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THE FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC ART IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research report is to explore the extent to which public art in post-apartheid, democratic South Africa may contribute both to urban regeneration and nation building as well as the extent to which contemporary African monumental public art could reflect African heritage and traditions (Nettleton 2003:3). Another issue that is explored is the role of patronage in determining the function of public art in post-apartheid South Africa.

Case studies in the form of two examples of post-apartheid public, namely the Freedom Park and the Constitution Hill projects art are used to explore the functions of public art in South Africa.

In summary this research report therefore analyses:

- The nature and function of public art-historical issues;
- The practical issues affecting the production of public art in post-apartheid South Africa;
- The socio-political factors that mitigate for or against the ability of public art to function effectively in the post-apartheid South African context; and
- How these functions feed into the broader issues of making a contribution in a demographically complex, post-apartheid South Africa.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

_____day of _____, 2006.

To my family, friends and colleagues with sincere thanks for their love and encouragement during my studies.

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TERMINOLOGY

Unless stated otherwise the terms listed below have the following meanings in the context of this research report.

Democratic government: The post-1994 South African government is described as a democratic government. In the context of the research project Hawkins' (1986, 221) definition of this concept is accepted. He says a "democratic government [is] a government by all the people, direct or representative, a form of society ignoring hereditary class distinctions and tolerating minority views".

Monuments or public art: 'Public' (art), can be described as "concerned, or for the use of the people as a whole, representing the people, done by or for the people open to general observation or knowledge" (Hawkins, 1986: 669).
In this research report the term 'monument' is equated with public art work.
A key function of a 'monument' is contained in the original Latin word *monere* which means 'to remind' (Reynolds, 1996:10). Related functions stem from this concept namely "a means to giving memory …establish a particular view of history … mnemonic devices for the public" and keeping a memory alive (Nettleton, 2003:10). In the context of this research paper, a monument is defined as a means for social upliftment in the sense that it gives a memory to the public of, for example, important, inspiring, historical events.

Public: The 'public' that view public artworks can be described as having certain characteristics. Public art works are complex cultural articulations and realizations of ideas that have the function of conveying a social message to the public. This public is demographically diverse especially in the South African context. The monument addresses the public through visual elements, composition and words or text. The text verbalises the concepts contained in the monument and can, for example, be inscribed on the monument's base, and is

usually legible to pedestrians (Reynolds, 1996:

Message: The message that the monument conveys centres around themes such as heroes, noble ideas and extraordinary achievements (Reynolds, 1996: 10).

The message is relayed by the choice of site of the monument. It can for instance mark a battlefield or a prison (Reynolds, 1996: 10).

The message can be contained in certain standard forms of monuments. These are: “the triumphant arch, dome, column, obelisk, pyramid, tumulus and sculpture both allegorical and representational at a grand scale” (Reynolds, 1996: 11).

Pretoria/Tshwane: The administrative capital of South Africa is Pretoria. Pretoria is situated within the greater municipal area called Tshwane. However, the name Pretoria is under revision and could be changed to Tshwane in the very near future so that Tshwane would be the administrative capital of South Africa. Only a small area in the inner city would retain the name Pretoria.

In this research paper Pretoria/Tshwane is used to refer to the administrative capital in order to indicate that the name is under review. The Voortrekker Monument and the case study, Freedom Park, is situated in the greater municipal area called Tshwane.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the course of my Masters by coursework studies in Culture and Media Management, I became interested in the link between heritage and culture, and especially the ways in which the new socio-political environment in South Africa is reflected in the commemorative sites that are in the process of being developed. An awareness of philosophical and discursive argument is an important feature of the Culture and Media Course. In this research report I engage with aspects of these arguments by grappling with the weight that policy carries in the development of public art. I also engage especially with the concept that public art is influenced by broader historical discourse.

1.1 AIM

The aim of the research report is to explore topical, central issues concerning public art works in post-apartheid, democratic South Africa and their functions in a young democracy, such as contributions to both urban regeneration and nation-building.

The following questions will be explored:

- To what extent can, or should, contemporary African monumental public art be designed to reflect African heritage and traditions (Nettleton, 2003:3)? (Although I explore this vexed questions, I do not ultimately offer a clear answer, but focus rather on its contested nature);
- What is the role of the patron regarding public art in post-apartheid South Africa? What impact does the intervention of patrons have on

the function of public art in the South African post-apartheid milieu?; and

- How do existing examples of South African public art contribute to the exploration of central issues?

In summary this research project therefore aims to analyse:

- The historical issues regarding the nature and function of public art;
- Socio-political factors that militate for or against public art as being able to fulfill a function in the post-apartheid South African context; and
- The way in which these questions and anlyses contribute towards an understanding of the function of public art in a demographically complex, post-apartheid South Africa.

The rationale behind the report is to be found in the fact that since the abolition of apartheid in 1994, issues with regard to public art have come to the fore in South Africa. This is partly due to the commissioning of certain commemorative public art works illustrating the theme of the attainment of democracy. The issues concerning public art in post-1994 South Africa may therefore be seen in the context of a larger debate surrounding such art and young democracies (predominantly in post-colonial Asia and Africa) and the functions of this kind of art in these environments.

The subject of the function of public art is contentious and needs to be explored, because some of the examples of such art that exist in other young democracies do not address the questions such as those mentioned in 1.1. For example, in Namibia the Heroes' Acre, 2002, outside Windhoek was initiated by Sam Nujoma. The commemorative site which includes an eight meter tall statue of an Unknown Soldier and a white obelisk seems to be an attempt to outdo the colonial monuments in scale, instead of celebrating democracy by reflecting the indigenous culture of the country (Heroes' acre in Windhoek n.d.).

By highlighting these questions, some of the functions of public art in a demographically complex, post-apartheid South Africa are explored.

The following definitions of public art are offered: first, a generic definition. Public art originates in a specific political and social environment and background, which often determines the interpretation thereof (Freschi, 2005). Public art can, for example, commemorate a noteworthy historical event or it might make an implicit reference to violence and conflict (Mitchell, 1990:1).

Second, a more specific definition holds that, ideally, public art is situated in a visible, accessible place in order to ensure intentional or unintentional interaction between the public and the art work (Lacy, 1995:20). The public art work and its milieu cannot be separated and the contemporary artist is often responsible for the design of the whole environment. A relationship between public art, architecture and city planning exists, and for this reason a public art work can change or determine the social dynamics of the urban environment (Finkelpearl, 2000:1-20).

As can be expected, South African public art reflects the socio-political developments which occurred throughout its history. Before Union in 1910, the British in the Cape and Natal were commissioning monuments and sculptures. In addition, the ideologues of the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek (ZAR) in the Boer Republics erected monuments. During the Nationalist government's term in office (1948-1994) the main issues focused on creating an identity for Afrikaners. This led to the exclusion of other groups and a legally enforced cultural separation, which was reflected in government-funded public art works (see Delanty & Isin (2003) on the characteristics of nationalism). Art works after 1994 are being executed in a democratic milieu and strive to include all cultural groups, often with the stated intention of attaining national cohesion.

Public art therefore performs several functions which will be discussed in this research paper.

- First, it is commemorative and creates a public identity or cultural cohesion which is appropriate for the time. It acts as a kind of time capsule to be studied later, in order to gain insight into the concepts of an era.

- Second, public art functions as a landmark.

- Third, it assists in engineering urban regeneration.

- The fourth function of public art is social and/or political in nature. Its social function would include social upliftment, a means to embody memory and establish a particular view of history. Furthermore, it shapes the viewer's concept of history by conveying a social message (often by means of text), changing the viewer's concept regarding aspects of the world. Coombes (2004:14) states that public art can become a "focus for symbolic transactions" during transition periods in a country's history and Reynolds adds that it "can begin political discourse necessary to deal with the past of the country" (1996:160).

Different types of patronage are evident in the realm of public art. For instance, the government often acts as a patron. The role of the patron and his/her/its relationship with the public art work as well as political objectives will therefore come into play. The government will often qualify as a patron because it will hold competitions and express a clear agenda for the art works that will be displayed in the public domain. Since 1994, this agenda in South Africa has been to construct national identity or cohesion by making use of public art. In the White Paper on Arts and Culture (SA, 1996:11-16) policies regulating the arts were put in place by the government.

The arts funding organisation of the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), the National Arts Council (NAC), is supposed to create an “enabling environment” (Grieg, 2005:10) for arts and artists. However, internal and organisational problems and strife have hindered this role of the NAC. “The using of arts as instruments of state social policy” (Grieg, 2005:10) is, however, one of the functions of the government which it carries out adequately, as may be noted in the Constitution Hill Project (see Chapter 3).

The role of the patron could, however, be problematic because the patron might impose “a particular view of history” (Nettleton, 2003:10) on the works that are chosen, in the event of a competition. There might also be competing agendas and diverse points of view regarding the function of a public art work in a country such as South Africa, whose eleven official languages are a reflection of the complexity of its demographics.

The question of ownership arises: can the owner of the public art work (for example a government) destroy the work? This has happened in the United States and Germany, and can be considered in greater detail in connection with the function of public art in contributing to identity politics. The instance of the historic South Africa House in London comes to mind. The house and its contents are owned by the British government. Nothing may be altered or destroyed, although the art works may be deemed inappropriate in the present political and social environment (Freschi, 2005**b**). Destroying a public art work destroys a particular moment in time. The implications of this action will be examined later in this research report. The place of existing public art works in South Africa will consequently need to be negotiated and this matter will also be discussed below.

Government has recognised the need to reposition public art in post-apartheid South Africa; for example in President Mbeki's assertion that the arts function to

aid nation-building and establish social unity in South Africa (Mosala, 2005:25). The government is required to create an environment that fosters the arts (Grieg, 2005:10). Hence it has set in place organisational structures in the form of the DAC, which maintains directorates working on public art, urban regeneration and heritage development projects.

Business shows interest in the patronage and sponsorship of the arts because of the promotional advantage accruing. The reciprocal advantage for the arts lies in the enhanced prestige stemming from its association with a major firm such as Anglo-American (Effective, innovative use of sponsorship, 2004:1). By encouraging entities in the private sector to become art patrons in collaboration with the public sector, the function that the public sector sees the arts as fulfilling becomes more viable, because more funds are forthcoming.

A further example of this type of patronage is that to be observed in Business and Arts South Africa (BASA, with its patron, President Thabo Mbeki), which arranges sponsorship for all the arts. Its "supporting grant scheme is the …[DAC's] art sponsorship initiative managed by BASA to develop business sponsorship of the arts" (BASA, 2004:1). BASA's initiatives are public art-oriented, since it states in its rules that "private events which are not open to the general public …[are] not eligible for support" (BASA, 2002:1). The mobile telephone company, Cell-C, presently sponsoring large art works in Johannesburg, constitutes an example of corporate sponsorship offering the promotional advantages mentioned above.

The scope of public art works may vary. The examples of public art selected as case studies below comprise whole sites developed, or in the process of development, for the purposes of commemorating aspects of the post-apartheid democracy. These case studies, namely Freedom Park and Constitution Hill, function as embodiments and celebrations of the best aspirations of the post-apartheid South Africa.

In 2002 the government approved as a memorial - to be known as 'Freedom Park' - the site of Salvokop in Tshwane. This preserves the memory of the victims of eight historic South African conflicts. Freedom Park's significance for the study of public art and identity politics lies in its aim of being positioned as "a national and international icon for freedom and humanity" (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:7). Its organising principles are based on African philosophy, African indigenous knowledge and the African Renaissance. Therefore Freedom Park will be explored as an example of the extent to which contemporary African monumental public art can or should be designed to reflect an African heritage and traditions (Nettleton, 2003:3).

The architectural vision for Freedom Park also links the concepts of reconciliation and nation-building in the context of "African values" (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:8). It argues that the divisions of the past should be cured in order to concentrate on shared aims. Freedom Park is a useful case study for this project in as far as it concentrates on African organising principles to create a sense of nationhood. In this sense, it attempts to design public art that reflects an African heritage and traditions without trying to outshine colonial monuments (Nettleton, 2003:3). Furthermore, the implications (positive and/or negative) of Freedom Park's adherence to the PANSALB prescriptions regarding the language policy, and what this says about commemorative art work in a complex post-colonial cultural setting, are important and will be considered in this research report.

The second case study focuses on Constitution Hill, which was developed on the site of the Old Fort (Prison). It comprises the Constitutional Court and remnants of the prison, was inaugurated on Human Rights Day 2004 and serves as a reminder of the denial of their human rights to prisoners under the apartheid government. The inclusion of this new Court in the complex celebrates the fact that this Court now defends human rights.

Why is Constitution Hill significant? The Constitutional Court defends “human rights in the new South Africa” (Democracy in pictures: the Constitutional Court's art collection, 2004:36). The art works in the gallery were donated by artists “who are passionate about South Africa’s new democracy" and were installed with the aid of funding provided by the Getty Foundation and the Finnish government. Furthermore, these works were commissioned as the result of a competition that was planned as an integral part of decorating the building. The execution of the winning pieces of art was funded by the Ford Foundation and the Lotto. Residents of Hillbrow were also involved by the artists Lewis Levin and Patrick Rorke who included their personal histories in visual form, as engravings on metal panels on the western side of the Constitutional Court. The thought behind this action was “so that they would feel a sense of ownership towards the building and would not be inclined to deface it” (Democracy in pictures: the Constitutional Court‘s art collection, 2004:36). The Heritage, Education and Tourism team was involved in the regeneration of the precinct. “The development of Constitution Hill is a catalyst for the regeneration of neighbouring Hillbrow and Braamfontein” (Democracy in pictures: the Constitutional Court‘s art collection, 2004:36). The extent to which this aim is achieved is explored in Chapter 3.

How will Constitution Hill contribute meaningfully to this research report? The Court implements the Constitution and as such defends the rights of each South African. In that sense it describes the legal identity of South Africans. The combination of such an identity with art works which are mostly displayed publicly and which embody the theme of political awareness as a theme could constitute an example of public art that contributes to nation-building and national cohesion because it describes an aspect of a post-apartheid South African identity.

The Constitutional Court also considers the past in its incorporation of, for example, some of the bricks and staircases in the demolished Awaiting Trial Prison into its present structure. This project seems to be premised on the

assumption that the contemplation of the significance of the total legacy of the past can lead to the creation of a "true" national identity.

All of these issues affect the functionality of public art works in post-apartheid South Africa, and as such could contribute to the larger debate on the function of public art in young democracies.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review concentrates on the different aspects or components of this research report, namely:

- Ornament, decoration and style;
- Power, ideology and politics; and
- Regionalism and identity.

In studying public art and monuments, questions of style are significant. Since ornament and decoration are, in this context, often inseparable from style, it is necessary to consider all three aspects. The literature investigates the influence of the public artist's employment of ornament, decoration and style on, for example, the socio-political environment and the viewer. A study of the literature foregrounds the functions of the public art work such as nation-building, identity and urban regeneration, and shows how these are supported and sustained by ornament, decoration and style.

A primary source for interpreting symbolic elements of ornament and decoration is Juan Eduardo Cirlot's *Diccionario de simbolos tradicionales,* translated into English by Jack Sage (1988). Cirlot's dictionary furnishes a symbolic interpretation of elements of ornament and decoration and is therefore used to interpret such elements in the case studies. In this research report a symbolic interpretation is offered, together with other considerations such as "the constructional technique; … its period styling… [and] the implicit or explicit

cultural and religious values" (1988:xiii). In the context of the present study a symbolic interpretation of the elements is relevant in order to illustrate that symbols communicate meaning to a wide variety of people and that the latter can identify with the implicit meaning of the public art work. Therefore, a discussion of symbols and symbolic interpretations should make the case studies accessible to a wide variety of people, from different cultures as found in the population of South Africa as well. A symbol is thus an element in public art that can provide a shared experience and therefore promote a shared identity and unity.

This in turn raises questions concerning viewership, and the relationship between the public and the public artist. Finkelpearl's *Dialogues in public art* (2000) offers a useful analysis of the changing role of the public artist. He notes the following:

- The artist often designs the whole environment;
- The public art work might alter the social interaction that takes place in an environment;
- Such a work can assist in rebuilding a neighbourhood; and
- A relationship exists between public art, architecture and city planning.

In *Urban design: ornament & decoration* (1995) Moughtin *et al.* consider the role of ornament and decoration in the urban context, describing it as one of being able to "re-humanize cities aesthetically as well as tackling their social and economic problems" (1995:vii). They further propose a theory of ornament and decoration, and explain the principles of perception and the Gestalt theory. An aspect of the latter which they investigated is that of "perceptual sets", which is significant in the context of this study and is related to the perception and interpretation of public art by a (typically) culturally diverse group of viewers. Some general "perceptual sets" (Moughtin *et al.*, 1995:14) occur and can be taken into account when planning public art works, so that these will communicate with culturally diverse groups. By making use of these "perceptual sets" one can attempt to ensure that the perceptions and meanings of the works

are read in the same way.

The social problems of South Africa's culturally diverse population largely result from the divisions created by the apartheid system. The function of contemporary public art in this context would be to address these divisions through nation-building and sustainable development. The search for nation-building might be fulfilled by recognising the needs of culturally diverse groups, which could be done by applying a "perceptual set".

In a study of public art and monuments considering aspects of power, ideology and politics are important because the functions of public art works, namely nation-building, identity and urban regeneration, are played out within a specific socio-political context. Because these works can influence the public's perception of political-historical events, the possibility exists that ideologues could present historic events in a certain way by making use of a monument, in so doing influencing public perception and even national identity. The texts chosen for the literature review emphasise the influence of power, ideology and politics in the role of monuments.

Anne E. Coombes in *History after apartheid* (2004) reflects on the present uncertain status of pre-1994 monuments in South Africa and on the agendas involved in the creation of new commemorative monuments. She argues that these new monuments carry the burden of reminding the viewer of a divided past but simultaneously aiming to create national cohesion. Coombes's perspective on past and present public art in South Africa places the art works in a socio-political historical context that will be invaluable to the present study.

The question of whether public art works can change the viewer's concepts, regarding aspects of the world, is central to contemplating the function of public art in post-apartheid South Africa with regard to nation-building. Murray Edelman's *From art to politics* (1995) may be valuable in addressing this

question. He argues that an individual's concepts regarding the world are not fixed, as they are based on insufficient information and groundless assumptions (Edelman, 1995:52). He maintains that "the transformation of concepts through art" (1995:49) can take place in two ways, namely:

> "[The artist can] explicitly express ideological views in a work;
> [or] indirectly assume an ideological stance by examining a range of revealing social situations [so that the viewer] subtly derives [a] political outlook from relevant moral, social, economic and psychological premises thus the ideological thrust is deeper" (1995:49-50).

Art involves both an emotional reaction and the objective evaluation of emotions, with a resultant more correct interpretation of emotion. Therefore, art wields the power to change conceptions and emotions (Edelman, 1995:53). In summary, Edelman's stance is that art can change assumptions by providing different points of view (1995:52).

In this study I support Edelman's viewpoint that art can change the viewer's concept regarding the world. I will analyse art works as exhibiting a more explicit or indirect ideological stance, as well as discuss the way in which this impacts on their "ideological thrust" (Edelman, 1995:50).

Andreas Huyssen interprets the power of monuments as residing in creating a memory that speaks to the viewer and explains the world that he or she lives in. In *Present pasts: urban palimpsests and the politics of a memory* (2003) Huyssen describes the influence of globalisation on the memory of specific events such as the Jewish holocaust. There is a global memory of the holocaust, but specific sites for its monuments, for example, the Jewish Museum in Berlin. The same can be said of the global awareness of apartheid and the need for specific sites to commemorate apartheid.

In *Blank_:Architecture, apartheid and after* (2000) Chapter C4, “White sepulchers: on the reluctance of monuments”, David Bunn constructs a history of colonial monumental architecture in South Africa. He highlights racial exclusion from European monumental architecture in South Africa and the subsequent lack of joint commemoration (which could constitute a nation-building exercise). Bunn discusses English colonial monumental architecture and its main exponent, Herbert Baker, from his projects for Rhodes in 1910 to the 1930s. According to Bunn, Baker ostensibly worked towards introducing the Arts and Craft movement into South Africa and used local material (stone). However, Baker’s work also reflects the Cape interpretation of Edwardian ideals of beauty mixed with an Italian Renaissance influence (Bunn, 2000:C4). The identity envisaged for the Cape was more Mediterranean, in accordance with Rhodes’ ideal of connecting the British colonies from the Cape to Cairo.

Bunn also asserts that “White imperial monumentality is stylistically and politically regressive, always longing for an older mode of administration in which paternal authority is invested with wide unmediated political powers” (Bunn, 2000:C4). The irony of a post-colonial reiteration of the colonial style of monumentality would reside in the action of embracing a colonial cultural style which is inherently conservative, while rejecting the political system it represents.

In Bunn's view the Afrikaner monuments were conceptualised as instrumental in nation-building. Through the commemoration and propagation of the history of the Great Trek as taking on legendary dimensions, in for example the Voortrekker Monument (1949), the Afrikaner nation’s sense of identity was established.

The purpose of creating an identity is significant because public art not only reflects the identity of a nation but can also shape it, as was the case with the Voortrekker Monument (discussed in 1.6). If the political context alters, then any monument becomes a type of time capsule mirroring the identity of a nation at a

specific time in history.

Benedict Anderson theorises regarding the terms "nation", "nationality" and "nationalism". His *Imagined communities* (1991) speaks of “the universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept” (1991:4). Anderson furthermore writes of “cultural artifacts that would [in South Africa’s case] not be accepted or shared by all” (1991:4). If Anderson’s theories are accepted for the purposes of this research report then these two aspects would be taken into account as regards the creation of a national identity. In other words, social and cultural concepts should be shared and there would need to be cultural artifacts which could be shared by all and command profound emotional legitimacy (1991:4). Consequently, the two case studies attempt to create an "imagined community" that includes groups that were previously ignored and marginalised; for example, at Freedom Park and Constitution Hill all the official languages of South Africa are included. The eight historic conflicts are commemorated. In addition, the ideals of the South African democracy are expressed in the design and layout of the sites. This feature can be analysed by looking at and comparing the arrangement of similar elements at each of the sites, such as light, water, stone, orientation, the journey, elevation and their symbolic implications.

The question as to whether public art can contribute to national identity and the role of nationalism is examined by reference to five authors and publications, namely Gerard Delanty’s *Handbook of historical sociology* (2003), Elizabeth Delmont in the *South African Historical Journal* (1993), Emmanuel Eze in *African philosophy: an anthology* (2001), Federico Freschi in “Imagining fusion: the politics of South Africanism as reflected in the decorative programme of the Pretoria City Hall (1935)”, *De Arte* (2004) and Sabine Marschall in *South African Journal of Cultural History* (2005).

This research report explores factors which constitute a sense of nationality and national cohesion. In a country such as South Africa, which is only beginning to

emerge from the complexities of past social and cultural division, this identity is in a state of flux, and it is therefore necessary to take note of the characteristics of nationalism as described in Delanty's *Handbook of historical sociology* (2003), for Instance. An important feature of nationalism is that it defines who is included in the nation, and by implication those who are excluded. Delanty demonstrates that this exclusion can lead to xenophobia and violence. Nationalism exerted a profound influence on South Africa during the Nationalist government's term in office (1948-1994), as is apparent in the Voortrekker Monument.

Elizabeth Delmont (1993) analyses the way in which this Monument shaped Afrikaner identity and became a powerful symbol exploited by the Afrikaner Nationalist government. It illustrates the role that a public art work can play in one government's term in office and how this could alter under a new dispensation in which, for instance, its continued existence shows the reconciliatory stance of the new government.

The case study of Freedom Park makes use of African philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems as organising principles. In the light of the fact that the fine arts in South Africa show evidence of cultural fusion and that national identity is still evolving, an insistence on African identity in public art works could interfere with the natural process of establishing a national identity, which could eventually be different from the African identity imagined today.

Emmanuel Eze (2001) describes African nationalism and its negation of the possibility of acculturation. As such, African nationalism would not offer an answer in the quest for a national identity, as it would not allow for acculturation or cultural fusion, but in fact alienates the nation. However, the characteristics of African nationalism must also be borne in mind if they are to be avoided in contemporary South African public art. As in the case of nationalism, African nationalism might also lead to exclusion, xenophobia and violence.

Federico Freschi recreates the political and social environment and background in terms of which the public art works in the Pretoria City Hall originated. (The paintings are dated 1933-37 and the City Hall was completed in 1935.) His paper investigates the construction of “different South African identities” (Stevens, 2004:2) by means of the art works. Freschi argues that while many of the tropes of Afrikaner nationalism are used, in the context of the Pretoria City Hall they are extended to embrace a wider nationalistic subjectivity, in connection with the notion of the "unity in diversity" of the Afrikaner and their historical enemy, the "Brits". Some of the art works are based on compositions found in European art history. For example, the mother and child depictions are reminiscent of Christian art: mother Mary and the infant Jesus. Freschi argues that these are significant in as far as they start constructing a kind of "civil religion", which is one of the most powerful rhetorical devices of nationalism.

Depictions of the different cultural and racial groups illustrate “fusion politics”. From the Afrikaner perspective, depicting the other cultural and racial groups as also being *volksmoeders* (mothers of the nation), would have been considered generous in that era. The mother might be an Afrikaner (with baby), British (with baby) or a Black woman (bearing an ambiguous feminine symbol, namely a vessel or container (Cirlot, 1988:358)). The conciliatory aspects of the depiction of the mother figure, across culture and race, in the context of the 1930s, can be deemed to be representative of the ideological principles of fusion politics.

Although Freschi suggests that the underlying principle of "unity in diversity" has a certain resonance in post-apartheid South Africa, these art works illustrate political ideas that possess little relevance in 2006. As suggested earlier, they can be compared to a time capsule of the era and in that sense, are of historical value.

The Monument does, however, reflect aspects of public art and identity politics, which Nettleton (2003) also highlights, such as the reliance on iconography from

art history in an attempt to infuse the works with meaning.

Sabine Marschall examines the concept of a foundation myth in connection with establishing a principle that would forge diverse groups together in one nation. She describes such a myth as often established by a new political order around a selectively chosen historical moment "that traces roots and defines the roots of the new order" (2005:20). She expounds the reason why foundation myths are so effective and attractive in establishing a national identity in the following way: "[i]t is this blissful clarity - as apposed to the confusing opacity of gradations and ambiguities, which tends to characterize historical reality - that attracts people to myth. Monuments and other 'products' of the heritage sector are means of visualizing these myths" (Marschall, 2005:6).

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A degree of social and historical background is necessary in order to place the study of identity politics and nation-building, in post-colonial South Africa, in context (Miguel, 2004:361). It is provided in 1.5.

Art works can be seen as allegories with social and political dimensions. The furnishing of narrative accounts and/or historical backgrounds is the key to the interpretation of monuments (Mitchell, 1994:1). The art work can be interpreted In terms of the symbolic references in the work. The symbolism is often derived from the natural elements, such as lakes or trees that illustrate these social or political allegories (Mitchell, 1994:1).

Michael Warner theorises the notion of "the public", as in the concept of the viewer of the public art work. He also engages with the idea of what constitutes "public" and avers: “[the] idea of a public is a cultural form, a kind of practical fiction…Like the idea of rights, or nations, or markets, it can now seem universal. But it has not always been so. Publics exist only by virtue of their imagining. They

are a kind of fiction that has taken on life, and very potent life at that" (2002:77). This argument refers back to earlier, post-Marxist social theory concerning the construction of a nation, particularly that of Benedict Anderson (1991:4).

Because my aim in the case studies is to consider nation-building, Anderson's theories concerning the term "nation" (including nationality and nationalism) are important, since he speaks of "the universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept" (1991:4). However, in a country such as South Africa which has a legacy of social and cultural divides (as illustrated by its eleven official languages) the sense of nationality - the personal and cultural feeling of belonging to a nation - a shared social and cultural concept (Anderson, 1991:4) does not exist: it must evolve.

Anderson furthermore speaks of "cultural artifacts that would [in South Africa's case] not be accepted or shared by all [and none that] command such profound emotional legitimacy" (1991:4). If Anderson's theories are accepted, as they are in this study, then these two aspects should be taken into account as regards allowing a national identity to evolve. In other words, shared social and cultural concepts should exist and there will need to be cultural artifacts that will be shared by all and therefore command profound emotional legitimacy (1991:4).

A complication arising with Anderson's concept of nation, in the South African context, is that he regards language (printed) as a common denominator among "imagined communities" (1991:4). In the context of this research report, in South Africa, the language divide is complicated by illiteracy (according to the census of 2001 one third of the population in the age group 20 years and over is functionally illiterate (Department of Statistics, 2004:144)) and, for a large proportion of the population, being educated in a language not their mother tongue contributes to their feeling of not belonging.

"The national language policy of South Africa is expressed in the PANSALB[1] Act" (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:11) and aims to give recognition to the various indigenous languages. At Freedom Park for example, in an attempt to respect the language policy and thereby to contribute to nation-building through respect for all the people of South Africa, the identification of the various elements is recorded in all eleven official languages. This will go some way to resolving the feelings of many in the population that they do not belong. This recognition of all eleven languages is an approach that differs from Anderson's, who views **one** language as being a common denominator among "imagined communities".

The question as to whether public art can contribute to urban regeneration and nation-building becomes focused on how to address the legibility of the art work across the still considerable cultural, social and linguistic divides of post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, the question as to whether the artist can influence the viewer to adopt another point of view becomes the key to the present study. If the artist can indeed influence the viewer's point of view, the artist's function should be to show the viewer what he/she should aspire to, namely a national identity so that nation-building can be achieved.

During the Nationalist government's time in office (1948-1994) the main issues centred around entrenched cultural insensitivities. The inequitable dispensation perpetuated a kind of master-slave relationship. Some of the characteristics of nationalism as described by Gerard Delanty demonstrate the possible origin of the Nationalist government's cultural insensitivities and its inequitable dispensation.

The previous government's policies reflected some of the typical characteristics of nationalism. For Delanty, nationalism is "a response to processes of

[1] PANSALB: the Pan South African Language Board protects all major South African languages.

integration and differentiation" (2003:287). He discusses three questions that nationalism addresses: firstly, who the members of the polity are; secondly, where the borders of the polity are; and thirdly, what the distinct characteristics of the polity are (Delanty, 2003:287).

However, according to him, some of the responses to nationalism have negative results such as the fact that minorities are often not included, which can result in violence and xenophobia because some people are perceived as not belonging inside the borders of the polity (2003:287). This exclusivity was at the root of the Nationalist government's insensitivities and the resulting dispensation. Black people were perceived as not being members of the polity, not belonging inside the borders of the polity and not exhibiting the distinct characteristics of the polity. The function of public art in nationalist, apartheid South Africa was consequently to address the questions of the members of the polity, its borders and its distinct characteristics, for example, in the Voortrekker Monument.

The question remains to what extent the present government, in trying to create a national identity, still subscribes to the tendencies or characteristics of nationalism. Furthermore, one can enquire whether nationalism is indeed reflected in the function of public art in a post-apartheid, democratic South Africa. The Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park] states that: "African philosophy celebrates the plurality and mutuality of our societies. Whereas western knowledge erected boundaries and installed pervasive opposition thinking, African philosophy acknowledges and recognizes plurality or alternative knowledge. This approach will contribute to processes of national reconciliation and nation-building. The tenets of African philosophy are widely shared by the people of South Africa and the sub-continent, thus providing the nation with another basis of forging national regional and continental unity. In many of the African societies the vision of humanity is commonly celebrated in edicts about *Ubuntu*… the same principles above have been interpreted into *Batho Pele* - a principle of governance that puts people first" (2004:8).

Therefore, it appears that the post-apartheid government's objective is to subscribe to an African philosophical principle to achieve nation-building and reconciliation. But the processes used to achieve these aims often seem related to the characteristics of nationalism.

If nationalism is perceived from the vantage point of cultural theories, then by means of dialogue it can present "models of meaning which are tool-kits for the construction of collective identity" (Delanty, 2003:289). Anderson (quoted in Delanty) considers that nationalism provides citizens with the means, through "a cognitive model" (Delanty, 2003:289), to understand their social environment. Nationalism "in cognitive terms is a mode of social knowledge, a way in which individuals 'know' their society" (Delanty, 2003:289). However, Gellner (quoted in Delanty) argues that the "truth content of nationalism is false, since nationalism is based on fabricated versions of the past" (Delanty, 2003:289). Because of the possibility that nationalism can assist in nation-building (as Delanty notes above) and owing to the democratic government's aspirations towards nation-building, the temptation exists to deploy nationalism in achieving this objective. However, Gellner warns against the distortions of history that can result from a nationalist perspective. As seen above, this may lead to the exclusion of groups, xenophobia and violence. Therefore, the democratic government should best avoid processes that seem related to the characteristics of nationalism.

The question remains: how to deal with monuments from the past - for example the colonial and apartheid past? One strategy is to follow an "integrated approach" (see 1.6): showing as complete a picture of history as possible for the people of today, keeping the monuments from the past intact and allowing them to co-exist with monuments from the post-1994 era. This strategy will contribute to reconciliation and add value to the way in which the greatest number of South Africans relates to a demographically complex, post-apartheid South Africa and its history, hence contributing to nation-building.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Public art is perceived as fulfilling the functions of, for example, urban regeneration and nation-building, and also shaping social identities. The socio-political background and placing in context of these functions of public art in South Africa, and how these relate to the broader debate surrounding the function of public art in young democracies, are pursued by means of literature and case studies. The literature on the case studies themselves is limited because of their recent development and as yet incomplete state. Therefore primary sources such as radio interviews, tour guides, magazines and newspaper articles have been included in the literature study. There are exceptions and where available critical literature has been included, for example, Hannah le Roux on Constitution Hill: Hell/whole the inversion of Constitution Hill (2004:38-44).

1.5 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

This section will discuss the historical legacy that determined and still determines the functions of earlier monuments in South Africa, as well as those that are in the process of being established. The focus will fall on the functions of public art or monuments that were established, or are in the process of being established, in post-apartheid South Africa. To understand the functions required of the post-1994 South African monuments, the writer will consider the influences on and the layers comprising the composition of the socio-political landscape in South Africa, and Africa.

The legacy of apartheid is only one of a number of influences that have shaped this country. According to Coombes, the migration, colonialism, absolutism and struggle groups that characterised the South African socio-political landscape all

constitute legacies or influences that must be included in any consideration of the panorama (2004:7). Their influence and importance in the representation of post-apartheid South Africa in monuments must be negotiated (2004:5).

The transition and the subsequent redefinition of the communities that inhabit this landscape comprise the focus points when considering the functions of public art. One of the contradictions in such a debate stems from the fact that the various groups' interests, concepts and concerns regarding the importance of certain sites must all be reflected (Coombes, 2004:5). On the other hand, the government perceives public art as a vehicle to achieve social cohesion. The contradiction can at best be contained and negotiated to include different perspectives on history, but cannot be totally incorporated.

An example of a monument erected under the apartheid regime's term in office (which is still extant and the function of which is in the process of being negotiated by various interest groups in democratic South Africa) is the Voortrekker Monument, Tshwane (see Terminology for the use of Pretoria/Tshwane). The internationally recognised term 'apartheid' defined the Nationalist government of the South Africa of 1948-1994 for many people and evoked images of exclusion and separation, which were also reflected in the monuments of the time. For example, the intended function for which the Voortrekker Monument was erected can be cited. Elizabeth Delmont quotes from "the foreword of the official guide of 1954: [T]he Monument will arouse the pride of belonging to a nation of heroes who saw the Great Trek through; it will arouse and strengthen a love for the country for whose sake so much was sacrificed; and it will strengthen a faith in God whom the people trust. It will induce them to devote their lives to the duty and the privilege of building a nation" (1993:76). By its intended function, namely to induce the descendants of the Voortrekkers to devote their lives to the building of a nation, it excluded other people from the nation. The function of the Voortrekker Monument was clear and reflects the legacies that shaped the country at that stage. The ramifications of the

Voortrekker Monument and its relevance to this study are discussed in 1.6.

The image propagated of post-apartheid South Africa (during the presidency of Nelson Mandela) is that of the inclusion of all cultural groups in South Africa, hence the term "rainbow nation" (introduced to the South African context by Desmond Tutu, but also used in the United States by the Reverent Jesse Jackson and was the foundation myth of Mauritius (Marschall, 2005:20)). The subsequent presidency of Thabo Mbeki propagates the concept of an African Renaissance: a wider vision than that of President Mandela in that it includes the African continent. The African Renaissance seeks to implement African monetary, political and academic coalitions so as to strengthen the continental influence and lessen the Western influence on and power over Africa (Coombes, 2004:3). The aim of the African Renaissance is to avoid continued dependency on the European and American nations. The inclusion of all South Africans is also propagated by means of this concept, the focus of which is on the culture of Africa (Coombes, 2004:3).

To concentrate mainly on the ethnic grouping devised under apartheid in South Africa does not take into account the total spectrum of political affiliations. On the left of the political spectrum alliances between different ethnic and cultural groups have proved possible. Therefore, although the influence of apartheid and other characteristics of the socio-political landscape have determined that the “the prejudices and discriminations …[are] internalised to a certain degree” (Coombes, 2004:3) more complex alliances exist than those that are ethnically based. However, “both factors [ethnic/cultural and political] need to be taken into account in order to understand the stakes involved in the struggle for historical memory and public history in South Africa” (Coombes, 2004:3).

The monuments or sites that will be used as case studies reflect the two concepts of the African Renaissance, conveyed through African cultural ideas, and the rainbow nation, embodied in complex political alliances due to the

inclusion of all groups, most notably in the form of the eleven official languages and the protection of the constitutional rights of all South Africans. The backdrop of the monuments or sites is the historical socio-political landscape.

Marschall introduces the argument against the rainbow nation as foundation myth and for the 'Struggle' as foundation myth for the post-apartheid South Africa. She argues that the new post-apartheid South Africa needs a foundation myth that would describe the new nation and "invent a new inclusive past that can be shared by all, or most South Africans to form the basis for a new nation" (2005:20). Marschall argues that "based on the emerging 'heritage products' as evidence, it appears that the function of foundation myth is currently performed by the meta-narrative of the 'Struggle' for liberation…virtually all new monuments and cultural heritage sites, built and proposed in post-apartheid South Africa, are in one way or another linked to the notion of struggle or resistance. This refers not only to resistance against apartheid, but against colonial domination and all forms of disenfranchisement of the non-white population and negation of their value systems…the foundation myth of the 'Struggle' is intended to forge people of widely diverse origins and experiences into one nation" (2005:20). She concludes that the present South African national identity is therefore vested as a struggle for liberation from oppression and that this is embodied in public art.

South Africa is a country displaying wide disparities: some industries are highly developed, but on the other hand 29% of the working population is unemployed (Eybers, 2005:20), 30% of the population over the age of twenty is functionally illiterate (Department of Statistics, 2001:144) and the distribution of population groups is still uneven due to the policies of separate development (Coombes, 2004:4). Communities were not allowed to develop and interact in an organic fashion but were grouped together in an artificial way.

In South Africa, one of the functions of public art will therefore be to reflect on and assist in the interpretation of this disparity, in order to benefit the public and

in this way to assist the process of evolving a national identity. In terms of the concept of the 'rainbow nation' the focus is on the inclusion of different cultures and the disparities described above. Because of the influence of the historical inequalities in the socio-political landscape, the inclusion of these differences is often problematic and strained; and tensions are not fully resolved but often ignored rather than addressed.

Against this background the historical memories are rewritten to include other viewpoints and perspectives. The idea of who constitutes the community changes. The government's ideal of national cohesion and its perception that public art has the function of making a contribution to this ideal, is deployed against this background (Coombes, 2004:4-5).

1.6 ASPECTS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC ART

Since 1994 an "integrated approach" to the cultural preservation and the recording of history has gained momentum in South Africa (Jordaan, 2005:12). This approach acknowledges that the cultural and historical heritages of all groups are of equal importance and should be recognised in, for example, public art works. Devising an integrated approach in a culturally diverse society such as South Africa will depend on three factors:

First, in order to create an accurate representation of history, the roles and contributions of all groups need to be taken into account (Jordaan, 2005:12). In public art commissioned by the previous regime, in which the conventional characteristics of western art were displayed, western ideology and contributions were depicted as superior.

Second, history should not be appropriated by one group. For example, the Anglo-Boer War was not an all-white war and the Boers were not the only victims: 18 000 blacks died in the British concentration camps (Jordaan,

2005:12). Adding this information and reinterpreting history can bring cultural groups together and assist in the creation of a national character (Jordaan, 2005:12).

Third, it must be a comprehensive, inclusive history and each group's contribution needs to run concurrently with the main thrust of South African history. The good and bad aspects of each group's history should be remembered (Jordaan, 2005:12).

If these three factors are kept in mind, the integrated approach will lead to the realisation that although each group possesses a unique history, a combined history also exists (Jordaan, 2005:12).

One of the original functions of monuments is "to remind". Events - mythic or otherwise - that are considered worthy of memorialisation, are represented. Huyssen (2003:35) accurately describes the contemporary pitfalls to which monuments are prone, and explains why the effectiveness of the functions of public art has to some extent been eroded, observing that "the monumental is aesthetically suspect because it is tied to nineteenth-century bad taste, to kitsch, and to mass culture. It is politically suspect because it is seen as representative of nineteenth-century nationalisms and twentieth-century totalitarianisms. It is socially suspect because it is the privileged mode of expression of mass movements and mass politics. It is ethically suspect because in its preference for bigness it indulges in the larger-than-human, in the attempt to overwhelm the individual spectator" (2003:35).

From the above argument it is evident that the functions of public art have been misused and overexploited. The debate concerning public art in young democracies could investigate these issues, but the (suspect) context within which the art works are conceived remains the same. The one function that remains intact is contained in the original meaning of the word monument: "to

remind".

Zubeida Jaffer describes the issue of public monuments as emotional (Radio sonder grense, 2005**d**). The emotions of all the cultural groups involved must be taken into account when considering the re-evaluation of existing monuments. The existing monuments cannot just be removed or destroyed. They are part of the history of the country and reflect an integrated approach to cultural preservation and the recording of history (Jordaan, 2005:12).

Jaffer contends that the question should rather ask: What should be added to provide a complete picture of the historic socio-political environment and to make it relevant today and in the future? For example, the contribution of the cultural groups other than the Dutch - such as the slaves from Indonesia - to the formation of Afrikaans, should be recognised and added to existing monuments to the language. The debate on the monuments should be as wide as possible and include other cultural groups (Radio sonder grense, 2005**d**). “This is similar to the way in which the debate around the murals in South Africa House is being handled, *i.e.* to set up a dialogue between old and new rather than simply to destroy or paper over the existing works… it raises its own set of problems and challenges, not least the question of whose history is told in its place, and by whom” (Freschi, 2005**b**).

Ideally, the function of any monument should be to remind the nation of all contributions to the country’s history in order to contribute to reconciliation and to lessen the divide between the cultural groups. For Jaffer the challenge is to bring all groups together and to accommodate all constituencies. The contribution of all people should be recognised (Radio sonder grense, 2005**d**).

In an article in the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld*, Lebogang Lance Nawa writes that “[in] the process of redefining a nation especially after obtaining freedom … the building blocks in the process of creating a national identity are symbols

(such as sculptures, … language, place names, etcetera)" (Nawa, 2005:13, my translation). Nawa considers that a process of redefining the national identity of South Africa is taking place after the democratic election of 1994 (2005:13). (A direct causal link between the election and the construction of a national identity does not necessarily exist. The process of identity construction in a democracy is ongoing.) Extrapolating from Nawa, one can argue that the quest for an identity can be illustrated through the consideration of the function of monuments.

In Nawa's view a national identity will be formed through the consideration and promotion of an African philosophical framework by which to engage with the environment and to reconcile the differences. Public monuments and art works of heroes and historical events constitute definitive environments in which the philosophical framework can be expressed. Such a framework defines all aspects of life (2005:13).

The issues related to nation-building in a new democracy depend to a great degree on reconciliation (Nawa, 2005:13). According to Nawa reconciliation consists of four components:

First, "reconciliation is a process that engages two or more parties and takes place in a specific context … in the South African context for example the Afrikaner cannot just negate its his contribution to apartheid. Reconciliation commences by means of the recognition of the rights of other people" (2005: 13, rough translation). Second, reconciliation calls for the creation of symbols that everybody can identify with and that are advantageous for all. Third, reconciliation means the preservation of the symbols that are meaningful to different cultural groups and not their removal (though their position in the new context might have to be renegotiated); and fourth, reconciliation has to do with the empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups (2005:13). President Mandela's reconciliatory approach was rooted in these four components and in this way affirmed his commitment to nation-building.

One of the case studies of a public art work in this research report, namely Freedom Park, offers an instance of the embodiment of the function of reconciliation in a public art work; all victims of conflicts are remembered, and by this means, a feeling of unity and a national identity is created.

Coombes investigates the possibility that a public art work's function can be described in a certain way during one regime, but that its function can be altered and still remain influential during the transition from one regime to the next. Coombes cites the example of the Voortrekker Monument (1949) (2004:19-31). Coombes asserts that the Voortrekker Monument can be stripped of its Afrikaner nationalist overtones and invested with new meaning to retain a public profile in the context of the new democracy without the overt associations with the previous government. In the present study this Monument will be discussed in order to explore the question: How do existing examples of South African public art contribute to the examination of the central issues?

In her influential article exploring the nationalist ideology that informed the politics of the Voortrekker Monument and shaped the beliefs of the public, Elizabeth Delmont (1993:76-101), notes that the original functions of the Voortrekker Monument were described by S. J. G. van Niekerk in *The Voortrekker Monument Pretoria Official Guide* of 1954. These included the following: "arousing the pride [of the Afrikaner descendants of the Voortrekkers] of belonging to a nation of heroes who saw the Great Trek through; it will arouse and strengthen a love for the country for whose sake so much was sacrificed; and it will strengthen a faith in God whom the people trust".

The Voortrekker Monument became a particularly powerful symbol for the Afrikaner Nationalist government. The representation of the history of the Great Trek (the Afrikaner appropriated this history, as opposed to following an integrated approach to the recording of history, see 1.6) was constructed and

propagated roughly around the time of the centennial of the Great Trek in 1938, owing to the rise of nationalism. A commemorative trek by replicas of the type of ox wagon used by the Voortrekkers through the country was widely publicised. The replicas were met by Afrikaners in most towns and created a feeling of nationhood and cohesion.

The Monument was inaugurated in 1949. The growing feeling of nationhood, fostered by the centennial, now reached a climax. At that stage the function of the Monument was explicitly to build a nation (Judin and Vladislavic, 2000:C4). To analyse the function of this Voortrekker Monument in the socio-political context of 1949, one should keep in mind that it was designed for only a section of the population. Therefore, one should determine whether it could still play a role (and what is this role) in the context of democratic South Africa. Through an analysis of the Voortrekker Monument this research report hopes to demonstrate that public art can become a way to affect a conciliatory role between groups and that the Voortrekker Monument's relevance to nation building can be influential in such a scenario.

At that point, the purpose of the Voortrekker Monument was to create unity among Afrikaners by keeping the memory of the Great Trek, as well as the vow and the battle of "Blood River", alive. The founding allegory of the Afrikaner is depicted in the narrative relief (Victory at Blood River) and the symbolic tomb of the Voortrekker leader, Piet Retief. This succeeded and the vow is still commemorated, but to a smaller degree. The Monument, together with the centennial celebrations, altered the (Afrikaner) viewer’s concept of the world. Therefore, the Voortrekker Monument was functionally successful in the context and illustrates the view of Edelman that “[the] transformation of concepts through art [can take place through] explicitly expressed ideological views” (1995:49).

In Anderson’s terms the creation of a national identity will necessarily be characterised by shared social and cultural concepts, making use of cultural

artifacts that will be shared by all and will command profound emotional legitimacy (1991:4). As regards the Voortrekker Monument, these shared concepts were created by means of the build-up to its inauguration.

As a result, the Monument was successful in its original context in that it answered to the criteria of functions (albeit in retrospect) described by authors like Finkelpearl (2000), who, as mentioned earlier, notes that the public art work or monument might alter the social interaction that takes place in an environment. The role of the Nationalist monuments about fifteen years after this inauguration remained the same (to effect the national cohesion of the Afrikaner volk) but the message became more clearly focused on the concept of apartheid (Bunn, 2000:C4).

The Voortrekker Monument remained literally visible to and engraved on the consciousness because of its prominent, elevated position on a hill. However, its significance altered during the era of high apartheid; it became more closely associated with apartheid through the subsequent historical events and because it is situated within the boundaries of Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa during the years of apartheid. Placing the Voortrekker Monument on the hill made "a statement of Afrikaner nationalism in relation to that other significant monument of national imagining, the Union Buildings which was the seat of the British colonial power despite the placatory fusion politics of the 1930s, …Freedom Park [which is situated directly opposite the Voortrekker Monument] is now aiming, in a sense, to close that circle of national imagining: from the vision of a united, white South Africa to the vision of a divided, Afrikaner dominated South Africa, to the vision of a united black and white South Africa" (Freschi, 2005).

The questions in new democracies are invariably: What should be done with monuments that commemorate the previous regime's one-sided historical interpretations and iconic monuments? What is the function of these examples of

public art in a young democracy? How can they contribute to such a democracy? The past and its interpretation of history often find little resonance with the new regime. Monumental forms, to catch the memory of the past without creating divisions and factions that project past traumas into the future and result in regression, are often elusive (Coombes, 2004:19-20).

The Voortrekker Monument is being preserved in terms of the ANC government's cultural policy. Its function in the new dispensation will be examined below to offer a perspective on the possibility that one could "disinvest such an icon of its Afrikaner nationalist associations and re-inscribe it with new resonance that enables it to remain a highly public monument despite a new democratic government whose future is premised on the demise of everything the monument has ever stood for" (Coombes, 2004:23).

Fifty years after the centennial celebrations of 1938, the Monument housed celebrations that reflected "a spirit of self sacrifice and compromise from these heroic predecessors [the original Voortrekkers of the 1838 Great Trek] in order to promote the concept of 'power-sharing'" (Coombes, 2004:31). These celebrations were encouraged by the government of the time so as to include other groups in the governing process. By the time of the run-up to the 1994 election, the Monument was reflecting the altering constituencies and rifts among Afrikaners and the socio-political changes in the country. It constituted the focus of right-wing shows of opposition to change. These references were regressive and attempted to resurrect the high apartheid, nationalist Afrikaner exclusivity in shows of aggression and armed resistance. The ruling National Party's decision to hand power over to the ANC during a democratic election created a new patron of the Voortrekker Monument.

In a "democratic South Africa and in the context of an increasingly post-national, post-colonial world …the monolithic idea of 'the Afrikaner' no longer has any validity" (Freschi, 2005). The Monument is also now not perceived to perform the

function of creating national cohesion among Afrikaners. At this stage it can therefore be compared to a time capsule that preserves aspects of the socio-political climate from 1948-1994. Black people often experience the Voortrekker Monument as one-sided and negative. Joe Louw (1992), a black journalist, describes the relief sculptures in the Voortrekker Monument as a one-dimensional, negative portrayal of the black people whom the Voortrekkers encountered on their trek into the land, for example, in the depiction of the Bloukrans attack by the Zulu *Impis* on the Voortrekkers. The Zulus are shown as killing mostly women and children. In the rest of the reliefs the blacks are depicted as either conquered or killing. Louw experienced the monument as anti-conciliatory, provocative and inflammatory (Coombes, 2004:35).

Four years later and two years into black majority rule under President Mandela (one should recall his conciliatory aim of a rainbow nation or national cohesion during his term of office), Tokyo Sexwale, at that stage the Premier of the newly declared province of Gauteng, interpreted the imagery at the Monument differently (Coombes, 2004:37). Coombes pointed out that the relief portraying ox wagons forms a symbolic protective enclosure around the Monument, which could be seen as imprisoning or trapping the Afrikaner inside. But Sexwale is shown as opening a gate and thereby symbolically freeing the Afrikaner. The gate is composed of Zulu spears “apparently blocking the path of civilization. [But Sexwale] … inverts this symbolism: 'it was precisely the assegais at its height that turned the tide. Umkhonto we Sizwe, the spear of the nation, opened up the path of civilization'” (Coombes, 2004:37).

By reinterpreting the monument which, at that stage, was a symbol of apartheid, Sexwale to some extent defused the inflammatory connotations attached to it. His interpretation appeased both the Afrikaners and the blacks. By doing this, Sexwale accorded new meaning to the Voortrekker Monument: its function could be interpreted as creating reconciliation and cohesion between Afrikaners and blacks in the post-apartheid South African context. In effect he Africanised the

monument (Coombes, 2004:37). Therefore, a monument created under one regime can be reinterpreted under the next so that it remains functional and promotes the concept of reconciliation among different cultural groups.

Salvokop, adjacent to the Voortrekker Monument and opposite the Union Buildings, is at this stage being developed as Freedom Park (the first case study). The implications of its placement are explored in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

CASE STUDY 1: FREEDOM PARK AT SALVOKOP, TSHWANE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Freedom Park is a monument to the new democracy and also reflects "the outcome of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations which called for the preservation of the memory of victims of eight historic South African Conflicts: genocide, slavery, the pre-colonial wars, the wars of resistance, the struggle for liberation, the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902) and the first and second world wars. The aim was to perform cleansing rituals that will free the souls of fallen heroes and heroines including the brave children of our neighbours who laid down their lives in defense of our envisioned human rights and freedoms" (Radebe, 2004:12). Freedom Park is part of the *Re Kgabisa Tshwane* proposed heritage trial (see 1.6).

It can be said that the function of Freedom Park is the "broad representation of the entire South African story which will provide new perspectives of its history and heritage" (Petje, 2004:3). Included in this purpose is the preservation of the memory of victims of eight historic South African conflicts by means of cleansing and healing acts in South Africa as well as in the neighbouring countries. Although it is very ambitious to state that Freedom Park comprises the "broad representation of the entire South African story", it enriches the history of South Africa because the other monuments, such as the neighbouring Voortrekker Monument, were not demolished. (This complies with Nawa's third component of reconciliation (see 1.5).) "The conflict of man against power is the conflict of memory against forgetfulness" (Le Roux, 2005:15, my translation). Le Roux contends that history is written by those wielding the greatest socio-political

power (Le Roux, 2005:15).

Another envisaged role of Freedom Park is to celebrate African culture and to introduce all South African communities and the rest of the world to it. The Freedom Park project also fits into the government's desire that arts and culture contribute to poverty alleviation and generates employment by making available craftwork for the visitors to the site. The Garden of Remembrance, for instance, "provides a place where Africans can communicate with their ancestors, and a home where they can find healing for past pains" (African cosmology, 2004:10). John Nkwana, Corporate Services Manager at Freedom Park, considers that "it must have a deep meaning not only for South Africans, but for all citizens of the world. In addition Nkwama says that Freedom Park also celebrates the young democracy established after the 1994 democratic elections (Corporate services ... creating opportunity through delivery, 2004:13).

The fact that the neighbouring Voortrekker Monument and other monuments were not demolished by the new government points to another aspect of the role of Freedom Park, namely reconciliation between the cultural groups in South Africa: this also reflects Nawa's third component of reconciliation (Nawa, 2005:13)) and can therefore likewise contribute to nation-building. The importance accorded to the concept of reconciliation by the Freedom Park Trust is shown in their festive arrangements celebrating peace and diversity during the National Day of Reconciliation, on 16 December 2003 at the Union Buildings. The contribution of Freedom Park to nation- building is therefore closely coupled with reconciliation (Thousands celebrate nation-building and reconciliation, 2004:6).

Another role of Freedom Park is to be noted in the remark that "we are giving ourselves a chance to address issues of the present and future and committing our generation to handing over an intact, non-racial, and non-sexist, democratic, prosperous and powerful nation to all who come after us" (Celebrating ten years

of freedom, 2004:15).

The Freedom Park project responds to aspects of the desire of President Mbeki to initiate an African Renaissance in that it is envisaged as celebrating African culture in all its facets. It was officially launched by the president in 2002, although it had been under consideration since 1998. In an interview the curator of Freedom Park, Sipho Mdanda (2005), explained that the park can be classified under the Presidential Legacy Project, which assists the initiation and construction of commemorative projects that celebrate the new democracy and the history of people ignored under the previous dispensation. Freedom Park has its origins in a plea lodged to President Mandela by women who wished to honour the memory of relatives who had lost their lives during the apartheid years.

Mdanda (2005) further stated that after a task team had investigated the matter, and also following the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC), the concept of Freedom Park was born. Because it is a Presidential Legacy Project, it has received parliamentary approval. Seed money of R560-million was provided by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) for the development of the memorial site. Coombes points out that Freedom Park has been conceptualised as a central monument of the new democracy and commemorates South Africa's indigenous cultural and historical inheritance (2004:303-304).

The Freedom Park Trust began its task in April 2001. The Trust's core business is "to construct all structures of the national heritage site and to manage the process of cleansing and healing both in South Africa and in the neighbouring states" (Corporate services.. creating opportunity through delivery, 2004:13). The Trust was commissioned by the government to develop the memorial site and to hand it over to the government, who will in turn hand it over to the people of South Africa. Freedom Park will be completed in three phases over a ten-year

period (Radebe, 2004:12).

2.2 FREEDOM PARK AS AN AFRICAN MONUMENT

The first phase, costing R45 million, consists mainly of the Garden of Remembrance (*Isivivane*) measuring 25 000 square metres and was completed in March 2004. It was handed over by Dr Wally Serote (CEO of the Freedom Park Trust) to President Thabo Mbeki on 8 March 2004. The President handed it over to the South African nation on 10 April 2004 to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the democracy (First phase handover, 2004:8). The second phase largely comprises a museum and memorial and the aim is to complete it in 2006. The third phase, which will consist of the business-related area, conference area and interactive resource centre containing a library and audio-visual section, has not been begun yet (First phase handover, 2004:8).

The aim of Freedom Park is to celebrate "freedom and humanity [while promoting and introducing African] civilisation and culture [to the world] … It seeks to showcase African history and heritage as bearers of our traditions and values … its organising principles are [largely] based on African philosophy, African indigenous knowledge and African Renaissance … Nation-building is thus perceived from the perspective of rebirth and a regeneration of a nation within the African milieu. *Ubuntu* principles brings to the fore African identity and encourage moral regeneration" (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:7).

Freedom Park would therefore seem to avoid the trap fallen into by many post-colonial and new democracies who choose a realist style for monuments and often also a very large scale (see Chapter 1) (Nettleton, 2003:1). Instead it focuses on indigenous cultural tradition (such as African philosophy, indigenous knowledge, the African Renaissance and African history). The promotion and celebration of the African tradition is aimed not only at a local, but also at an

international, audience (National celebration, 2004:20).

It would seem as if Freedom Park could offer an answer to the question posed by Anitra Nettleton, whether “there is a possibility of creating other kinds of monuments and a different language of monumental memorialization [that celebrate an African culture and iconography]” (Nettleton, 2003:1). It is stated in the *Freedom forever* publication (2004) that Freedom Park avoids the tendency to make use of foreign artists as is often the case in young democracies, since a national art competition was held for “all South African artists to submit” concepts for art works (National celebration, 2004:20), The architectural competition, however, was open to international participation.

The Freedom Park art competition brief also demonstrates that the tendency to “use conventions of style and iconography borrowed, either directly, or via forms of socialist realism, from a European tradition of memorialisation” was avoided (Nettleton 2003:1). The brief stated that the art works should first “relate to and engage with … [the following] principles: African philosophy, indigenous knowledge systems, nation-building, African renaissance, African kinship, pan Africanism, language policy and environmental principles” and second “[relate to the] …conflict events and the *Sikhumbuto*/ Monument in the Garden of Remembrance: pre-colonial wars, genocide, slavery, wars of resistance, Anglo Boer war, first world war, second world war and liberation struggle" (National celebration, 2004:20).

The government also shuns the tendency of other democracies to remove monuments erected by the previous regime. Freedom Park is therefore geared towards reconciliation and answers to Nawa’s four components of reconciliation. An example of the desire for reconciliation is that on 16 December 2003 “[three] Freedom Park Board of Trustee members, Ms Lulli Callinicos, Prof Willie Esterhuyse and Ms Helen Sebidi, the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Voortrekker Monument Historical society joined Mr Hennie de Wet who later that

morning attended the Nation-building and Reconciliation Ceremony at the Union Buildings" (Thousands celebrate nation-building and reconciliation, 2004:6).

In the quest to incorporate African symbolism and philosophy, consultants and advisory panels are made use of. For example, an Indigenous Knowledge and History Panel advises on the design of the Museum to be situated at Freedom Park (Corporate services, 2004: 13). Traditional healers are consulted as regards the cleansing and healing ceremonies. Some South Africans died in neighbouring countries such as Mozambique; therefore, at the initiative of the Freedom Park trustees a cleansing ceremony was held in Maputo on 13 and 14 February 2004.

Freedom Park attempts to engage a new approach to the idea of the monument but seems to revert to the same traps of nation-building, memory and struggle (Freschi, 2005). This is problematic in the sense that the rhetoric becomes as exclusive as in the case of the Voortrekker Monument. Only those who took part in the struggle are viewed as having the right to the land - the freedom fighters, because they have paid for it with their blood and suffering. This is almost the same rhetoric that was used by the Afrikaner Nationalists when they were establishing themselves after the humiliation of the Anglo Boer War: their Voortrekker ancestors had paid for the land through blood and suffering, and therefore the Afrikaner enjoyed the right to the land. The ideology becomes comparable to that of Nationalist ideology (see 4.3).

2.3 FREEDOM PARK

As noted earlier, the Freedom Park site is adjacent to the Voortrekker Monument (see Chapter 1) to the south west. It also overlooks the Union Buildings to the north and Klapperkop to the east (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:7). These represent cultural heritage monuments and sites stemming from the colonial and apartheid past. Freedom Park's positioning in the

geographical-historical context of Pretoria/Tshwane can therefore be described as strategic or symbolic and negotiates the position of, for example, the Voortrekker Monument in post-apartheid South Africa.

The site on Salvokop is charged with significance. In Tshwane there are three hills with monuments: Salvokop with Freedom Park, Schanskop with the Voortrekker Monument and Meintjeskop with the Union Buildings (Freschi, 2005). Fort Klapperkop could be counted as a fourth. In the context of the role of monuments in post-apartheid South Africa these hills and monuments are significant because they relate the history of Tshwane very eloquently and illustrate the similarities in the reasoning of the groups that conquered the area. The rhetoric settles into the mindset of conqueror/loser, but includes the concept of reconciliation because of the retention of the old monuments.

The planning of the Freedom Park site is also linked to the tourism market. It is hoped that the Gautrain Project, which will link Johannesburg and the Johannesburg International (to be renamed Oliver Tambo) Airport with Tshwane/Pretoria, will be finished in time for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. There will be a station at Freedom Park. The Soccer World Cup's link to Freedom Park is not as forced as it might seem because sport relies on team effort: the individual team members working together to achieve one aim. The same concept can be applied to nation-building: the individual members of the nation working together to achieve the aim of a positive outcome for the entire nation. According to J. Rademan (Radio sonder grense, 2005**a**) the Soccer World Cup could provide a door of opportunity to nation-building: The fact that Freedom Park will showcase "African organising principles to create a sense of nationhood" (Nettleton, 2003:3) will contribute to the sense of national identity amongst South Africans.

The Freedom Park is also included in the proposed *Re Kgabisa Tshwane* heritage trial which is associated with the regeneration of Pretoria/Tshwane. (It

will be recalled that the regeneration of an area is one of the functions of public art.) In 1997 Pretoria/Tshwane was designated by Cabinet as remaining the administrative capital of South Africa, housing all national government headquarters. Hence it was decided to launch an urban renewal project. The project will cost approximately R18 billion and seven areas are to be included in and will therefore benefit from the heritage trail: the Union Buildings, the Mandela Corridor, Sammy Marks Square, Paul Kruger Street North, Church Square, Museum Park and Salvo Kop/Freedom Park. This "will form a procession route to be used in celebrations. Residents and tourists will be able to walk from Freedom Park to the Union Buildings, and strolling through Mandela Corridor. The route will be lined with shops and cafes" (Groenewald, 2005:10).

The Freedom Park terrain encompasses a large portion of Salvokop: about 52 hectares. As mentioned above, its commemorative features consist mainly of a Garden of Remembrance, a museum and a memorial. The supporting infrastructure includes offices, an information centre, an auditorium, a resource library focusing mainly on South African history and the eight conflicts and parking. A presidential guest house which overlooks the Pretoria/Tshwane CBD, including the Union Buildings, will also be erected (Prinsloo, 2004:4).

The Garden of Remembrance phase of the development consists of a sacred spiral path from west to east through the forest, a ring road, a final resting place or *isivivane* with a facility for washing hands, terraces, a cave tunnel, a *mveredzo* path, a meeting place or *isikhumbuto*, a sacred lake or *tiva* visible from the southern spiral path, sculptures, indigenous flora, etcetera. The supporting and services infrastructure at this stage of the development consists mainly of parking, internal roads, an ablution block and information kiosk (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:11). Rock quarried from the environment is used extensively in the buildings and the construction of the pathways. The neighbouring community has provided labour and received appropriate skills training (Prinsloo, 2004:4).

The concept of Freedom Park stems from traditional healing ceremonies as performed at, for example, an unnatural death when, in order to assuage or appease powerful forces, rituals were performed, which, for example, are found In the Zulu culture. In the Zulu healing ceremony the ritual slaughter of an animal is performed. Surrounding this ritual are symbolic preparations and elements with symbolic meaning (Berglund, 1976: 44-46). Although the layout and the symbols found at Freedom Park are not explicitly stated to be based on this ceremony it would seem as if the ideal is that visitors to the Park in essence undergo some cathartic experience and derive benefit from this healing ceremony.

Conceptually and symbolically the *isivivane*, or final resting place, is a "contemplative space devoted to commemorate memories of the heroes and heroines of South African history" (First phase handover, 2004:8). The *isivivane* also constitutes "a sacred space where all nine provinces [of South Africa] are represented by nine boulders each from the provinces that they represent and laid carefully on soil taken from sacred places in the relevant provinces" (Prinsloo, 2004:4). In addition, trees from the nine provinces have been planted. The Freedom Park Trust acquired boulders from the neighbouring countries that had housed freedom fighters, such as: Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho and Swaziland. Each province provided the names of freedom fighters and the *isivivane* will be their symbolic burial ground (Celebrating ten years of freedom, 2004:15).

The aim at Freedom Park is to make use of symbols and concepts that are part of an African philosophy and have meaning in an African context (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:7). However, the term "African philosophy" does not comprise a single school of thought, as is illustrated by the anthology *African philosophy* edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (2001); at Freedom Park, therefore, principles commonly held in African philosophy are used to stress communality, a sense of belonging or national unity.

One of these concepts, widely used at Freedom Park, is that of *ubuntu*. Gunther Ruther observes in *Ubuntu Kunst aus Sudafrika* that *ubuntu* loosely means: One is a person through other people (1994:1). As the Vision for the Architectural Design Brief points out, “The tenets of African philosophy are widely shared by the people of South Africa and indeed the sub-continent, thus provide the nation with another basis of forging national, regional and continental unity. In many of the African societies (alluding to the links that the apartheid fighters had with friendly neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe) the vision of humanity is commonly celebrated in sayings about *ubuntu* such as:

Umumtu, ngabantu (IsiZulu)
Motho, kemotho kabatho (SeSotho)
Muthu, ndimuthu, ngavathu (ChiVenda)
Umuntu muntu pa Bantu (ChiBemba-Zambia)
Omuntu nomuntu ahabwaBantu (Rukiga- Unganda)
Munhu, munhu, nevanhu (ChiShona- Zimbabwe)

The words above are inscribed on the plaque that was planted at the top of Salvokop by the president. The same principles above have been interpreted into *Batho Pele* - a principle that puts people first” (2004: 8).

As indicated earlier, according to Anderson, two aspects need to be taken into account during the creation of a national identity, namely a shared social and cultural concept and the need for cultural artifacts that will be shared by all and command a deep emotional legitimacy. Such a concept at Freedom Park is that of *ubuntu*.

The specific African context of the symbols used can be described, but many symbols possess a universal appeal and meaning with which most people can associate. African philosophy was originally couched in an oral and visual tradition which determines the contextual interpretation of the symbols. For example, topographical features such as the lake, the forest and the hill and the

landscape itself can be interpreted as symbols in this context (Cirlot, 1988:179). As suggested earlier, J. E. Cirlot's *A dictionary of symbols* represents the main source for the interpretation of the symbols used at Freedom Park. He was a Spanish art theoretician of the Barcelona School to which Antonio Tapies and Modesto Cuixart belonged. Although cultural differences do exist in the interpretation of symbols, Cirlot interprets a wide range of symbols from different cultural perspectives (1988:55).

Symbolic interpretations of some of the elements that are found at Freedom Park follow.

A *landscape* can convey a symbolic meaning and can be described as an "analogy [of the mind] whereby the landscape is adopted by the spirit in consequence of the inner bond linking the character of the scene with the spirit of the observer himself " (Cirlot, 1988:177). To interpret a landscape, one should ask questions about the landscape involving the orientation: Is the Spiral Path uphill? Another question posed could be: What is the Park's orientation to the north-south and east-west axis? (Cirlot, 1988:179).

The concept of a *journey* as being symbolic in meaning occurs in African tradition but also among other groups. The physical experience of "journeying" at Freedom Park along the pathways and through a dark forest, arriving at the Garden of Remembrance and subsequently continuing the journey and seeing a view of the sacred lake, is symbolic of a spiritual journey (African cosmology, 2004:10) as well as of "the journey to, and the sacrifice made for, freedom in South Africa" (First phase handover, 2004:8).

One approaches the *isivivane* from the foot of the hill, from the east and through a dense, dark "forest", which is disorientating. Smoke from burning incense will symbolically hide one from the enemy. When one emerges from the forest the *isivivane* or final resting place is visible, symbolically coming out of the dark into the light or out of the cluttered environment into the open (First phase handover,

2004:8).

The *isivivane* houses the circular shape of the *lesaka*. The *lesaka* is accentuated by the nine principal boulders from the provinces. In the core is a fine spray. The boulders from the provinces and the neighbouring countries represent the burial site where generations upon generations have been laid to rest. “It brings back home the spirits of those who were not accorded proper burials - it’s a way of healing for their families”” (African cosmology, 2004:10-11).

The rituals are easily associated with the religious practices of the past. In the 1920s, for example, Afrikaner nationalism was strengthened by a "civil religion". This also “filtered through into public art and memorials, not least at the VTM [Voortrekker Monument] with all its quasi-religious symbolism” (Freschi, 2005). The function of public art in post-apartheid South Africa in this case seems similar to its function before the democratic elections, in that national cohesion is strengthened.

The journey is significant not only in African symbolism, but also in western and eastern symbolism. If one of the functions of Freedom Park is to “have a deep meaning not only for South Africans, but for all citizens of the world” (Corporate services. creating opportunity through delivery, 2004:13) the symbolism of the journey will be communicated to visitors from most cultural backgrounds. Cirlot writes that “from the spiritual point of view, the journey is never merely a passage through space, but rather an expression of the urgent desire for discovery and change that underlies the actual movement and experience of traveling” (1988:164). He further explains that: “The true journey is neither acquiescence nor escape - it is evolution. For this reason Guenon has suggested that ordeals of initiation frequently take the form of ‘symbolic journeys’ representing a quest that starts in the darkness [forest] of the profane world (or of the unconscious …) and gropes towards the light. Such ordeals or trials - like stages in a journey - are rites of purification" (1988:165). Therefore, many religious groups require their

initiates to travel, as “travel is often invested with a higher, sublimatory significance” (Cirlot, 1988:165).

The journey at Freedom Park along the spiral route echoes the symbolic interpretations of Cirlot. The visitor following the route along the spiral path will undergo an initiation into African culture and the historical heritage of (South) Africa. He or she will proceed through the darkness of the forest and into the light and arrive at the Garden of Remembrance. At the *isivivane* provision is made for the washing of hands, which is a cleansing, purifying ritual. The journey will continue with a vista of the lake and the Voortrekker Monument (which could be interpreted as looking back at the past) (Cirlot, 1988:165).

The journey is not retrospective in essence, but mainly looks ahead (thus embodying the nation-building purpose of Freedom Park) as it will provide the nation with an icon which addresses “issues of the present and future”, as Wally Serote has said: “[with] the completion of the first phase of the Freedom Park on the eve of the country’s celebrations of ten years of freedom, we are giving ourselves a chance to address issues of the present and future and committing our generation to handing over an intact, non-racial, and non-sexist, democratic, prosperous and powerful nation to all who come after us (Celebrating ten years of freedom, 2004:15).

Following the Spiral Path, one walks through a forest. The forest is also a widely recognised symbol in many cultures, associated with female aspects and the unconscious. The dense growth of the trees results in darkness. Consciousness is obscured by the darkness and the forest houses dangers (Cirlot, 1988:112). Therefore the person undertaking the journey enters the world of the unconscious and of "danger" at this stage.

The lake, again, is a widely recognised symbol in many cultures. In some aspects it symbolises the “transition between life and death” (Cirlot, 1988:175).

But the lake's reflective surface also points to "self-contemplation, consciousness and revelation" (Cirlot, 1988:175). Because it is visible from the Garden of Remembrance, the lake's symbolic features reinforce the reflectivity of the Garden.

The spiral (in the spiral path or sacred path), signifies, among other things, a dance of healing and prayer. The spiral dance was often used to bring about a condition of trance, transporting one away from reality and heightening the effectiveness of healing and prayer (Cirlot, 1988:306). Therefore the walk along the spiral path can also be interpreted as a spiral dance, which adds a healing dimension to the journey.

The cave (tunnel) that one encounters signifies a state of being inside and enfolded. It is often seen as the place to encounter the ancestors (Cirlot, 1988:40).

The boulders used in the *isivivane* can be perceived as embodying the symbol of the stone: "a symbol of being, of cohesion and harmonious reconciliation with self. The hardness and durability of stone have always impressed men, suggesting to them the antithesis to biological things subject to the laws of change, decay and death as well as the antithesis to dust, sand and stone splinters, as aspects of disintegration. The stone when whole symbolized unity and strength" (Cirlot, 1988:313). In the *isivivane* or final resting place the boulders become a sad reminder of the impermanence and fragility of life and therefore are comforting because of their permanence.

These symbols function by commemorating the past and creating a specific vision of the future. This role will be discussed further in the comparison in Chapter 4.

The second phase of the construction of Freedom Park will consist of the

museum, memorial, *moshate* (presidential guest house) and office block. An international architectural competition, accredited by the International Union of Architects, was launched in the search for designs. However, although four hundred proposals were received, and five were short-listed, no proposal was accepted and only three second prizes were awarded. At present, local architects are being invited to propose ideas (Prinsloo, 2004:5).

The museum will house a general historical area and a commemorative area, the former of which will endeavour to contribute to conjectures regarding the earliest human settlement in South Africa and to the debate whether humanity emanated from South Africa. The latter will reflect on the eight historic South African conflicts (Radebe, 2004:12). In this, Freedom Park is being associated with the concept of "'struggle' and conflict as a guiding principle in legitimising claims to nationhood" (Freschi, 2005**a**), a principle which often seems to settle into the antithesis of conqueror or loser. Marschall supports this notion of 'Struggle' for liberation as a foundation myth in the South African context (see 1.5).

The Indigenous Knowledge and History Panel comprises experts on the eight historic conflicts and will advise on the accuracy of their depiction (Corporate services… Creating opportunity through delivery, 2004:13). These clashes all have as their aim the attainment of freedom and the construction of an identity. The 1492 conflict between the Portuguese and the Khoi is the first to be depicted. The attainment of freedom for the Afrikaner and the British is eventually superseded by the struggle for liberation against the apartheid regime. The conflicts resulted in some victims losing their lives and others being traumatised.

Freedom Park strives to be a Garden of Remembrance for all victims and a place for all South Africans to "find peace and healing" (Tutu, 2005:17) (hence the symbols used at Freedom Park). "It is a place where the people can reflect on past memories to deal with the trauma so that healing can begin to create a common patriotism and move towards patriotism and move towards nation-

building" (Tutu, 2004:17).

The eight historic conflicts will not be discussed in detail in this study. Only a certain indication of the relevance of the conflicts to the function of Freedom Park as a monument will be given. As the struggle for liberation is the most recent conflict commemorated at the park, many people that were affected by the struggle are still alive. Freedom Park could therefore be a monument to their memories. This conflict informs to a large degree the context of the initial concept of the Park, its symbols and cleansing rituals.

(In 1950 the African National Congress (ANC) attempted to initiate negotiations with the National Party who came into power in 1948 and who installed racial restrictions. These did not materialise. Therefore, in 1955 the Freedom Charter was compiled as a document that proclaimed the ideals of an equal share in South Africa by the black, coloured and Indian people who were suffering under apartheid. The struggle for liberation started during this period (Freedom Charter special supplement, 2005:1). This is one of the conflicts that Marschall refers to as an inspiration to the notion of 'struggle' as a foundation myth (2005:20).

Language constitutes a key aspect of the design of Freedom Park. Language features strongly in the struggle for liberation, which is closely related to the June 16 1976 Soweto uprising of black youth in protest against the obligatory use of Afrikaans in the school system. Early warnings by, for example, the sociologist Melville Edelstein that the use of Afrikaans as the language of instruction at schools was strongly opposed by these youth, were ignored (Le Roux, 2005:15).

In this dissertation it is important to consider the implications (positive and/or negative) of Freedom Park's adherence to the PANSALB prescription on language policy (Vision for the architectural design brief, 2004:11) and what this suggests about the function of commemorative art work in a complex post-colonial cultural setting,, since one of the functions of public art is to assist in

nation-building. As mentioned by Reynolds, such art is always accompanied by text (1996:10) and Anderson asserts that the importance of language in nation-building cannot be underestimated (Anderson, 1991:4). Hence public art and its accompanying text make for an ideal combination to achieve this purpose.

As an example of the crucial role of language, one could take the Afrikaner's language conflict in the aftermath of the Anglo Boer War. Part of the conflict after this War concerned the Afrikaans language (and of course the Afrikaner media). For example, the newspaper *Land en Volk* was published and funded under certain restrictions imposed by the regime of Lord Alfred Milner. A poem by Eugene Marais (1871-1936), *Winternag* (published in *De Volkstem*), was held up as proof that the language, and by implication the Afrikaner, could aspire to excellence. As intended, this accorded the conquered Afrikaner nation some self-respect and identity (Marais J.L., 2005:16) and offers an instance of the positive influence of language on people: effecting nation-building.

On the other hand, when the apartheid regime insisted on Afrikaans in the black schools, this language became a symbol of the repression of the black population. The 1976 Soweto youth uprising is an example of the extremely negative perceptions that language can generate. Ironically it also bound the black youth together to unite against the Afrikaans language and government.

Therefore, although the African philosophy on which Freedom Park is based stems from an oral and visual tradition rather than the written tradition that Anderson deems important in creating a nation, the incorporation of all the official languages, including Afrikaans, in the monument can contribute to nation-building in post-apartheid South Africa. The concept of "unity in diversity" is served by this action.

2.4 SUMMARY

At this stage, Freedom Park is still being developed. However, it is already serving a purpose and is being used to instill a sense of South African and African culture, heritage and tradition in, for instance, the newly appointed international representatives (ambassadors and high commissioners) of this country. This is part of Freedom Park's marketing strategy, the vision of which, according to Yonah Seleti, is to "transform it into the country's leading heritage site" (Nthite, 2005:7).

Since national cohesion (collective identity formation) is one of the intended functions of Freedom Park (National celebration, 2004:7) the discourses at Freedom Park around national cohesion are conducted through a reflection on and commemoration of the conflicts of the past.

To some extent the symbols at Freedom Park coincide with those of a nationalist orientation. If the struggle against apartheid is seen as an example, then the focus on the conflicts of the past seems to address the question of who the members of the polity are (those who took part in the conflicts), and it also addresses the question of where the borders of the polity are (the geographical dispersion of the members of the polity in South Africa and beyond the borders to escape the conflict and to organise resistance) and the distinct characteristics of the polity: their (African) heritage and traditions.

The role of the patron, in this case the government, can be seen as prescriptive here. Freedom Park was conceived to celebrate the new democracy and preserve the history of people ignored under the previous dispensation. The government's influence on the function of Freedom Park lies in the fact that it can describe what will be commemorated and how history will be represented.

The question can be asked whether this is the prerogative of the patron and whether this is unavoidable. The ideal is that if a monument occupies a public space, the responsible patron would ensure that the commemoration is in the

public interest. It should however be borne in mind that a democratic government enjoys a mandate from the electorate and hence in that sense its decisions are validated.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY 2: CONSTITUTION HILL

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The new Constitutional Court in Johannesburg was inaugurated on Human Rights Day in 2004. The court itself is part of a larger complex that incorporates three original Awaiting Trial stairwell structures, Constitution Square, the Old Fort prison for white males, the Women's Jail, Constitutional Court, the children's room in the Old Fort, the Great African Steps, the visitor's centre and Number Four prison for black males (Visitor brochure, Constitution Hill, 2005).

The Constitutional Court houses two art collections, the first comprising art works integrated into the Constitutional Court building and the second consisting of art works donated by artists and collected by Judge Albie Sachs. The exhibitions and publications were sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation and the Mott Foundation (Visitor brochure, Constitution Hill, 2005).

The Constitutional Court is situated on Constitution Hill, previously the site of the Old Fort prison complex which Paul Kruger, the president of the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek (ZAR), caused to be built in 1893 because of the escalation of crime after the discovery of gold in 1886. The prison was designed by Sytze Wierda, Kruger's architect of choice. Building a prison was an attempt to restore law and order, after a huge influx of miners during the gold rush and resultant rampant crime (Freschi, 2005).

At this time British Imperialism was also at its height and in 1895 war between the British and the ZAR occurred as a result of the Jameson raid. The walls and ramparts of the Old Fort were constructed around the prison by Paul Kruger

during 1896-1899 and the prison complex was used as a military garrison during the Anglo Boer War of 1899-1902. Gun slits can still be seen at the preserved main (south) entrance to the original prison. On the inside, on the inner wall of the rampart over the entrance, is a coat of arms designed by Anton van Wouw. The motto is *Eendracht maak magt* (unity of purpose results in power or united we stand - my rough paraphrase). The literal translation means "unity is strength" and the saying formed part of the Union of South Africa's official motto (Freschi, 2005**a**). Gevisser (2004:508) pointed out that the complex was hidden from the outside world by its ramparts (this was especially useful to the apartheid government when many political prisoners were housed there). To make the complex difficult to identify, the coat of arms could therefore not be placed outside and as mentioned, it was placed on the inside of the rampart. During the Anglo Boer War Johannesburg's defenders operated from the shelter of this fort. After the war the fort reverted to being a prison again. In 1983 when the tri-cameral parliament was formed the prison was closed down.

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3.2 CONSTITUTION HILL

In the creation of a monument to the memory of the political prisoners that were incarcerated there (especially during the apartheid era), some buildings and structural elements of the original prison complex were preserved and/or incorporated into the present complex at Constitution Hill. The facts that black and white prisoners were separated (and also that criminal and political prisoners were separated) and that different sets of rules applied to different races, with whites enjoying more privileges, are illustrated by means of the preserved buildings and exhibitions of text and photographs. The original buildings and structural elements serve as a reminder to all that suppression of political ideology and racial discrimination should never happen again and that the Constitution protects the people of South Africa (Masha, 2004).

The political prisoners, such as Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo, were housed upstairs in the Old Fort while the criminals were housed downstairs. The exercise court was also used at separate times by the criminal and political prisoners. Nelson Mandela was the only black imprisoned in the hospital section of the Old Fort in 1962, because it was feared that he would be assisted to escape if he was kept in the ordinary cells (Masha, 2004).

The Native Jail, Number Four, was eventually overcrowded with up to forty prisoners in communal cells, often held for race and pass law infringements. The prisoners created hierarchies by means of gangs, which ruled the prisons. Famous prisoners included Mahatma Gandhi and Robert Sobukwe. The unfairness of the laws that underpinned the apartheid system made criminals of ordinary people (Masha, 2004).

Constitution Square is situated in the centre of the present day complex. It is an open space where two stairwells of the original Awaiting Trial Block structure are preserved and serve mainly as a reminder of the past. Recordings of resistance songs, made by people who were active in the Defiance Campaign of the 1970s, are played. The "We the People Wall" encourages visitors to write graffiti about the meaning of democracy (Visitor Brochure, Constitution Hill, 2005).

The Women's Jail, to the west of the main entrance, was constructed in 1910 and is Victorian in style. Black and white women were held separately. Both criminal and political prisoners were kept in custody here. Political prisoners included Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Albertina Sisulu. As in the black male section, many black women were imprisoned for pass law offences rather than criminal offences (Visitor Brochure, Constitution Hill, 2005).

The Constitutional Court is a modern addition to the site. The building was designed by the architects Janina Masojada and Andrew Makin of Design Workshop in Durban and Paul Wygers of Urban Solutions in Newtown,

Johannesburg (Lambrecht, 2005:12).

“The Constitutional Court is the home of the Constitution, the highest court of the land. Like the Constitution itself, the new Court is designed to be open, accessible and transparent. The Court is built around … [two more] remaining stairwells of the old Awaiting Trial Block. The foyer of the Court is a [natural] light-filled area populated by slanting columns, an architectural metaphor for trees under which African villagers traditionally congregated to discuss matters of social importance with elders” (Visitor Brochure, Constitution Hill, 2005).

From the above description it is clear that the themes of Africa are incorporated in the building. The transparency of the building (from inside the building one can look to the outside - to the city - and from the outside one can look in) is symbolic of the transparency of the Constitutional process. The sense of the extended landscape, light and community is incorporated in the iconography of the building. Art works enhance the theme of the Constitutional Court. The incorporation of art and craft into a public building was always part of African reality (Sachs, 2005).

For Lambrecht the design of the building emphasises aesthetics, symbolism and the heritage of South Africa. It is sustainable in terms of “people, planet and posterity” (2005:12). The building is sensitive to the traffic patterns of the users of the building and also to the earth’s exhaustible resources, and therefore protects the youth’s heritage. For example, the temperature of the building is regulated naturally by means of the condensation of moisture below the building at night, resulting in cool air which is channeled during the day through vents in the floor, circulating in the building during summer (Sachs, 2005).

Aesthetic elements are emphasised in this building. The theme of the Constitution and the Court building - of dispensing justice under a tree in the traditional African way - is even used to displace the traditional emblem of justice

(a blindfolded woman, Themis, the Greek goddess of justice, with a scale and sword). This emblem is replaced by a circular emblem depicting a tree under which both black and white people are gathered. Thus blindness, darkness and separation from nature, as represented by a blindfolded woman, are replaced in the Constitutional Court building by light, openness, community and the positive power of nature, as depicted by the group of people (outside) under a tree (Lambrecht, 2005:12).

The materials employed in the construction of the building include stone, wood and glass walls. Roof lights allow light into the building and reinforce the theme of the tree throughout. The chandeliers, lights, chairs, the detail on the stairs, doors and carpets were designed and made by artists. Even the structural elements in the entrance hall such as its slanted pillars can be read as “sculptures with symbolic and practical properties” (Lambrecht, 2005:12, my translation). The unique, incorporated art works are also “functional elements” (Lambrecht, 2005:12).

As indicated, the driving force behind the aesthetic qualities of the Court is Judge Sachs. Apart from the symbolic elements incorporated in the building, he collected about two hundred art works donated by artists, for example: Marlene Dumas, Judith Mason and William Kentridge. Sachs’s aim was “to honour the creativeness and the heritage and cultural practices of the people” (Lambrecht, 2005:12, my translation).

Leave chandeliers woven from wire by sculptor Walter Oltmann further enhance the theme of trees and foliage. The ceramic decorations of Jabu Nala were moulded in copper and employed as finishes or details on the stairwell. The carpet, with patterns representing the pools of sunlight and shade on the ground as filtered through the foliage under a tree, was designed by Andrew Verster. The glass walls and roof lights also allow natural light to enter the building, contributing to the play of light and shade. Natural light alters throughout the day,

and the rhythm of “morning, afternoon and night” (Lambrecht 2005:12, my translation) and the changes in the elements, such as sun and moving clouds, are experienced by those inside the building - enhancing the feeling of being under a tree.

The concept of "unity in diversity" which is protected by the Constitution, is symbolised by the entrance door also designed by Andrew Verster. This wooden door is constructed of panels carved by woodworkers throughout South Africa. The relief carvings depict hands communicating in sign language and portray themes from the Bill of Rights. A Braille inscription is placed on the metal door handle. On the outside wall (if the viewer faces the building), to the left of the entrance, the words *Constitutional Court* appear in the eleven official languages of South Africa (Lambrecht, 2005:12). The inclusion of all the official languages of South Africa as well as the Braille and sign language systems demonstrate respect for all the people of the country.

If one faces the Great African Steps leading to the Constitutional Square, two hundred metal panels can be seen; some with engraved messages from people on the street (in Hillbrow) expressing how they feel about democracy (Masha, 2004).

The bricks incorporated in the structure of the Court Chamber as the Great African Steps (see below) were salvaged from the demolished Awaiting Trail Prison. Today the bricks symbolically guard our basic rights as practised in the Constitutional Court Chamber. The metaphor of rebuilding and transparency is reinforced by re-using the bricks, which also serves as a powerful statement that the past will not be forgotten and/or repeated (Masha, 2004).

The judges’ chairs in the Court Chamber are covered in Nguni cow hides. The uniquely patterned hides show that each of the eleven judges is an individual but that in their judgment they reach consensus; as represented in the black border

that frames the white pattern. Everyone who attends the court debates is placed on the same level as the judges so as to depict the Right to Equality as stated and protected by the Constitution of South Africa (Masha, 2004).

The steps (with a ramp to the right) ascend the hill to the entrance of the Constitutional Court on one's left. The light-filled building on the left is the Court and the blank stone wall on the right is that of Number Four prison. There are two rows of trees flanking the ramp to the right of the steps. The set of steps allows one to walk between the past and the future. Because the Constitution protects the rights of all South Africans, the future is safeguarded and will not allow the past to surface again. One therefore perceives "[t]he legacy of apartheid on one side and the values of freedom, equality and dignity on the other" (Visitor Brochure: Constitution Hill, 2005).

3.3 THE CONSTITUTION

As mentioned previously, the Constitution is based on the Freedom Charter of 1955. The Constitutional Court only rules on constitutional cases. It is the final court of appeal and one can only have recourse to the court through a petition. The petition is then considered and the court itself must decide if the matter should be heard. Everything in South Africa, including the government, falls under the jurisdiction of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Constitutional Court (The Constitutional Court in the first 10 years, 2004:6).

3.4 PUBLIC PROGRAMMES

The Constitutional Precinct offers a variety of public programmes. The most important participants in these comprise: "the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, Lawyers for Human Rights, Khulumani, Lenaka, Equality Project, People opposing Women Abuse, Engenderhealth, Wits, … UNISA [University of South Africa], Living License Collective, Department of Correctional Services,

Department of Welfare, …. [and] Human Rights Commission" (Tsolo, 2005:2).

The Constitutional Court considers exhibitions as constituting a primary tool in public programmes, informing the public about the "core values of the Constitution and the heritage value of its different spaces … [at Constitution Hill precinct. The aim is to have] interactive and participative exhibition programmes that root the values of the Constitution on Constitution Hill, and render its spaces as a living, vibrant heritage site" (Tsolo, 2005:3). The result of the exhibitions must be to narrate the stories of Constitution Hill, to record and preserve the prisoners' experiences, to enliven the experience of visitors to the three prison buildings and the Constitutional Square and to instruct and empower the guides to present educational, informative tours (Tsolo, 2005:3).

Another tool of these public programmes is the *lekgotla* (debate), which will take the form of "public debates, lectures, seminars and workshops [and will provide] forums to explore and present ideas and issues relating to the history and offerings of Constitution Hill" (Tsolo 2005:4). Two possibilities follow:

- An encounter *Lekgotla*: The public can engage in discussions with leaders such as "judges, politicians, policymakers … to encourage dialogue and public accountability" (Tsolo, 2005:4). The result of the encounter *lekgotla* is that the public can enjoy access to their leaders and conversely that leaders can speak to the public.
- Dialogue *Lekgotlas*: these are less formal and can involve various public interest groups, for example students or learners and a public speaker such as an ex-political detainee. The discussion could deal with the apartheid and the post-apartheid eras and how these affect the responsibilities of young people (Tsolo, 2005:5).

The instructive value of the *lekgotla* is to be noted in its assisting the public to build an identity in the young, changing South African democracy. The aim is to employ stories as a starting point for debating current topics (Tsolo, 2005:4). The

result of the *lekgotla* must be to involve different interest groups at Constitution Hill, to foster greater public contact with the workings of the Court, to offer a platform for the “stories, experiences and opinions of ordinary people” (Tsolo, 2005:4) and lastly, to facilitate interaction between the Constitutional Court, the exhibition sites in the prison, the non-government tenants and the visitors (Tsolo, 2005:4).

3.5 SYMBOLS USED AT CONSTITUTION HILL

A symbol operates at different levels of meaning and may therefore be meaningful for a diversity of people. It should ideally be read in context. As seen at Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument, the way in which symbols are deployed and juxtaposed at a site can convey a universal message. A concept or theme contextualises and determines the deployment of the symbols in order to communicate the intended notion. The concept of transparency (in following legal processes which are just) is carried through at the Constitutional Court building and is reflected in the deployment of the symbols. Mainly two symbols or metaphors are continually reinforced, namely transparency and rebuilding, both in the décorative programme and in the engagement with the site. The principle 'never again' and memorialisation are implicit in the project.

Some of the main symbols (verticality, light, journey, water, direction and the edifice itself) occur at all three of the sites: Voortrekker Monument, Freedom Park and Constitution Hill. As stated previously, the context and deployment of the symbols communicate a central concept. The guiding concept at Constitution Hill is that justice should be transparent. As mentioned above, this is illustrated by reference to the practice of indigenous people of holding legal proceedings under a tree. Hence, as noted above, two rows of trees flank the ramp to the right of the steps, to the side of the Number Four prison wall (which again reinforces the tree theme of the Constitutional Court building and links different elements at Constitution Hill).

The tree's symbolic meaning is very wide and complex. In this context it can connote "growth, proliferation, generative and regenerative processes. It stands for inexhaustible life, and is therefore equivalent to a symbol of immortality" (Cirlot, 1988:347). In the context of the Constitutional Court one could perceive a reassuring meaning stemming from this symbol. If the Constitution is equated with a tree, and symbolically takes on its properties, it will act as both a generative and a regenerative force in South African society.

The symbol of verticality is reflected in the steps (Great African Steps - self-conscious metaphor) leading up to the Constitutional Court. According to Cirlot (1988:312) steps are symbolic in cultures worldwide and have been so throughout history. The basic concept is that of ascending, thereby establishing contact between vertical planes. Also, symbolically, steps, ladders or mountains convey the same meaning. Among some cultures ascension is also symbolised by a tree. "[Ascending] … can be understood both in a material and in an evolutive and spiritual sense" (Cirlot, 1988:312). To ascend can be a symbol of spiritual sublimation and transcendence.

Steps such as the Great African Steps can therefore symbolise the fact that "one must ascend the ladder of one's forebears - suggesting a biological and historical source for the mystic symbol of the ladder. Hence steps are also one of the most notable symbols in ancestral rites" (Cirlot, 1988:312), though it must be kept in mind that Cirlot wrote from an European perspective. Height does suggest a strategic advantage: In Pretoria/Tshwane three major monuments, namely Freedom Park, the Voortrekker Monument and the Union Buildings, are situated on hills or a height. In conventional warfare this was a strategic position, one of strength. Height or steps can therefore universally allude to strength being gained.

The context of the steps at Constitution Hill might signify that the symbol of

spiritually transcending the past is the most appropriate one to apply to the Great African Steps. By climbing up to the Constitutional Court on steps constructed from the Awaiting Trial Prison, the past helps one to avoid repetition of the past.

As noted earlier, the architects made use of light or transparency as an element in the design of the building. The symbolic value of light and transparency in this context can be associated with Cirlot's argument that "light is the manifestation of morality, of the intellect and the seven virtues" (1988:188). To become illuminated means to be aware of "spiritual strength" (Cirlot, 1988:188). Furthermore, the fact that the sun shines into the interior could symbolise a God that sees all and knows all (Cirlot, 1988:317).

The converse of light is shade. "As the sun is the light of the spirit, so shadow is the negative 'double' of the body, or the image of its evil and base side" (Cirlot, 1988:290). The symbolism attached to the elements of shade or shadow in the Constitutional Court building likewise strengthens the themes inherent in the Constitution Hill site. As such, the negative aspects of the past (a non-transparent judicial system) are preserved in the Old Fort and Number Four Prison (which are dark) as well as in the bricks from the demolished Awaiting Trial Prison. Negative aspects of the past could be equated with the shade or shadow. If there is light there will be shade and the one serves as a reminder of the other.

The walled enclosure of the Number Four and Old Fort Prisons and the dismally small windows resulting in dark prison cells symbolise the "impossibility of reaching outside. It expresses the idea … of impotence" (Cirlot, 1988:362). In stark contrast to this are the concepts of light, transparency and the feeling of being outside, under a tree, in the Constitutional Court building.

3.6 ART WORKS AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

The art works discussed here include both functional art and an art collection, as

mentioned above. The themes in the former are related to African themes and traditions, such as justice being dispensed under a tree.

Judge Albie Sachs explains the rationale behind this theme and how it relates to the representation of justice: “historically in Africa, disputes were settled under a tree and we decided [for the logo of the Constitutional Court] on people under a tree,” says Sachs, “with our logo as well as with the art collection as a whole, we’ve developed our own unique representation of justice, which allows for artistic freedom, and captures the freedom that is protected by our new democracy … There is a sense of a blurring of the lines between the building and the art work” (Democracy in pictures, 2004:36).

Certain details of the art work have been discussed above; others now follow. The patterned copper detail on the stairs was designed and made by Jabu Nala. The patterns are Zulu in origin and usually adorn traditional clay pots. Mosaics against the leaning pillars reflect the colours of nature, again to reinforce the concept of being outside under a tree: for instance, at ground level browns dominate, while the greens and blues of foliage and the sky dominate at the top (Lambrecht, 2005:12). One can also sit on tree trunks in the foyer.

The functional art works also reflect the concept of unity in diversity as ensconced in the Constitution. For example, the doors of the Court Chamber are decorated by metal tiles with patterns that are used in the textiles of different African cultures (Lambrecht, 2005:12).

Protecting the west glass wall from direct sunlight are seven hundred stainless steel sunshades designed by Patrick Rorke and Lewis Levin. About two hundred are engraved, some with the histories of people from the neighbouring suburb of Hillbrow. In the same way as Freedom Park is part of a proposed heritage trial in Pretoria/Tshwane and is therefore linked with the regeneration of run-down areas in the city, the Constitutional Court’s proximity to the Newtown precinct and

developments could exert a beneficial influence on Hillbrow (Democracy in pictures, 2004:36).

As the Constitutional Court was inaugurated in September 1994, the art collection is only twelve years old. One of the first art works collected was a Joseph Ndlovu tapestry. Cecil Skotnes and Hamilton Budaza's wooden wall panel depicting South Africa's young democracy as its theme was donated by the artists. Many artists have since also donated art works to the collection (Democracy in pictures, 2004:39).

Two paintings, both called "The blue dress" by Judith Mason, are based on the account given at the TRC hearings of a female freedom fighter who was killed by security forces. She wore only underpants "that she made for herself from a blue plastic bag. As a symbolic gesture, Mason sewed up a dress made out of blue plastic, and later painted two pictures of it" (Democracy in pictures, 2004:39).

The art works at Constitution Hill and the way in which Constitution Hill has been transformed (just enough of the prison complex is incorporated and conserved to remind visitors of its history) illustrate the resolve that the transgressions of the apartheid era should never happen again, while the new complex symbolically indicates that the Constitution will protect the rights of all South Africans and that the process is transparent.

3.7 SUMMARY

The second case study, Constitution Hill, has been described in this Chapter. The history of the evolution of Constitution Hill was recounted and its subsequent evolution into a commemorative site housing the Constitutional Court described.

African themes are incorporated in the Constitutional Court building, for instance the Nguni cowhides on the judges' dais and in the stools fashioned from tree

stumps. But transparency evokes a particularly 20th century modernist notion of aesthetic purity pointing to a non-African influence (Freschi, 2006). This positions the constitutional identity as an African identity but integrated in a wider context.

Somewhat contradictorily, some of the themes echo internationally-renowned architecture, for example the theme of transparency that reminds one of the theme of the Reichstag building in Berlin. According to Vale (1999:391-408) reference to international architecture also reflects the positioning of a nation in a wider, global context. This is one of the functions of public art in South Africa and its strategic positioning, namely, to illustrate South Africa as one of the leaders of the African continent and also influential and exemplary in a wider, global context. The modern Constitution and the fact that South Africa was transformed into a democracy relatively peacefully is a further validation of this claim. The Constitution Hill strives to make this transition and example concrete and also commemorates the constitutional or legal identity of South Africans.

Hannah le Roux describes Constitution Hill as follows: “[It] constructs an imaginary moral order that represents the extremes of human rights and their abuse. It does this at a singularly large scale and through an unprecedented variety of media that link heritage and tourism strategies, urban and architectural interventions and arts procurement” (2004:39). Her remark aptly describes the function of this commemorative site in terms of its scope and its moral value in the South African context. It also indicates the universality of the moral significance of human rights, as well as of their abuse, which makes the Hill an important heritage and tourism site.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research report was to explore topical, central issues surrounding public art in post-apartheid, democratic South Africa and its functions in a young democracy, which include, for example, the contribution of such art to both urban regeneration and nation-building, which are desirable to form a stable and sustainable democracy. In the case studies certain key matters in this respect emerged. Because only two studies were explored the results are not representative of or conclusive about the function of public art in South Africa. The functions described here are mostly applicable to the context of these two sites. However, the literature survey points to relevant aspects that coincide with the function of public art in other and comparable contexts.

Furthermore, South Africa as a democracy perceives itself as multicultural, but also as specific, as reflected in the motto “unity in diversity”. It furthermore is aware of itself in the context of Africa and the global world. South Africa possesses a relatively well-developed infrastructure and stable economy and has thus emerged as a leader on the African continent. Since the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has associated itself with the geographical fraternity of African nations through such initiatives as the African Renaissance and New Partnership for Africa's Development [Nepad]. These factors describe the wider context within which the monuments exist within Africa and the world. The functions ascribed to South Africa’s monuments should reflect the leading role that South Africa plays in the context of the African continent.

4.2 CASE STUDIES

Two case studies were investigated, namely Freedom Park (Tshwane) in Chapter 2 and Constitution Hill (Johannesburg) in Chapter 3. The Voortrekker Monument was discussed in Chapter 1 because of its role under the apartheid government and its altered function under the democratic government and the subsequent changing demographics.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The following questions were asked:

To what extent can/should contemporary African monumental public art be designed to reflect the African heritage and traditions (Nettleton 2003:3)?

During the first decade of democracy, South Africa has associated itself with the other African nations. As a post-apartheid and post-colonial country, South Africa aims to acknowledge the different African cultures within its borders, while introducing the African culture (although this is stated in the source it is obviously problematic) to the rest of the world (Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:7-11).This ideal is laudable and new monuments in South Africa are intended to contribute towards it. For instance, at Constitution Hill, internationally renowned architects Geoffrey Bawa and Charles Correa, "who are known for their development of post-colonial languages in Asian architecture" (Le Roux, 2004:39), were appointed to preside over the competition for the development of the precinct. South Africa's awareness of global developments and the strategic positioning of the African heritage in this context are illustrated.

Again, Lawrence Vale's (1999) comments on the ways in which national identity is supported "in architectural terms [are applicable]. One of these is the notion of a 'noteworthy modernity' that serves to establish the new nation as worthy of attention in the international arena" (Freschi, 2005**a**). Constitution Hill could serve

as an example.

The desire to incorporate African philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems in African monumental art is commendable because such art could introduce these timeless values to a wider audience. However, problems may arise if it (African philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems) becomes exclusive and not accessible (see comments on African Nationalist philosophy). At both Freedom Park and Constitution Hill attempts are made to include a wide range of people, because, by means of the use of symbols accessible to many, key concepts are engaged and introduced.

Constitution Hill, for example, attempts to offer a new approach to the idea of the monument by reflecting the African heritage and traditions. Although it echoes the influence of the Berlin Reichstag it also successfully depicts themes from Africa.

The case studies illustrate aspects of the extent to which contemporary African monumental art can or should be designed to reflect Africa's traditions and heritage (Nettleton, 2003:3). They show that it is possible to design monuments that fulfill the function of engaging the viewer and contributing in a meaningful way to the national debates around nation-building and urban regeneration.

What is the role of the patron in the two case studies/ public art in post-apartheid South Africa and what impact does this intervention have on the function of public art in this milieu?

The government acts as the monetary and conceptual patron of Freedom Park. The vision for the architectural brief stipulated the conceptual context of the designs entered in the competition. From this it is evident that the government has an interest in how Freedom Park is developed as well as in its function, that is, the authorities describe what will be commemorated. Therefore the role of the government can be seen as prescriptive. Freedom Park was conceived to

celebrate the new democracy and preserve the history of people ignored under the previous dispensation. In a democratic dispensation such as South Africa, the case could be made that the government enjoys a mandate from the people to represent a certain viewpoint, in the public art works as well.

On the other hand, the government must shoulder the responsibility, in the case of Freedom Park and other projects, to represent as many people as possible. The Presidential Legacy Project therefore assists the initiation and construction of commemorative projects that celebrate the new democracy and the history of people ignored under the previous dispensation. Their function is to represent history more comprehensively. In addition, the fact that the Voortrekker Monument was not demolished contributes to the inclusive nature of public art in South Africa.

Freedom Park also mirrors the government's policy of fostering the arts and culture in order to contribute to poverty alleviation and the generation of work by means of the "numerous business opportunities [that] have arisen from the outsourcing of non-core activities and the formation of public-private partnerships. A strong commitment to black economic empowerment underpins this strategy" (Nkwana, 2004:13). A certain amount of education was also involved. A neighbouring community was drawn into some of the construction work, where they were taught skills and employed. Therefore, one of the functions of Freedom Park is to benefit communities in order for them to become more sustainable.

However, the role of the government as a patron might become negative if it falls into the trap of nationalism. Freedom Park attempts to engage a new approach to the idea of the monument by reflecting the African heritage and traditions, but seems to fall into some of the same old traps of nation-building, memory and struggle (Freschi, 2005**a**). This result might even be compared to aspects of nationalism, as depicted by the previous government in the Voortrekker

Monument (highlighted by Elizabeth Delmont).

Since national cohesion (collective identity formation) is one of the intended functions of Freedom Park (as stated in the Vision for the architectural design brief [for Freedom Park], 2004:8) then the amplification of discourses of meaning, as seen at Freedom Park, has to do with conflicts of the past. If the struggle against apartheid is perceived as an instance, then the focus regarding the conflicts of the past seems to be placed on the question of who the members of the polity are (that is, those who took part in the conflicts). Furthermore, it addresses the question of where the borders of the polity are (the geographical dispersion of the members of the polity in South Africa and beyond her borders in escaping the conflict and organising resistance) and it describes the distinct characteristics of the polity (their African heritage). Therefore, nationalism can encourage feelings of belonging (national identity) but becomes a trap when it promotes exclusiveness and xenophobia.

The decision of the said patron to develop Freedom Park on Salvokop introduces another voice to the national vision statement made by the two buildings on the adjacent hills, namely the Union Buildings on Meintjieskop (the vision of a united white South Africa) and the Voortrekker Monument on Schanskop (the vision of an exclusive Afrikaner-controlled South Africa). Freedom Park's statement of a national vision is that of the rainbow nation. Although the vision of Freedom Park is inclusive, the site is consequently overburdened with meaning (Freschi, 2005**b**).

The present function of monuments in South Africa (to promote reconciliation among all the cultural groups) is implemented in several ways by the patron, for example:

- First, the neighbouring Voortrekker Monument and other monuments were not removed by the post-apartheid government, which points to

reconciliation between the cultural groups as constituting a function of a monument such as Freedom Park.

- Second, a member of the Voortrekker Monument Board attended a function together with members of the Freedom Park Board of Trustees concerning a Nation-building and Reconciliation Ceremony at the Union Buildings. Therefore these monuments act to promote the notion of reconciliation by means of commemorations at the sites of the monuments.

In summary, the role of the particular patron in the two case studies and the impact of its interventions on the function of public art in this milieu can be perceived as decisive and as promoting a national vision. At this stage, this role is positive since it engages and reconciles a wide range of people, including those who were ignored under the previous dispensation.

How do existing examples of South African public art contribute to the exploration of the central issues?

The Voortrekker Monument is an existing example of South African public art that contributes to the exploration of the central issues by showing the conciliatory stance of the present government. Hence its emphasis on reconciliation as a function of public art allows the present government to occupy the moral high ground, since the pre-1994 government had razed areas such as Sophiatown, which were of cultural value for black people.

The Voortrekker Monument is an example of how the ideology of nationalism (under the Nationalist government) is reflected in the function of public art. Elizabeth Delmont notes the three approaches followed at the Voortrekker Monument in order to achieve nation-building: firstly the notion of a “nation of heroes, [secondly] a love for the country for whose sake so much was sacrificed and [thirdly] faith in God or an official religion" (Delmont, 1993:77). Some of the

approaches by means of which nation-building under the Nationalist government was achieved in the Voortrekker Monument also seem to be evident in the post-apartheid, democratic South African monuments such as Freedom Park; for example, the ideal of heroes or freedom fighters who sacrificed much for the country. Therefore, one function of existing examples of public art could be to create awareness of traps to avoid in new examples of such art.

At the Voortrekker Monument site the “trek routes were translated into paths on the eastern hill of the monument. The convention of mapping makes permanent claims to land which has been physically controlled. Thus, as J.B. Harley notes, maps are used to ‘legitimise the reality of conquest’…The claim to territory symbolised in the mapping of trek routes on paper… is reinforced by the physical imprint of the trek routes on the land itself” (Delmont, 1993:99). Conquest obviously relates to the subjugation of people. It can be stated that the function of this aspect of the Voortrekker Monument is to "legitimise the reality of conquest" and to reinforce the Afrikaners' claim on the land.

At Freedom Park a spiritual journey is translated into paths on the hill - the territory is claimed. The spiral path can be read as a map of healing, highlighted by areas for cleansing rituals, and making references to the African principles of *ubuntu* and *batho pele*. Therefore, the same claim to territory reflects the contrast between the Nationalist government’s approach and the approach reached by reference to African heritage and traditions at the two neighbouring sites. The Nationalist claim is expressed in the depiction of a literal map - a country that was transversed, conquered and subjugated. The African claim does not depict an actual map but a symbolic journey expressed as a path. Making a spiritual journey visible through a physical journey that can be mapped is an ancient idea: that of the pilgrimage. Cirlot describes the symbol of a journey as a desire for “discovery and change.. [or] evolution” (1988:164). It is also forward-looking (1988:164). Such a symbol is universally significant. The path at Freedom Park proceeds upwards, as do the Great African Steps at Constitution Hill. The theme

of height is therefore repeated at the sites of both case studies. A comparison between existing and new examples of public art indicates different ways to achieve national unity. The Nationalist way was more literal and created a certain unity, but did not include all people. The African spiritual journey, being more symbolic, unites more people in its universality.

Discussing the use of modern materials in a monument's construction, Lawrence Vale (1999:391-408) comments on the ways in which national identity is supported "in architectural terms. One of these comments refers to the valid notion of a 'noteworthy modernity' that serves to establish the new nation as worthy of attention in the international arena" (Freschi, 2005**a**). Constitution Hill, and specifically the Court building, echoes the theme of transparency embodied in a recent European building, the "Reichstag". This may well position Constitution Hill and the post-apartheid nation as "worthy of attention in the international arena".

Therefore, existing examples of South African and other examples of public art contribute to the exploration of the central issues and demonstrate how comparison with contemporary monuments not only enriches the debate but also highlights problematic areas in public art.

In summary, this study has therefore analysed the following:

The nature and function of public art-historical issues.

"Freedom Park, in its choice of reflection on eight historic South African conflicts buys in to the notion of 'struggle' and conflict as a guiding principle in legitimating claims to nationhood" (Freschi, 2005**a**). These conflicts all express, as a universal aim, the attainment of freedom and constructing or attaining an identity.

The practicalities: The kinds of socio-political factors that militate for or against public art as able to fulfill a function in the post-apartheid South African context.

One of the purposes of Freedom Park is to “have a deep meaning not only to South Africans but to a wider international audience” (Tutu, 2004:17).

The way in which these questions and analyses contribute towards an understanding of the function of public art in a demographically complex, post-apartheid South Africa.

It is planned to extend the contribution of Freedom Park to a demographically complex South Africa by linking it (as is to be noted in the proposed date of completion and the proposed Gautrain Station at the Park) with other events such as the 2010 Soccer World Cup. Because the function of Freedom Park in this respect is to install a pride in “African organising principles to create a sense of nationhood” (Nettleton, 2003:3), the monument will focus the demographically complex, post-apartheid South African population around an event that emphasises unity of purpose and team work. These principles are also important in establishing a sense of national identity.

Nation-building and the language policy are linked at Freedom Park and Constitution Hill. The fact that all the official languages are included illustrates the concept of unity in diversity. The policy of including the different cultural groups is carried through, which also contributes to reconciliation.

Since the functions of public art would include the exploration of the relation between public art and culture, nation-building in South Africa will be achieved to some extent by attaining a cultural identity and cohesion, a purpose which is explored in this study. Furthermore, the aim of urban regeneration being fostered by the presence of public art in suburbs is more attainable if a cultural identity

and cohesion exists[2].

Policies and the value of memorials

No public holidays are named after a person and the monuments used as case studies do not commemorate the life of one person alone, but the lives of many people: this precludes hero-worship.

In an interview Federico Freschi (2005**b**) emphasised that long-term policies must be put in place in order to sustain the important role of monuments. (The short-term policies answer to present needs.) The focus must be sustained over a longer trajectory and term, in other words.

While the general awareness of art and culture could assist in the inclusion of the role of monuments in the public's consciousness, the stated functions of Constitution Hill and Freedom Park to reflect and introduce African heritage and

[2]The state of any national cultural identity is to some extent reflected in the general state of the arts in a country. It could therefore be beneficial to consider briefly what is happening in the arts. South Africa's arts are experiencing a tentative boom. "New stories are being told, fresh talent is emerging and through this explosion of creativity, new identities are being formed" (Jacobson, 2005**a**:17). The fusion of cultures, often first and third world in origin, is not always accepted enthusiastically and is sometimes described as "cultural tourism" (Jacobson, 2005**a**:17). "The interesting amalgamations and appropriations that characterise relations …" (Jacobson, 2005**a**:17) can be described as a fusion of cultures. The fusion can also be seen as a global trend and demonstrates contact between South Africa, Africa and globally (Jacobson, 2005**a**:17).

But the constant struggle for resources in the art world underlies the tenuousness of the boom. For instance, the Brett Kebble awards were cancelled after the death of Kebble (Jacobson, 2005**c**:21). The governor of the Reserve Bank, Tito Mboweni, is one of the patrons of the South African Ballet Theatre. Mboweni says that "artistic endeavours are central to the complex process of nation building, allowing us to give voice to the rich cultural fabric of South Africa and shape our nation's cultural aspirations" (The Sleeping Beauty, 2005:1). The public support and interest of these influential and wealthy patrons raise the prestige and investment value of the arts and create a sustainable environment for artists. Outreach programmes in the arts, such as ballet and music, reach the youth and create artists and art patrons for the future. Yet this scenario may alter in future.

traditions might be, to some extent, at odds with the concepts of freedom and democracy. Writing about African philosophy, Masolo contends that the “return to the traditional past is the only way to identify different thought systems, philosophy included” (1994:247). Wiredu terms this way of thinking the “nationalist school” (Masolo, 1994:247). Freedom Park seems to adhere strongly to African philosophical tradition and emphasises that it is different from other philosophies such as Chinese, Western and Indian. This school of thought argues that “each group has and must have its own philosophy, which reflects and is rooted in its own traditions, for any thought system which is not part of its traditions [the group] does not experience. To members of this school acculturation is simply impossible. The nationalist position denies any possibility of examining “the varying ways human beings experience the world according to widely varying needs and interests”” (Masolo, 1994:248).

It is problematic to include African heritage and traditions as a function of public art because this aim can become exclusive, perhaps even excluding the people that it wishes to include. If the adherence to African heritage and traditions reflects rigid nationalism, it may exclude the contemporary South African who experiences the world not only in these terms. The experience of contemporary South Africans is apparent in the amalgamation of cultures and influences in the arts, of which the “ Xhosa adaptation of Bizet’s *Carmen* by a Cape based theatre company Dimpho di Kopane” (Jacobson, 2005**b**:39) offers an example. In contrast, Arts and Culture minister Pallo Jordan remarked that Europeans “want to see someone from Africa doing something African” (Jacobson, 2005**b**:39). The function of public art in this milieu might be to commemorate the past without excluding people who are in a process of transition and achieving a new identity. In this regard Judge Albie Sachs asserts that “in today’s global village it is ‘unhelpful’ to talk about eurocentric versus African art. It is not as if African culture exists in some unsullied form” (Jacobson, 2005**b**:39).

Most politicians and academics view issues of unity and nationhood as “the

national question" (Jacobson, 2005**b**:40). The ruling party prepared a document for the 2005 National General Council which argued that "the national question is the "quest for a single united South African nation with a common, overriding identity". To achieve this, it is necessary to forge a common patriotism and South African culture, led by the African majority" (Jacobson, 2005**b**:40).

If one of the functions of public art, as stated by the government, is to aid nation-building and the patron is the government itself, then the results of the above council meeting may be reflected in further construction and commemorations enacted nearby monuments such as the two case studies. Because a national identity is still in the process of being formed, the potential exists for the government to influence and be prescriptive regarding the form that the national identity should take, which might preclude emotional accessibility at monuments as far as the youth who are in the process of forging a new culture, are concerned (Jacobson, 2005**b**:39). These issues feed into the broader issues of making a contribution in a demographically complex, post apartheid South Africa. Jacobson writes: "[It] is hard to pin down what South African cultural and national identity is, the term being so slippery and so loaded and in some ways it is too soon to try. It is from the coming generations and their hybrid future that new national identities will bloom. A piece of local architecture stands as their protector, their guide. It is the Constitutional Court" (Jacobson, 2005**b**:40).

Public art's function of assisting in nation-building, and the long-term policies regarding such art, mean that the process will need to be fluid and avoid being prescriptive. The potential at Freedom Park of reverting to nationalist tendencies (western or African) and struggle ideologies leaves less space to negotiate a new South African identity than at Constitution Hill and in the Constitution, whose constitutional (legal) identity creates room and shelter to do so. The contribution of the symbols used at the three commemorative sites resides in commemorating the past and creating a specific vision of the future.

It has been argued above that when national identities are in a state of flux and evolution public art has the potential of making visible an ideal, something which does not exist yet; it can embody an ideal identity to strive for in the South African context. Marschall's notion of the foundation myth can be applied here. She argues that "the key myth of origin of the post-apartheid state and the basis of present day South African national identity is the 'struggle' for liberation, which includes all forms of colonial oppression" (2005:20). She concludes that the present South African national identity is therefore vested as a struggle for liberation from oppression and that this is embodied in public art.

The following four concepts related to identity and commemorative sites have emerged:

- Commemorative sites originate in traumatic experiences of displacement, conflict and loss which led to alienation or a loss of identity.
- Although these three commemorative sites (the Voortrekker Monument, Freedom Park and Constitution Hill) are different in concept and layout they all embody a quest for identity.
- This post-traumatic quest for identity is ever evolving (even at the older site).
- Each site mainly addresses one or two facets of an elusive, evolving identity.

Such facets of identity are expressed in the elaboration, interplay and juxtaposition of the following symbols at the three sites.

- Light
- The journey
- Verticality (light shaft(s), trees, koppies, steps)
- Edifices (boulders, bricks, stone)
- Orientation (the Constitution as a compass, the orientation of the buildings, the *isivivane* which faces north)

- Water (condensation: cooling system (environmentally friendly), cleansing as in the washing of hands, steam, lake, Blood River)

The use of these symbols leaves a margin for the evolution of identity because a symbol can to some extent be reinterpreted according to its evolving context.

The Voortrekker Monument is situated on a koppie. The layout of the site is circular and insular in nature. The light that enters the building (edifice) is regulated and concentrated in a shaft: the light falls on a sarcophagus once a year to commemorate the Battle of Blood River (water becomes associated with blood). The symbol of water here is mingled with blood and battle.
The way in which the themes of displacement, conflict and loss are embodied in and assuaged through the composition of the elements (symbols) of light, verticality, edifice, a journey and water embodies a certain interpretation of the notion of identity. It can be interpreted as insular and exclusive.

On the other hand, the Constitution Hill site employs some of the same symbols as those of the Voortrekker Monument namely light, verticality, edifice and a journey in order to capture the themes of displacement, loss and conflict. The way in which these symbols are employed here embodies a different facet of identity - a legal identity. In terms of direction/orientation the Constitution becomes a moral compass.

In the foyer of the court one can observe some of the compositional strategies in the employment of light and shade, verticality, stone (condensation cools the air) and undertake a journey that leads to the unique symbolic embodiment of the constitutional (legal) identity of South Africans. Light can move freely through the building, which conveys the concept of transparency and translates to transparency in a legal sense. This transparency also ensures that one is connected to the environment: the constant change of light throughout the day,

weather patterns and the seasons. The symbol can be interpreted as inclusive and open.

4.4 THE FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC ART IN A YOUNG DEMOCRACY

It is commendable that the case studies attempt to engage a new approach to the idea of the monument by reflecting the African heritage and traditions rather than trying to outdo colonial monuments, as is the tendency in some other young democracies. At this stage the monuments are accessible through their use of universal symbols, but the government patron and its constituency must guard against latent African nationalist possibilities.

One of the functions of public art is the positioning of a young nation in a global context. Public art introduces the successes of a country (South Africa's relatively peaceful transition to democracy) to a wider audience. Each monument, because of the context of the site, focuses mostly on one unique aspect of the national identity (constitutional or in terms of African heritage and traditions) rather than the complete picture. Monuments must have the potential to accommodate the changing demographics in South African society, which can result in cultural fusion. Hence they must leave room for acculturation if the desire is to celebrate freedom and democracy.

In the final analysis, I would argue that South Africa's public art, as well as public art in general, has a vital function and can make a contribution to building a national identity and to regenerating urban areas. These two factors are both desirable attributes of a stable and sustainable democracy.

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