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What happended to Kliptown?

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Dedication

For Nadia and Mila, and the next generation of story-tellers.

Acknowledgements

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My supervisor, Jonathan Hyslop, for his encouragement and support from the start.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided and original work. It is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Masters in Writing. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signed _____ on _____ day of _____ 2007.

Abstract

This Research Report comprises two parts: a theoretical introduction and a creative component entitled "What Happened to Kliptown?" The overall piece of work focuses on Kliptown, an historic area about 20 kilometres south-west of Johannesburg, between Eldorado Park and Soweto. Kliptown was the site of the Congress of the People in June 1955 where the Freedom Charter was reviewed and adopted. The Research Report focuses on the work of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) in Kliptown to build a monument and set of buildings on Freedom Square, re-named the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication. The JDA's work in Kliptown was initiated in preparation for their hosting 50th anniversary celebrations in June 2005.

The theoretical introduction explores themes of development and memorialisation in post-apartheid South Africa as well as 'the spectacle' and 'the ordinary' in relation to Kliptown's development. The essay also explores the writing process for the creative piece including:

- My choice of topic;
- My choice of form and structure; and
- The process of writing and revising.

The creative component of "What Happened to Kliptown?" is written in the first person, present tense. The piece charts my journey to explore the new Square in Kliptown and its impact, especially in relation to how the residents of Kliptown engage with the Square. I then explore the perspective of some of the people who worked for the JDA on the project. The piece is written in numerous sections and scenes that weave together stories from Kliptown's history, Kliptown's present and my personal experience.

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