

The Women's Monument and memorial complexity in the context of political change: from memorial exclusivity to monument(al) inclusivity

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The Women's Monument that was erected in Bloemfontein during 1913 fulfilled a strong urge by prominent Afrikaner leaders, such as President Steyn, to commemorate the sacrifices made by women and children during the Anglo Boer War of 1899–1902. However, the Women's memorial focus to commemorate women was soon used as a platform to promote nationalistic agendas. Over the decades various additions have been made to the site that transformed the exclusive women's memorial into an inclusive monument serving a broader agenda. In the post-1994 post-colonial epoch within a broad democratic arrangement the monument is undergoing further changes steering it even further away from its original focus. In addition the new democratic era has ushered in a broad comprehensive all-inclusiveness that has a further impact on the layout of the site and the memorial/museum. The purpose of this article was to examine the shift from memorial exclusiveness to an all-inclusive monument.

Key words: Women's Monument, concentration camps, Anglo-Boer War, museum

Die Vroue-monument en herdenkingskompleksiteit in 'n konteks van politiekeverandering: van herdendingseksklusiwiteit to monumentaleinklusiwiteit

Die Vroue-monument wat in 1913 in Bloemfontein opgerig is het 'n sterk behoefte van prominente Afrikaner leiers soos President Steyn vervul om die opofferinge wat deur vroue en kinders gedurende die Anglo-Boere-Oorlog van 1899–1902 gemaak is op 'n waardige wyse te gedenk. Die Vrouemonument is egter spoedig ná die inhuldiging as 'n platform gebruik om 'n nasionalistiese politieke agenda te dien. Die oorspronklike agenda en fokus om vroue en kinders te eer is deur 'n breër aanslag vervang met byvoegings aan die terrein. Dit was duidelik dat die oorspronklike fokus om uitsluitlik 'n vroue gedenkarea te wees geleidelik aangepas is om 'n alles-insluitende monument wat 'n breë agenda dien, te wees. In die postkoloniale era na 1994 en in die breër demokratiese opset is die monument besig om nog verdere veranderinge te ondergaan, wat dit verder van die oorspronklike fokus wegneem. Die nuwe demokratiese era het 'n breë allesomvattende en alles-insluitende invloed op die terrein gehad en die monument/museum se huidige status dui eerder op inklusiwiteit as eksklusiwiteit. Die oogmerk van die artikel is om die skuif om spesifiek vroue en kinders te gedenk na 'n alles-insluitende monument te ondersoek.

Sleutelwoorde: Vroue-monument, konsentrasiekamp, Anglo-Boere-Oorlog, museum

Within the context of a postcolonial, transitional society the construction or reconstruction of memorials and monuments will always be a contested endeavour. However, the reality is that political change and transformation in a transitional state is an ongoing process which inevitably generates and maintains a context for perpetual shifting of political allegiances. The ebb and flow of the control over political power in turn provides the stimulus for the reconstruction of history and the manner in which past experiences would be reflected in memorials and monuments. As Estelle Maré (2007: 37) wrote: "Memory has always had political or ideological overtones, but each epoch found his own meaning in memory."

The post-colonial process of construction new memorials and monuments and the reconstruction of existing memorials and monuments in South Africa is similarly an on-going phenomenon, with a protracted history not exclusively restricted to the post-1994 era. South Africa's history has always functioned within the broader political context of colonialism and post-colonialism which has influenced and steered its historical and political contours for more than a century. This phenomenon of construction and reconstruction of memorials and

monuments will form the central theme of this article. The Anglo Boer War (1899–1902) fought by the two Boer Republics against an imperialistic colonial power formed a watershed event in the country's history. In the aftermath of the War the suffering and injustices subsequently provided a strong impetus to create memorials and monuments to ensure that its horrors will not slip into oblivion and that the fallen be honoured.

The suffering of women and children in concentration camps during the Anglo Boer War, with more than 30 000 fatalities, provided a strong impetus to honour the fallen with a memorial. The former Free State president, President Steyn, was determined after the war to raise the required funds to build a memorial for the women and children. Largely as a result of his efforts the funds were raised and the memorial constructed and inaugurated in 1913 (Schoeman 1983: 115).

It should be stated that although prominent role players did not specifically make a distinction between a memorial and a monument the intention was clearly to erect a memorial for the women and children. (The conceptual differences between a memorial and a monument will be explained under a different subheading.)

In the preface of the official program at the inauguration of the Women's memorial Steyn stated the purpose of the memorial: "...naar de onthulling van het Monument, dat opgericht is terherinnering van de duizende edele vrouwen en kinderen, de in de Koncentratie Kampen en elders ten gevolge van de oorlogzijn omgekomen." (The inauguration of the Monument to commemorate the thousands of honorable women and children that died in concentration camps as a result of the war.) (Official program 1913: Inauguration of the Women's Monument).

The intention of Steyn, as the initiator and primary driving force behind the Women's memorial, was unmistakably to honour the women and children who had perished in the camps as a result of the war. His wife, Tibbie Steyn, saw the project as an attempt to place women on a high pedestal, while the influential Emily Hobhouse made it abundantly clear that it was essentially a women's memorial of which all women should be proud (Nasson & Grundlingh 2013: 230).

It is now more than a hundred years since the inauguration of the sacred Women's memorial that quietly nestles on the eastern slope of an unimposing hill in the barren veldt outside Bloemfontein. However, the observers that had witnessed the inauguration in 1913 will struggle in the modern era to recognise the site a hundred years later. Regular physical changes to the terrain and new additions near the original memorial resulted in a loss in focus. Bloemfontein had also sprawled and has crept closer to the memorial until it had finally encircled and urbanised the site. This 'urbanisation' of the memorial had stripped the memorial of its splendid solitude which had framed its existence during the first few decades. However, it is not only landscape changes that have taken place over hundred years the broader context has also changed which resulted in a focus shift. The backdrop of political change, colonial construction and post-colonial reconstruction of the Women's memorial had clearly a profound effect on the memorial. The 100 year period could be subdivided in two broad periods 1902–1994 and post–1994. The increased number of additions on the site during these two broad periods has shifted the initial emphasis, central values and intention irrevocably away from its original focus towards a broader less focused inclusivity.

Changing the playing field? Memorials and monuments – to remember and not to forget

The central question that this article wishes to address is to outline the emphasis shift that has taken place in the physical appearance, underlying theme and messages of the Women's memorial. The related secondary question is to establish if these changes have resulted in a change from memorial exclusivity, to honour women and children, to an all-inclusive monument that embraces the encompassing values of a broader all-inclusive society? If the latter is indeed the prevailing thought or underpinning driving force, then the inclusive purpose of a women and children memorial has lost its initial focus in the drive to a broader all-encompassing inclusivity.

It is important to recognise that all the changes and the additions did not happen within the decades after 1994. The shift from the original exclusive agenda to honour women and children to a broader interpretation were already implemented within the first two decades after the 1913 inauguration. However, it should be remembered that the original underpinning motive for the memorial was not done within a specific or a strong political context. The original construction of the memorial was to honour women and children and not to serve a specific political agenda. An analysis of the speeches during the inauguration reveals that they were regressively emphasizing the sacrifices of women and children. This aligns with the distinctive intention of a memorial to honour the death. The creation of a political context that influenced the memorial and site coincided a decade later with the rise of Afrikaner nationalism and sporadically flared up until the end of the era of apartheid. The post-1994 changes have again affected radical change and additions to the site in an effort to align it with the new all-inclusive political context in a broader democracy.

The strong Afrikaner nationalistic drive in the decades after the inauguration of the memorial and the related impact on the site meant that the intention to honour women and children has been progressively used to serve a political agenda. Within this political agenda the women in children were relegated to be subservient to the 'greater need in the following decades' or 'for the nationalistic good of the Afrikaner.'



Figure 1

The women's memorial displaying the obelisk, the statues, the two side panels and the enclosed area accessed by the central steps, (source: Google Images).

Grundlingh (2013: 241) has recognised that this shift from memorial exclusiveness to broader interpretation occurred within the first few decades since the memorial's inauguration. He explained that the shift occurred when nationalistic principles surpassed the earlier noble intentions of the Commission: "... (namely to) materially depicting the role of the women as serving male nationalism ... women (was) silenced by a greater cause."

This shift also represented a technical change, because the intended purpose of the memorial was as a result transformed into a monument. The original intention of the Steyn's Commission was to erect a memorial, and not a monument, for the women and children that perished in the concentration camps. Memorials and monuments are treated by many as the same concept, but there are subtle and very distinct differences between the two concepts. Ware (2008: 1) indicated that although the two concepts are etymologically linked as a result of both evolving from the root word "to be reminded and to be mindful", the application and deeper meaning of the root word has forced a distinction between the two concepts. Danto also makes a very vivid distinction between a memorial and a monument and explained that the word memorial is used to honour the death, while in the case of a monument the intention is to honour the living (Snyman 1996: 182).

According to Snyman (1996: 181) there are distinct rules that govern the distinction between monuments and war memorials. He quoted Danto (1987: 115) that explains that: "... we erect monuments that we shall always remember and build memorials so that we shall never forget ... Monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginning. Memorials ritualise remembrance and mark the reality of ends. Very few nations erect monuments to their defeats, but many set up memorials to the defeated death."

Danto (1987: 115) as referred to by Snyman (1996: 181) also make a further important distinction between memorials and monuments: "monuments made heroes, triumphs, victories, conquests perpetually present and part of life. Contrary to that a memorial is a special precinct extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honour the dead. With monuments we honour ourselves."

M.C. Botha (1952: 15), when the building and the *raison d'être* of the Voortrekker monument was challenged, explained that the impressive monument should primarily 'force' Voortrekker descendants to think about the sacrifices made by their forebears in order to create an independent nation. "When entering the Monument the visitor should be overwhelmed with gratitude towards God." He emphasised that the Monument should remind descendants that they should be mindful of and thankful of the past sacrifices. Within the strict context of the difference between a monument and a memorial the Voortrekker monument is in reality a memorial and not a monument. However, both the Women's memorial and the Voortrekker monument have over the years blurred the intended meaning of the word.

If the differences between a memorial and a monument are put opposed to each other their differences could be graphically presented as follows.

Monuments	Memorials
To remember	Not to forget
Commemorate the memorable and embody the beginnings	Ritualise remembrance and mark the reality of ends
It is a celebration of past triumphs	Mediation cast in stone

Very few monuments “celebrate” defeat	Memorials are set up after defeats and death
Monuments make heroes and triumphs perpetually present	Memorials is extruded from live to honour the death

Within the post-colonial epoch the Blood River/ Ncome monument, is an interesting combination of a memorial and a monument on one site. The initial building and expansion of the Blood River Monument was exactly for the purposes outlined above; namely to remember, to commemorate the beginning of white political domination, it celebrated the beginning and the military triumph of the battle of Blood River and the heroes that emerged from the battle. In the shadow of the Blood River monument the newly erected Ncome complex was built as a memorial to represent the Zulu experience of the battle. It was set up after defeats and death to honour those who have perished in search of freedom (Schonfeldt-Altman 1997: 223-225).

The initial intention of the Women’s memorial before 1913 was to honour women and children who had paid with their lives during the Anglo Boer War. However, this noble idea was gradually sacrificed for the greater political good of the Afrikaner within its nationalistic surge to gain political power. This change also represented a shift from exclusivity to inclusivity with an accompanied lost in focus and cohesion of what the site should have originally represented. This shift from an exclusive Women’s memorial to an all-inclusive monument meant that the memorial and site has surrendered its special status to serve a broader political purpose. In the post-apartheid era this shift has been accelerated within the new political context with a further loss of focus.

In the next subsections this shift from an exclusive women’s and children memorial to an inclusive monument will be outlined within two broad periods; namely from 1913–1994 followed by an outline of the post-1994 period.

The underlying meaning and purpose of the Women’s monument – 1913 to 1994

The first important step is to extract the original purpose for erecting the Women’s memorial could be extracted from the first publications on the memorial. NJ. van der Merwe wrote the first publication on the Women’s Monument (undated) and clearly stated the purpose of the Memorial: “Is dit dan nie ‘n wonder dat daar ’n begeerte by die manne ontstaan is om ‘n gedenkteken op te rig vir die heldinne wat met hul kinders feil gehad het nie? (Is it not a wonder that the need originated with the men to erect a memorial for the women and children) (Van der Merwe undated:12).

When Steyn and the Monument Commission on the 7th February 1907 convened a conference to plan the building of the memorial a joint decision was taken by all interested parties, including political parties and the Dutch Churches on the purpose of the memorial namely: “... dat de tijd aangebroken is om een Monument op Zuid-Afrika’s boden daar te stellen, ter roemrijke nagedachtenis van de moeders, vrouwen en kinderen die tijdens den jongste oorlog zijn omgekomen ... ” (The time has arrived to erect a Monument in South Africa to honour the mothers, women and children who died during the recent war (Van Schoor 1993: 6).

When Tibbie Steyn, the wife of President Steyn, was asked to unveil the Women's monument she declared: "In naam van onze vrouwen en kinderen onthul ik dit monument." (In the name of our women and children I unveil the monument (Truter 1997: 121).

It is unnecessary to belabour the point, because it is clearly evident that the original idea shortly after the signing of the peace treaty was that a memorial should be erected for the women and children that lost their lives in concentration camps during the Anglo Boer War. Although the border between a memorial and a monument was clearly blurred, used interchangeably and even further exacerbated in the decades leading up to the centennial celebration, the imbedded ground motive for erecting the memorial was well articulated.

The setting and the way the memorial was constructed confirmed that it's the focus was to honour women and children and not to serve a broader purpose. This notion is reinforced by the geographical backdrop, the outline of the statue and the side plates of women and children. The obelisk with its 36, 5 meter high needle with its inscription that dominate the gentle slope of a nearby kopje and the enclosure all speak to this imbedded meaning and ground motive namely to serve as a memorial for women and children who died in concentration camps during the war. The general setting all meet the classic criteria of a memorial, because it cast the tragic (the death of women and children) in something heroic as a memorial to the defeated death so that those behind should never forget (Snyman 1996: 190).

The 1913 Monument: A spatial analysis of the setting and the placement of the obelisk

Bloemfontein, the capital of the old Free State republic, was chosen as a suitable setting for the Women's memorial. The decision was done against some stiff opposition from the English speaking community in the city (Van Schoor 1993: 7). However, in spite of the descending voices from the majority English speakers on the City Council, the terrain southwest of Bloemfontein was donated as the setting and after a lengthy fund-raising campaign the memorial was constructed and erected in 1913.

The site that was preferred was in the flat barren open veldt southwest of Bloemfontein, devoid of any prominent geographical features. The original access road to the site was the old national road that led south along Monument Avenue to the Cape Province. The old road forked off just outside the city limits and then branched off to the right to provide access to the entrance to the memorial. The surrounding flat arid veldt provided the appropriate backdrop that not only accentuated the memorial, but also symbolically complemented its significance. This placing allowed an open unobstructed vista that stretches far ahead over a flat terrain to the next horizon.

The openness and barrenness of the flat terrain devoid of any vegetation, with a little hill to the left (east), ensured that the attention of the visitor of the memorial was fully occupied and unobstructed. The area devoid of any traffic or other sounds accentuated the memorial's simple dominance of the surrounding area and provided an unsophisticated view of the memorial with its very basic features. The outside appearance of the memorial within the ocean of vastness was reminiscent of the life in the concentration camps with its destitute appearance and its desolate setting in the barren open veldt.



Figure 2
The Women's Monument in the open veldt outside Bloemfontein shortly after its inauguration
 (source: Google Images).

On entering the terrain in 1913 the road had originally curled gently into a gentle western arch to provide access to the obelisk and the inner sanctum. The memorial complemented the initial simplistic features observed from a distance when it was approached by road. It basically consisted of an obelisk and a wall that enclosed an inner paved area. The access to the inner area was provided by way of a central set of steps placed in the middle of the wall with the central focus point an imposing main sculpture group and two bas-relief panels on the side (Van Zyl 2013: 192).

The imposing sculpture of the scene at a concentration camp was done by the sculpture Anton van Wouw, overseen by Hobhouse, who had very specific ideas in mind what the sculpture should sublimely reflect. Hobhouse was to a certain extent critical of Van Wouw's ability to fully reflect the plight and suffering of the women and children in the concentration camps and various changes were suggested and made before the final product was accepted.

The Commission preferred the placement of the sandstone obelisk next to and not on top of the small kopje on the terrain. The sculpture of the two women and child was placed at the bottom section of the needle-like obelisk on a four meter high pedestal. The finished sculpture embodied grief and suffering reminiscent of a tragic scene that Hobhouse envisaged at the Springfontein camp during the War. Hobhouse described how she had to watch how a woman experienced in agony how her only child drew his last breath. The mother never moved or wept although it was her only child who died. Dry eyed, but deathly white, she sat there motionless, looking not to the child, but far into the depths of grief beyond her tears. A friend that stood behind the woman and child silently called on Heaven as a witness to this tragedy (Van Schoor 1993: 8).



Figure 3

The sculpture of the two women and child at Springfontein camp (source: Google Images).

The obelisk and the sculpture have been complemented by the two side panels; the first depicted the destruction of the farms and the manner how the women and children were forcibly removed to the concentration camps. The second side panel depicts a scene of a dying child in a concentration camp with onlookers that stood in silence around the tent. According to Snyman (1996: 190) the second panel has a receding focal point that spatially connects with the onlooker (visitor). In the scene the dying child on a bed in a tent is in the background in low relief, while the onlookers outside the tent are depicted in high relief, which establishes a nexus between the two dimensions. There is a spatial continuity between the onlookers outside the tent and the onlookers (visitors) observing the panel. The onlookers outside the tent are dominated by two women figures, one on the left and the second on the right of the panel. The first women look into the tent and the women on the right, with her face partly obscured by her bonnet, looking at the onlookers (visitors) and invite them in silence to be a witness of what had occurred. This forms a telescopic nexus from the viewer to the women looking at him/her with the second women and then focuses on the dying child. The way the panel was constructed forms a clear spatial connection and a flow between the three dimensions, the suffering child and mother inside the tent, the onlooker just outside the tent and the onlooker (visitor) observing the suffering.

When the whole setting of the Women's memorial within the 1913 context is analysed it is clear that the suffering and plight of the women and child who died in the concentration camps were clearly the focal point. From a spatial perspective the memorial dominate the open area with little or no competing structure to influence the uninhibited view of the memorial. The kopje was very skilfully used as a supporting structure to complement the setting. The 3,6 metre

high needle obelisk formed a focal point and the placing of the sculpture on a pedestal four metres above ground level forces the visitor to look upwards in the same manner when a church or a cathedral is entered. The high placement “conveys something heroic, dignified and elevated above the ordinary, but more importantly it emphasizes the central underpinning theme of the memorial the suffering of the women and children” (Snyman 1996: 190).

In the final analysis it is very clear that the memorial in 1913 was very successful in creating a spatial continuity between the past and the present. It was also very successful on a sublime level to link the onlooker as an observer and as a witness to align themselves with the suffering of the women and children. The whole setting adheres to classic rules to establish a memorial as outlined above. In short it was built that the onlookers (visitors) shall never forget, because it ritualises remembrance and marks the reality of ends and was erected in memory and to honour the defeated dead.

When the memorial was inaugurated in 1913 further developments on the terrain were entrusted to National Women’s Memorial Commission under Steyn’s chairmanship. The next chairman was the Reverend Kestell who initiated the building of a museum on the terrain where items dating from the period and donated to the Commission could be stored (Van Schoor 1993: 15). The cornerstone of the museum was laid in 1926 and the unveiling by General Hertzog happened four years later in 1930.

However, the Commission then took a significant emphasis shifting decision to allow Afrikaner heroes of the era to be buried beneath the obelisk within the sacred sanctum that was originally reserved for women and children. This crucial decision to bury men at the site started the process that diverted the attention away from its original purpose. The direction change brought a broader dimension to the site that fragmented the focus of the terrain. President Steyn (1916), General de Wet (1922), Emily Hobhouse (1926) and Reverend Kestell (1941) found a resting place within the enclosure of the obelisk. Tibbie Steyn, who died in 1955, was also buried in the same grave as her husband within the enclosure. According to Truter (1997: 121) it was well-known that she was very reluctant to be buried at the monument, because she was of the opinion that it would detract from the original purpose of the monument.

However, this was only the prelude to the changes to the site. In an alarming move within a decade or two after the inauguration nationalistic politics started to spill over onto the terrain and managed to pull the women’s memorial even deeper within the political realm. Van Zyl (2013: 224) points out how several political meetings were held on the site clearly to exploit the status of the memorial. On 20 July 1940 more than 70, 000 people gathered on the terrain to protest against South Africa’s participation in the Second World War. The gathering was moved to an area north of the Memorial, because of concerns of the impact of such an event, although the decision has already compromised the integrity of the area.

The 1938 symbolic ox-wagon trek was also celebrated on the terrain and it was allowed that imprints be made on a block of cement to eternalise the event. The imprints were later moved to a less conspicuous place, but the integrity of the memorial was already compromised. The 1949 inauguration of the Voortrekkermonument was also celebrated on the terrain which added to the broader focus of the Women’s memorial (Van Schoor 1993: 22 - 23).

The use of the terrain for nationalistic and political propaganda was further compromised with the decision to erect sculptures depicting certain events of the Anglo Boer War on the site. Naturally it was predominantly men that were depicted which did not align with the original aim of the Women’s memorial. The erection of sculptures together with the earlier use of the

terrain for political and nationalistic reasons has already attracted a fair bit of criticism that the monument has already lost its central focus. The first Commission's intention was clearly set that nothing should be erected to divert the focus from the monument itself, but the new additions were implemented regardless (Van Zyl 2013: 224).

In the last decade before 1994 a number of additions have been added to the site. Dotted on the open terrain a number of statues have over the years been unveiled to commemorate the role of burghers during the War. The first addition was a statue of a burgher and a young boy as prisoners of war clinging to the rail of a ship on their way to one of a number of camps outside South Africa. This was followed by statues of the 'Bittereninder' and 'Farewell' statues representing respectively the burgher who fought until the bitter end and the moving scene of the burgher who has left for the front leaving his family behind (Van Schoor 1993: 22-23).



Figure 4
One of the statues that were erected on the terrain to commemorate the last farewell between the departing burgher and his family (source: Google Images).

A spatial analysis of the Women's Monument after 100 years

The visitors who attended the 1913 unveiling of the Women's monument would be hard pressed to recognize the original setting and outline of the original memorial if they were able to witness the contemporary site in the modern era (Schoeman 1983: 121). The city has expanded in the 100 years since the inauguration of the memorial and in a few decades has thrown its tentacles in the form of ever expanding suburbs around the monument. The enclosed site in the modern era resembles a little island lost in the middle of the huge expanse of suburbia. The urbanisation of the surrounding area meant that the monument has lost its centrality within the vast inhibited openness that framed and formed such a fitting background in the past.

On entering the site a neat sandstone wall as part of the entrance was constructed and provides a sombre, but dignified entrance to the monument. On the left, after entering the complex, a single story building nestles amongst a cluster of trees which houses a small restaurant and kiosk. Dotted between the building and the museum complex various structures

were recreated such as block houses, trains and other paraphernalia from the war. However, the central dominating point on the site is now a two story museum placed on a small rise and its sheer size now forms the pivotal point to the terrain.



Figure 5

The Women’s Monument in the new era with a paved access area and on the side small plaques are commemorating the various camps and the number of women children who have perished in the camps (source: Public domain internet).

Within the postcolonial and post-apartheid epoch the modern day visitor will notice many changes under the umbrella of progress that have been made to expand the site in search of broader inclusiveness and acceptance. The original concentration camp theme has also been accentuated with more recent additions. The access way to the obelisk has been paved with little small plaques or gravestones, spaced along the edge of the pathway, with the names of the camps and the number of women and children who died in those camps. However, one of the most notable changes on the terrain is a small memorial on the edge of the pathway that acknowledged the fact that 140 514 black people were also confined in 65 camps all over South Africa. The plaque reflects the the fact that more than 10, 000 black inhabitants died as a result of malnutrition and diseases. The inscriptions on the memorial are done in Afrikaans, English and Sesotho. Grundlingh (2013: 243) correctly points out those black women were not singled out and is merely included within the more comprehensive changes to the terrain. However, changes are already put in place to stronger commemorate the plight of black women and children elsewhere on the terrain which will rectify the situation. One more recent addition was specifically aimed at the role of black males with the erection of a black mounted servant known as an “agterryer”, retainer or servant to commemorate the more than 12 000 that assisted the burghers on commando.

From memorial exclusiveness to broad inclusiveness in an environment of political transformation and change

The consideration of the events leading and underpinning the erection of the Women's monument clearly establish the original underlying motive to erect a single memorial and not a monument and addition structure. The Women's memorial was built relatively shortly after the carnage of the Anglo Boer War as Ware (2008: 1) indicated to be reminded and to be mindful and in this specific case to be reminded of the suffering and plight of the women and children.

However, it was clear from the outset with Afrikaner nationalism on the rise that the notion of exclusiveness for white women and children would be challenged over time. In the modern era and in the new political context the challenge is more intense. Although the suffering of women and children was essentially in the centre of the monument it was done selectively with very or no reference to the plight of black women and children who also perished in concentration camps. The addition of honouring across the racial divide to include all women and children that perished in the camps however has no impact on the integrity of the site.

However, the nationalistic drive to selectively monopolise history during the decades leading up to the attainment of a Republic in 1961 had left a legacy which opened itself up to be challenged within a different political environment. The nationalistic drive of the post-1913 era bypassed legitimate reasons for inclusiveness of all women and children (white and black) who died in concentration camps. The nationalistic agenda monopolised the meaning of the monument to be for the suffering of white women and children only for their own benefit. Snyman (1996: 24) emphasised "that the Afrikaner circumvented the issue of black sacrifice for the sake of soil and freedom and that for many the central theme of concentration camps and the suffering legitimized a claim political power on the basis of the suffering of *white* women and *white* children."

As Maré (2007: 36) reminds memorials and statues inevitably cast a specific memory in stone and the statue cannot be modified. The obelisk, the statues on the pedestal and the side panels were erected within a specific political context and cannot be modified or changed, because of its iconic status amongst a large section of the white community.

However, as a result of fundamental political changes under a new all-inclusive democratic government it was inevitable that the nationalistic monopolisation of "suffering during the Anglo-Boer War" could no longer be legitimised or diverted. The election of an ANC dominated government signalled a change in the political context and culturally museums have to adapt to the new political environment, maintain themselves or perish in an effort to maintain their independence.

Conclusion

In the final analysis it is evident that the erection of the initial structures of the Women's memorial on the terrain after the Anglo Boer War and its unveiling in 1913 was done within a political context and that the underlying momentum was to honour the suffering of women and children. However, as outlined in the unpredictable political opportunism the political narrative changed the initial intention of Steyn. It was monopolised to provide a political essence for nationalistic propaganda.

It proved almost impossible within a political context to maintain the original meaning. In order to balance a more comprehensive account of the Anglo Boer War the construction of the museum complex followed which broadened the focus which diluted and relegated the original obelisk to a peripheral “side-show” within the broader exhibition of the war.

Although the shift from exclusiveness to inclusiveness (1913–1994) from a white perspective was a gradual process the 1994 political transformation followed by the centenary celebrations hastened the inevitable rethinking of the site. The predominantly black government in power necessitated a rethinking of how to more exclusively reflect the war. The new political context necessitated the memorial for black people in concentration camps, the statue of the “agterryer” and the changes made within the museum to reflect black participation. However as Grundling (2013: 242 & 243) correctly points out very little has been done to specifically honour the plight of the black women as it was done for the white women in 1913. In correcting this omission something of the original intention to commemorate women and children in a memorial could be regained.

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