‘Bricks-and-mortar testimonies’: The interactive and dialogical features of the memorials and monuments of the June 16 1976 Soweto Uprisings

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Introduction

Physical forms of public memory have been labelled ‘bricks-and-mortar testimonies’[1] and have become a major feature in processes that reclaim and humanise public spaces in African townships. These townships are not residential places of choice. They were imposed as backyards for a labour force of so-called ‘sojourners’ who were expected to return to their ‘homelands’ when they no longer fulfilled the labour needs of the urban areas. Consequently, the residents of the townships were not only socially degraded as people but they were also trapped, through the use of various laws, into living in a dehumanising landscape. The township became known for its inadequate and under-resourced schools, libraries, recreation amenities and health facilities. Residents of these townships responded in part by affirming their humanity in various ways, including innovative reconfigurations of their homes (popularly known as matchbox houses), as well as of the public spaces of their neighbourhoods. Writer and educationist, Es’kia Mphahlele, observed the following interventions on the built environment of the township:[2]

> When we occupy a municipal house, we break down walls, punch new doorways, rearrange the rooms, make extensions, to adapt the dwelling to our practical needs and aesthetics.

Mphahlele’s observation is both a literal and a figurative feature of the human settlements of most African townships. It is literal in the sense that a number of homes were changed over the years by the residents, to meet their practical needs and aesthetic tastes; which also became a negation of the imposed built environment

1 C.L. Griswold, ‘The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography, *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (Autumn 1985).

2 E. Mphahlele, ‘Towards a Humanistic Philosophy of Education’, *The Capricorn Papers*, 1, 46.

by the establishment which defined the people living in African townships as mere sojourners. The metaphor of life in African townships was and continues to be characterised by 'always having to change or rearrange this, revive that, inject new life into this, breath energy into that, stretch this out, shorten that, add this, destroy that.'[3]

This process of humanising the wasteland of oppression in African townships was also (and still is) manifest in the creation of diverse institutions of religion, *stokvels*,[4] music, dance, literature, theatre and the visual arts. It gave the townships their schools and teachers – who would make their mark in their profession and in society – and it gave them sports and players who rose beyond the confines of the township. It also gave them gangsters and hardened criminals, whose stories would later be remembered and retold with amusement and sometimes nostalgia, despite the misery they had caused. Reclamation of the township landscape was also manifest as a humanising agent embedded in the local and national political struggles. In this context reclamation was an act of taking back the right and the initiative to make one's own history.[5]

This trend continues today, taking on new forms under different political conditions. One of these forms is the memorialisation of the diverse experiences – social, cultural and political – of both township and national life. This chapter reflects specifically on the emergence of physical forms of public memory of the 16 June 1976 uprisings in Soweto. The focus here is to unpack how the design, construction and unveiling of the 1976 memorials constitutes memorial debate in its own right, thus turning memorials into testimonies of 'bricks-and-mortar'. Memorial debates that arise in the construction of 'bricks and mortar' testimonies include public exchanges, lobbying, disputes, silencing and engagement of different interest groups as 'community' labour in memory making. The 'memory in stone', or 'memorial architecture' or the 'landscaped parks' of the June 16 1976 uprisings include the headstones erected at the burial places of Lilly Mithi, Tsietsi Mashinini, Khotso Seathlolo, Hector Pieterson and Hastings Ndlovu among others; the 'Never, never again' memorial at the entrance of Avalon Cemetery; and the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum in Orlando West township. Others include, 'a photographic montage'[6] commemorating Tsietsi Mashinini at the June 16 1976 Memorial Acre in Central Western Jabavu; the sculpture of Hector Pieterson, Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makhubu at Maponya Mall (installed in 2007); the newly erected Hastings Ndlovu Bridge in Khumalo Street; and the 'larger than life' statue of Tsietsi Mashinini in the premises of Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto. More public art has been installed around Vilakazi Street which is popular as 'the only street in the world where two Nobel Price winners

3 E. Mphahlele, 'Towards a Humanistic Philosophy of Education', 46.

4 *Stokvels* are clubs or syndicates serving as rotating credit unions in South Africa. Members contribute fixed sums of money to a central fund on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.

5 Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 'Education for a National Culture', *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-colonial Kenya*, (London and Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1983), 87.

6 Johannes Phokela, quoted in G. Anstey, 'The Light Bulb Moment: The Artist's Concept', *Sunday Times* Heritage Project, available at http://heritage.themes.co.za/memorials/gp/TebogoMashinini/article.aspx?id=569061

– Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela – lived'.[7] The street was also a gathering space for protesting students on 16 June 1976. But Desmond Tutu does not live on Vilakazi Street. He lives on Bacela Street which crosses over Vilakazi Street.

W. Fitzhugh Brundage argues that 'because memories are transitory, people yearn to make them permanent by rendering them in physical form by erecting monuments or marking off sacred places'.[8] This practice could also be seen as a process where 'political strategists … delegate to monuments the moral responsibility to guarantee remembrance'.[9] Remembrance is widely acknowledged as 'a human activity [that] shapes links to the past'.[10]

The physical forms of public memory are in many instances integrated with landscaped parks, while in other instances landscaped parks are re-imagined as memorials. This approach was earlier called upon by Pan Africanist Congress veteran and Black Consciousness Movement activist and poet, Don Mattera who delegated the responsibility of commemorating to nature, which has become a popular feature of memorials. In one of his poems written in 1983 and dedicated to the first victim of the police shootings on 16 June 1976, Mattera takes on a completely different stance to commemoration. He looks up to nature and invests the trees and flowers with human attitudes of grieving. Mattera wrote:[11]

> And now
> Let grieving willows
> Mark the spot
> Let nature raise a monument
> Of flowers and trees
> Lest we forget the foul and wicked deed.

The permanence of physical forms of public memory is not always a given. This is largely because the passage of time can change their meaning and original purpose. It can also be as a result of the change of the political environment. Andreas Huyssen argues that when this happens, monuments and memorials 'stand as figures of forgetting',[12] a view also shared by Nora Pierre in her article, 'Between Memory and History'.[13] This chapter will examine how partisan political contestation over public sites of memory can turn them into figures of forgetting for those sections of a community who choose to distance themselves from a memorial.

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7 C. Hooper, 'History Flows down Vilakazi Street', *The Sunday Independent*, 2 November 2003.

8 W. Fitzhugh Brundage, 'Introduction: No Deed but Memory', in W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Where these Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015), 8.

9 P. Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of vel'd'itu in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin.* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 1.

10 A. Huyssen, 'Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age', in J.E. Young (ed.), *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History* (New York, Prestel-Verlag, 1994), 9.

11 D. Mattera, *Azanian Love Song* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1983).

12 Huyssen, 'Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age', 9.

13 N. Pierre, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire 1' *Representations*, 26 (Spring 1989), 7–25.

Charles Griswold challenges us to view physical forms of public memory as a 'species of pedagogy'.[14] That is, exploring ways in which they function 'to instruct posterity about the past'.[15] This can be a one-way or top-down process that prescribes what and how the meaning and significance of the memorial should be read. It is a dominant approach taken by tour guides and a major feature of brochures and other promotional material on heritage sites. In my work experience at the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum as well as the making of other heritage sites in Soweto, I have participated in debates where one school of thought argues that tour guides tend to tell the 'wrong history'. So-called wrong history usually tells those anecdotes that are not in the official brochures of the sites and often include the life histories of the tour guides themselves. 'Correct history' on the other hand is assumed to be the officially sanctioned narratives which in most cases the tour guides are expected to memorise. The official approach tends to be the major feature of brochures and other promotional material about the heritage sites, although many acknowledge some areas of debate and contestation on these sites.

An alternative approach seeks to be 'interactive [and] dialogical'.[16] In the previous chapter I demonstrated how the evolution of the commemoration of the uprisings from 1977 to 2006 became an ever-changing ritual of ideological contestation and resistance. Since 1994, interaction on the memorials of the 1976 uprisings include guided tours linked to visits by tourists of other struggle sites in Soweto; the annual Youth Day commemorations; public education programmes in, among others, the Hector Pieterson Museum and the Memorial's Education Department; the Gauteng Youth Commission and the June 16 1976 Foundation; political parties and individuals from the immediate locality. These diverse forms of interaction represent dynamic processes that animate the physical forms of the public memorials of the uprisings. James E. Young writes:[17]

> By themselves memorials remain inert and amnesiac, mere stones in the landscape without life or meaning. For their memory, these memorials depend completely on the visitor … in this way we recognise the essentially dialogical character of memorials.

This understanding of memory in stone provides a perspective that challenges established arguments which see physical forms of public memory as characterised by a possibility to 'foreclose dialogue and become obsolete in short order'.[18] Instead, they confirm James Young's argument that 'meaning and memory … depend not just on the forms and figures in the monument itself, but on the viewers' responses to the

14 Griswold, ' The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall' .

15 Ibid., 689.

16 J.E. Young, *Holocaust Memorials and Meaning: The Texture of Memory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), xii.

17 Ibid., 37.

18 L. Sevcenko, 'The Power of Place: How Historic Sites can Engage Citizens in Human Rights Issues', Center for Victims of Torture, 2004, 14, available at http://www.newtactics.org/sites/newtactics.org/files/Sevcenko_Power_ en_ update2007. pdf.

monument'.[19] This is a position also articulated by Annie E. Coombes, who argues that performances and rituals animate and re-animate memorials.[20] So, in visiting a monument, laying wreaths, staging performances and staging protests, the public make the sites visible in 'subtle and not so subtle' ways. Accordingly, James E. Young writes:[21]

> Instead of allowing the past to rigidify in its monumental forms, we would vivify our memory through the memory-work itself – whereby events, their recollection, and the role the monuments play in our lives remain animate never completed.

Discussing similar projects, the *Sunday Times* Heritage Project, initiated to commemorate 100 years of the *Sunday Times* newspaper, refers to 'bricks-and-mortar testimonies' as 'story sites'.[22] One of many roles of story sites as articulated by the project that resonates with the major trends in memory making and public art, is that they 'add a valuable stitch to the fabric of their immediate surroundings and communities'.[23] This in turn serves as a rationale that links their making to the need for local economic development, thus assuming the description of 'attractions' or 'destinations'.

Fitzhugh Brundage challenges us to look at the rise of historical tourism as reflecting the capacity of physical forms of public memory in adapting to changing social and political circumstances.[24] This adaptation provides us with two perspectives to look out for in discussing the remembering of 16 June 1976 as memory in stone, serving the interests of tourism and local economic development. The one perspective is described by Thompson as 'the bland contemporary tourism which exploits the past as if it were another foreign country to escape to'.[25] The other route would be what Kapstein identifies as an inherent resistance to 'any single reading of the nation's heritage'.[26]

Contestation of the making of physical forms of public memory has also manifested as public debates on what constitutes a community. Who speaks for that community? Whose voice is the final arbiter given multiple and sometimes conflicting interests in any given community? In an address to a conference on the establishment of the Liberation Heritage Route organised by the National Heritage Council (NHC) in Johannesburg in 2009, political scientist Mcebisi Ndletyana who researches and

19 Young, *Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 180.

20 A.E. Coombes, *Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa: History after Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2003), 12.

21 J.E. Young, quoted in A. Thomas, F. Michael and P. Hamilton, 'The Memory and History Debates: Some International Perspectives', *Oral History*, (Autumn 1994), 37.

22 An Overview of the *Sunday Times* Centenary Heritage Project, '*Sunday Times*, 100 Years of the Best Stories'.

23 Ibid.

24 Fitzhugh Brundage, 'No Deed but Memory', 10.

25 P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 25.

26 H. Kapstein, 'A Culture of Tourism: Branding the Nation in a Global Market', *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies,* 8, 1 (January 2007), 111.

writes on African intellectuals in South Africa, points out that this contestation is also broadly:[27]

> over historical subjects, between families and public institutions, and among the different spheres of government. The contestation tends to revolve around how such figures should be memorialised, and who has the right to decide on the manner of that memorialisation.

The manner of memorialisation here is understood to refer to the 'visual appearance'[28] of the memorials. As a participant in consultation processes on the making of memorials of the 1976 uprisings in Soweto, I can attest that there is a strong preference for memorials that are huge. This view is in clear contrast to the memorial initiative of the *Sunday Times* Heritage Project mentioned above, whose approach is geared to having small, interactive memorials. Oupa Moloto, one of the 'Class of '76' behind the June 16 1976 Foundation argues that size tends to entail visibility and is therefore interpreted to represent an appropriate form that acknowledges the sacrifices made by the individual memorialised. He further links this insistence on a 'huge' memorial to be related to the practice where people are prepared to pay for expensive funerals as well as tombstones that are large in scale to remember their loved ones.[29] However, this questions the view that memorials that are monumental in scale could potentially be forgotten or ignored.[30] It will be argued in this chapter that forgetting may be as a result of the political nature of animating memorials.

Another visual appearance that is recorded as a preferred form in minutes of community consultation forums is either a 'bust' or bronze. Participants in the meetings usually use the word 'steel' to describe their preferred physical memorial.[31] These inputs by members of the public represent the influence of apartheid era monuments translated into the popular consciousness. They have been described by the director of the *Sunday Times* Heritage Project, Charlotte Bauer who comes from what can be described as a democratic social history tradition, as 'big men on bronze installed on huge plinths 8 metres up in the sky'.[32] Recent memorial projects or monuments following this tradition include the bronze statue of Chief Albert Luthuli at Groutville in KwaZulu-Natal; the monument to Solomon Mahlangu in Mamelodi; as well as the representation of Hector Pieterson and Antoinette Sithole

27 M. Ndletyana, 'Accessing Memory through a Nationally Co-ordinated Effort', Liberation Heritage Route national launch, Kempton Park, 25 and 26 February 2009.

28 S. Marschall, 'Setting up a Dialogue: Monuments as a Means of "Writing Back"', *Historia*, 48, 1 (May 2003), 310.

29 Telephonic conversation with Oupa Moloto, 17 August 2009.

30 Coombes, *Visual Culture and Public Memory*, 12.

31 See minutes of a meeting of the June 16 1976 Steering Committee, Hector Pieterson Museum. See also J. Grobler, 'The Impact of Politics on Heritage and Cultural Tourism in South Africa', *South African Journal of Cultural History*, 22, 1 (June 2008), 177.

32 C. Bauer, 'No More Big Men on Bronze Horses', *Sunday Times*, 23 September 2007.

at Maponya Mall in Soweto. We will discuss this particular memorial in detail later in this chapter.

Monuments in this same mould represent the trend in post-colonial states where the founding fathers of the new state, like Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana[33] and Nelson Mandela[34] in South Africa, are commemorated through larger than life bronze statues. Recently the African Renaissance monument erected in Senegal clearly drew from the tradition of its makers – the Chinese and North Korean socialist realism. Zimbabwe's Heroes' Acre is also part of that same tradition. In a number of instances, the end product cannot simply be called a result of 'community' input. This is because the designers continue to exercise artistic license and in some instances it is because members of a given community are more interested in the project in as far is it provides possibilities for job creation. This represents the shallowest aspects of memorial debates.

There are several documented debates on the visual appearance of memorials. Ndletyana for instance, discusses the contestation on the imaging of a founding leader of the ANC, Sol Plaatje and Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) leader Steve Biko. He points out that to date, several statues were on the drawing board to be erected in Plaatje's honour. One was put up by a municipality in the Northern Cape but was never officially unveiled to the public because of disagreements over symbolism. Ndletyana writes:[35]

> Some objected that the figure of Sol Plaatje seated at a desk did not quite resonate with the revolutionary figure they understood him to be. Evidently, they felt that what was worth celebrating about Plaatje was his political role, over his intellectual and journalistic pursuits.'

Subsequently, another statue was built but this too, has not been unveiled although already mounted. Again the dispute was over imagery. This time the feeling was expressed that the statue should surely 'portray Plaatje as a nationalist, political leader with a clenched fist hoisted into the air, in a sign of black power'.[36] On Steve Biko, Ndletyana's query is that he is represented in 'what looks like military gear, in a commanding pose'.[37] However, as Ndletyana points out, Biko's 'imagery among those most familiar with him was not of an authoritative, commanding figure reminiscent of a military leader',[38] and that the sculpture failed to capture Biko's personality. The

33 See, I.M. Quist, *Kwame Nkrumah: An Undying Flame. Tour Guide to Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, Accra, Ghana* (Accra: Meliqui Publishers, 2004).

34 For an in-depth discussion of Mandela's statue in Sandton, see M. Sihlongonyane, 'The Nelson Mandela Statue in Sandton: Bridging or Broadening the Urban Divide?', Paper presented at the Memory in the City conference, Johannesburg, 25 August 2009.

35 Ndletyana, 'Accessing Memory through a Nationally Co-ordinated Effort', 3.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid, 4.

38 Ibid.

converse is King Goodwill Zwelithini's complaint that the statue of Shaka at the new airport was modelled on a contemporary sketch – and did not look military enough.

In addition to their visual appearance, the location of memorials has also given rise to contestation. The place where a statue or monument is located, in Marschall's view, serves 'to attract attention, [and it is usually] placed to be noticed'.[39] This suggests that the choice of a site does not always relate to commemorating any special link between the individual or event commemorated and the site chosen for the statue, memorial or monument.[40] For example, the decision to locate Sarah Baartman's grave just outside Hankey which had no proven link to her residence, was considered to be a good way of encouraging tourism to that part of the Eastern Cape. Other statues that are in places that have no historical association with the commemorated historical personality include Nelson Mandela's statue in Sandton; Steve Biko in East London; and Hector Pieterson, Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makhubu in the Maponya Mall. Marschall's argument contests Ndletyana's views that the choice of location is significant because it should allow for contemplation.[41] In fact it can be argued that big bronze statues do not call for contemplation. This is because the practice of monumentalising is more concerned with celebrating triumphalism as opposed to reflection. The developments in Johannesburg also point to a shift from using statues and public art to mark the significance of place. The trend represents the use of public memorials to rehabilitate and inject economic activity in certain public spaces. Ndletyana nonetheless makes the argument that the location of Steve Biko's statue in East London does not make any meaningful historical connection to place at all.

Another area of debate is the view that most statues created since 1994 are of twentieth-century political figures. Therefore the argument goes they 'play into the denial and the pre-1994 myth of the empty land'.[42] This argument could have led to the rise in recent years of a number of statues of pre-colonial historical figures like Chief Tshwane in front of the city hall in Pretoria; Kgoshikgolo Sekhukhune 1; and Makhado of the Venda and Malebogo of the Hanwana in the Limpopo Province.[43] This practice still has to be problemitised. It raises questions. Is this practice a connection with the past that asserts that South Africa was never empty land or does it signify re-ethnicisation that has come about with the new democratic order as reflected in the slogan 'one nation, many cultures'?

We now proceed to look at how these debates manifest themselves around the questions: Why have the memorials of the 1976 uprisings been built? Whose memory

39 Marschall, 'Setting up a Dialogue', 310.

40 G.J. Ashworth, 'Tourism and the Heritage of Atrocity: Managing the Heritage of South African Apartheid for Entertainment', in T.V. Singh (ed.) *New Horizons in Tourism: Strange Experiences and Stranger Practices* (Basingstoke: CABI, 2004).

41 Ndletyana, Accessing Memory through a Nationally Co-ordinated Effort', 3.

42 Pallo Jordan quoted in Grobler, 'The Impact of Politics on Heritage and Cultural Tourism', 175.

43 Ibid, 177.

are they honouring? What has been the public's responses to the memorials? And what organised constituencies shape the making of these memorials?

The Regina Mundi Church

The Regina Mundi Church is registered in the political consciousness of many South Africans as a venue for political meetings, rallies and funerals. In the previous chapter it was pointed out that the funerals of political activists were a rallying point in the unfolding liberation struggle. The funerals and the subsequent commemoration of the dead is a major source of popular association of memory to places. Among these is the Regina Mundi Church.

Photograph by Angel David Nieves

Regina Mundi Roman Catholic Church in Soweto. The *City Press*, 18 May 2003, describes it as: 'a great shrine of freedom … the spiritual home of the freedom struggle because it was where political meetings, protest rallies and community gatherings were held during the apartheid era.'.

It was built in 1962,[44] and is considered 'one of the largest churches in Africa and can accommodate 6 000 people inside'.[45] Because of its massive structure, G.J. Ashworth described it as 'a physical monument'.[46] Indeed, the building is an imposing structure within the vicinity of a landscaped precinct. The landscape around the Regina Mundi Church and Thokoza Park nearby were designed by Newtown Landscape Architects. These developments constitute, in Amy Weisser's words, the visualisation of the historic landscape as 'a mnemonic device',[47] mapping 'the evidence by which many of the stories of history are recounted to a community and its visitors'.[48] Before discussing the stories that this physical monument tells one should point out that the church building accommodates 'diverse relics, from the black Madonna statue, [to] the bullet holes in the walls'.[49] The black Madonna is said to be 'one of the only two … in South Africa'.[50] The bullet holes are the result of the use of the church for a variety of political purposes and resultant apartheid state violence. The marble altar that was broken in a police attack has been retained as 'a reminder of the way the worshipers were attacked.'[51] Consequently, writes Siyabonga Africa, 'the church stands like a monument to the fallen heroes. Its green walls and stained-glass windows are riddled with bullet holes from the past'.[52] Another significant artefact inside the church is the three-dimensional 'Pieta, alluding to the Marian image of sorrow and suffering where Christ's dead body hangs limply in the arms of his devoted mother'.[53] The image of the Pieta echoes the iconic photograph of Hector Pieterson in the arms of Mbuyisa Makhubu with Hector's sister, Antoinette, running along with them.

Regina Mundi was also a site of commemorating the 1976 uprisings. Prior to the advent of democracy in 1994, the site invited brutal police reaction. Poet and former Black Consciousness activist, Mafika Gwala provides a reading of the significance of the church as a place of commemoration. However, he questions the church's ability to be a place of safety. That is, safety from teargas and bullets. Mafika Gwala writes:

> Many a commemoration no tears could wipe
> Till the black child of Afrika had lost all tears
> As Regina Mundi swallowed teargas too
> No free church services to honour our dead

44 'Siyabonga Africa: Township of God', *Joburg Style*, (Spring 2008), 51.

45 Soweto Spaza, *Soweto: The Complete Township Guide* (Soweto: Soweto Spaza, 2003), 32.

46 Ashworth, 'Tourism and the Heritage of Atrocity'.

47 A. Weisser, 'M. Brown v. Board of Education: Memorializing Separate but Unequal Spaces', in C.E. Barton (ed.), *Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture and Race* (Princeton: Architecture Press, 2002).

48 Ibid.

49 Ashworth, 'Tourism and the Heritage of Atrocity'.

50 Soweto Spaza, *Soweto: The Complete Township Guide*, 32.

51 R. Kerkham-Simbao, 'The 30th Anniversary of the Soweto Uprisings: Reading the Shadow in Sam Nzima's Iconic Photograph of Hector Pieterson', *African Arts*, 40, 2 (Summer 2007).

52 'Siyabonga Africa, Township of God', 51.

53 Ibid.

Regina Mundi
qui solis pecceta mundi
how did the Bible fail you?
You also tasted teargas kisses
of Christian goodwill and puritan morality

Regina Mundi
harbour your bullet stung children.[54]

The religious symbolism that emerges as an outstanding feature of how the Regina Mundi Church is remembered by Gwala is the duplicity of what he calls 'Christian goodwill and puritan morality'. Whilst the apartheid state advocated Puritanism, its supposed goodwill and morality could only be imposed through brute force. Therefore, the goodwill of the Regina Mundi Church in accommodating commemorations and embracing those who were victims to mourn and remember could not stop a regime that professed adherence to 'puritan morality' from pumping bullets and teargas canisters into the church building and its occupants. Today the church is still used for religious and other community services. It is also part of the struggle tourism of the liberation struggle in Soweto.

Further developments of what is today known as the Regina Mundi precinct and the Thokoza Park nearby were undertaken in 2003. These developments were based on a master plan for Regina Mundi Church developed in 2000 as part of the Klipspruit Open Space Framework. The landscape has 'incorporated mosaic art work on a small "story wall" where the community told the story leading up to the release of Nelson Mandela and the elections in 1994'.[55] Within the church land, the landscape architects have included a water feature. According to one of the architects, Johan Barnard, 'the water feature design incorporated several cultural ideas of birth, baptism, washing of sin/forgiveness, and the presence of the forefather in the stones'.[56] The original road opposite the church was diverted to 'create a gathering area for Sundays or for funerals'.[57] The approach here, unlike at the Hector Pieterson Memorial where a gathering space was created for commemorations, in the Regina Mundi precinct the idea was to create space for the regular users of the church. Bernard further points out that 'the façade of the church is framed with indigenous white stinkwood avenues'.[58] The landscape architects also kept the connection to the then Old Potch Road which was recently renamed Chris Hani Road. According to Barnard, 'the old Potch Road was not ripped up but kept for the historic significance of it being the original road on which the youth marched in 1976 during the Soweto uprising and where their blood was spilt'.[59]

54 M. Gwala, *No More Lullabies* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), 92.

55 Johan Barnard, email to Ali Hlongwane, 11 May 2010.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

We now return to cemeteries and headstones. It is acknowledged that various generations of the liberation struggle are commemorated through headstones. The focus below will be on those seen as constituting the 'Class of 76.'

The headstones

Sebastian Brett, Louis Bickford, Liz Sevcenko and Marcela Rios in their published booklet under the auspices of the International Coalition of Historic Site Museum of Conscience, titled Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action (2007) argue that public memorials can and do resemble cemeteries.60 That is, public memorials and cemeteries are connected to the various ways people come to grips with the 'unknowability of death', healing after trauma, and seeking immortality by 'leaving trace'. There is a thin line dividing public memorials and cemeteries, where the private and sacred act of remembering is opened up 'towards the non-sacred'. This entails 'seeking to tell the story about the past that is meant to influence the way

Photograph by Angel David Nieves

The headstones at the graves of Hector Pieterson, Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seathlolo at Avalon Cemetery. Photo: Angel David Nieves.

60 S. Brett, L. Bickford, L. Sevcenko and M. Rios, 'Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action', Paper presented at an International Conference in Santiago, Chile, 2007, 6.

Courtesy of *Arise! Vukani*, Magazine of Action, 1987

In the picture on the right Hector Pieterson's mother, Dorothy Molefe stands beside her son's grave. On the left is Hector's father, Victor Pieterson. Very little is said about him in the narratives on Hector. His father spent the last days of his life in Alexandra. Photos courtesy of *Arise! Vukani*, Magazine of Action Youth, 1987.

we think and act in future',61 and begins in the context of the 16 June 1976 memorials with Hector Pieterson's place of burial.62

The initiative to erect a headstone for Hector Pieterson in 1980 ushered in new forms of commemoration and memorialisation of those who lost their lives in the 1976 uprisings. In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that political rallies were the major form of commemoration and continuing political mobilisation for the then unfolding liberation struggle. The introduction of tangible forms of memorialisation can be traced to the construction of a headstone for Hector Pieterson at Avalon Cemetery, which was a deliberate political act. This was carried out by the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU), an internal wing of the then banned PAC. The tombstone was unveiled on 16 December 1981. The choice of 16 December could have been a deliberate strategy to link Hector Pieterson's death to the ideological symbolism that the liberation moment ascribed to this day. It was remembered as

61 Ibid.

62 We acknowledge the use of burial grounds as public spaces for commemoration and championing a vision of the future is a feature of earlier burial grounds, such as the graves of those killed in the Sharpeville shootings in 1960.

Dingane's Day or Heroes Day in contrast to the apartheid state's framing of the day as the Day of the Covenant or the Day of the Vow to commemorate the support supposedly given by God to the trekkers at the Battle of 'Blood' River over the Zulu regiments commanded by King Dingane.

According to one AZANYU activist, the tombstone was erected because 'the question of commemoration services [was] an issue that had become monotonous, hence we came up with an idea of erecting a tombstone for Hector Pieterson.'[63] The tombstone was, he continued:[64]

> A dedication to the memory of all those who fell on June 16 1976. They will be remembered as heroes and heroines who followed the tradition of our struggle – bravery and determination. This tombstone will also serve as an inspiration to the youth and be a constant reminder that the struggle continues.

The tombstone at Hector Pieterson's grave, as reflected in the photographs have no signature of any artist or designer. Its form and materials were influenced largely by the general practice of erecting headstones for loved ones found in graveyards throughout the country. However, its creation was a deliberate political act, because Hector was seen as a symbol of youth sacrifice for the struggle. His funeral in 1976 was organised to be a symbolic statement of collective grief and solidarity when the then apartheid state banned a mass funeral for the many who died as a result of police reaction to the student's protest march. So, although the gravestone is similar to those in most graveyards, its inscription is a family's statement of loss as well as the imagined nation in struggle's expression of grief, remembrance and determination to continue the struggle. The inscription on the headstone reads:[65]

ZOLILE HECTOR
PIETERSON
August 19, 1963
June 16, 1976
DEEPLY MOURNED BY
HIS PARENTS, SISTERSAND A NATION
THAT REMEMBERS
TIME IS ON THE SIDE OF
THE OPPRESSED TODAY
TRUTH IS ON THE SIDE OF
THE OPPRESSED TODAY
ONE AZANIA
ONE NATION
R.I.P.

Visits to Hector Pieterson's place of burial, became, in a number of instances, part of collective remembering and mourning. In the late 1970s and 1980s the

63 D. Mthimunye, 'Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU)', *Azania News*, July 1983.

64 Ibid.

65 The inscription is also recorded in *Arise! Vukani,* Magazine of Action Youth, March–June 1987.

commemoration of 16 June 1976 included the laying of wreaths at the place of burial to be followed by a commemorative rally at the Regina Mundi Church. It may have been this broader collective expression of struggle that led to some unknown people or agents inexplicably vandalising the grave shortly after it was unveiled.[66] However, with the advent of the Cenotaph and the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum, the government organised a wreath laying ceremony. In recent years, there has been a significant return to the actual place of burial as a counter-commemoration by sections of the former liberation movement, particularly from the Black Consciousness tradition, some of whom feel they have been silenced out of the memory of the uprisings in the way the new state monopolises 'official' commemorations.

The practice of erecting headstones that commemorate the deceased's involvement with the liberation struggle has resurfaced in the post-1994 period. This re-emergence of headstones can be ascribed to the decision to declare some sections of burial grounds as 'Heroes Acres' where ANC, PAC and Black Consciousness Movement leaders, activists and former operatives of the military wings MK and APLA are buried. There is no policy in the various tiers of government on who is a hero and what constitutes a hero. There is also no central burial ground for any designated individuals. Public figures associated with the 16 June 1976 uprisings such as Tsietsi Mashinini and Khotso Seathlolo have had their headstones erected with the Black Power theme as the prominent feature.

This again represents a process of counter-commemoration asserting the role of the BC tradition. The PAC has followed suit with gravestones of its former operatives, among them John Ganya with an inscription on the gravestone protesting its marginalisation as well as asserting its claim behind the 16 June 1976 uprisings. The inscription in Ganya's headstone reads: 'The Unsung Hero of June 16 Soweto Uprisings. The Bethal Trial!!! Accused Number 2'[67]. The inscription deliberately plays up his anonymity taking into consideration that Ganya is one of those who was sent to Robben Island Prison twice. The first time was in 1963 after the mass arrest of PAC activists and after the uprisings he was sent there again. More generally, however, the rationale behind the associations of popular memory with the Regina Mundi Church and the political agendas behind erecting headstones for dead former political activists, have emerged as a major strategy to lay down the founding myth of the new democratic political order. Similar initiatives have also been undertaken by business interests as demonstrated by the intervention of City Funerals to mark the twentieth anniversary of the uprisings through the 'Never Never Again' memorial at the entrance of Avalon Cemetery discussed below.

66 The headstone that stands at Hector's place of burial today reads: This headstone was donated on behalf of the freedom loving people of South Africa by A.G. Harrow, USA.

67 Inscription on the headstone of General Ganya at Avalon Cemetery.

The Never Never Again Memorial

This memorial, erected by City Funerals and constructed in red brick, is located in the entrance of Avalon Cemetery in Soweto. It was a brainchild of Tony Guines of City Funerals.[68]

The message on this stone reads:

"NEVER NEVER AGAIN"
Dedicated to all those who lost their lives
on this day & thereafter
20th commemoration
16 June 1976

On the occasion of South Africa hosting the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Department of Tourism in the City of Johannesburg erected billboards on several historic sites in Johannesburg including the Avalon Cemetery. Within the vicinity of the 'Never Never Again' cenotaph were billboards carrying the names of some of the political activists buried at the cemetery. They also erected signage to the grave of Hector Pieterson, and South African Communist Party leader Joe Slovo. The billboard referring to Slovo read: 'In this area lies Joe Slovo and others who gave their lives during the liberation struggle',[69] although Joe Slovo died of cancer, presumably in bed, in 1995. Again the silences and erasures on these billboards did not go unnoticed. The leaders of the now defunct South African Youth Revolutionary Council (SAYCRO) bemoaned the fact that 'the council [City of Johannesburg] had deliberately snubbed Seathlolo and Pan Africanist Congress stalwart John Ganya, who are buried next to Slovo',[70] by referring to them as 'others' in the story board at the entrance of the cemetery. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the uprisings, adherents of the Black Consciousness philosophy exhumed the remains of former student leader Khotso Seathlolo and (re)buried him next to another former student leader, Tsietsi Mashinini, who played a critical role in organising and leading the student march and protests on 16 June 1976.

Despite the traffic to Avalon Cemetery during the course of the week and particularly on weekends, the Never Never Again memorial at Avalon Cemetery can be said to represent a figure of forgetting. The many that frequent the cemetery are preoccupied with burying their loved ones and do not detour to interact with the memorial. Its creation as well as its presence has attracted negligible public comment even though it was opened to the public by the well-known international personality and musician, Michael Jackson. The comments by activists from the former SAYCRO and Andile Mgxitima's contestation of special attention given to Slovo, do not mention the memorial. We can therefore conclude that it has not aroused any public debate

68 Telephone conversation with Tony Guines of City Funerals.

69 B. Ndaba, 'City Officials Accused of Ignoring Some Struggle Icons', *The Star*, 16 June 2006.

70 Ibid.

Photograph by Angel David Nieves

The memorial is located at the entrance of Avalon Cemetery. Written on the stone is a poem by Mzwakhe Mbuli paying tribute to those who contributed to the liberation struggle across the generations.

that can be appraised as memorial activity. Nor does it feature in any of the major publications of memory culture in South Africa. James E. Young describes such sites as devoid of 'a people's intention to remember',[71] and thus they 'remain little more than inert pieces of the landscape, unsuffused with the meanings and significance created by visits to them'.[72]

The Hector Pieterson site in Vilakazi Street, Soweto

The creation of the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum is intrinsically linked to the interface of continuous memorialisation of the liberation struggle, the prominence of local economic development initiatives, and the rise of the tourism industry. Building on the earlier initiative by AZANYU and City Funerals, the ANCYL took a similar initiative to erect a 'walled precinct, [that was initially] situated within the road reserve at the intersection of Moema, Khumalo and Pela Streets',[73] in the township of Orlando West. This cenotaph was provisionally declared a National Monument on 15 February 1995 by the then National Monument's Council which was later replaced by the South African Heritage Resources Agency.[74] It later became part of the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum which in turn, is now one of many sites linked to the origins of the Soweto uprisings and its aftermath. This development has become an integral part of a commemorative landscape which includes the site where students gathered in numbers on June 16 after marching in protest from various schools in Soweto.

The commemorative feature of this site marks the place where young Hector Pieterson was shot in Vilakazi Street opposite the former Orlando West High School. He was later certified dead at a clinic nearby. The site consists of a 'bench, piece of dry stacked wall and a short description of events which lead to Hector's death'.[75] The inscription on the wall reads: 'On June 16 1976, Hector Zolile Pieterson a thirteen-year-old schoolboy was shot and died at this corner during a clash between the police and students in the uprisings against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction'.[76] As would be expected with any process of mapping a historical landscape, the design fixes the spot on the corner of Vilakazi Street as the shooting site. Subsequently, there has been contestation of this particular spot by some of the witnesses and participants in the events of 16 June 1976. Various individuals have come forward with different

71 J.E. Young, 'The Art of Memory', in J.E. Young (ed.), *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, 23.

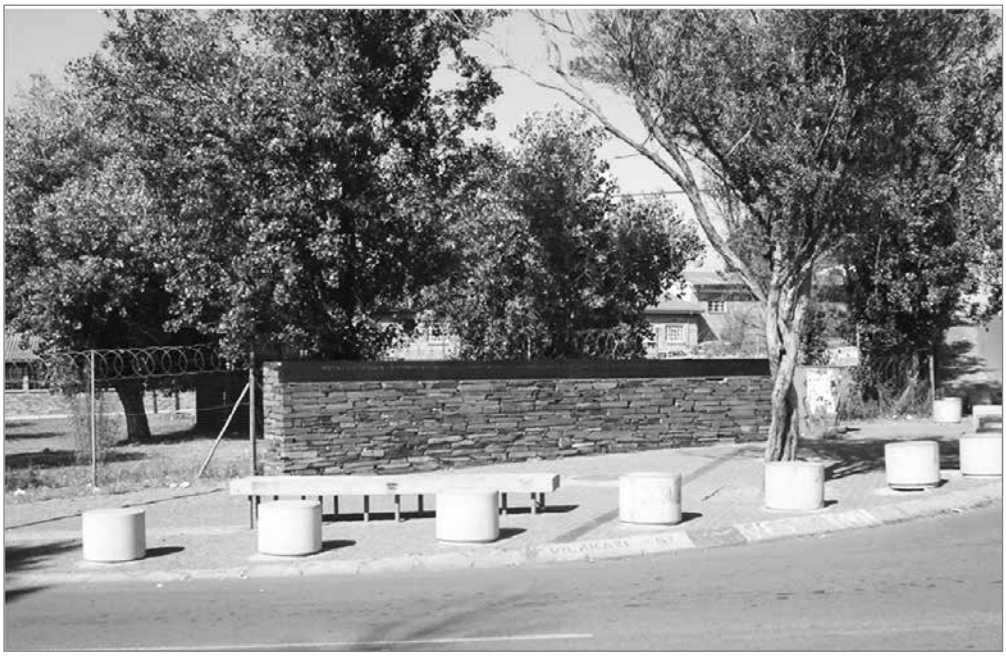
72 Ibid.

73 Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum Archives, Soweto, National Monuments Council, 'Declaration as a National Monument: Hector Peterson Memorial, Orlando West'. Government Notice, Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

74 Ibid.

75 Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum Archives, Soweto, J. Rose, 'Site', a short unpublished article describing the features of the Hector Pieterson Memorial.

76 Inscription on the wall at the site thought to be where Hector Pieterson was shot in Vilakazi Street, Soweto.



Photograph by Angel David Nieves

Street furniture marking the site thought to be where Hector Pieterson was shot in Vilakazi Street, Orlando West, just outside the perimeter fence of Orlando West High School.

accounts of the events of the day, opening up the accepted story to question and in the process showing how any one version of historical events will always be contested.[77]

Nonetheless, the site remains intrinsically linked to the place of gathering by protesting students on that fateful day, and to the subsequent confrontation between the police and students that led to the fatal shooting of Hector Pieterson. Apart from the contestation of the exact site where young Hector was shot, there are other silences too; in particular about others said to have been shot on that day, in much the same spot. Their identities and fates have been lost, because the name of Hector Pieterson has assumed the role of symbol of all who died during the student protests.

At the time of the 30th anniversary of the 1976 uprisings this site was vandalised with graffiti as a counter-narrative to the one referred to above. Written in white enamel paint, the graffiti consisted of deliberately-chosen messages which in part read: 'Died in vain'; 'U will pay'; 'ANC sucks'.[78] This counter-narrative may be one example of instances where the 'memory of historical events [fails to] domesticate such events, never makes us at home with them, never brings them into the reassuring house of

77 Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum, *A Journey of Discovery* (Soweto: Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum, 2005).

78 Photographs of these graffiti are available at the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum Archives.

redemptory meaning'.[79] It may also point to an emerging social consciousness that refuses to turn a blind eye to unresolved social problems such as lack of housing, inadequate education and unemployment. This emerging consciousness has begun to question whether the creation of memorials and name changes is a strategy to shift attention from the failure to dismantle the deep-rooted legacy of oppression and inequality in South Africa.

A significant feature of commemorating the 16 June 1976 uprisings, then, has been characterised by dispute and contestation: official commemoration on the one hand, where government officials and politicians use memorials to highlight their achievements and former liberation movements; and on the other hand, there are those who are in the opposition, who animate memorials to reflect the failures of the new government.

However, to return to the shooting site, the visitor follows a line of indigenous trees and lawn leading to the memorial. The trees lead the visitor past the Methodist Church that became renowned in the 1980s as a temporary home of the youths who ran away from their homes because of police harassment, an episode that has been effectively silenced in the local discourse of commemoration. This is because of its association with the fate of Stompie Sepei, who met his death under circumstances that it took the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to unearth.[80] His story and that of the Methodist Church and the priest at the time, Paul Verryn,[81] although constituting part of the TRC report and related writings, does not fit into the liberation story very comfortably and besmirches the name of Winnie Mandela. Accordingly they have now receded from the memories of tour guides and visitors who drive past the shooting site and the church on their way up Moema Street across Khumalo Street to the memorial.

The Memorial

The Hector Pieterson Memorial has become widely known and symbolically recognised internationally. The architectural team, comprising Phil Mashabane and Jeremy Rose, see the elements of their design as speaking symbolically to the events of 1976. These include 'the carefully offset slate walls at the topmost level of the site'.[82] These walls have also been described as 'framed by a large, dry stacked black slate wall, recalling the thousands of students who rose up against Bantu Education'.[83] Juxtaposed with the imagery of gathering crowds is a 'central void'. According to

79 J.E. Young, quoted in A.K. Hlongwane and A. Nieves, '*The People should Speak for Themselves: Reflecting on the History and Origins of the Hector Pieterson Museum as "Memorial Architecture"*' (Soweto: Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum, 2006).

80 See, A. Sampson, *Mandela: The Authorised Biography* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1993), 376.

81 Ibid., 37.

82 A. Lipman, 'This is Not the Way to Honour Heroes of 76', *Sunday Independent*, 18 January 2004.

83 Rose, 'Site'.

Photograph by Angel David Nieves

The Hector Pieterson Memorial in Orlando West, the site of the annual National Youth Day.

the architectural team, this void, 'empty and austere, remembers the missing stories and individuals. The route around the centre permits glimpses of the void as a reminder of the missing individuals and their stories'.[84] In addition to the story of Mbuyisa Makhubu, among the missing narratives are the stories of those who simply disappeared in the course of the 1976 upheavals.

Central to the memorial is the cenotaph, originally created by the ANC Youth League and unveiled by the then president of the ANC, Nelson Mandela. Its inscription reads:[85]

> To honour the youth who gave their lives in the struggle for freedom and democracy.
>
> In memory of Hector Peterson and all other young heroes and heroines of our struggle who laid down their lives for freedom, peace and democracy.

The designers also utilised 'street imagery such as cobblestones, gravel, slate and kerbs … [as well as natural materials like] rocks and water'.[86] The choice of these materials, in the view of one of the designers, was to make the memorial 'a living thing … something people can relate to'.[87] Two critical elements of the memorial are

84 Ibid.

85 Cenotaph inscription, Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum.

86 See S. Marschall, 'Visualising Memories: The Hector Pieterson Memorial in Soweto', *Visual Anthropology* (2006), 153.

87 Gibbon, quoted in ibid, 153.

Postcard courtesy of the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum Archives

The original layout of the cenotaph, initially erected by the ANC Youth League at the intersection of Khumalo and Moema Streets. This site was provisionally declared a national heritage site by the then National Monuments Council which was later replaced by the South African Heritage Resources Agency.

its interpretation as a garden of remembrance and the wall of memory. Symbolically, the wall recognises the needs and voices of those who are 'marked by loss and suffering and who are concerned with mourning rather than celebration'.[88] The memorial thus provides space 'whereby contemporary South Africa and future generations have a comprehensive knowledge and remembrance of the past, including painful and problematic memories'.[89] It also 'incorporates a robust indigenous landscaping … The gardens are patterned and shaped with road kerbs, gravel and concrete recalling the textures of the roads upon which all the activity took place'.[90]

Since its inception, the memorial has been a public space for a variety of activities that sustain its dialogical character. Every year on 16 June, one of many commemorations of Youth Day takes place at the memorial. These are officially sanctioned commemorations, organised by the two tiers of government – the City of Johannesburg and the Gauteng Provincial government in collaboration with the

88 V. Rioufol, 'The University of Resistance to Apartheid', *Newtown Zebra*, May/August (2000), 16.

89 Ibid.

90 Rose, 'Site'.

Gauteng Youth Commission. The theme of each commemoration comes as a political directive either from national or provincial government, with all the politically approved speakers grounding their speeches on the official theme.

Some semblance of civil society representation is visible in the form of the inclusion on the day's programme of a representative from the June 16 1976 Foundation. This is an organisation formed by people who were student activists at the time of the uprisings. Although the majority of them are associated with the ruling party, they sometimes represent a voice of dissent, particularly on the constant discourse about how the uprisings should be commemorated.

Another animating feature of the annual commemoration at the memorial is a choral presentation, by an invited choir, of freedom songs of the 1976 period. All epochs of the liberation struggle in South Africa have inspired songs and poetry. So it was with the June 16 1976 uprisings. During days of commemoration in particular, these songs have come to represent nostalgia for days gone by. A question could be asked: But why poignant nostalgia rather than bitterness and grief when the days gone by were so hard? It could be that in the midst of oppression and hardship people always created spaces for laughter – what writer and scholar Njabulo Ndebele calls 'the ordinary'. The memorial has also been used as a space for debate and discourse by young people. An example is the activities organised by the Gauteng Youth Commission on the challenges facing the youth in the early 21st century as part of their annual Youth Month programme. Attempts have been made to stage similar activities on yet another site – the June 16 Memorial Acre – but these were disrupted by ongoing construction on the site.

Tsietsi Mashinini Memorial and the June 16 Memorial Acre

The *Sunday Times* Heritage Project initiated in 2006 to commemorate 100 years of the *Sunday Times* newspaper, embarked on a mission to 'erect a number of narrative monuments to record and recognise some of the remarkable people and events that made our news' over the previous century.[91] The aim of the project as articulated by the newspaper was:[92]

> To inspire South Africans to think about our diverse past in new, imaginative ways. To unlock memory – collective, local, personal – and give it a home in the present through public 'story art' which stirs curiosity, emotion and pride in a burgeoning national identity.

In realising these objectives, artist Johannes Phokela pointed out that when he was designing the Tsietsi Mashinini Memorial he first thought of doing a mural. But he subsequently rejected this idea because it was 'a little bit old-fashioned and with an

91 'A Century of Stories: An Overview of the *Sunday Times* Centenary Heritage Project', Unpublished *Sunday Times* Heritage Project Concept Document.

92 Ibid.

Photograph by Art South Africa

A photographic montage commemorating the life and times of Tsietsi Mashinini. Photograph by Art South Africa

old, socialist kind of ethos'.[93] As a result he went on to create 'a photographic montage on ceramic tiles' which were placed on a 'wall that looked like a text book'. The book has 'photographs of Mashinini as well as other students with clenched fists and protest posters, and posters of police shooting, interspersed with paintings of student scenes'.[94] The montage shows student routes from Naledi to Morris Isaacson. These draw on discussions with members of the June 16 1976 Foundation and personnel at the Hector Pieterson Museum. At the time of the design, the debates on the routes were still raging among the June 16 Task Team and former student activists. As a result, Phokela's design features the Naledi routes that have subsequently been abandoned as 'incorrect' and are not paved as part of the June 16 Soweto Students Trail.

Since the installation of the Tsietsi Mashinini Memorial, the site where it is located was renamed the June 16 Memorial Acre as part of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the uprisings. The renaming followed a process of consultation and debates led by the ward councillor. Although Tsietsi Mashinini's name was raised several times the technocrats who processed community input reported that the

93 Quoted in Anstey, 'The Light Bulb Moment: The Artist's Concept', *Sunday Times* Heritage Project.

94 Ibid.

'community' wanted the park renamed the June 16 1976 Memorial Acre. This again points to the use and abuse of the notions of 'community' as well as 'consultation'. It also suggests that once a particular interest group is set to drive memorialisation in a particular direction it will always persevere until it finds a way to do so. This point will be demonstrated further in the case of a statue of Hector Pieterson, Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makhubu at Maponya Mall.

Statues of Hector Pieterson, Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makhubu at Maponya Mall

This statue which was installed and unveiled in 2007 is a 300kg bronze statue based on the iconic photograph by Sam Nzima. It was donated by Dan Oloffson, a wealthy European entrepreneur, who wanted to show appreciation of former President Nelson Mandela.[95] Those consulted about the idea included the former president, ANC leader and businessmen Mathews Phosa, Soweto businessman and former mayor of Soweto under the apartheid-created Black Local Authority, Richard Maponya, Hector Pieterson's family and the then Minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan. Phosa is quoted at the unveiling of the statue as saying:

Photograph by Angel David Nieves

Public Art in the June 16 Memorial Acre opposite the Morris Isaacson School.

95 Discussions between A.K. Hlongwane and R. Newberry (of Newberry Developments) held at Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum, Soweto, on 10 May 2008. Newberry facilitated the process of commissioning the sculpture of the Mandela statue and the statue depicting Hector Pieterson, Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makhubu.

Photograph by Angel David Nieves

June 16 bronze statue at Maponya Mall.

> We owe our freedom to the generation of Hector Pieterson. All South Africans were liberated by the defeat of the oppressive and dangerous apartheid policy. Now we should form a national partnership against all social ills such as crime and corruption.[96]

The statue was created by two artists: one white, Kobus Hattingh, and one black, Jacob Maponyane. They were the artists who had previously created the Mandela statue that stands in Mandela Square in Sandton. As an interpretation of Sam Nzima's photograph, this bronze statue was intended as a commemoration of a turning point in South Africa's history.[97] An issue of copyright quickly arose, with Nzima requesting a significant fee.[98] There was, however, no agreement on this, the

96 M. Phosa speech during the unveiling of the statue at Maponya Mall, Soweto.

97 Ibid.

98 Fitzhugh Brundage, 'No Deed but Memory', 13, writes that 'once monuments [are] erected, the origins and struggles over the sponsorship and design … recede into the background until some controversy exposes them.'

donor's view being that it was a gift 'from the people of Sweden to the people of South Africa, particularly [those of] Soweto'.[99]

The statue was unveiled at Maponya Mall in February 2007. Among the high profile guests were the former executive mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Amos Masondo; Dr Ntato Motlana, who was associated with the uprisings as a former leader of the Black Parents Association and a doctor who treated some of the students shot by the police; Richard Maponya;[100] and Dorothy Molefe, Hector's mother. Sam Nzima was invited but did not attend. Also absent was any representative of Mbuyisa Makhubu who left the country in 1976 as a result of police harassment and has not been seen since. According to his brother, Raul Makhubu they were not consulted about the statue but heard about it when the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Museum tried to facilitate a meeting between him, Thulani Nzima (eldest son of Sam Nzima), the June 16 1976 Foundation and a representative of the Olofsson Thanda Group.[101]

Two contradictory views emerged on where the sculpture should be located. Representatives of the June 16 1976 Foundation were of the view that it should be placed within the June 16 1976 Student Trail that was currently being developed in Soweto, as a relevant 'point of reference',[102] linked to the diverse narrative of the student marches of 16 June 1976. A representative of Dan Olofsson – the Swedish entrepreneur and philanthropist linked to developments in Mvezo, the home of Nelson Mandela – was of the view that the Maponya Mall was lovely and the sculpture was magnificent; 'the people of Soweto will come here once [pointing to the Hector Pieterson Memorial] and will once a week go to the mall'. The statue was located in what was identified as 'a prime place' within the mall and 'the donor is happy'. It is further stated that the mall meets the principle behind the making of the sculpture; and is 'a statement for the people of Soweto'.[103]

However, one may ask, what is the connection between a sculpture memorialising resistance and atrocity and a mall, symbolic of black economic empowerment that is often contested as a policy facilitating the enrichment of the few? If the sculpture of Hector Pieterson, Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makhubu is a narrative image of the uprisings, what does its location in a mall do to assist in telling the story well or poorly?[104]

Jeanne van Eeden, in her article 'All the Mall's a Stage: The Shopping Mall as Visual Culture' defines malls as public spaces that can be read as 'ideological

In future, research may well be undertaken on the various squabbles over intellectual property, entitlements and the political correctness of this memorial.

99 Discussions between A.K. Hlongwane and R. Newberry, Soweto, 10 May 2008. See also, P. Twabu, 'Hector's Statue Unveiled', *City Vision East*, Thursday 22 February 2007.

100 It seems that no reference was made to Richard Maponya's collaboration with the former Black Local Authority.

101 According to Rob Newberry, not consulting the Makhubu family was 'an oversight'.

102 I have borrowed this term from Young, *Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 102.

103 Discussions between A.K. Hlongwane and R. Newberry, Soweto, 10 May 2008.

104 This question is derived from S. Pitchford, 'The Power of Stories', *Healing through Remembering Bulletin*, 2 (Autumn 2006), 3. She argues that 'every medium does some things well and others poorly'.

texts that express ideas concerning space, capitalism, class and gender'.[105] Like all ideological texts, she argues, malls 'embody so many contradictions'.[106] A mall is a 'space of consumption, entertainment and social interaction;'[107] a site for 'leisure, escapism, entertainment and tourism' and for 'potential resistance and multiple or polysemic meanings'.[108] The question remains, what does Van Eeden mean by potential resistance?

Are malls in fact public spaces? In many instances, fencing and security guards keep out certain sections of the public: the 'other', who are thus marginalised and condemned to the periphery of the malls. These people have few opportunities to patronize and enjoy malls, other than as car attendants or hawkers constantly on the look-out for police. Has the sculpture of Hector Pieterson, Antoinette Sithole and Mbuyisa Makhubu thus been emptied of its resistance meaning, or does it contest the meaning of the mall as a space for entertainment and consumerism?

One way of answering these questions is to look at the sculpture and its context. At Maponya Mall, it seems very different to Sam Nzima's photographs on which it is based. One of these is in the background: it shows a simple four-room house as representative of the landscape of Orlando West township. The sculpture on the other hand has a fountain as its base. While water in memorials can represent cleansing, in a mall it represents an imaginary paradise or a place of escapism. Surrounding the statue are shop windows, trolleys, and people pre-occupied with shopping or on a date. The result is a romanticised and 'clean' image. The photograph, in contrast, shows pain in the faces of Antoinette and Mbuyisa as well as blood in young Hector's mouth.[109] What then is the function of this sculpture at the mall? It largely plays a decorative role. Though the sponsors of the sculpture saw it as commemorating the sacrifices made in the fight against apartheid and regarded the location as a busy public space, months of observation of the movements of people in this part of the mall points to a similar development as the memorial in Avalon Cemetery discussed above. The sculpture is an image of forgetting.

The Hastings Ndlovu Memorial

The latest development in the topography of the memorials of the 16 June 1976 uprisings is on the site thought to be where Hastings Ndlovu was killed. His name has emerged consistently as part of a marginalised narrative, or an example of ongoing attempts to develop an inclusive text on the 16 June 1976 uprisings. The story of his killing, either before Hector Pieterson or later after his admission to Chris Hani

105 J. van Eeden, 'All the Mall's a Stage: The Shopping Mall as Visual Culture', in J. van Eeden and A. du Preez (eds), *South African Visual Culture* (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 2005), 39.

106 Ibid., 63.

107 Ibid., 39.

108 Ibid., 40.

109 This paragraph has benefited from discussions with honours and MA students of Public Culture at the University of the Witwatersrand, 29 April 2008, facilitated by Professor Cynthia Kros.

Photograph by Angel David Nieves

The Hastings Ndlovu Bridge in Orlando West, not far from Vilakazi Street, a memorial created by Johannesburg City Parks.

Baragwanath Hospital, first came to the fore in the oral testimonies of his father, a former school teacher Mr Elliot Ndlovu which are part of the narrative in the Hector Pieterson Museum. Hastings' story was brought to the fore through a written testimony by Dr Malcolm Klein who had always thought the young boy (the first to be brought to the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital casualty unit on the morning of 16 June 1976) was Hector Pieterson. It was only later he discovered it was Hastings Ndlovu. His written testimony was deposited at the Hector Pieterson Museum.[110]

In the ongoing memorialisation processes of the uprisings in Soweto, a disused bridge in Khumalo Street was identified as the site where Hastings was shot.[111] Following this, various consultation processes indicated the need to create a memorial in honour of Hastings. This took concrete form in 2009 when Johannesburg City Parks took a decision to develop an Orlando West Regional Park near Orlando Stadium.[112] The park is part of the City of Johannesburg's legacy projects linked to South Africa hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Landscape architects and various environmental

110 Klein's statement is included in K.A. Hlongwane et al, *Soweto '76: Reflections on the Liberation Struggle*.

111 Interview with Elliot Ndlovu, conducted by Sifiso Ndlovu, in ibid.

112 F. Coetzee, Johannesburg City Parks, email to A.K. Hlongwane, 25 February 2010.

consultants identified this site as 'an access node to the Hector Pieterson Museum [that should] be upgraded and recognised'. In the process it came to the attention of Johannesburg City Parks that this bridge was indeed on the route taken by students of the June 16 March.'[113] While a number of interest groups including the June 16 1976 Foundation wanted the site to memorialise Hastings, the brief given to the architects by Johannesburg City Parks was 'to provide an information area where visitors can learn more about the neighbourhood they find themselves in and also to indicate close proximity of other heritage sites of importance'.[114] This brief largely informed the design on the site. Drawing from the brief given by Johannesburg City Parks, the consultants saw the main objective of their design as 'the provision of information signage, seating and shaded areas'.[115] Currently, there is no memorial activity that associates this site with the killing of Hastings Ndlovu and the 1976 uprisings. Neither is it an information centre for people visiting Soweto. It may nonetheless have a different significance, namely injecting new life to a public space that was largely derelict and providing better lighting to a very busy intersection.

Conclusion

Clearly, the memorials of the 16 June 1976 uprisings are not in the tradition of those that historically represent 'heroic celebration and figures of triumph'[116]. This despite the fact that the rhetoric and accompanying rituals put more emphasis on the heroic acts of student and youth activists. Instead, they are characterised by a number of features. They are a permanent representation of the memories of the uprisings and therefore are spaces for collective mourning and remembrance. Mourning and remembrance are expressed privately and collectively in visits to tombstones, homes of former students as well as through commemoration at the memorials. For instance, the laying of wreaths at the Hector Pieterson Memorial and Hastings Ndlovu's place of burial constructs collective memories away from the private spaces of the family.

However, there are also instances in reverse; where homes and burial places take on the public function of the commemoration. In this instance the story of the family becomes part of a bigger process of collective remembering. There are also a number of instances where headstones in the graveyard have become a platform for counter-commemoration by those who feel they have been excluded by 'official' commemorations and want to re-anchor themselves in the legacies and collective memories of the liberation struggle that are remembered differently.

The forms and styles of the memorials of the 16 June 1976 uprisings are drawn from various traditions. These range from memorial architecture, to street furniture, to public art and murals. These in turn have given rise to various forms of memorial

113 F. Coetzee, Johannesburg City Parks, email to A.K. Hlongwane, 25 February 2010.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 Huyssen, 'Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age', 15.

debate – and to silences as well. These are debates that contest certain forms of memorialisation, particularly the 'bronze' which is popular in records of public consultation processes and unpopular among commentators and scholars of heritage and public art.

It has also been demonstrated that 'memorial debate [is] a form of memorial activity, [that is] never resolved, [and] forever in flux'.[117] The debates are of 'socio-political or historical dimension',[118] ranging from the basic bread-and-butter needs of certain communities and the 'many ideas and expectations with which society invests'[119] physical forms of public memory. This is in part because, as Marschall points out, memorials:

> Convey a sense of belonging and allow a new generation to connect with the past, thereby making sense of the present; … they are needed to complete the historical record, to tell the other side of the story.[120]

117 Young, *Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 40.

118 Marschall, 'Setting up a Dialogue', 310.

119 Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany*, 1.

120 Ibid., 310.

The caption: Poster advertising commemoration event for June 16.

History, memory, tourism and curatorial mediations: The Hector Pieterson Museum and the representation of the story of the June 16 1976 uprisings

By Ali Khangela Hlongwane

Introduction

Developing a history exhibition (like all exhibitions) is not a value-free process. It is a complex process that involves negotiating assumed, and sometimes imposed hegemonic philosophical and ideological assumptions on the past and how to (re) represent it. It involves negotiating the storylines from different interpretations that emphasise different facets. It also involves making a selection about which techniques should be deployed in representing the various layers of stories to be told. Techniques here refer largely to objects, installations, voices and the various places associated with the given storyline. This chapter investigates how these overt and subtle assumptions were manifest in setting up the exhibition on the June 16 1976 Student Uprisings and the creation of the Hector Pieterson Museum and Memorial; how both the curatorial process and the architectural intervention were critical elements of mediating the history of the uprisings as well as how, through various public programmes and publications, museum practice is turned into a continuous process of defining and redefining the role of history and its (re)representation in a museum and the landscape in which the museum is located.

The making of the Hector Pieterson Memorial and the development of the 'permanent' exhibition was a 'multi-disciplinary memory-making process'[1] which involved architects, historians, curators, film-makers, city politicians and community representatives. All these elements constituted a curatorial team – 'with uneven

1 A. Nieves, 'Mapping Geographies of Resistance along the 16 June 1976 Heritage Trail', in A.K. Hlongwane (ed.) *Footprints of the 'Class of 76': Commemoration, Memory, Mapping and Heritage* (Johannesburg: The Library, 2008), 20.