

In what remains of this paper I would like to look at memory and heritage and their relationship to identity in the ‘new’ South Africa are playing out at Prestwich Place. It was at this site, on the corner of Buitengracht Street and Somerset Road, that human remains were uncovered in May of 2003 by developers (PPPC public seminar, 17 November 2007; Malan 2003). Eventually it was discovered that the bones were part of a larger area that was an unmarked burial ground. The remains uncovered were found to be those of 18<sup>th</sup> century slaves and marginalized people, those people who “helped to build this city” (PPPC public seminar 17 November 2007; Weeder 2006; Shepherd and Ernsten 2007). The developer, Ari Estathiou of Styleprops Ltd, was involved in demolishing buildings on the site and redeveloping the site to put in luxury apartments (Shepherd and Ernsten 2007). Since the uncovering of these remains, Prestwich Place has become a site of contestation between different actors involved in the site, from the developer and the city to heritage agencies to public groups concerned with the remains. It has proven to be a test case for South Africa’s National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) (Malan 2003). It is also significant in that it highlights struggles over who has a right to claiming space in the city of Cape Town. In many ways, the bones uncovered have reinserted the past into the present and have brought the layers of history of the area to the surface and in the face of modern developments and attempts to erase this history.

Under the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), no person may, without the consent of the South African heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)

destroy, damage, alter, exhume, remove from its original position or otherwise disturb any grave or burial ground older than 60 years which is situated outside a formal cemetery administered by a local authority (36 (3)(b)).

Thus, if a burial site is uncovered, the developer must notify SAHRA immediately and cease activity on the site (NHRA 1999, 36(6)). The developer acted according to this legislation

(Malan 2003). It becomes the responsibility of the developer, in this case Ari Estathiou and Andre van der Merwe, to contract archaeologists and carry out an investigation of the remains (NHRA 1999, 36 (6)(a)). In the case of Prestwich, University of Cape Town archaeologists were contracted (Shepherd and Ernsten 2007; Malan 2003). The developer is also held responsible for assisting anyone who may be a direct descendant to make the arrangements for exhumation and re-interment of the remains or, if no direct descendants are found, “make any arrangements as it deems fit (NHRA 1999, 36 (6)(b)). In order to follow these requirements, a series of public meetings, facilitated by SAHRA, were held over the minimum 60-day period in Athlone, Mitchell’s Plain and St. Andrew’s Church in Cape Town (SAHRA Notice). Even before the meetings were conducted, exhumation had begun. Despite significant public protest to continued exhumation of the remains, SAHRA issued a permit to continue exhumations in September of 2001 (Shepherd and Ernsten 2007; PPPC 2007). While the developer seemed to recognize the importance of the site, their main concern was with the escalating costs as the public consultation process prolonged, especially as many of the flats to be built had been pre-sold (Ernsten 2006).

In response to this, the Prestwich Place Project Committee (PPPC) was formed. Formerly the *Hands Off Prestwich Ad Hoc Committee* (HOPACC), the PPPC filed an appeal to SAHRA’s decisions, calling for a stoppage of the exhumations. In October of 2003, an appeal lodged by the PPPC was turned down by SAHRA and excavations continued (Abrahams 27 October 2007). The PPPC’s appeal to the Minister of Arts and Culture was also rejected and construction activities on the site resumed (Shepherd and Ernsten 2007, 221). In the interim period, the committee and others had drawn attention to the inadequate interment of the remains in a nearby warehouse. With the support of Mayor Nomaindia Mfeketho, the remains were ceremoniously transferred to a mortuary of the Woodstock hospital on 21 April 2004 (Abrahams 27 November 2007; PPPC 2007).

It is impossible to understand the events that have unfolded at Prestwich Place without an understanding of the surrounding area and without situating the site in the landscape in which it is located, a landscape that has dramatically changed over time. In the 1600's and 1700's, the area officially known today as Green Point was mainly a peripheral area, having a gallows and several large burial grounds (Shepherd and Ernsten 2007, 216). It was host to both formal and informal burial grounds (Weeder 2006; Shepherd and Ernsten 2007; Malan 2003). Unlike the formal cemeteries, which had their remains transferred when development of the area took hold, the dead of Prestwich Place were simply built over (Weeder 2006). Later, under apartheid, the area came to be known as District One, a name former residents and other South Africans are choosing to use again. Forced removals were also part of the history in District One (PPPC Seminar Walk, 17 November 2007).

A map of Cape Town today, or preferably some general knowledge of the area, shows that Prestwich Place is located in Green Point, a section of Cape Town situated between the central business district (CBD) and the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. The Waterfront is a fairly new commercial development. It is very much a 'mall culture' with lots of restaurants, a large shopping mall, and African boutiques. Ryan (2005) writes that "[t]he Waterfront is designed to project the image of a young, vibrant society gloriously reborn from the ashes of the past" (1). Capitalizing on the notion of multiculturalism, the Waterfront 'sells' difference, promoting itself as a post-apartheid space (Ryan 2005). Upon visiting the Waterfront, you may come across one of the many plaques commemorating history that have been set up at various places before moving on to the next boutique. Ryan (2005) notes that the information on the plaques seems to acknowledge a history of oppression but was edited in such a way as to deny any links between this history and the present (35). While the Waterfront development wants visitors to see this space as inclusive and void of the discrimination and exclusion of the past, it is very much a "racist and classist environment" as Ryan (2005)

shows, observing the whiteness of mannequins and the shoppers themselves (35). Indeed, the Waterfront is an area which, by proximity is not readily accessible to many residents on the Cape Flats or in outer townships, and the stores and restaurants are not exactly inexpensive. (You can imagine my embarrassment when a group of friends and I made reservations at a restaurant and then had to walk out when we saw the menu- R600 a plate!) Just next to the Waterfront, in Green Point, one will find many cafes and shops, art galleries and expensive homes built right on the slopes of the Mountain. It has a very cosmopolitan feel.

Gentrification is occurring in the area and property prices have been on the rise (Shepherd and Ernsten 2007, 216).

Insert into this environment the discovery of human remains. And not just any bones, but significantly, the bones of “the underclass of colonial Cape Town” among them slaves, free blacks, criminals who were executed, and sailors...(Shepherd and Ernsten 2007, 216; PPPC 2007; Weeder 2006). Stan Abrahams put this in perspective, arguing that the Prestwich site “is of national importance, these are the people that you would say who built this place” (27 November 2007). In a landscape of erasure and of much of the memory and history of the area, uncovering a tense and controversial part of history necessarily presents problems for the maintenance of the current landscape. Indeed, the Prestwich site *threatens* the maintenance of this ‘modern’ landscape which seeks to maintain Cape Town, and more specifically Green Point, for white middle and upper-class South Africans (and tourists as well).

In regards to the stance of the PPPC, differences between scientific ways of viewing the remains and social understandings of the remains have come up. First was the notion of ‘direct descent’. Bonita Bennett, Acting Director of the District Six Museum and involved with the PPPC, noted that ‘biology is not the only way to make connections with the past’ (29 November 2007). Dr. Crain Soudien cautions against seeing the remains in purely ‘blood

terms”: “It’s absolutely, for me, critical that everybody in the city look at those people as their responsibility” (27 November 2007). While some people may be able to claim biological links to the remains, Soudien said that seeing this as the only way to make kinship ties is “a very apartheid, very kind of, last 300-years, racialised way of understanding our relationship with the past” (27 November 2007). Like others involved with the Prestwich site, Soudien points to the shortcomings of the African Burial Ground in New York, where racialised understandings of the past have been pronounced in African-American descendant communities laying exclusive claim to the site (27 November 2007).

Secondly there was debate around archaeologists wanting to study the remains and contribute to reconstructing the past by analyzing the bones, which could tell about the lives that were lived by those buried at Prestwich site (Ernsten 2006). The Prestwich Place Project Committee and members of the public challenged the archaeological point of view, arguing for respect for those who were buried, arguing that the bones had social significance (Ernsten 2006; PPPC 2007). In the appeal lodged to the Minister of Arts and Culture, the Committee argued that “[e]xhumation makes impossible a whole range of people’s identifications with that specific space in the city” (PPPC 2007). As Shepherd and Ernsten (2007) ask, “[a]re the bones of the Prestwich Street dead artifacts? Or are they ancestors? And under what conditions might they be both?” (225).

Speaking with people involved with Prestwich Place presented a strong notion of the divide between the city and developers and the public and those involved with memorializing the site. The role of the city government in the Prestwich site and in wider initiatives to commemorate the lives of slaves in the Cape has been controversial. Unlike the rest of South Africa and the Western Cape Province are overwhelmingly pro-ANC, the city of Cape Town is a stronghold for the Democratic Alliance Party. City bureaucracy is seen as a problem (Bennett 29 November 2007; Jaynes 28 November 2007). Responding to a question about the

obstacles faced by the Committee and those interested in preserving the site, Bonita Bennett responded:

City development and the location of Prestwich and also the demands of development, I suppose, the economics of the area. Some of that's been difficult. Some of it has also been the way the city understands the public...They understand it as the businesses that operate around Prestwich for example...We think of ownership as broader than the people who are there now (29 November 2007).

What Bonita speaks about demonstrates that places are indeed contested and struggled over. Similarly, while developers see the land as valuable in terms of money, others like those of the PPPC have attached different meanings to this site in light of this tangible uncovering of the past.

Today the focus is on the newly built ossuary, which will house the remains, and the accompanying memorial park and visitor's center. They are located on the corner of Somerset and Buitengracht. Remembering the many candle-light vigils that were held as part of the anti-exhumation campaign for the site in 2004, Stan Abrahams said

I always had the sense when I walked around with my candle that the spirits were speaking to me, you know. The pain of being disinterred and thrown around, it was as hurtful to me, I believe, as ...to those disinterred bodies. Lucien [le Grange, member of the PPPC] used to say that bones also have human rights. *Yes, bones have human rights!* ...Bones are significant, it's who we are (27 October 2007).

The newly constructed ossuary is seen as a framework, the beginning step, to remembering the history of District One, including slavery and forced removals under apartheid (PPPC public seminar, 17 November 2007). Discussions around the site at a recent public seminar held on the 17 November highlighted some of the concerns the PPPC and those involved with the site are facing.

One question that was asked was that of how best to display the remains and whether all of the remains should be open for public viewing. This harked back to debates around how best to memorialize history, in this case a history of slavery. The commercialization of the site for tourism was something members at the seminar were opposed to (PPPC public seminar 17

November 2007) Funding was also seen to be of concern. One member of the committee described the project as very basic, saying that the funding allocated was “only about as much as one of the lofts here” (PPPC public seminar 17 November). It was also brought up in the discussion that many people in the Cape Flats, who many of whom could be descendants of those uncovered on site, had poor access to the new ossuary, garden, and visitor’s center. In regards to the role of the Committee itself, a representative from the SAHRA suggested that the PPPC consider becoming an official recognized organization under the law (PPPC public seminar 17 November 2007). It was argued that this would help facilitate the process and could be important in future cases where remains are uncovered, which is highly likely (PPPC public seminar 17 November 2007). Recently, I brought this suggestion up when speaking with Bonita Bennett. She responded that the PPPC had been considering this suggestion for some time but there was some hesitancy to ‘going the formal route’ as this would entail following certain conventions (Bennett 29 November 2007).

Members of the PPPC and the public have also been involved in establishing a Midnight walk on December 1 to draw awareness to the history of slavery and ‘reclaim the streets’ (PPPC public seminar 17 November 2007). However, for this year’s walk, the city withdrew funding and permission to hold the walk. Planners described the previous year’s walk as “a powerful demonstration of the owning of space by the simple pedestrian act of walking the streets of the city” (District Six Museum and PPPC press release, 26 November 2007). According to the planners, the city withdrew funding and permission in part because it was concerned with the noise visitors would make for the CBD, business owners and hotel managers and how it would affect holiday consumers during the Christmas shopping season (District Six Museum and PPPC press release, 26 November 2007). This is just one other instance of the city attempting to control access to the space of Cape Town.

## Conclusion

Since the ushering in of the new democracy in 1994, there has been a boom in interest in memory and heritage initiatives. These have been varied and complex, from new memorials to victims of apartheid violence to creating spaces for people like those evicted from District Six to engage with their memories. New monuments and memorials have been put in place to commemorate the struggle, effectively altering the 'landscape of memory' of Cape Town. Memory and processes of memorializing the past are selective and in the case of South Africa, this selection is increasingly done in the interest of building a new, unified nation and constructing a South African identity. *Who* remembers and *how* are both sources of division among actors involved with memory work and heritage.

Memory and place are related and struggles over place in attempts to commemorate the past illustrate the importance of specific sites to memory. This is perhaps best illustrated in the case of the Prestwich Place dead. Struggles over this site have highlighted divisions between scientific ways of viewing the past and social concerns, and have brought to the surface tense issues of who has the right to occupy space in the city. In the context of a gentrified, affluent area where histories of slavery and forced removals have been covered over with cafes, boutiques, and luxury apartments, the tangible and intangible history that came with the uncovering of human remains has been a powerful reminder of the country's past and how it still affects people today. It is a reminder that Cape Town was built to a large extent on the hard labour of slaves and other marginalized people. It is a reminder to those whose families were evicted under apartheid that this land was once taken. As Edward Said (2000) has argued, both memory and geography are central to struggles for power. Struggles over place and the meaning of places, which stories are told and which ones are written over, at the heart of visions over what exactly a 'new' South Africa means.

Thus, we see that memory and the variety of ways the past is being remembered in Cape Town is indeed beginning to play a major role in the constructing of a South African nation. Those involved with museums, monuments, and other ways of remembering the past are increasingly seeking to situate themselves within efforts to construct a 'new' South Africa. Sites like Robben Island, the District Six Museum, and Prestwich Place seek to shape the national consciousness through the memories and history they convey. Yet even as this is done with visions to unite South Africans, the process of remembering remains selective and undoubtedly, some things get left out. It is in engaging with what is left out, in beginning to seriously address concerns over youth involvement, public participation, and other issues that memory projects will be able to be most effective. And it is in fighting for a space in the city, for sites such as Prestwich Place, that memory and heritage can be most effectively mobilized to give people agency to not only remember their histories, but to gain power over their present and future.

### **Recommendations for further study**

While I came to South Africa with the intention of answering many of my questions around the country's past, present, and future, I have come out of this research project with far more questions than I had when I first started. To begin, a more thorough analysis of demoralization in South Africa would involve a gender analysis of memory and heritage. Gender is very relevant in studies of monuments, memorials, and the cultural landscape of a place and the work it does (Mitchell 2000; Tilly 2006; Bender 2001; McEwan 2003).

Looking at intersections of race and gender, Cheryl McEwan (2003) argues that

...if black women are denied a presence and agency in the construction of collective memory, their belonging and citizenship is consequently mediated in the process of nation building (739).

She points out that women play a central role in building a nation (McEwan 2003).

Secondly, I think it would be relevant to pursue a study of place name changes in South Africa since 1994, as this is certainly an arena of debate which shows relationships between memory, place and power. Ongoing research into memory and heritage in South Africa should not only incorporate the views of those people who staff museums and run memory project initiatives, but should incorporate the voices of the general public. During my stay, I found that a number of South Africans I spoke to had not gone to places like the District Six Museum or Robben Island. Why is this and what does it mean? Finally, while it was not explored in this paper, the relationship between memory and heritage to the tourist industry is an important component of understanding the politics of memory and place in South Africa and should be further explored.

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*(both the above are accessible via SAHRA's Web site, listed above)*

#### *Other Primary Sources*

Alexander, Neville (5 November 2007). "Rainbow Nationalism," MSC Lecture.

DACPM pamphlet, "Journey of Remembrance: into the heart of resistance."

Erasmus, Zimitri (31 October 2007). "Coloured Identity," MSC Lecture.

Peace Education Workshop, *Direct Action Center for Peace and Memory* ( 28-29 September 2007).

Public Seminar, *Prestwich Place Project Committee* (17 November 2007).

Prestwich Place Project Committee pamphlet (2007), obtained at the public seminar.

University of Cape Town pamphlet, "Heritage Trail."

Von Robbroek, Lize (24 October 2007). "Imag[in]ing Afrikaner Nationalism: The role of the Visual Image in the Construction of Afrikaner Identity," MSC Lecture.

## Appendix I

### Interview Questions

*The following questions provided a basis for me going into each of my interviews. However, I chose to allow a more organic flow of information and thus interviews were more informal in the sense that a structured set of questions was not used. I asked questions as they came up in speaking with the interviewees and chose not to ask some of the prepared ones. I list my prepared questions below.*

*In regards to the consent forms that follow, I would like to point out that while several interviewees circled 'I do' in regards to wishing to remain anonymous, the form had been somewhat confusing and I later received verbal consent from three of the interviewees to use their names in this project.*

What organizations and/or initiatives are you involved in around issues of memory and remembering the past?

Why do you see memory and heritage as important in South Africa?

How do you think the discovery of the burial site at Prestwich Place has affected the general public? Cape Tonians who may be direct descendants of those who were buried at the site?

How is the public involved in the Prestwich site?

Are youth very involved with memory and heritage initiatives?

Who are the central actors involved in the site and what are their views of the site?

How does the uncovering of bones at Prestwich Place relate to District One as a whole?

What is the significance of the site in terms of its location?

What are some of the obstacles the PPPC has encountered in its efforts to provide a respectful place for the interment of the remains?

Do you think the PPPC should become an official organization recognized under the law?

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation was formed in 2000 as a response to the need for continued engagement with memory, reconciliation and justice after the end of the TRC (IJR web site). The Archbishop Desmond Tutu is patron of the Institute (IJR 2006 Annual Report)

### **Understanding Memory in Cape Town: How Best to Remember the Past?**

Debates around the ways in which the past is remembered have figured heavily into post-apartheid South Africa. Some of the central debates have been around what to do with

existing monuments that commemorate imperialistic and racist people or ways of seeing, debates around Western ways of memorialization versus what is appropriate for South Africa, remembering heroes versus remembering the people, the importance of place, and how to get the general public and youth involved in these processes.

Related to this way of telling the past is the focus of some sites of memory in Cape Town on commemorating the ‘big names’ of the past. Probably the site that is most well known for this is the Robben Island Museum. The museum is now a World Heritage Site visited by many world leaders and international tourists (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004, 347). Here, visitors take a tour of the prison, often with a former political prisoner who was held at the island, with the highlight of the trip being a visit to the cell where Nelson Mandela spent the majority of his 27 years in prison. While it is arguably important to pay tribute to the leaders such as Mandela, who played a central role in resisting apartheid and pushing for a democratic South Africa, some argue that simply telling ‘grand narratives’ which focus solely on these ‘heroes of the past’ fall short of the potential that memory work has to be more inclusive. Furthermore, narratives such as the one presented on Robben Island tend to glorify these heroes, overlooking some of the complexities of the past. A student director of a play on the life of Winnie Mandela at the University of the **Witwatersrand** related to our group that Mandela is almost ‘not real’ and regarded as something of a myth.

A further source of debate around commemorating the past in South Africa is the dominance of Western forms of remembering. Much of my discussion thus far has focused on statues and monuments, these physical markers on the land which commemorate past people and events. **Judge** Albie Sachs has spoken of the need for more creative and meaningful ways of remembering the past, with an emphasis on traditional African methods such as oral tradition. Speaking to members of the Cape Town Memory Project in June 2005, he said

One has to think of memorialisation on more creative ways that simply putting up big monuments...I’m not against stones and monuments and physical monuments but those are perhaps the least significant forms of memorial that a city needs...[T]he oral tradition is the richest, most powerful recorder of the past.

The collection of oral history has played an important role in the District Six Museum since its conception (Ebrahim, personal communication, 4 December 2007). Another member of the museum related to me the concept of ‘intangible heritage’ describing it as everything “which is not written, which is not a monument, which does not have a statue attached to it” (personal communication, 29 November 2007). Intangible heritage encompasses oral history as well as music and traditional forms of dance, among other things (personal communication, 29 November 2007). The idea of performance and acts of remembrance is important to places such as the District Six Museum, which has facilitated event such as the Public Sculpture Project ( ). The Memory, Art and Healing Project of the IJR is one project that seeks to involve members of “grassroots communities, many of whom remain marginalised, enabling them to tell their stories” (IJR Annual Report 2006). Dance groups, storytellers, oral history, and craft initiatives are all components of the project (IJR Annual Report 2006).

Another area of focus for people and organisations involved in memory work has been recognizing the role of place in relationship to how the past is remembered. Sachs (2005) argued that those sites of memory established with a direct connection to the location they are in, such as the Robben Island Museum, are the most powerful whereas places like the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg lacks this direct link to a past event or people on site.

## **Memory and heritage in the making of the ‘new’ South Africa**

### **Memory and power- alderman and H 349**

In studying the ways in which the past is remembered, memory, heritage, and history often become intertwined. Rassool (2000) argues that heritage and history are often seen as opposing forces, with historians claiming the higher ground, that history is more rooted in academia, more accurate and valid (3). Heritage is often seen as more inventive and created (Rassool 2000, 3). However, history itself is also a creation and influenced by “particular times and places” (Rassool 2000, 4). In speaking with Natalie Jaynes of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation’s Memory, Arts and Healing Project, I found the confusion I had over the use of ‘memory’, ‘heritage’, and ‘history’ was not uncommon. Jaynes noted that while academically there is literature on these concepts, they are very abstract concepts (Jaynes 27 November 2007). Perhaps one useful way of looking at memory is that presented by Clarke and Johnston ( ) who see memory as “the past in the present” (3). The focus of this paper is not to define these concepts necessarily, but rather to understand that they are indeed interrelated and more importantly, inherently related to place and identity formation. Perhaps one of the best ways to illustrate this is through a look at the District Six Museum in Cape Town.