GRAPPLING WITH MONUMENTS OF OPPRESSION

Moving from Analysis to Activism

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Remaking Monuments and Memories

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INTRODUCTION

Remaking Monuments and Memories

Christopher C. Fennell

Tangible culture compositions play key roles in the daily performance and expression of a social group's intangible belief systems. The creators of a material design often possess a variety of intended meanings they hope the composition will convey to viewers. Sometimes the message is triumph and dominion, sometimes pain and sacrifice. As a form of tangible heritage, a monument often conveys a selective focus on facets of past events to create a simplifying narrative which serves the interests of the composition's creators. In turn, such a narrative works to omit and erase perceptions about other actors and subjects. Yet, people viewing such an object bring their own perceptions, biases, and beliefs to bear, and can interpret the composition much differently than the creators intended. These dynamics grow complex for public monuments, which are created by private parties in some instances, by government commissions in others, and which are then subject to diverse reactions and interpretations by the multifaceted population engaging with them (Fryer et al. 2021; Fennell 2007; Smith 2006; Smith et al. 2024). This book addresses the controversies which arise when such monuments communicate messages of oppression and discrimination to many viewers. As these studies show, such memorials can span multiple scales, from small objects, to statues, projected images, buildings, and landscapes (in this chapter, I use the terms monument, memorial, and commemoration interchangeably and with the same, basic meanings).

Grappling with Monuments of Oppression presents case studies from across the globe to probe the ways in which the materiality of social domination can be combated. Readers will benefit from a deep dive in each case, and efforts to derive a toolkit of takeaway lessons. These initiatives represent particular efforts at advancing restorative justice through the interactions of tangible and intangible heritage of diverse groups in varied contexts. Study locations across these chapters include Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, The Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Italy,

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the Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Protests concerning oppressive memorials have been particularly active in the United States in recent years, and our case studies include locations in Alabama, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia.

In preparing this book, I sought out authors who could address a broad diversity of geographies and controversies involving oppressive monuments and responses to them. The intersection of analysis and activism in addressing such challenges typically requires a detailed and context-specific approach. Researchers and activists concerned with confronting monuments of oppression will greatly benefit from this growing body of particular studies and accompanying overviews of common takeaway lessons obtained from those investigations. The authors of chapters in *Grappling with Monuments of Oppression* confront such challenges and consider the themes of restorative justice and a possible toolkit of methods and strategies for addressing continuing structures of social domination. These analysts bring insights from a diversity of investigative disciplines, including art history, critical heritage studies, anthropology, philosophy, historical preservation, archaeology, law, African studies, geography, history, global Black studies, and art performance. Insightful case studies could no doubt focus on many other locations and initiatives worldwide other than those addressed in this book. An absence of studies from other places in this collection does not reflect an absence of advocacy and protest elsewhere. Instead, the sample of studies and locations presented in this volume reflects the scope of my success in soliciting contributors to such a book project at a particular point in time. Additional case studies of oppressive monuments and attempts to address them are provided in a growing number of publications, reflecting the fast pace of such initiatives worldwide (e.g., Bicknell et al. 2020; Decker 2024b; Gensburger and Wüstenberg 2024; Houlton 2022). This expanding body of literature provides rich, international data sets from which takeaway lessons and strategies can be derived for future initiatives.

In the following sections, I first discuss general aspects of interpretative frameworks in which one can analyze the characteristics and impacts of oppressive monuments. Activist responses to such memorials include facets of restorative justice. I next explore the workings of such monuments and responses to them in brief case studies drawn from locations in Germany, Italy, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and South Africa. I chose those locations to complement the diversity of geographies addressed in greater detail in other chapters of this book. These brief case studies provide insights as to key facets at play in efforts to grapple with oppressive monuments. I next provide an overview of the case studies presented in Chapters 2–12 and the ways in which common themes and stratagems are manifest in those diverse initiatives.

Strategies and Perspectives on Oppressive Monuments

Some oppressive monuments have become so offensive to common moral sense that they should simply be dismantled and removed from the public eye. Dominant

social groups find themselves on the wrong side of evolving histories and politics. But simple removal of monuments, without counter-speech, can result in social amnesia for past wrongdoings. Activists often aspire to confront members of dominant, privileged groups with the past malevolence and continuing inequities that they and their predecessors perpetrated. In this manner, changemakers seek to bring learning to all members of society in these confrontations over monuments. Oppressive memorials can be addressed in restorative justice initiatives by counter-speech performed around and upon them. Such counter-speech can provide historical and current critiques of the falsehoods and domination those monuments seek to communicate. Toppling of statues has a long and multifaceted history. Many statues fell when new governing regimes removed the memorials of those whom they conquered. Other statues embodying cosmological and religious beliefs were thrown down by groups who subscribed to contrasting belief systems. Recent decades have seen more complex controversies in which marginalized groups protest the memorials created by the politically dominant constituents of their own societies.

This book of essays by activists, scholars, and artists across the globe envisions the theme of restorative justice in heritage studies and archaeology as encompassing initiatives for reconciliation of past societal transgressions. These efforts employ processes that are typically multivocal, dialogic, historically informed, community-based, negotiated, and transformative. For example, monuments (memorials, structures, and statues) to historical figures who engaged in past oppressive, colonial, and imperial regimes provide opportunities for dialogue and negotiation. In such confrontations, citizens can envision new ways to address the context and significance of those figures and the many people who were targets of their oppression. Such restorative justice efforts often focus on multiple perspectives and modes of reconciliation, rather than a narrow vision of retribution and punishment. Past aspects of domination and oppression traversed multiple, intersecting dimensions of experience, including racial, ethnic, economic, gender, sexual, and embodied dynamics. New reconciliations must grapple with those complexities.

The material compositions of monuments and the selection of their locations perpetrate myriad, interwoven messages. Such communications are not limited to celebrating an aspect of the dominant group's past. Enduring, material monuments also propel similar themes of domination in the present and project those claims as inevitable aspects of the future. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon (1963: 50–51) describes the grinding machinery of such structures:

> [A] world of statues: the statue of the general who carried out the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge; a world which is sure of itself, which crushes with its stones the backs flayed by whips: this is the colonial world.

As demographics, morals, norms, and politics shift, opportunities arise for non-dominant groups to challenge those monuments of oppression. Yet, the methods and strategies for doing so are numerous, varied, complex, and often dependent on specific contexts. The pace and range of such challenges has accelerated.

These are vital and highly visible subjects in social movements and politics today. The past decade has witnessed an acceleration in the efforts worldwide to combat such oppressive monuments and related symbols. Controversies in the United States intensified notably. In 2015, Dylan Roof shot and killed nine parishioners in the Mother Emanuel African American Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. A 21-year-old, white resident of South Carolina, Roof published messages on social media in which he embraced the Confederate flag as a symbol of white supremacy and indicated that he hoped his actions would ignite a race war. A number of local and state government officials across the nation responded to these developments by pressing to remove Confederate flags and monuments celebrating the Confederacy. Far-right extremist groups organized a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, to oppose that city's plans to remove a monument honoring Robert E. Lee. Ensuing violence led to a member of the far-right rally driving his car into a gathering of people who supported removal of the Lee statue, killing one and injuring others (Thompson 2022).

On May 25, 2020, police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota, murdered George Floyd, an African-American resident, in an act of strangulation that was filmed by witnesses and reported on news media. The Black Lives Matter organization, founded in 2013, launched protests in response to Floyd's murder. Those demonstrations spread internationally as communities worldwide also grappled with varied forms of police brutality and social inequities. Citizens of Minneapolis constructed commemorations to honor Floyd and conducted ongoing protests and demonstrations in the neighborhood in which he was murdered (Figure 1.1). These memorials and performances honoring Floyd, in close proximity to the location of his murder, provided poignant refutations of the devaluation of African-American lives. In the United States, an estimated 170 objectionable statues were taken down after the widespread demonstrations following Floyd's murder. Most of those were removed by local or state government officials answering the demands of protests (Thompson 2022: 101).

This expanding wave of controversies spurred research and advocacy organizations to action. For example, in 2020, the Mellon Foundation launched a $250 million program to address strategies for dealing with oppressive and racist monuments in the United States. Mellon's program emphasized the foundation's desire to explore myriad strategies by supporting initiatives such as "reexamination of the very ways in which we talk about civic spaces and geographies" and projects which "foster more representative participation in the creation of our nation's commemorative sites and practices" (Mellon Foundation 2023; see Decker 2024a: 202). Mellon later doubled its funding commitment and collaborated with Monument Lab to conduct a national audit of the characteristics of public memorials in the United States (Miranda 2024). The resulting report recommends steps to combat the erasure of histories of marginalized groups, correct distorted narratives in existing monuments, and create memorials to commemorate the full diversity of America's communities (Monument Lab 2024). World Heritage USA (US ICOMOS) similarly

FIGURE 1.1 The George Perry Floyd Monument against police oppression and brutality, including an image of Floyd by artist Peyton Scott Russell and an image of the Akan symbol of Sankofa by artist Esther Osayande, located at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Photograph by the author, 2024.

received support from Mellon to create initiatives, including the "Monuments Toolkit," which seeks to distill key lessons from varied challenges to oppressive monuments. Cequyna Moore is the Director of the Monuments Toolkit program, and she provides an overview of their strategies and insights in Chapter 2.

Surveying the variety of engagements worldwide, one can discern four primary methods for addressing monuments of oppression. I refer to these as refutation, reinscription, relocation, and removal. Refutation involves the creation of new displays and performances placed in juxtaposition to the oppressive memorial or in a stand-alone venue. These refute the false messages of the oppressive memorial. Reinscription is a subset of refutation and entails adding new, corrective information to the existing inscriptions that accompany an oppressive monument. Relocation involves moving statues from public places into museums or parks where they can be stored or put on public display with new, contextual information and counter-statements. Removal entails complete removal of an existing statue followed by recycling of its materials or placement in non-public storage. To explore

such approaches, the following discussions distill strategic frameworks from brief case studies of initiatives that unfolded in Germany, Italy, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and South Africa.

Refutation through a Counter-Monument in Germany

Reinscriptions and refutations entail counter-statements and counter-speech. A different concept has been articulated by scholars of memory studies which employs the labels of counter-monument and anti-monument. James Young (1992, 2016) promoted the concept of a counter-monument style of design. His analytic framework has been considered in later studies which applied the labels of anti-monument and dialogic monument for the same considerations (e.g., Cronshaw 2008; Stevens et al. 2018). Young constructed this concept in part by building on Pierre Nora's (1989) idea of more individualized sites of memory as opposed to more collective memories and group-sponsored memorials. The counter-monument concept entails a departure from the authoritative and didactic character with which traditional monuments are designed. The goal is to create an interactive composition which surrenders authorial privilege and spurs others to contribute their own engagement and sense of meanings and significance. This contrasts with traditional and didactic monument designs which tell viewers what is being memorialized and why. A counter-monument composition would seek to problematize and complicate a subject matter, rather than present it as stable and resolved. Similarly, designs utilizing voids, changing formats, and transience contrast with traditional elements of sculptural forms, classic architecture, and intended permanence (Stevens et al. 2018; Young 1992, 2016; Yun 2023).

An example of such a counter-monument approach was attempted in the "Monument Against Fascism" erected in Harburg, a suburb of Hamburg, Germany, in 1986. Designed by Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz in response to a public request for proposals, the composition consisted of a pillar (or stele) 12 meters high and 1 meter square made of aluminum and sheathed in a thin lead covering. Instead of placing the structure in a prominent position in a public park, it was located in a busy intersection of a commercial district. Styluses with steel tips accompanied the pillar, so that individuals could inscribe their names and texts or graphic expressions into the lead surface within reach. A plaque next to the pillar presented a message (displayed in seven languages) asking passers-by to add their names:

> We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12 metre-high lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely and the site of the Harburg monument against fascism will be empty. In the long run, it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice.
>
> *(Shalev-Gerz and Gerz 2024)*

As people covered the four sides of the pillar with names, messages, and symbols, the pillar was lowered into a recess beneath its platform to expose a new length of the pillar for inscriptions. One could also look into the platform beneath the exposed pillar and see the recessed sections and a photo display of the successive stages of its public engagements. The stele was lowered in eight phases of 1.5 meters each, disappearing below the surface until only the top of the pillar was visible under foot in 1993 (Shalev-Gerz and Gerz 2024; Stubblefield 2011; Young 1992).

Young (1992, 2016) and others viewed this Harburg design, like Maya Lin's 1982 design for a Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, DC, as an exemplar of a counter-monument (Cronshaw 2008; Shalev-Gerz and Gerz 2024). Others have preferred to view such compositions as falling across a spectrum of degrees of employing dialogic, counter-monument elements without creating a rigid binary of monument versus anti-monument (Cronshaw 2008; Yun 2023). Even the Harburg composition still possessed traditional attributes of the initial, authorial design, choice of location, imposition of a structure into that location, and instructions to passers-by of the subject matter within which they should engage with the structure. Each lowering of the stele over the years was accompanied by public gatherings and related ceremonies, adding elements of transient performance. Yet, those gatherings could also entail participants' perceptions that the event organizers were in positions of authority (Lupu 2003; Moshenska 2010; Stubblefield 2011).

Refutations and reinscriptions addressing oppressive monuments typically employ displays and performances of counter-statements or counter-speech. Such expressions could employ the design features of a counter-monument, such as transience and interactivity, or more of the didactic attributes of traditional monument compositions. Such examples are illustrated in the next case study, drawn from locations in Italy.

Combating Fascism in Italy

Many monuments celebrating colonial conquest and fascism were constructed within Italy during the influence and dictatorship of Benito Mussolini from 1919 to 1945. The government sought to expand its territorial holdings in Albania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, and Somalia (among others) in the early twentieth century. Allied with Nazi Germany, Italy's fascist regime later collaborated in the horrors of war and campaigns of holocaust and genocide against oppressed peoples in Europe. The Nazi regime fought tenaciously as Allied forces marched on Germany to end World War II. As a result, many of Germany's buildings and statues promoting the fascist Reich were destroyed by Allied forces in intensive fighting and bombardments (Belmonte 2023: 10–11; Young 2016: 138). Italy's fate was different. Mussolini lost hold of power earlier in World War II, and an internal civil war defeated his regime. The landscapes of Italy suffered less severe bombardments, and numerous statues and buildings celebrating Italian fascism remained standing

after World War II. Following the war, new legislation in Germany prohibited conduct and speech promoting fascism or the Nazi regime. Similar initiatives in Italy were less strict and often went unenforced (Belmonte 2023; Ben-Ghiat 2021; Zevi 2023).

Promotions of colonial expansion and fascism in architecture, art, and statuary in Italy often incorporated particular architectural and artistic styles. Their designs included elements drawn from an array of traditions spanning from the classic Roman period to modernist styles in the early twentieth century. This tendency often made particular memorials of fascism difficult to remove after World War II (Young 2016: 137; Zevi 2023). Removal could entail direct destruction of a memorial in its location or moving it to storage in a museum or similar space. Opponents of removal typically defended the challenged compositions as having historical, contextual, and aesthetic significance deserving of preservation. Efforts to counter such oppressive displays have instead focused on counter-statements affixed to oppressive monuments or erected on their own. As art historian Carmen Belmonte (2023: 12) observes, through such varied strategies such tangible heritage "can be preserved, restored, relocated, but also contested, undermined, and re-signified."

Dell Upton (2023: 65) summarizes:

> Scholarly, political, and public proposals run from doing nothing, to alteration to erase currently offensive aspects of particular works, to "contextualization" by the addition of texts that would give an ostensibly critical interpretation of the works, to their official removal from public spaces, often to be relegated to the collections of museums that do not want them.

Museum specialists Modupe Labode and Tsione Wolde-Michael (2023) similarly caution that museum displays of removed monuments of oppression could provide those statues with unintended reverence and incur unmanageable costs (see Fryer et al. 2021). On the other hand, effective critiques of the monument in a museum display can lead to complaints by some museum visitors and decreased funding support (Thompson 2022: 153). An even greater challenge lies in changing the oppressive belief systems that created such monuments and work to preserve them: "Simple alteration or removal of individual statues or murals would mistake the symptoms for the disease" (Upton 2023: 65).

Debates about such oppressive displays in Italy were invigorated when historian Ruth Ben-Ghiat published an article in *New Yorker* magazine in 2017, titled "Why Are There So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" She raised concerns focused on continued complacency about such displays and a parallel trend of the reemergence of fascist influences in national politics. Ben-Ghiat's arguments sparked numerous responses by parties advocating preservation of such memorials as historically significant. Others argued that there are no current tendencies toward fascism in current politics (Belmonte 2023: 10; Lowen 2024). Historian Mia Fuller (2023: 27) articulated a concept of *inertia memoriae* ("inertia

of memory") to capture the challenges of so many remnant structures of fascism in Italy and an accompanying political complacency concerning their prevalence. She observes: "Fascism's physical infrastructure is so omnipresent that Italians are typically desensitized (and even oblivious) to its historical and political connotations" (Fuller 2023: 23). Debates calling for removal of particular monuments are often precipitated by complaints from outsiders rather than from local interest groups (Fuller 2023: 24, 29).

An early monument condemning fascism was erected in 1949 in Rome. On March 23, 1944, several months after the Nazi forces occupied Rome, Resistance partisans set off an explosive on a central street in the city, killing 32 German soldiers. German forces, with assistance from some Italian military, responded by arresting a diverse group of men and boys in Rome, including individuals of varied ethnic, religious, and political affiliations. Other individuals confined in local prisons for past Resistance activities were also targeted. The German commanders planned to execute at least 10 Italian persons for each of the 32 German soldiers killed in the attack. They took 335 of these captive individuals to the Ardeatine quarry on the outskirts of the city. On March 24, 1944, they executed all 335 inside a mineshaft at the quarry and then set off explosives to collapse and seal the shaft. This heinous act was later called the Fosse Ardeatine Massacre. After World War II concluded, the quarry site was designated as a national memorial cemetery and a monument was constructed there to commemorate the victims and as a national expression of disdain for fascism (Clifford 2008). Such a focused message at the monument of national pride and resistance to fascism dissipated as neo-fascist political elements gained ground in the 1990s in Italy. The Fosse Ardeatine monument has been viewed in recent decades by Italian politicians and media more as a condemnation of Germany's war crimes (Clifford 2008).

An example of applying a counter-statement onto an oppressive monument was undertaken in 2017 by designers Michelle Bernardi and Arnold Holzknecht. A structure called Palazzo degli Uffici Finanziari (Financial Office Building) in Bolzano included a monumental display titled "The Triumph of Fascism" designed by Hans Piffrader in 1939–1942. The monument included an engraved fascist slogan of *credere*, *obbedire*, *combattere* ("believe, obey, fight"). In the 2017 counter-statement by Bernardi and Holzknecht, a large-scale, LED, light display is affixed to the building façade and monument and instead declares "no one has the right to obey" in a blaze of neon written in Italian, German, and Ladin. The phrase is a quote from historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt as a condemnation of authoritarian regimes (Belmonte 2023: 15; Zevi 2023: 124).

Other artistic works seek to subvert the authority accorded to past rulers. Italian artist Rossella Biscotti was able to collect bust sculptures of Mussolini and King Victor Emmanuel III (under whom Mussolini served) from a public storage facility. She placed these sculpted heads on the ground in exhibits, so that viewers looked down upon them. Devoid of plinth or pedestal, the figures lost their historical authority and dignity (Zevi 2023: 124).

German artist Gunter Demnig has undertaken a colossal effort of producing small-scale monuments and counter-statements now displayed at thousands of sites across Europe. He calls them stolpersteine or "stumbling stones." Each small brass plaque is inscribed with the phrase "here lived" or "here worked," the name of an individual apprehended by the Nazi or Italian fascist regimes (1933–1945), their year of birth, date of arrest, the prison or concentration camp to which they were sent, and the date of their execution. Such individuals included members of political and intellectual opponents of the regimes and a multitude of ethnic and religious minorities. The stolpersteine are placed in the ground near the space in which the individuals lived, worked, or were arrested. The plaques are uniform in overall design, treating all persons alike and celebrating their lives and humanity. Demnig (2024) invokes a passage from the Talmud for the project: " 'a person is only forgotten when his or her name is forgotten,' " and the stolpersteine "in front of the buildings bring back to memory the people who once lived here."

Since 1993, over 100,000 such monuments to those individuals have been installed in locations in "Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Ukraine" (Demnig 2024). Adachiara Zevi (2023: 124) observes:

> In this way, the relatives of the victims, who commission them, "bring back home" their loved ones, transforming an anonymous piece of the city into a place of memory, commemorating with a stone, as in Jewish cemeteries, those who are no longer there.

Rather than a collective, centralized monument structure which people can choose to visit or not, the stolpersteine confront people throughout space in the cities of Europe, eliciting reflection on the life stories experienced, lost, and remembered.

Events in the United States in 2015, 2017, and 2020 led to international protests against oppressive forms of heritage and governmental suppression of minority groups, refugees, and immigrants. Such initiatives intensified following the 2020 murder of George Floyd by police officers in Minnesota. The Black Lives Matter movement had started in 2013 in the United States and began to spread internationally, but with little impact in Italy for several years. The COVID-19 pandemic provided an amplifying context in 2020 and helped fuel the spread and intensity of demonstrations condemning governmental and racist oppression. The pandemic was also accompanied by increased consumption of news and social media, spreading reports of social unrest. Protests occurred in cities in Italy, but focused more on issues concerning the treatment of refugees and immigrants. Demonstrations and debates in Italy focused much less on demands for removing monuments of past colonial and fascist conquests (Della Porta et al. 2022; Zevi 2023).

Dell Upton (2023) provides a comparative study of the compositions of monuments celebrating the Confederacy in the United States with memorials promoting

fascism in Italy. Many of the American Confederate memorials incorporate architectural and artistic elements drawn from classic Greek and Roman traditions. Such designs seek to legitimate a more recent regime by connecting it to European antiquity. As it occurs in Italy, proposals to remove oppressive American monuments are often countered by arguments to preserve structures which appear to have historical, contextual, and aesthetic significance (Upton 2023). A similar argument was raised in attempts to preserve a colonial-building viewed by many people in South Korea as a symbol of Japanese oppression. That controversy is the subject of the next case study.

Monuments Large and Small in South Korea and the Philippines

The societies located in what we today call South Korea experienced waves of imperial dominions over centuries. Communities struggled with debates on how to approach material legacies of past colonial regimes and to commemorate victims of imperial malfeasance. More prominent initiatives in recent decades include South Korea's demolition of Japanese colonial architecture.

The peoples of the Korean peninsula were governed by the state-level Joseon dynasty for several centuries until 1897, and by a regime called the Korean dynasty from 1897 to 1910. The Japanese empire had made repeated incursions into the region since the sixteenth century and succeeded in attaining dominion in 1910. The Korean people suffered under the oppression of the Japanese empire from 1910 to 1945, and the conclusion of World War II. The peninsula was divided into two, with a north–south national boundary at the 38th parallel of latitude, in the treaties among the Allied forces following World War II. North Korea, called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was principally supported by Russia. South Korea, called the Republic of Korea, was largely supported by the United States. In 1950, North Korea sent troops south to seize territories from South Korea. The United States and its allies responded with force. Three years later the Korean War was settled by treaty with recognition of the original, national boundary at the 38th parallel (Chung 2003; Linantud 2008; Sîntionean 2017).

The people of South Korea suffered greatly under Japanese imperial control. After World War II and the Korean War, the national agencies in the Republic worked to erase the material legacies of imperial and colonial oppression. Aspects of such difficult histories included Japanese oppression and episodes of Koreans' past collaborations with colonial authorities. Related campaigns of memory and forgetting ensued. Memorials often focused on subjects of resistance, such as a social movement in 1919 protesting Japanese control and celebrating Korean heritage. Erasures included dismantling key buildings employed by the Japanese colonial administrations (Chung 2003; Sîntionean 2017).

A primary example of erasing a structure viewed as symbolic of Japanese oppression was a building which came to be used as the National Museum of Korea in Seoul. The expansive structure, called the General Government Building, was built

in 1926 by the Japanese empire to serve as headquarters for its colonial administration (Figure 1.2). Japanese administrators constructed this building to fill the space of the gateway into the traditional Kyŏngbok (also called Gyeongbokgung) Palace complex of the Joseon dynasty. Such placement significantly disrupted the space of an important tangible heritage of the Korean people. Korean cultural beliefs viewed the location as significant for its power of place, which was enhanced by the specific layout and design of the palace complex. That power of place was violated by the Japanese building. The design by Japanese and German architects employed neoclassical and baroque elements in symmetrical façades, two interior courtyards, and a central dome. After World War II, the building was used as a government center for the new Republic (1948–1983) and then as the National Museum of Korea (1986–1996) (Chung 2003; Sîntionean 2017).

A political and social movement called "settle the past" in the early 1990s called for demolishing this building because it was a symbol of past oppression. President Kim Young Sam promoted the call for demolition in 1993 and two years of heated debates followed. Preservation advocates argued that demolition would erase history, lead to a forgetting of the past, destroy a notable example of colonial architecture, and deprive citizens of a tangible structure which could facilitate important, ongoing lessons about past oppressions. The destruction would also be very costly,

FIGURE 1.2 The former Japanese colonial General Government Building, at Gyeongbokgung in Seoul, South Korea, 1929. Photograph in public domain, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

both in demolishing the building and having to arrange new spaces for the museum holdings. Earlier approaches to the building had sought to reinscribe or recontextualize it by employing it as the offices of the Korean national government and then the Republic's national museum (Chung 2003; Kim 1998; Sîntionean 2017).

Others, including President Kim, characterized the standing edifice as a cause of continuing pain. Their arguments provided an example that could be described as a "place of pain and shame" in the realm of "difficult heritage" as articulated by William Logan and Keir Reeves (2009: 3). The president finally arranged for destruction of the building in 1995 and 1996 after moving the museum holdings. Notably, the tear-down phase was not preceded by acts of defacing the building. In a way, defacement and desanctification were achieved by the belief among governing parties that the Japanese colonial edifice had defiled the powerful space of the predecessor, palace landscape. As an act of defacement itself, the Japanese building lacked the perception of sanctity ostensibly assigned to monuments of oppression in other settings. The demolition included an enormous public ceremony on August 15, 1995, the 50th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan. Political officials, dignitaries, and approximately 50,000 citizens watched as jets flew overhead, fireworks exploded, and a crane removed the spire of the central dome of the building (Kim 1998). Destruction was completed in 1996 and a new project to restore the palace complex was initiated to celebrate histories of Korean sovereignty and culture. In orchestrating this demolition project, President Kim also succeeded in focusing public attention on oppressive regimes of a more distant past and away from current social and economic challenges (Chung 2003; Sîntionean 2017).

Management of this Japanese colonial building also entailed aspects of relocation and creation of new displays concerning the structure and what it symbolized. In the process of demolition, samples of the building's ionic columns, façade materials, and portions of the central dome were preserved. They were placed on display in a new space and new location which served as the national museum. Scale models of the colonial building and the Kyŏngbok Palace complex were created to accompany the display. In this way, material remains of the colonial building were employed in preserving citizens' memories of the colonial oppressions. These materials also served as tangible prompts to facilitate important, ongoing lessons about the Republic of Korea's histories (Chung 2003).

Another initiative of commemorations developed in South Korea and the Philippines concerning legacies of other Japanese imperial transgressions in the twentieth century. Many young women were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese empire, particularly in a period of military expansions from 1937 through 1945. Japan maintained "comfort women" posts to serve military and colonial personnel. The number of women ensnared in this system of sexual slavery across South Asia ranged in estimates of 200,000 or more. Memorials honoring the victims of this practice, often called "Peace Statues," have been created in a form of refutation and defiance of attempts to erase this history. Over 120 of these memorials have been

constructed in South Korea and dozens more in other locations in the Philippines, Australia, Germany, and the United States. These installations have been created and installed primarily by private parties, civic groups, and heritage organizations (Aquino and Martin 2024; Shahani 2024; Yun 2023).

These Peace Statues often consist of poignant compositions which present a bronze figure of a young woman seated on a chair and gazing out, with a calm, unsmiling expression, her hands resting on her lap (Figure 1.3). She is clothed in some form of traditional attire and is bare foot. The design often includes a small bird perched on her shoulder. She is accompanied by an adjacent, empty chair and plaques discussing the past oppressions and abuses. The design has an open character, with a life-size figure and chairs placed on a base level with the ground. The open chair connotes ideas of presences and absences in the past, present, and future. The bird can be seen to convey concepts of liberation, flight, and passage of time. The image of a shadow of an older woman underlies the seated figure, relating the victims in youth to the surviving elders today. There is room on the chair next to the seated figure and on the base on which visitors can leave mementos and tributes. Many have left flowers, letters, photographs, and poems. Visitors can also sit in the open chair, embrace the seated figure, and reflect on the memorial's subjects. The design thus elicits dialogic interaction with visitors, who occasionally add clothing to the figure in colder months, in addition to placing remembrances (Shim 2023; Yun 2023).

One of these Peace Statue memorials was placed in juxtaposition to the accused entity by positioning it across the street from the Japanese consulate in Seoul, South Korea, with the figure of the young woman staring at the consulate. Other memorial designs feature one or more standing, young women in bronze atop a base which presents inscriptions providing contextual statements. The national government of Japan has offered apologies and reparation payments and proposes that those actions should provide closure. Representatives of governmental and commercial interests in Japan have applied pressure on officials in South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and elsewhere to remove these memorials, often applying economic pressure to achieve their objectives. Proponents of the memorials continue to combat what they view as attempts of erasure (Aquino and Martin 2024; Shahani 2024; Yun 2023). In the next case study from Australia, refutations and reinscriptions were placed at the locations of oppressive memorials in combination with acts of defacement and demolition.

Statue Defacements and Removal in Australia

James Cook, Arthur Phillip, Lachlan Macquarie, and William Crowther are viewed as symbols of Anglo-Australian oppression of Indigenous peoples. Numerous monuments were created to honor them throughout Australia. Recent attempts to remove such statues have been largely unsuccessful, with a few exceptions. Captain Cook propelled British imperial conquest in Australia in 1770. Captain Phillip

FIGURE 1.3 An example of one of many "Statue of Peace—Comfort Women" memorials, located at the Ashfield Uniting Church in Ashfield, Australia. Photograph by Oronsay, 2022, available for public domain via the Wikimedia Commons.

claimed Sydney Cove for Britain in 1788 and founded the colony of New South Wales. He served as first Governor of New South Wales from 1788 to 1792. Macquarie served as the fifth governor of New South Wales and the last to supervise that colony as a penal colony before it transitioned to open settlement. He implemented military campaigns against Indigenous groups, including an infamous Appin Massacre at a site west of Sydney. Tasmania was called Van Diemen's Land by earlier agents of the Dutch East Indies Company in honor of Anthony van Diemen, a governor of that organization. The British later founded a colony on Tasmania to serve as a penal colony for subjects of the empire, and Crowther served as a premier for that colony (Hollinsworth 2010; Maddison 2024; Pedersen 2005).

Ignoring initial instructions from the crown, Cook, Phillips, and other colonial officials treated Australis as an empty landscape to be discovered (*terra nullius*). They had no concern with the Indigenous populations (referred to as Aborigines) and did not engage with them or seek to enter into treaties. Such British colonial officials sought to eliminate and displace the Indigenous population, rather than engage with them in a respectful manner. For example, Macquarie wrote openly about his intentions to eliminate the Indigenous population to make way for settlers under the colonial regime. An estimated 800,000 Indigenous people occupied the

continent in the 1770s, speaking over 200 languages. They were decimated by the colonial impacts of disease and violent attacks by the Anglo-Australian population. Indigenous people's populations slowly recovered to over 500,000 today, comprising 2.5 percent of the country's total population of 22.4 million (Hollinsworth 2010; Maddison 2024; Pedersen 2005). Activists emphasize the egregious character of the *terra nullius* myth created by the British imperial regime. Multiple lines of evidence demonstrate that the continent has been inhabited by humans, including the ancestors of today's Indigenous groups, going back at least 65,000 years (Maddison 2024; Carlson and Farrelly 2022b).

Activists for the interests of Indigenous peoples have protested monuments constructed to honor those British officials. Cook is commemorated in numerous monuments across Australia. A prominent statue of Cook was erected in 1879 in Sydney's Hyde Park with an inscription on the base of "Discovered this Territory in 1770." Other statues honoring Cook, Macquarie, Phillips, and Crowther typically bear inscriptions that also speak of discovery and settlement in the eighteenth century and make no mention of the heritage of Indigenous peoples. These monuments have become targeted by activists to remove or counter-speak (Maddison 2024). In Sydney, activists undertook counter-speech and reinscription in 2017 by spray painting "no pride in genocide" on the base of the Cook statue and throwing paint on that statue in 2018. In 2017, another Cook statue in Melbourne was covered in pink paint and the words "no pride" were painted across its base. Australian officials typically condemned such acts as criminal vandalism and responded with force to protect the monuments. Activist protests intensified with the international spread of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. At one point that year, local officials protected the Cook memorial in Sydney by having it surrounded by police officers on horseback (Maddison 2024; Carlson and Farrelly 2022b).

Some activists and heritage scholars, such as Bronwyn Carlson, an Aboriginal woman born in Dharawal Country in New South Wales, advocate for multiple lines of approaching such monuments of colonial and imperial oppression. Some statues are of such egregious character that they should simply be removed and the materials destroyed or recycled. For example, in 2021, protestors tore down a Cook statue in Victoria, in the British Columbia province of Canada, and threw it into the nearby harbor waters. They covered the empty statue base (or plinth) in red hand-prints, symbolizing murdered and missing Indigenous women, and erected small red crosses at the location. Similarly, in January 2024, protestors in Melbourne, Australia, defaced two colonial statues. They sawed off a bronze statue of Cook at the ankles and doused a statue of Queen Victoria in red paint. Government officials in Australia, Canada, and elsewhere have typically rejected proposals for removing statues as improper attempts to erase history and view such protests as vandalism (Al Jazeera 2024; Carlson and Farrelly 2022a, 2022b; Maddison 2024; Ritchie 2024).

Carlson and her colleague Terri Farrelly (2022a, 2022b) emphasize that a representative sampling of some other oppressive statues should be relocated and

collected in a new venue to be made the subject of counter-speech displays. This approach would preserve the historical character of the colonial myth-making for present and future generations to critique. For example, in 2019, Māori activists in Grisborne, New Zealand, succeeded in having a Cook statue removed with plans to display it in a local museum. A similar approach would be to preserve some oppressive statues where they stand and add juxtaposing displays of refutations at those locations. An example of this was accomplished in Fremantle, Australia, where activists were permitted to create counter-speech displays of imperial violence against Indigenous peoples to stand next to an existing "Explorers Monument." Whether in a new location or next to the statues' original placements, these juxtaposed displays would critique the false myths of the empire, present countervailing facts of imperial violence, and convey counter-stories of the proud heritage of the Indigenous groups. Other activist artists have instead created stand-alone displays which depict scenes of the removal and destruction of monuments, or depict existing monuments in defaced and ruinous conditions. These too serve to provide counter-speech messages in refutation of the false claims of the oppressive memorials (Carlson and Farrelly 2022a, 2022b; Maddison 2024).

Carlson and other activists also perceive challenges in proposed forms of protest and counter-speech. For example, moving oppressive statues to a museum or park requires adequate staffing and budgets at those locations to create and maintain new displays. Oppressive statues were typically erected in visible, public locations. This placement promoted frequent engagements with those monuments by members of the public. Erecting counter-speech displays in juxtaposition at those prominent locations would also give the counter-speech greater engagement with members of the public. If the statue and accompanying counter-speech displays are moved to a museum or separate park, the level of public engagement would likely decrease. Citizens would have to take the time to go to those new museum or park locations. Some activists favor removal and destruction of oppressive monuments to express their lack of legitimacy. Moving oppressive statues to a museum or designated park could impart some continuing sense of legitimacy and reverence for those original works. Members of the public viewing any display also bring their own, varied interpretations. For example, a monument indicating a past event in which an Anglo-Australian was killed by Indigenous people could be viewed by Indigenous individuals as not a shameful event, and rather as evidence of occasions on which their ancestors exercised agency and fought back (Carlson and Farrelly 2022a, 2022b; Maddison 2024).

A recent success of arranging for the simple removal of a monument occurred in Hobart, a principal city in the Tasmania province of Australia. William Crowther was a surgeon, naturalist, and government official in Tasmania, serving as premier in 1878–1879. He was born in 1817 and died in 1885. A monument honoring Crowther, including his likeness in a bronze statue, was erected in 1889 and stood in a primary location in Franklin Square in Hobart. Activists had long protested against this monument and sought its removal. Crowther not only represented the

dreadful legacies of the British empire and Anglo-Australian colonial regime. He also pointedly symbolized accompanying racial ideologies and the defilement of Indigenous, human remains (Carlson and Farrelly 2022a, 2022b).

In 1869, Crowther was appointed a medical officer in Hobart General Hospital, but was promptly suspended from that position in the same year. He was charged with removing the head from the remains of William Lanne, a respected member of the Indigenous Palawa people, who had recently died at age 34 from disease. Crowther sent Lanne's preserved head to the Royal College of Surgeons in London as a specimen of the physiology of an Indigenous person in Tasmania. This act was part of broader-scale collections of human remains by proponents of a racist view within science and medicine who sought to study the physiologies of populations they labeled as inferior races. Crowther also removed Lanne's hands and feet as specimens and arranged to have the rest of Lanne's skeleton preserved for study. Apparently perceiving the questionable character of his actions, he replaced Lanne's head with a head removed from another corpse. Lanne's head was finally repatriated from London to Tasmania in 1991 (Carlson and Farrelly 2022a, 2022b).

In 2021, the administration of the City of Hobart was persuaded by ongoing protests and initiated a program of counter-speech. They launched the "Crowther Reinterpretation Project" and funded temporary public art works, with priority given to Palawa heritage artists. These works included displays placed on and around the statue in ways that involved temporary reinscriptions and defacements. In 2022, the Planning Commission for the City voted to remove the Crowther statue, and the City Council approved that decision in 2023. Many Indigenous activists throughout Australia celebrated this decision as a rare victory in achieving official, governmental action to address an oppressive monument. Others objected that simple removal would not fully address and discuss the troublesome past of British colonialism, and could result in a forgetting rather than a reckoning. Members of the City Council indicated that they planned to sponsor rotating exhibits and displays around the empty plinth which would explore the history and reasons for removing the statue. Yet others objected to the removal because they viewed it as an attempt to erase history. Members of the latter constituency filed suit to stop the removal that had been approved by the City Council (Al Jazeera 2024; Carlson and Farrelly 2022a, 2022b; Ritchie 2024).

While the court case proceeded, activists grew impatient. The City Council would see success with their plan, as a court decision was announced on May 8, 2024, affirming the City's authority to remove the statue. Yet, just days before that court decision was announced, activists cut down the hollow, bronze statue, slicing through the feet with a saw. This slicing dismemberment seemed appropriate in response to the past acts of Crowther in regard to Lanne's remains. Activists had earlier spray-painted "no pride in genocide" on the plinth, and now spray-painted "what goes around" and "decolonize" on the base as the toppled statue lie on the ground. The City Council arranged for a temporary sign to be placed on the empty plinth describing the controversies entailed in Crowther's colonial involvement

and personal conduct. The City Council also indicated that they plan new displays at the location in Franklin Park to tell the broader stories about the histories of the Indigenous peoples, Anglo-Australia, and the city (Al Jazeera 2024; Ritchie 2024). Protestors will often experience more success in efforts to remove a memorial when they strongly relate the figure depicted with a broader context of societal structures of oppression. The next case study, of the "Rhodes Must Fall" campaign in South Africa, further illustrates these dynamics.

Rhodes Must Fall in Cape Town, South Africa, and Oxford, England

Cecil John Rhodes was born in Britain in 1853 and became a key figure in British imperial and industrial interests in Africa in the late 1800s. He moved to the southern region of the continent and focused on mining gold and diamonds in the 1870s and 1880s. Rhodes' rapidly accumulated wealth was built on the backs of exploited African laborers (Majavu 2023: 79). In his roles managing the chartered British South Africa Company and De Beers mining company, he attained great influence in colonial management of territories across Africa. Through these intertwined imperial, colonial, and commercial frameworks, he governed territories named after himself (later named Zambia and Zimbabwe) and served as Cape Premier from 1890 to 1896. The Glen Grey Act was passed under his administration in 1894. That Act eliminated land tenure claims by members of the Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape in what is today the nation of South Africa. The law also created a labor tax to force Indigenous Africans into economic roles as wage laborers. Rhodes openly expressed his view of the superiority of the "Anglo-Saxon race" and the appropriateness of Britain ruling over the expanses on Africa. He envisioned British enterprise, governance, and transportation spanning the continent, from Cairo to the southern Cape. The policies he implemented in his colonial governance laid the foundations for segregation structures, called apartheid, that continued into the twenty-first century (Knudsen and Andersen 2019; Majavu 2023; Maylam 2005; Styve 2024).

Rhodes worked to create a celebratory legacy for his life's works. Before death in 1902, he arranged the formation of an eponymous trust fund and scholarship program to which he bequeathed millions of pounds in funding. Rhodes intended to facilitate the education of a generation of young men to serve the interest of furthering the British empire and Anglo-Saxon race (Majavu 2023: 77–78). His legacy-enhancing strategy succeeded and many admirers subscribed to a near "cult of Rhodes" in the early 1900s. They wrote glowing appraisals of his life and constructed statues, buildings, and other commemorations honoring his name (Maylam 2005). Rhodes similarly donated large sums to Oxford University in England, which he viewed as playing a central role in his trust and scholarships (Majavu 2023: 78). The Rhodes Trust was headquartered in Rhodes House, built at Oxford in 1829. Rhodes House was adorned with statues celebrating the empire

and included a depiction of a symbolic bird figure from Great Zimbabwe. Rhodes believed the ruins of Great Zimbabwe provided evidence that southern Africa was once an outpost of the Phoenician civilization of the Mediterranean region. He donated additional sums to the particular college he attended at Oxford, called Oriel, and a statue in his likeness was erected on that college building in 1832 (Knudsen and Andersen 2019).

The University of Cape Town (UCT) was established in 1829 and expanded significantly in the 1880s with the help of Rhodes' wealth from mining operations. In 1893, Rhodes purchased an estate house in Cape Town called Groote Schuur, located on a prominent, upland site that looked out over the city and coast. He expanded the related land holdings and developed the estate house grounds with gardens and a small zoo. After his death in 1902, Groote Schuur served as the official residence of 11 Prime Ministers of South Africa from 1911 to 1994 (Nelson Mandela and his successors declined to reside there). In 1912, a large monument to Rhodes was established in the hills above the estate. The location carried significant symbolic associations with imperialism, white supremacy, and colonial rule. Rhodes bequeathed land surrounding Groote Schuur to serve as a new location for UCT, and the university campus was moved there in 1928 (Knudsen and Andersen 2019; Shepherd 2020).

Among numerous memorials to Rhodes, British artist Marian Walgate designed a statue in his honor in 1934. Her spouse was an architect who had helped design buildings at UCT. The bronze figure depicts Rhodes seated, leaning forward, and gazing out with a map in one hand as a symbol of imperial aspirations. She intended a posture to convey pensiveness, and likely was inspired in part by Auguste Rodin's 1880 design of *Le Penseur* (The Thinker). Walgate's statue is one-and-a-half times the size of a person, which is then raised on a seat and again on a pedestal 6.5 feet tall. The statue was initially installed on a less visible location on the UCT campus. In 1962, it was relocated to a prominent position at the entrance to a central quadrangle on the campus, opposite a main building named after another colonial figure. Instead of facing into the quadrangle, the statue faces out, so that it appears that Rhodes is gazing out, imperial map in hand, over Cape Town and the expansive landscapes beyond (Figure 1.4). This domineering gaze is underscored by an inscription on the statue's pedestal of a Rudyard Kipling poem celebrating aspirations of conquest (Miller and Schmahmann 2017; Schmahmann 2016).

Rhodes' legacy received another positive acknowledgment from Nelson Mandela in 2003. Mandela's political approach consistently focused on modes of reconciliation. As a price for a peaceful transition in governance, Mandela and his political allies in the African National Congress (ANC) had agreed in the early 1990s to abstain from undertaking economic and social restructuring to overcome the impacts of apartheid. They had hoped the future fortunes of a new, multicultural nation would benefit all citizens adequately. The ANC dominated politics and governance in the country starting with Mandela's presidency (1994–1999) (Dladla and Webster 2024; Marschall 2019; Wilson 2001).

FIGURE 1.4 Monument for Cecil Rhodes on campus of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, 2011. Photograph courtesy of Ian Barbour from Cape Town, South Africa, available for public domain via the Wikimedia Commons.

In the early 2000s, Mandela and others worked to form a foundation to promote underprivileged Africans in higher education. Departing from Rhodes' original intentions of focusing on Anglo-Saxon men, the Rhodes Trust had also awarded scholarships to individuals of African heritage from African nations starting in the 1960s and 1970s (Majavu 2023: 77). The Rhodes Trust proposed investing millions of pounds in the new Mandela scholarship initiative, and adding the Rhodes name to the project (Maylam 2005: 134–135). Mandela agreed:

> The Mandela Rhodes Foundation was founded in 2003 by Nelson Mandela in partnership with the Rhodes Trust. Forming the partnership was a considered act of reconciliation and, specifically, reparation: a way to return some of Cecil John Rhodes's wealth to its origins in Africa. Mr Mandela's intention was to "close the circle of history" by utilising Rhodes's resources for the advancement of Africa, helping to address the inequalities that result from the grave legacies of colonialism and apartheid.
>
> *(Mandela Rhodes Foundation 2024)*

Many activists in South Africa view such a reconciliation approach, and accompanying "post-racial" and "color blind" policies, as failures. Social and economic transformations did not materialize, and "White people, less than 10 percent of the population, own approximately 85 percent of the land, 85 percent of the entire economy, and over 90 percent of the largest companies" (Milazzo 2015: 8; Dladla and Webster 2024). Thirty years after Mandela's presidency, the ANC lost its dominant role in government in the face of grinding poverty and continuing impacts of structural racism (Savage 2024).

The Rhodes Must Fall initiative was promoted by Chumani Maxwele and others in March 2015. Maxwele views this ongoing initiative as engaging in a dialogue with the shortcomings of Mandela's reconciliation politics. While Mandela achieved the formal end of apartheid governance, he launched an array of conciliatory policies which refrained from eliminating structural inequalities. Unlike other newly independent nations, such as Zimbabwe (the British colony of Rhodesia until 1980), policies of Mandela and the ANC also refrained from stripping away the symbolism and tangible heritage of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. Those oppressive symbols remain on street names, statues, buildings, and monuments throughout the country (Knudsen and Andersen 2019; Miller and Schmahmann 2017; Marschall 2019). As a young intellectual and activist, Maxwele continues to struggle with the oppressive socioeconomic inequalities created by structural racism within his society (Maxwele 2023, 2024). After the removal of the Rhodes statue from the University of Cape Town on April 9, 2015, protesting students also focused the Rhodes Must Fall movement on a target of "Fees Must Fall" and decolonizing university and economic structures (Knudsen and Andersen 2019: 239). Although national law in South Africa generally facilitated affirmative action in education and employment, little social progress had been experienced. The regional and national governments typically responded to such continuing student protests after 2015 with forceful police reactions (Milazzo 2022: 130–131; Shepherd 2020: 577–578).

The Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town was the subject of diverse counter-statements and subversive performances in the decade preceding Rhodes Must Fall. A final demonstration of debasement of the statue was performed by Maxwele on March 8, 2015. Wearing a placard declaring "White Arrogance @UCT," he tossed a bucket of human excrement onto the inscribed pedestal of the statue. This act symbolized the ways in which Rhodes and colonial structures treated humans as disposable waste. In turn, it expressed the abject disgust Maxwele and others felt in regard to the histories and legacies of Rhodes and the extractive industries, expropriations, and oppression of colonialism (Baines 2024: 65, 68; Shepherd 2020: 566). This performance was attended by many and the subject of photographic and audiovisual recordings to be distributed widely. Maxwele and others emphasized that the Rhodes statue symbolized greater maladies of past and present injustices perpetuated through ongoing, structural racism in South Africa (Kros 2015: 151; Marschall 2019; Miller and Schmahmann. 2017: viii–ix;

Schmahmann 2016: 90–91, 99–100). Continuing demonstrations and occupations of university buildings ensued in following weeks. Faced with such determined disruptions and widespread media coverage, on April 8, 2015, the University administration announced plans to remove the Rhodes statue and place it into storage (Knudsen and Andersen 2019; Miller and Schmahmann 2017; Schmahmann 2016; Shepherd 2020).

The removal of the Rhodes statue was accompanied by counter-speech performances, one of which incorporated profound cultural symbolism. The Chapungu is a symbol of the Indigenous kingdom of a Kalanga-speaking people (ancestors of the Shona) called Great Zimbabwe. The polity was engaged in complex crafts, metallurgy production in gold, iron, and copper, and long-distance trade across the Indian Ocean region. The central precinct of Great Zimbabwe served as a governmental, ceremonial, market, and social center. Constructed in stone masonry beginning around 1250 CE, the center included a walled district called the "Great Enclosure" in use from 1270 to 1450. The Great Enclosure contained 8 soapstone figurines of carved birds, each 14 inches tall, that were placed on top of 3-foot-high columns, related to religious and ceremonial functions. The eight bird figures, later referred to as chapungu or hungwe, were unique, and an image of one is now incorporated in Zimbabwe's national symbolism. Such relics were plundered in the colonial period, and Rhodes purchased one of the bird figures looted from Great Zimbabwe to display at his residence. Rhodes and European historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries asserted that Great Zimbabwe was too sophisticated to have been created by an Indigenous society, and instead attributed the remains to a Phoenician and Mediterranean origin (Nielsen 2024).

As the statue of Cecil Rhodes was lifted by a crane to remove it from the University campus on April 9, 2015, artist Sethembile Msezane performed an accompanying counter-statement. She designed an ensemble to wear so that she could depict the mythic power of Chapungu, as the national symbol of Zimbabwe and long-standing, Indigenous heritage, rising up and displacing the image of Rhodes. A staircase near the Rhodes statue enabled her to rise up as she ascended the stair. She designed wings to strap to her arms, a beaded veil to cover her face, and wore a simple, one-piece swim suit of dark hue so that her body and outstretched arms depicted Chapungu in an elegant performance (Nielsen 2024). "Msezane placed her own Black, female, artist's body in place of the image of the white male colonizer and ruthless capitalist" (Ludwisiak 2021). The artist "used her body as a medium for Chapungu to speak through her movements" and "as Rhodes fell, Chapungu majestically raised her wings into the air" (Nielsen 2024: 116). This counter-statement and performance was not ephemeral, as it was recorded in photography and audiovisual recordings which were shared and displayed across diverse venues thereafter (Nielsen 2024: 117).

Among numerous individuals whom could be viewed as symbolic of colonial evils, Rhodes was perceived by many in South Africa as particularly representative of abject, imperial exploitation—as a "moral monstrosity" (Majavu 2023: 82;

Maylam 2005: 143). Objections to memorials for Rhodes thus often served in South Africa as objections to positive appraisals of imperial history (Majavu 2023: 79–80; Marschall 2019). Some commentators perceive that the Rhodes Must Fall movement in 2015 laid the groundwork for the momentum which the Black Lives Matter movement would experience in 2020 (Knudsen and Andersen 2019; Majavu 2023).

> The ideas of RMF [Rhodes Must Fall] functioned as an ideological background in 2020 when Black Lives Matter protests defaced and demanded that statues of slaveholders and confederates be pulled own. The RMF politics have inspired movements from the United States and UK to New Zealand and Australia. In short, the RMF inspired a global movement that raised serious questions about colonial heritage in the postcolonial world, and most importantly, it sparked a global movement that mobilized to have "emblems of historic despotism" destroyed.
>
> *(Majavu 2023: 83)*

Some analysts contend that removing statues is ineffective. It is more productive to retain them and employ them as venues for interrogating, criticizing, and condemning ongoing inequities in society for which the retained statue stands as a representative emblem (e.g., Houlton 2022: 123). Such efforts of refutation can be achieved through juxtapositions and the erection of new displays to accompany the retained statue and to convey contextual information of the subject's history and objectional aspects (Marschall 2019). These counter-statements need not be in the form of lasting, material constructions. They can also be performances which are photographed and recorded in audiovisual formats to be displayed and shared widely. The goal of such communications and performances is to motivate broad societal changes and not just the removal of one statue deemed objectionable (Goodrich and Bombardella 2016; Houlton 2022).

Among a number of such performances, an activist group called the Kultural Upstarts Kollective engaged with the Rhodes statue at UCT in 2007 by covering it in extravagant costumes associated with zealous football (soccer) fans. A miner's hat was reminiscent of such fan regalia for a particular team, but took on new meanings atop an image of a mining magnate. Oversized sunglasses were common among celebrating sports fans, but could also convey a dimming of an imperial gaze when placed upon Rhodes' figure. In addition, the demonstrators draped a sheet around Rhodes' seated figure, like a cape, and blazed on the back of this cloak "Whose Seat Is It Anyway?" The artists intended these features to destabilize the sense of a lasting heritage, imply dynamic, changing social possibilities, and to subvert the authoritarian claims of imperial agents (Schmahmann 2016: 106–108).

Other analysts assert that some monuments attain a status of abject disgust in the perception of a large enough constituency that removal becomes necessary and morally correct (Chapter 3 of this volume; Knudsen and Andersen 2019; Mbembe

2015). A necessary element of the development of such abject disgust may be that the monument is viewed as emblematic of broad social inequities and past evils and not just symbolic of an isolated biography of the subject depicted (Marschall 2019; Matthews 2023). Memorials which attain such status as subjects of abject disgust are no longer "empty signifiers" or "neutral containers of political mobilization" that continue to elicit counter-statements. They simply need to be removed (Baines 2024: 65, 68; Knudsen and Andersen 2019: 243).

Another, potentially necessary element spurring removal is the affective performance of such abject disgust by protesters defacing the monument as a step that precedes removal. Such physical defacement expresses the perceived disgust and can serve to delegitimize or "desanctify" the monument (Chapter 3 of this volume; Doss 2010: 362; Kros 2015: 154). Both elements applied to the Rhodes statue at UCT. An effective act of defacement also appears to be more likely if the defacement was preceded by earlier counter-statement engagements with the offending statue. Such earlier counter-statement performances had occurred with regard to the Rhodes statue at UCT in years before the 2015 defacement (Knudsen and Andersen 2019; Mbembe 2015). An act of defacement that is not preceded by protests and counter-statements will likely be viewed as lacking in significance and justification and could simply be repaired, ignored, and treated as an idiosyncratic and petty crime (Marschall 2019).

Efforts to remove a Rhodes statue at Oxford University likely failed due to an absence of these stepwise elements which occurred at UCT. There was not a sufficient series of counter-statement protests to develop a perception of the statue at Oxford as having attained a status of abject disgust that would justify a next step of defacement. The objections raised against the Oxford statue did not effectively associate the statue with broader social inequities. The protesters instead focused on narrower topics of university policies and curricular reforms. There was no attempted defacement of the statue, and protestors' demands for its removal were ignored (Houlton 2022: 128–129).

These case studies in Germany, Italy, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and South Africa provide insights into potential strategies for engaging with oppressive monuments. In some instances, protesting citizens will feel compelled to tear down the statue themselves because there is no credible process available for obtaining action of a government agency to do so. Many governments have passed laws which make the removal or relocation of monuments difficult (Thompson 2022: 108–109, 138–139). In other instances, arguments are made to preserve oppressive monuments because their design includes elements of classic architectural motifs or art styles. Demonstrations and counter-speech will often rise as primary options.

Counter-speech can be juxtaposed at the site of an oppressive memorial, or performed at diverse locations. More dialogic counter-speech can include elements which draw in expressive contributions from visitors. Facets of non-linear discussions, destabilizing subjects, transience, and multiple media for communicating can prove effective. The evolving commemorations honoring George Floyd

in Minneapolis and elsewhere have included such dynamic components (e.g., Figure 1.1). Audiovisual projections of new counter-messages onto oppressive monuments have notable impact. The ultimate goal of most protests is to spur changes in the background beliefs which produced an offending monument. That objective requires more than simple removal of a statue. Campaigns of performances and exhibitions are needed to provide counter-speech and educational outreach to convey alternative perspectives and to refute oppressive myths. These themes play out in diverse ways in the case studies presented in the chapters of this book. The next section provides an overview of those contributions.

Pursuing Removals, Relocations, Reinscriptions, and Refutations

Cequyna Moore is Director of the Monuments Toolkit Project within the World Heritage USA organization (formerly called US ICOMOS). In Chapter 2, Moore addresses the ways in which overt and structural racism cause individual and societal traumas. She considers the strengths and weaknesses of truth and reconciliation initiatives in addressing such traumas. Moore assesses new trends of including artistic works in such reconciliation projects. Design features such as counter-monuments and colocation play important roles in successful acts of counter-speech. She examines case studies of monument construction and dynamics of conciliation in Charleston, South Carolina, and the truth and reconciliation processes in Canada with regard to Indian Boarding Schools. Moore outlines successful strategies to address collective traumas and oppressive aspects of tangible and intangible heritage. She details strategies of removal, relocation, repurposing, destruction, reinterpretation, recontextualization, and colocation.

In Chapter 3, Daisy Dixon, a philosopher of language and an artist, uncovers the linguistic mechanisms through which monuments of oppression communicate their messages. She employs John Langshaw Austin's (1962) concept of illocutionary acts to dissect how these material compositions impact people. Such material presentations do not simply communicate representations of intangible ideas. The tangible objects palpably impact viewers with impositions of glorification and subordination. Yet, the monument also functions based on the premises of intangible ideas which lie behind it. Turning to ways of countering such messages of oppression, Dixon finds that activists should target the background ideas and premises by undertaking physical defacement of the tangible composition. If one were to simply demolish the monument, there would be little chance for subverting the background ideas of structural racism which motivated many of the compositions. Instead, activists should first engage in counter-speech (refutations and reinscriptions) through juxtaposed displays and then active defacement of the monument to subvert the oppressive ideas. After achieving subversion through such a counter-speech campaign, demolition or relocation of the oppressive monument can contribute further to subversion of the oppressive belief system.

In Chapter 4, Liza Gijanto employs her expertise as an anthropologist and archaeologist to unpack remarkable complexities of clashes of collective memories and erasures in the Senegambia region of West Africa. Recent decades have witnessed an increase in African diaspora tourism in which African descendant people worldwide visit locations in Africa impacted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Such visits are often undertaken in a spirit of a "homecoming" to likely ancestral locations. This increase of African diaspora tourism to Senegal, The Gambia, and Ghana influenced the ways that governments, commercial enterprises, and heritage organizations present cultural landscapes and preserved buildings related to past slavery systems. At times, fictional accounts are commemorated more than historical evidence. Shifting influences led to vacillations between monumental presentations of traces of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and erasure of accounts of domestic systems of slavery. Similar variations occur in competing emphases of monumental spaces from perspectives focused on individuals' agency and self-initiative versus their victimization by mechanisms of oppression. These shifting, selective memorials should motivate activist responses of reinscriptions and refutations to counter the varied episodes of erasures.

Stéphane Valognes specializes in critical heritage studies of cultures in France. In Chapter 5, he applies a multi-scalar perspective to see the ways in which the city of Cherbourg functioned as an oppressive landscape serving the military purposes of imperial and, later, national regimes. The facilities that grew into Cherbourg were initiated by King Louis XVI and expanded by Napoleon and later governments. The military installations and housing for sailors and soldiers were built on the Normandy coast to look out onto the English Channel in opposition to England's Royal Navy. Monuments within the city commemorate military personnel and their service to France's imperial and colonial campaigns worldwide. As original naval installations later faded in prominence, and commercial and civic development expanded, residents' memories and heritage associations of colonial power faded. Yet, domineering heritage became manifest again after World War II. The government led by Charles de Gaulle launched new projects to turn the city into a center for production and maintenance of nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed submarines. New efforts of reinscriptions and refutations seek to reclaim the forgotten heritage of the individuals who have lived and served within these contexts.

Francisco Andrade and Roberto Conduru specialize in studies of the intersections of artistic forms, architecture, colonial systems, and cultural heritage in Brazil. They present a fascinating study in Chapter 6 of the ways in which pillories were utilized and perceived as symbols in colonial and modern Brazil. Pillories are cut-stone, architectural forms in the shape of obelisks of modest height, often located in town squares. They were employed as whipping posts for punishing individuals who attempted to escape enslavement. These structures could thus embody dreadful messages of oppression and violence, but also of survival and resistance. Those associations were later displaced when pillories were viewed as symbols of local communities and municipal authorities as important elements of an ordered

society. New initiatives use artistic interventions and the pillory form to restore commemorations of Afro-Brazilians' histories and resilience. These new memorials seek to refute the attempted forgetting and erasure of Brazil's past engagements in slavery and racism.

Chapter 7 moves from terrestrial domains to the maritime. James Delgado is a renowned nautical archaeologist who played a key role in investigating the wreck of the schooner *Clotilda*. That ship was the last vessel to transport captive Africans to North America. Similar to the pillories in Brazil, such a vessel could be perceived as a symbol of dread and oppression. Yet, such a slave ship can also be seen as a site of memory of the resilience and heritage of captive Africans and their descendants. The captives on the last voyage of the *Clotilda* survived and formed a community on the Alabama coast. The vessel's transport of captives in 1860 was undertaken in defiance of national law prohibiting the international slave trade. At the end of the voyage, the owner burned and scuttled the ship along the coastline. Archaeological investigation and preservation of the wreck has been undertaken in collaboration with the interests and priorities of the African descendant community. Near the wreck of *Clotilda* lie the remains of the steamship *Lake Ellijay*, a twentieth-century ship used to train African-American sailors and soldiers during World War II. Delgado examines the ways in which the remains of both vessels stand as monuments to past oppression and ongoing impacts of structural racism in America. In response, he has collaborated with African Americans to develop perceptions of such vessels also as memorials of their heritage and perseverance. Such initiatives employ recontextualization and reinterpretation of the wrecks to refute efforts to forget and elide histories of enslavement in the United States.

In Chapter 8, Orville Vernon Burton reflects on the intense histories of white supremacy and Black self-initiative in South Carolina over centuries. He speaks with remarkable, in-depth knowledge of these topics as an individual born and raised in rural South Carolina and an esteemed activist and historian of race relations in the United States. Burton dissects the "Lost Cause mythology" of white supremacists and the many ways in which it has been perpetuated in Confederate monuments, erasures of commemorations for African Americas, and biased educational programs in schools, museums, and public spaces. State and local laws make removal of Confederate monuments difficult in South Carolina. Burton explores strategic methods of counter-speech in commemorations and public, educational outreach to celebrate African-American accomplishments and to counter ongoing, white supremacist propaganda. Due to the obstacles to removals, many activists pursue relocation, reinscription, and refutation strategies.

Anthropologist and archaeologist Julia A. King uncovers the history of Maryland's first capital in St. Mary's City and the later development of a college in that space. In Chapter 9, she critically analyzes the creation and perpetuation of origin narratives for the city and the colony of Maryland. Those accounts sought to lionize privileged Anglo-Americans and erase the significance and histories of the Black and Indigenous populations. In a significant step to counter such false narratives,

St. Mary's College commissioned the creation of a *Commemorative to Enslaved Peoples in Southern Maryland* to be built on the campus close to the location of past living quarters for enslaved laborers. King examines the ways in which this stunning composition of commemoration and counter-speech challenges the existing structures of power and ongoing oppression. When an oppressive commemoration entails entire landscapes and their histories, the strategies of removal and relocation give way to projects of refutation and reinscription.

The work of artists in restorative justice interventions is highlighted again in Chapter 10. Archaeologists Diane Wallman and Uzi Baram examine the creative responses of artist John Sims to an explicit Confederate monument in Florida. Sims was an activist and artist who designed a series of performances and works to challenge white supremacist legacies and to commemorate African-descendant accomplishments. One of his notable works was a "Recoloration Proclamation" in which Sims overwrote the elements of the Confederate flag with the black, green, and red colors of Black Liberation flags. He similarly designed ways of challenging the biased themes of the "Judah P. Benjamin Confederate Monument at Gamble Plantation Historic Park" near the Manatee River on the Gulf Coast of Florida. Wallman and Baram participated in community-engaged research and commemoration of the African diaspora populations in that region. They collaborated with Sims on performances and educational outreach projects to challenge the erasure of African-American histories by the Confederate Monument at Gamble Plantation.

Mary Ann Levine and James A. Delle examine Indigenous histories and an American military campaign in Chapter 11. The Haudenosaunee people became entangled in colonial wars between the British and French in the northeast region of what would become the United States. As the American Revolutionary War against the British unfolded in 1779, George Washington perceived the Haudenosaunee as dangerous allies of the British. As Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, he ordered a campaign to destroy their villages and food stores in a trajectory from Pennsylvania through New York. General John Sullivan led several thousand soldiers on a mission which equated with genocide, killing half the population. The route of this campaign and key locations are recognized today with numerous roadside, historical markers. Those small-scale monuments present narratives which erase the heritage and history of the Haudenosaunee. New initiatives work to counter-speak against and recontextualize the narratives conveyed in this collection of monuments of past conflicts. Recent efforts focus on reinscriptions and refutation of false narratives. Given the manageable size of the oppressive monuments, future activism could also target removal or relocation.

An example of removal of an oppressive monument, accompanied by replacement with a new commemoration, is detailed in Chapter 12. The city of Newark, New Jersey, renamed a primary commons area as Harriet Tubman Square. Local authorities responded to protests and removed a statue honoring Christopher Columbus from that square, due to that figure's association with European colonial depredations. A new monument was constructed in place of the Columbus statue in

2023. Called "Shadow of a Face," the new memorial honors Tubman and the many African Americans who fought against slavery and oppression. This composition has many features of the interactive and dialogic designs of counter-monument projects. Authors Noelle Lorraine Williams, James Amemasor, Michael J. Gall, and Christopher N. Matthews bring diverse perspectives from art, history, and anthropology to bear in conveying the contexts and innovative features of this memorial and related initiatives in restorative justice in the city.

Conclusion

This collection of analyses is presented within the "Restorative Justice in Heritage Studies and Archaeology" book series which I founded with Nedra K. Lee and Richard Paul Benjamin. Projects addressing restorative justice goals typically entail long periods of collaborations and community engagements. Research, dialog, negotiation, and reconciliation unfold in phases. Those efforts follow circuitous paths toward achieving elements of progress and the mitigation of inequities. One sees the same experiences and multiple phases of initiatives play out for the advocates and activists who grapple with monuments of oppression.

Controversies concerning oppressive monuments provide a stage for promoting social change. By engaging in these projects, community members, researchers, activists, and artists can bring forth underappreciated accounts of our pasts and correct the false narratives that accompany oppressive monuments. Memorials are tangible performances of interdependent belief systems. Such a material composition is shaped by the beliefs and practices of its creators and then works to reproduce and communicate those ideas to people engaging with the memorial. Those conveyed beliefs entail multifaceted aspects of experience and a promoted social order, including racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, economic, and embodied dimensions. The goal of community members and activists who challenge an oppressive monument should be to change the belief system entangled with the memorial's design and display. Diverse protests targeting such memorials have achieved notable progress in recent years. The chapter authors and I hope that the studies presented in this volume provide insights and suggestions for strategies which will benefit future initiatives.

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