

Debates on Memory Politics and Counter-Memory Practices in South Africa in the 1990s

Heidi Grunebaum

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6218-7155>

University of the Western Cape, South Africa

heidigrunebaum@gmail.com

Abstract

Memory politics are often regarded as the “soft” issues contested in the aftermath of political and social upheaval. Yet critical public debates on memory, justice, impunity and reconciliation in South Africa prompted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process suggest otherwise. I offer a partial review of some of the key themes and critical debates on justice, reconciliation and memory in the 1990s, followed by a discussion of the spatial practices of the Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory (DACPM) whose multilayered social pedagogy and activist repertoire of the transitional period challenged the terms of the political transition and the scope of the TRC. The debates on the TRC and the practices of the DACPM constitute but a glimpse into the significance of memory-work for now forgotten terrains of civil activist intervention, contestation and practice.

Keywords: memory-work; practice; public; space; postapartheid; pedagogy

Introduction

Intellectual, psychosocial and clinical investigations into the relationship between memory and state violence and between political impunity and historical erasure constitute an increasingly interconnected and burgeoning terrain of inquiry. That individual, social and cultural memories are fluid, dynamic, fragmentary, selective and interconnected goes without saying; as are the multi-vectoral transactions between individual and collective memories. And yet, in times following great social and political upheavals: times after war, genocide, state and mass violence, how a society understands, negotiates and integrates its memories

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and forgettings is a fraught and contested process in which competing actors are active participants in negotiating and making meaning. New power brokers, economic interests, national and global political elites are deeply implicated in these contestations. Under new political arrangements, collective experiences of state and mass violence may be flattened in public memorial sites and narratives or instrumentalised to mobilise nationalist projects and justify new exclusions. At the same time, an argument can be made that connects the elision of collective experiences of state violence to ongoing forms of impunity. To caution against both the political instrumentalisation of histories of oppression as well as against the elision of such experiences is a productive and necessary tension we would do well to not resolve at the current conjuncture. This would involve conceiving of memory-work as an ongoing, active and critical labour of meaning-making, debate, interpretative effort and intergenerational engagement with what is called “the past.”¹

In South Africa during the mid-1990s, “the future of the past,” to riff off the title of an important conference hosted by the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape in 1996, was far from a settled matter. Nor was it a seemingly consensual national script. In what follows, I offer a selective, subjective and partial account of the terms of some of the debates at the time which were concerned with state violence, memory, justice and impunity in South Africa during the mid-1990s.² Not surprisingly, the debates on memory politics and counter-memory practices during these years were responding to the mandate, principles and institutional proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process generally and to the TRC’s Human Rights Violations Committee and Amnesty Committee, in particular. More pointedly, the debates focused on the constraints and exclusions that grew out of the implementation of the TRC’s founding terms and mandate. I then turn to discuss a civil initiative in Cape Town, the Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory (DACPM), a psychosocial organisation founded by freedom fighters of the liberation movement. Established in the late nineties, the DACPM challenged the TRC process through its multi-layered social pedagogy and activist repertoire of counter-memory practices. My discussion

¹ There is a vast critical and interdisciplinary literature on memorial politics and the social, political and artistic labours of memory. A few that are relevant to the scope of this article include the works of Marianne Hirsch (1997), Mieke Bal, Jonathon Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (1999), Ifi Amadiume and Abdullahi An-Na’im (2000), Elizabeth Jelin (2003), Diana Taylor (2003), Jill Bennett and Rosanne Kennedy (2003), and Michael Rothberg (2009).

² I use the term “counter-memory practice” to refer to conceptions and modes of memory-work that opposed, refused or disagreed with the emergent narratives and moral prescriptions that began to dominate public discourse on history, truth, reconciliation, justice and redress in the late nineties.

of the DACPM broadens the focus on contestations and critiques of the TRC in the scholarly and public domain to consider practices that grew out of a conceptual terrain which both resonated with and extended scholarly and public critiques.

The founders of the DACPM designed itineraries of movement—“action tours”—through and in public spaces across Cape Town from the centre of town through the suburbs and townships. The itineraries of movement were a way to transmit and transact knowledge, expand social repertoires of what could be said about apartheid and the anti-apartheid struggle, and cultivate spatial literacy in a city whose spatial relations seemed to intensify the structural inequalities and violence of apartheid urban planning. These interventions therefore offered an engagement with debates on memory politics through a practice of social pedagogy in public space which was also understood as a method of memory-work. The DACPM’s founders conceived of memory-work as dynamic and relational, that is, as an active, fluid and open process in which subjects shape, dispute and create meaning rather than receive fixed, monumental or static narratives on the past, a conception similar to what Elizabeth Jelin (2003) has suggested. The DACPM’s founders held a materialist conception of memory-work, insisting that its labours also be grounded in a structural analysis of the social and economic conditions in which the work of memory is done in order to intervene in and change these conditions. The DACPM, where I worked from 1999 to 2006, was but one of a number of civil initiatives engaging with memory-work, counter-memory practices and psychosocial approaches to social recovery in the 1990s and 2000s. These include organisations such as Sinani KwaZulu-Natal Programme for Survivors of Violence, established in 1994 and working in Kwa-Zulu Natal; Khulumani Support Group, a national membership-based movement of some 100 000 members established after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, formed by witnesses and victims who gave testimony to the TRC³; the Institute for the Healing of Memories founded in 1998; Cape Town Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture in the Western Cape; local community-based organisations, national NGOs such as the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, and others.

³ Khulumani consistently and directly engaged the TRC and the state for justice and reparations. In 2002, the social movement filed a class-action suit in the United States against multinational corporations (in finance, armaments, oil, technology, mining and transport) for their role in financing and propping up the apartheid state, and, by extension, for implication in apartheid crimes. To read more on the case of Khulumani et al. v Barclays et al. in the context of his critique of the TRC, see Tshepo Madlingozi (2007).

The debates on memory politics, as we will see, engaged three broad concerns: the TRC's narrow focus on political violence between the apartheid state and its proxies and the liberation movements; the centrality of reconciliation (construed more broadly than political reconciliation) in the absence of more rigorous social and systemic change; and the exclusion of racialised structural and administrative violence as a significant feature of apartheid rule. It should also be taken into account, as Nicky Rousseau and Madeleine Fullard have argued, that the work of the TRC as a state commission was also characterised by a degree of improvisation and invention—particularly during the early period of its work—and that the early critiques of the TRC flattened out some of the contingency and contestation within the commission, muting, in turn, the complexities of and tensions between its many institutional voices (Fullard and Rousseau 2008). So whilst the TRC was at the heart of concerns raised in the debates and explorations of memory-work in the mid- and late 1990s, it constituted a productive and important, if now forgotten, terrain of contestation, mobilisation and practice. These, I hope to show, prefigured the critiques of the political transition by students in the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements that have featured so prominently in public debate since 2015. Importantly, these recent critiques have insistently debunked the terms and tropes associated with the transitional period, especially those associated with the TRC, such as truth, reconciliation, forgiveness, rainbow nationalism, and even the “post” when interpreted as a temporal marker in the term, postapartheid. There are connections to be made here.

Debates on the Limits of Reconciliation as a National Narrative

In 1996, during the very first years when political change and the defeat of apartheid as a crime against humanity were consolidated under the term “political transition,” following the negotiated political settlement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its three committees began their investigations and public hearings across South Africa. Whilst the South African TRC became one of postapartheid South Africa's export “commodities,” *par excellence*, and a touchstone of the global transitional justice industry, it should also be understood as an institution created within the constraints and possibilities of the global geopolitical moment at the end of the Cold War and the rise of a neoliberal hegemony that profoundly shaped the South African political transition (Alexander 2002). Perhaps, because of its unusual hybrid form, “its use of public testimony, psychotherapy, political theology and juridical procedure, the TRC baffled description” (Sitze 2013, 1), and continues to do so in

many respects. Attending public hearings of the Human Rights Violations Committee in downtown Cape Town and at various venues in townships of the Cape Flats, I was startled by the emphasis on forgiveness and the pressure to forgive that had entered the public and mediated aspects of the TRC process. I would later write *against* reconciliation, particularly as the weight of its burden was placed on the shoulders of settler colonial apartheid's historically victimised (Grunebaum 2002; Grunebaum and Henri 2003). I critiqued the assumption that withholding reconciliation implied a call to revenge, or a return to war (an implication that is itself replete with racist metaphors about violence and racist assumptions about its perpetrators) and that the binary coupling of reconciliation/revenge should be critically engaged to this end. However, during the life of the commission and in the debates on memory politics, it was social reconciliation and forgiveness that dominated both political and public discourse. I argued that the language of reconciliation (as opposed to political reconciliation) and forgiveness in South Africa foreclosed social and discursive spaces to a more rigorous reckoning with the multiple forms of racialised subjection and administrative dehumanisation that settler colonial apartheid produced across its various historical conjunctures.⁴ It also narrowed public discussion on resistance, dissent, accommodation and collaboration, reducing these to quite a restricted and politically partisan field of understandings and situating them within a geography of national territory. The haste to impose a script of forgiveness meant that what should have been merely a beginning, a first and rather small step, was presented rather as an ending with the metaphor of books frequently evoked (Grunebaum 2001; 2011). With the ascendance of an "official" script of reconciliation and forgiveness, critical civil voices and open public spaces began to narrow for forms of memory activism that did not fit these terms or that actively refuted them. A line was drawn creating an ontological distinction between past and present.

The first major intervention that inaugurated the debate on justice, memory, truth telling, and social reconstruction was offered by Kader Asmal, Louise Asmal and Ronald Suresh Roberts in their 1996 book, *Reconciliation through Truth: Reckoning with Apartheid's Criminal Governance*. In it, the authors argued that the post-Holocaust model of justice, the Nuremberg trials, would not serve South Africa's needs to address the accumulated impact of

⁴ Interestingly, between March and June 1998, SANGOCO (the South African NGO Coalition) and other organisations held a travelling national "speak out" campaign, the public "Speak out on Poverty" hearings and produced a two-volume report. The campaign made connections between material poverty, structural violence and apartheid socio-economic policies. In other words, the campaign focused on the effects and experience of apartheid's administrative dehumanisation and other aspects of apartheid that were omitted from the TRC's mandate during the public life of the TRC.

apartheid's criminality on the lives of those it had harmed. In the face of the former apartheid regime's insistence on blanket amnesty, an institutional mechanism was needed which would neither put the apartheid regime's leaders and generals on trial, nor pursue unconditional blanket amnesty (a legal term etymologically derived from the same root as amnesia: not remembering or forgetting). The conditional form of amnesty for full disclosure, the form that was eventually adopted in the act of parliament that established the TRC, was contentious from the start and subject of a Constitutional Court challenge by AZAPO, with the Biko and Ribeiro families (Case CCT 17/96).⁵

The authors of *Reconciliation through Truth* argued that an institutional mechanism such as a truth commission was necessary in order to avoid the future devastating effects of anger, revenge and resentment in such an extremely divided society, which would surely be exacerbated in the absence of such a mechanism. A scathingly critical review by Mahmood Mamdani was published in the November/December 1996 issue of the *South African Review of Books*. Mamdani's critique of *Reconciliation through Truth* informed many subsequent responses which would criticise the focus of the TRC on political violence ensuring it as a tool for political justice but not social and socio-economic justice. Mamdani also took issue with the narrow field of responsibility implied by the categories of victim and perpetrator. Not only, Mamdani argued, did the focus on this set of relationships purposefully ignore the structural and administrative features of settler colonial apartheid and its racialised and ethnicised socio-economic stratifications, it would also, by extension, create a false moral equivalency between the violence of the apartheid regime, the response of the resistance and violence associated with the liberation movement. To come to grips with the legacy of apartheid, Mamdani argued, it was necessary to understand how identities had been institutionalised and reproduced as instruments of governance and subjection under apartheid. Importantly, however, Mamdani's critique of *Reconciliation through Truth* centred on the authors' use of the primary metaphor of their argument which was the Holocaust. After the Holocaust, Mamdani contended, Germany was vanquished. Germans did not have to live with their Jewish victims of the genocide because for Jewish survivors and refugees there was already the state of Israel.⁶ In Mamdani's view, the authors would have done better, and

⁵ The AZAPO et al. case at the Constitutional Court is the subject of an important collection of critical essays on law, memory and apartheid edited by Wessel le Roux and Karin van Marle (2007).

⁶ Mamdani's point here merits consideration. His argument that Jewish survivors of genocide in Germany did not have to live with the perpetrators of the genocide but could go live in the newly established Jewish state naturalises both the political claim made by modern political Zionism for a Jewish ethnic national state, on

possibly arrived at a different conclusion, had they placed the metaphor of postcolonial and recently post-genocide Rwanda at the centre of their argument. Rwanda, Mamdani argued, like the newly democratic South Africa, had to find a way to address questions of political justice, social justice, political stability, social reconstruction and sustainable reconciliation in a society where both the beneficiaries and the victim-survivors had to live together.

Indeed, the TRC's focus on political violence contributed to almost completely omitting the need to engage the complicity of beneficiaries as a central element in the process of rebuilding society after the defeat of legal apartheid. As Fullard and Rousseau note, rather than "placing the complicity and culpability of beneficiaries centre stage, white South Africans by and large were able to claim a false innocence" whilst the perpetrators could be cast as morally reprehensible (2008, 225). The opportunity for public, personal and collective self-introspection of white South Africans was shifted onto denunciation of the actions taken by the system's foot soldiers, torturers and assassins. This contributed towards disconnecting the systemic, ideological and historical relations between beneficiaries and the victimised, and between beneficiaries and perpetrators from a more expansive and productive concept of complicity. Whilst Mamdani was one of the first to make this argument, many other commentators did too, for example, Tinyiko Sam Maluleke (1999), Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson (2002), and Tshepo Madlingozi (2007; 2010).

If the TRC was seen to be the primary institutional site for the forging of a postapartheid collective memory, it was very specifically in the service of nation-building. And if nation-building was premised on reconciliation, then the TRC, as an institution and future archive that would shape collective memory, implicitly authorising certain memorial narratives whilst excluding others, had to align with the broad premises of political reconciliation.⁷ As a pillar

the one hand, *and* the claim made by European ultra-nationalists, that Jews did/do not belong in Europe, on the other. The tragic irony of these claims was remarked upon by Edward Said who called Palestinians "the victims of the victims." Though differently motivated, both positions imply that Jewish people did/do not belong in Europe in the first place. Mamdani's point also elides that survivors who wished to return to live in societies complicit in the genocide did sometimes return (including to Germany) and that many Jewish refugees and survivors who were made stateless (and could not return to their homes and countries) did not settle in Israel.

⁷ The general scope of my argument is *not* on the TRC as an institutional archive as such. Nonetheless, it is germane to recall that the special unit established in the National Prosecuting Authority's office to pursue apartheid era crimes in the wake of the TRC did not prioritise or vigorously pursue its mandate. Where prosecutions have taken place, they have been pursued by family, friends, activists, and a handful of researchers and human rights lawyers. Alarming few efforts have been made to secure successful prosecutions from the side of the state. Only a few high-profile cases are now being revisited through the tireless efforts and sustained pressure by family and friends using legal mechanisms. For example, the apartheid era inquest that covered up the state's murder of activist Ahmed Timol was re-opened in 2017. The

of the new South African democracy's project of collective memory formation for nation-building, individual testimonies publicly presented at the TRC were mediated in ways that absorbed them into a homogenous and disembodied collective narrative of a nation under construction (Grunebaum and Henri 2003). Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee's edited collection, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (1998), with important contributions by Njabulo Ndebele, Ciraj Rassool and Gary Minkley and mainly University of Cape Town based scholars, opened up these contradictions. The essays in the collection excavated the silencing and exclusions that ensued in the fraught national process to remake a past based on composite individual memories. Importantly, the collection critically examined the complex constructions of subjectivity and fields of moral, political and social claims constituted through oral history and autobiographical, biographical and testimonial discourses. In other words, the collection connected expressive modes and genres of narration that give shape to memory and to memory-work.

Not surprisingly, individual testimonies and their framings in electronic and print media put the conflicting interests of those who testified and the overarching operations of the TRC as a state institution into sharp relief, often to the detriment of individual witnesses. Indeed, Tshepo Madlingozi (2007; 2010) would later critique the instrumentalisation of the figure of the "victim" in South Africa as well as in the global transitional justice industry as a "programme" opposed to thoroughgoing social and economic change, bringing a much-needed analysis of political economy into the debates on memory. In her study on race, violence and the TRC, Madeleine Fullard (2004) critiqued the narrative framing of reconciliation for occluding the lived effects of race and racism on the majority of South Africans. Nthabiseng Motsemme and Kopano Ratele (2002) and Motsemme's later work (2004) critiqued the epistemic constraints and gendered assumptions that constituted silences and selections within victims' and survivors' testimonies as well as the elision of the agency of silence that informed many understandings of testimonies. In different ways, these scholars drew attention to the significantly multilayered forms of interpretive agency of survivors who gave public testimony at TRC hearings. At the same time, international debates were responding to critiques of dominant Eurocentric models of memory in truth commissions that placed trauma theory and psychotherapeutic conceptions of the individualised human subject

court found that, contrary to the apartheid era inquest, Timol had been killed by Security Branch policemen and that the one policeman who is still alive, Joao Rodrigues, would be prosecuted for his role in Timol's murder.

at the centre. The international conflict resolution and transitional justice industry, for example, became a primary object of this position with the publication of Derek Summerfield's (1998; 1999) important critique of the contemporary model of war trauma and psychotherapeutic responses.

There would be another consequence to the TRC's focus on political violence that raises the twinned issues of the disconnection of beneficiary complicity from an institutional process of reckoning and from experiences of dispossession, forced removals and administrative atrocity. The necessity of recognising a shared ethical obligation to acknowledge and address those experiences and their multiple consequences, including transgenerational and socio-economic, was omitted. Forced removals continue to shape postapartheid's human, social and economic geography, haunting the spatial arrangements of postapartheid cities and intensifying contemporary forms of inequity and structural poverty. Indeed, many critics of the TRC noted how the mandate of the commission excluded bureaucratic and administrative modes of subjection that were legally enacted during apartheid (in addition to Mamdani, discussed above, Hein Marais's 1998 study on the political economy of the transition explored this). In 1985, Lauren Patzky and Cheryl Walker would report in their *Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa* that more than three and a half million people were forcibly displaced in South Africa between 1960 and the mid-1980s alone, in one of the largest state-organised projects of forced mass racial/ethnic displacement in modern times. In the 1990s, however, public debates catalysed by the TRC process mostly overlooked forced displacement and the "right of return" as critical issues for building a sustainable, equitable, people-centred peace in South Africa. Rather, in our avoidance to raise questions and explore ideas that would include but not be limited to the ethics, politics and economics of return, restitution and private property rights, a thick silence ensued which contoured the limits of the sayable in public discourse.

Memories of the multi-pronged tactics of mass civil and social action across the landscape of the anti-apartheid movements inside the country were sidelined in favour of often reductive and politically partisan memory narratives framed, almost always, within the broad terms of reconciliation. Moreover, memory was increasingly conceived in monumental terms, in other words as a static and externally fixed and fixable object. Or it was seen as an instrumental supplement called upon to be performed at commemorative occasions to legitimise the *raison d'être* of the democratic state, often through the presence of "iconic victims." The TRC's

framing, together with the political economy of the 1990s, ensured that the relationship between the complex dynamics of memory across time became disconnected from the lives of ordinary people and from everyday life more generally. In terms of its temporal horizons, memory increasingly came to be associated with the past rather than the present and future and future anterior. The temporal distinction is important. As a fluid, future-oriented labour, memory-work could provide meaningful and regenerative social energies, igniting the social imagination and invigorating new visions, ideas and possibilities for the future. In this view, memory-work offers a resource for hope and meaning-making. However, when memory-work becomes focused on and fixed in the past, and in a past inscribed within a narrative of historical rupture or break with the present, its regenerative social energies become sapped and depleted. In the temporal framing marking “past” from present that was being shaped during the 1990s, memory came to be viewed as a commodity, ossified and brittle, and best curated in the domain of public history through the museum and heritage industry, or what Ciraj Rassool incisively names “the South African memorial complex” (2015). Collective memory was therefore shaped through a reframing of historical experiences to fit reconciliation discourse and the broader macro-economic demands of the dominant classes and economic elites in South Africa and abroad.

Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory: The Social Pedagogy of Counter-Memory Activism

This brings me to the work of the civil initiative and counter-memory activist project, the Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory (DACPM), an initiative with which I worked until 2006. The DACPM began as the Western Cape Action Tour Project (the WECAT Project) and was formed in direct response to the TRC process. The initiative was started by freedom fighters mainly from Umkhonto we Sizwe and run as a non-partisan civil initiative to address the limits, exclusions and silences that had manifested through the TRC process. One of its objectives was to intervene in the debates at the time through a spatial practice of memory activism and social pedagogy of counter-memory. Established in 1998, the DACPM or WECAT Project was formed in recognition of the need for a collective practice that enabled self-defined, integrated, multilayered and holistic approaches to addressing the psychosocial challenges facing demobilised former guerrilla, political detainees and torture survivors in the broader national context of systemically intensifying socio-economic inequality and exclusion. The founders of the project identified the need for practices that

were derived from their combined and collective analyses of the individual, familial, social and structural challenges they faced. Refusing to submit to or identify with the diagnoses of experts and professionals that often criminalised or pathologised former guerrilla, the founders of the DACPM took an avowedly relational view of social recovery. This was based on an understanding that the individual is part of ever-widening but interconnected concentric circles linking self with family, community, society, polity and place across different geographies shaped, in turn, by the historically connected spatial and socio-economic divisions of the city and beyond. Topographic markers such as statues and memorials, for example, were also included in the founders' spatio-temporal analysis, more of which further on.

For the founders of the DACPM to initiate a practice of memory that carried a regenerative force meant that memory had to be reclaimed from its new and old institutional curators and from the state. For when the past is elided from the history of the present, survivors and surviving communities risk being excised from the political economy of the present even whilst survivors of prolonged state and administrative atrocity must attend to and deal with their experiences. This was a major concern and the starting point for a situational analysis for the group of demobilised guerrilla and freedom fighters facing the economic despair and psychological immobility that came with unemployment and structural depression in many townships of Cape Town at the time.

Whilst this is not the place to go into the specificities (and criticisms) of the demobilisation and reintegration process for former guerrilla from the various liberation movement armed formations in the 1990s, it is important to note that the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process for guerrilla fighters from 1993 onwards was followed by a hasty dispersal (and disposal) of ordinary cadres (Mashike and Mokalobe 2003; Mokalobe 1999; Williams 2002). The Cape Town-based group who formed WECAT, later DACPM, nonetheless expressed the need to expand the concept of reintegration wider than its general meaning in DDR processes in order to explore other approaches to self and civil reintegration. Their expanded concept sought to address the physical and psychological impact of living on the spatial peripheries of the townships and how this contributed to becoming forgotten. To live in the twilight of daily struggles for material survival was experienced as a form of social and existential alienation. The absence of memorial spaces and public markers during those years was seen to be a contributing element to the sense of

being forgotten. Such an experience of alienation was felt acutely given the geographical proximity yet physical inaccessibility of the urban infrastructure and economic vibrancy of the central business district (CBD), which had exponentially grown as it intersected the opportunities afforded with SA's entry into the neoliberal global economy buoyed by SA's macro-economic policy orientation of the late nineties.

The founders of the DACPM turned to everyday life in Cape Town, space and the materiality of the city's present past to develop a project of social pedagogy and counter-memory in order to address the multifaceted effects of social oblivion. This translated into a dynamic practice of memory-work grounded in everyday traces of settler colonial and apartheid violence, forced removals, land dispossession, intergenerational experiences, and civil resistance. As co-founder Yazir Henri argues, these practices intervened in the politics of memory and memory-work that were in formation at the time, sharpening the social necessity of alternative modes of remembrance and future-facing memory-work whilst connecting these to the importance of collectively creating the cognitive conditions which could yield a more enduring peace (Henri 2003).

For the duration of the active life of the initiative, no funding was ever received from South African government or non-governmental grant-makers. Nonetheless, from the WECAT period of the late nineties until the DACPM closed its doors in 2008, its public programme of action tours (later called Journeys of Remembrance) invited participants to join its itineraries of movement in streets, public squares and on pavements of the city to engage the significance of each site through narrative and dialogue as a method of co-creating knowledge. In this, its spatial, narrative and embodied practices were multifold and intended to actively explore practices of counter-memory that departed from the dominant memorial narratives associated with the TRC process. The organisation sought to reclaim the power of assembling in public spaces; to voice and narrate in public spaces; to shape social perceptions and participants' self-understandings of their own agency; to cultivate a sense of collective responsibility for the present and future; to historicise the perception of the material structures of society and explore how perception, cognition, embodiedness and memory intersect in shaping dominant modes of looking in and at our society; to generate income in order to build an organisational base; and, finally, to actively reinsert a counter-narrative to the dominant narrative of the city centre. As Henri (2005) notes, the action tour/Journey of Remembrance became the vehicle through which to

provide employment opportunities, provide for individual meaning-making by engaging socially, engage individual as well as collective experiences of trauma through its engagement with war testimony and witnessing thus allowing for psychological processing, work with excised experiences of memory, engage historically by reinserting these experiences of memory into the public sphere, and educate socially and publicly through its commemorative excursions.

These objectives animated the organisation's commitment to social pedagogy. Similar to the Sinani project in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, the DACPM's methods were also a hybrid mix of "African meaning systems interlinking self and community as dynamic and relational, Freirian ideas of participation in social change, non-linear systemic thinking which focuses on links and circular dynamics" (Grunebaum, Henri and Merk 2010, 215).

In addition to the action tours/Journeys of Remembrance, the DACPM ran closed programmes: one that worked with women in woman-headed households who had lost husbands or sons and daughters in the anti-apartheid struggle. The programme included a small bursary programme for primary and secondary education of the children and grandchildren. Another programme worked with former guerrilla from the various armed formations of the liberation movement. The programme focused on self-healing and civil integration, peer-teaching and learning, positive masculinities and support to prepare for formal studies. Alongside the public work of the action tours of WECAT and, later, the Journeys of Remembrance, the DACPM also ran longer peace-building seminars at the Derek Hanekom Resource Centre in Philippi as part of its practice of social pedagogy.

The action tours/Journeys of Remembrance developed spatial itineraries of movement, assembly, narration and dialogue through the city, suburbs and townships that the organisation's founders had conceptualised. From the centre of the city to District Six, Athlone, Gugulethu, Langa, Bonteheuwel and New Crossroads, the action tour/Journey of Remembrance was structured to engage both the *longue durée* of the making of Cape Town as a port city, a colonial city, a slave city, an apartheid city and a neoliberal postapartheid city, and to examine the responses of civil, social and political resistance struggles, including naming and commemorating the lives of activists, revolutionaries and innocent bystanders at the sites where they were killed by the state. When the action tours/Journeys of Remembrance convened in public spaces in the CBD or at the statue of Rhodes on the slopes of Table Mountain above the University of Cape Town, for example, the narrators would bring participants' attention to the absence of narrative re-framings, conceptual interventions

that would subvert and recast the meanings of the city's public monuments, memorials, statues and place names. Narrators would draw attention to how the city's monumental statuary associated with slavery, settler colonisation, wars of conquest and the implementation of apartheid continued to evoke colonial and apartheid narratives of conquest, civilisation, tutelage and trusteeship, eliding the ideas, practices and movements that arose in resistance.

When gathering at different sites in each area, the action tour/Journey of Remembrance facilitators and narrators, all members of the WECAT Project/DACPM, would historicise the specificity and significance of each place in relation to the broader historical conjuncture. Site-specific commemorative actions at public sites of uprising, resistance, civil disobedience or killings and massacres were anchored in historicising narratives about the area whilst interlinking these with broader national, continental and global political developments of the time. An improvisational sensibility also opened space for extended interaction between narrators, participants and passers-by who would intervene, stop, listen, respond and often speak about their own recollections and experiences in relation to the collective commemorative gesture at each site stop. This was significant. Despite existing as part of the social and embodied experiences of the majority of Cape Town's citizens, memories of apartheid's multiple forms of violence—categories of race and ethnicity, forced removals, the destruction of homes, pass laws, the prevention of free movement and association, state terror and terror by proxy formations, the murder, imprisonment or disappearance of activists witnessed by neighbours, family members or friends, and the many defiance campaigns and local civil resistance actions such as rent boycotts, consumer boycotts, school boycotts, and beach reclamations—had been neither widely acknowledged nor substantively engaged.

The action tours/Journeys of Remembrance also explored new forms of socio-economic marginalisation as well as new possibilities for social change and civil intervention. The movement in and between public places enabled the narrations to include the many aspects of everyday life shaped by settler colonial apartheid and the postapartheid which were excluded from the TRC's mandate and its focus on more "spectacular" forms of political violence. The narrations did not follow the ascendant public script in which political struggle was followed by negotiations, transition to democracy, moral triumph and reconciliation in a linear narrative arc of progress. At the same time, the physical movement of participants and narrators on these itineraries enacted a physical refusal of the spatial containment and

discursive distinctions between dedicated memorial spaces and “ordinary” public spaces. This enabled a simultaneous mooring and movement of memory practices in and on the grounds of the present borne by the body as it moved through the city, criss-crossing the CBD to the suburbs and townships, rather than the “abstract grounds on which the new nation was imagined into being” (Grunebaum 2001). The action tour/Journey of Remembrance facilitators and narrators would make visible the multilayered topographical arrangements of the city and how its segregationist architectures conjoined whilst separating. Narrators would ask participants to be aware (Grunebaum 2001, 204) of how the

crossings, roads, highways, footpaths, intersections, railway lines, reveal[ed] the visible boundaries and invisible thresholds that comprised the relationship between current township residents, socio-economic exclusion, and racialized disparities with the urban centre. In this way these memory practices also evoked histories of land dispossession, displacement, dispersion of communities, and enforced resettlement. Importantly this memory practice addressed, at the same time, the corporeally absent communities: beneficiary communities who remained by and large *unmoved*, within the urban centres of Cape Town.

Each encounter enabled a visual and cognitive mapping of historically grounded material, spatial and human relations to emerge. At the same time, each encounter at the sites along the itineraries of the action tour/Journey of Remembrance constituted an activist and counter-memory practice that was ephemeral and transient and which had to be constantly remade, repeated—*practised*, in other words. These always required the presence of participants and interlocutors and therefore had to be practised in and through the transient collectives that were constituted in each day-long, half-day or many day long action tour/Journey of Remembrance. At the same time, the connections created between embodied and cognitively re-contextualised grounding of memory-work within historically shaped and systemically reproduced power relations became an experiment in cultivating a sense of agency and a recognition of a shared responsibility in the present amongst participants. The spatial interventions of these encounters in public spaces, as Yazir Henri suggests, enabled a transformation of perceptions of the historicity of place “which suddenly becomes one of recognition, commemoration, mutual learning, respect, dignity, hope and humanity” (Henri 2003, 273). Moreover, by connecting social pedagogy to counter-memory practice, the action tour/Journey of Remembrance insistently refused the constraints that reconciliation and rainbow nationalism created for imagining different social, economic and spatial possibilities and insistently included participants and their standpoints as necessary and accountable accomplices in this. Through the action tours/Journeys of Remembrance, the physical movement across the social geography of the historically white city and townships of the

Cape Flats opened very different mediations with the past and its spatially located memory practices. This form of memory activism was an acknowledgement of the dynamic expressivity of memory as a *relational* rather than solitary or static activity attuned to the dynamics of a changing physical, topographical and social environment.

Conclusion

In 2008, the DACPM closed its doors. Not that its work was complete, far from it, but its ongoing struggle to achieve economic self-sustainability was dealt a final blow with the global financial crisis which culminated in its two small autonomous funders from the global North ending their funding support. As former freedom fighters and activists involved with the organisation left, the archive of the DACPM hosted temporarily by friends and former staff became dispersed. Nonetheless, despite the absence of an organisational archive, the concepts, practices and work of the DACPM provide important insights for the current moment. My reflections on some of the debates on memory during the time of the TRC along with the DACPM's experimental practice of memory-work suggest that the labours of memory as relational, fluid and dynamic, may generate new ideas about and practices for our interconnected futures whilst simultaneously debunking the premises that limit their conditions of possibility. Often viewed as the "soft" or apolitical aspect of social and political reconstruction, contestations around memory and memory politics are imbricated in and shaped by the political economy at a given conjuncture. But these contestations, as much as their elisions, are also imbricated in possible future exclusionary nationalist claims and ethno-nationalist projects. And to these possibilities, we must also remain vigilant. For both possibilities also implicitly raise the question of kinds of futures and forms of shared practice as the horizon against which civic renewal, moral responsibility, expanded conceptions of politics and justice, and the socially committed imagination can engage.

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