

Amlay House: Reinscribing Lost Space

Donna Corns

This study investigates the metaphor of home as a surrogate for historical legitimacy. Ethnography meets narrative journalism meets historiographical analysis in a reinterpretation of identity politics and representation. The subject of study is a house, whose owner was forcibly removed from Simon's Town during the Group Areas Act under Apartheid law. Thirty years later, when she is finally given back her house in a democratic South Africa, she decides to transform the space into a museum for those displaced. Findings bear on the meanings this has for the larger community.

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Simon's Town Heritage Museum Fair, April 13:

New age music billows through the palm-ensconced gardens of Amlay House, I recognise it (I have owned that very CD since high school) as Sacred *Spirit Native American Chants*. Through the open gate, I enter a scene bustling in preparation. Older men with white prayer hats and younger boys set up trestle tables and tents to hold up against the robust Autumn sun. Women set out their wares on the tables, hang up signs: *Curry Magic*. Across the lawn, *Scarf Styling with Shahida*. A group of young girls scamper out to the lot out back to wait their turn on the jumping castle. Their grandfather asks me to take a picture of them. I oblige. The cheer is high. Everyone is in their Sunday best.

I am here with J, a friend and community historian who will give a talk on slave ancestry and heritage. I am also expecting to meet the larger than life Mr A, the man once spotlighted in a local paper for his rags-to-riches life story. He will be the main character in the documentary I am making on the fishing community. This man's life embodies some of Simon's Town's most consequential narratives. It is noon and nobody knows where he is.

J has vanished into the museum to guide visitors through the rooms. I venture a little further into the garden out back, through a hedged arch. Paintings depicting olden day

* Kagoshima Immaculate Heart College, English Department, 4-22-1 Toso, Kagoshima-shi 890-8525, Japan

Simon's Town have been hung - of the fisher people after whom streets are named, beaches called. Here they are pictured, still at sea. I ask if they were painted from life. "From memory," the answer echoes. The voice belongs to Mrs M, the artist's sister and, it turns out, the niece of Mrs ZD, the lady of the house.

The arch leads out to a shade-clothed area on the left, where a lady is warming up fragrant bean curry and rotis. Some youngsters are playing a game of cards in the corner.

A spread of dainties is arranged under a fly screen - *koeksisters* with coconut, samoosas, *dolchies*. There are bottles of homemade *blatjang*. I notice a lot of energy concentrated near the gate. Long tables covered in white cloths, many chairs lined up. A sense of expectation surrounds the area. It is my cue to stand aside. A bus arrives and people are helped to their places at the long table. I am told they have been brought in from Ocean View. They are the old Simon's Town community, invited for Sunday lunch. I feel like a vulture standing there with my camera. Mrs ZD presides over the tables, touching people's hands. She is wearing a turquoise headscarf. Many of the people are old, with white hair. Some have younger family members and children with them. I make my way back to the house.

Outside the door, two middle-aged ladies sit on chairs. They are sisters. One is wearing a red dress, and pearls. She is barefoot with red painted toes and her sister is dressed in yellow. I ask if I can take a portrait of the red lady. Her sister wants to be in the picture too. They tell me they were eleven siblings but they are the only two surviving. I chat a while with the lady in red. Her daughter recently got married. She is very proud. The reception was held in Noordhoek. "It was very different, she didn't wear white, but earthen colours." I nod in appreciation. "They didn't even make the tables up fancy as I would do. It was very rustic."

There have been a number of newspaper articles written on the return of Amlay house to its original residents and the museum's founding (see Young 1998, Dickenson 1999, D'arcy 2001, De Kock 2005), but an investigation of its various roles in representing the community does not yet exist. This article looks at the space as a point where community re-articulates itself: the dialogic tension between agency and historical determinism.

The groundwork upon which this article builds is Joline Young's thesis on *The Enslaved People of Simon's Town* (2014), a chronical revealing much about the complex history of the town's families. Sean Field's work at the Center of Popular Memory (2001, 2007) has likewise been central to the study and dissemination of oral histories in the Cape. The collaborative practice of committing these stories to record has collapsed many of the boundaries between subject and scholar, thus granting access to (recorded) experience which might have remained out of reach to the public and unexamined. Crucial discussions around so-called Coloured identity politics in South Africa are found in the works of Mohamed Adhikari (2004, 2006). Saarah Jappie (2011) further provides a rich account of how folk culture and cultural membership constellate networks locally as well as transcontinentally. And Alessandro

Portelli (1991) brings to bear permutations of trauma, displacement and social memory as experienced by displaced communities, a reading which allows for empathetic engagement with the traumatised subject's complex inner world.

Approach

This study incorporates a variety of approaches and locates itself on the qualitative end of the methodological spectrum. The subject matter comprises many layers of representation: historical, historiographical, and the active modes of production and reproduction that inform these narratives. Research is also based on social interaction and thus lends itself to a combination of techniques. 'Data' is captured in the form of participant-observation and interviews as well as on camera and are not regarded as entirely discreet from the analytic process. In fact, interpretation only brings the findings into focus. These are articulated in the forms of historiographical analysis and narrative journalism - techniques whereby an event becomes an opportunity for a more general analysis of the politics of representation and its diverse substrata, the shifting co-ordinates of identity - political, cultural and communal, local and transnational. Furthermore, this study adds a further layer, while attempting to penetrate underlying and overlapping levels.

While a bird's eye view is at times attempted, there are no claims to absolute objectivity on the part of the writer. At the same time, the writer as focaliser, cannot assume to be on the 'inside' of the community under observation. It is the precarious position as a (white) non-member with access granted through an informant/friend that is made visible. Referencing an ideological standpoint aware of its own selection, emphasis and elisions and hence its complicity in the processing and re- presentation of 'data,' reflexivity is seen as necessary to the most honest rendering of findings. After all, these deal with humanistic concerns and comprise in effect, an inter-subjective endeavour, rather than the collation of static data. Having thus stated, the researcher's position of privileged outsider is noted.

The benefits of inhabiting the reflexive mode are outlined in the work of Finlay (2002), who recalls that reflexivity is a long held tradition (its revival circa the cultural turn hence appropriate) which can serve to situate processes such as introspection and inter-subjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique and discursive deconstruction within the context of the research encounter itself. Observations should bear on the encounter itself. Murphy (1999) points out that "a good ethnographic account involves dialogue and multi-voicedness that emphasize relations of time and space, ideology, the participation of observation and even cultural ambivalence" (216).

Though there are points at which the researcher and subjects' roles are not strictly differentiated, the researcher should be vigilant. Another potential pitfall is that of romanticising the other, thus essentialising culture or identity as something fixed and

deterministic. This is especially hazardous considering the traditional affiliation of ethnographic methods with the colonial gaze and even more so in light of the historical impetus that gave rise to Amlay house existing in its current form.

Discovery

I came to adopt Amlay House as the subject of my research in a serendipitous manner. I had been given a box of newspaper clippings about fishing rights to study by J, who had extensively researched and was on speaking terms with Simon's Town's fishermen (a subject I was researching for my documentary). When finalising a research proposal for this article I originally intended to apply a content and critical discourse analysis to the sample of articles (which had, according to J, been collected by the community). The hope was to reveal some subtext or pattern in agenda setting and media bias, and even something about the community concerns, by way of looking at which articles they chose to keep. In conversation I asked J to specify which members of the community she had acquired the clippings from. The lead pointed to two major characters - Mr A (the most famous fisherman) and Mrs ZD, (director of Amlay House, also known as Simon's Town Heritage Museum). It thus became essential to meet these prominent community members and J arranged for me to attend the Heritage Fair (a public event). The venue, Amlay House, was itself the site the very same articles were installed as part of a larger communal exhibition, and became the focus of interest. This is how I came into closer contact with the same community.

Simon's Town

Originally established as a winter anchorage and later as naval base, Simon's Town had since the nineteenth century been a relatively diverse, though isolated settlement. The population comprised British, Dutch, Jewish, a tiny percentage of Philipino, Muslim, Xhosa and Khoi San descendants (Thomas 2001, Jappie 2011, Young 2014). A large creolised section of the community, so-called 'Coloured',ⁱ had lived in the area for at least 200 years, some having made relatively prosperous lives for themselves. Artisanal fishing was one of the traditions that had sustained many families and was so integral to the community at large, that roads and beaches had been named after the 'Coloured' fisher familiesⁱⁱ. While different communities tended to live in distinct quarters, they lived alongside each other. Due to the legacy of slavery, colonialism and the diverse origins of various people, inequality and class differences were part of the picture, though social interaction between various communities was an every day occurrence (Thomas 2001). While a large percentage of the families were poor, fishing provided a lifeline. Generally, Simon's Town was home to a diverse and

stratified society that enjoyed comparatively decent living conditions.

When in the 1967 Group Areas Act came into force, this equilibrium was destroyed. Everyone who was not deemed 'White' was forcibly evicted from their home, regardless of whether they were home owners, tenants or squatters. Families, communities, well established networks were uprooted without exception. Some were re-located to the Cape Flats, while others were sent to Ocean View.

Families who had owned homes could purchase property, but only in areas demarcated for their "population group" (Thomas 2001). People without bearing or familiar point of reference were deposited in a hostile place, alongside other unwilling transplants, with whom they shared no affinity or common ground other than having being deemed 'coloured.' They were expected to get along in this alien environment, devoid of the most essential amenities.ⁱⁱⁱ

Amlay House

Mrs ZD grew up in Amlay House and had lived there from the time she was two months old. Her father originally named the house Villa Zain, after her. Mrs ZD's father was a well-respected man and served as the city councillor of Simon's Town for seventeen years. His placard^{5iv} still survives, now on display at Amlay House as part of its auto-narrative. But even this status did not protect the family from being evicted. The house was taken over by the Navy and renamed Amlay House. After some years, it became abandoned and squatters moved in. Almost thirty years later, when the ANC government came to power, a land reform programme was developed by the Department of Land Affairs. In 1994, the Restitution of Land Rights Acts was passed (Field a: 2001: 119), and the D family immediately lodged their claim, with Mrs ZD appointed as the family representative. In the year 1995, she was contacted by the Navy saying that the house was becoming available and that her family was given first option to rent it. When Mrs ZD and her husband arrived at the house, "It was a complete mess, the garden was overgrown and squatters had taken over" (J). The couple, now entering the twilight of their years, set out to clean up the premises: Mr ZD with his hedge-clippers groomed the garden back into shape and Mrs ZD made the inside sparkle. Soon they took up residence.

At first, upon reorientating to the town of her childhood after so many years, Mrs ZD walked around and found that nobody remembered the events that had changed the course of life for her community. Nobody knew who they were. When she visited the local Simon's Town Museum, Mrs ZD recalls being offended that "there was nothing to suggest that we ever existed." It was as if that part of history had never even taken place (J).^v

The years following the transition to democracy in South Africa can be characterised as a heady time of self-reflection - it was the end of censorship, the past had to be dealt with

and history rewritten to include an entire spectrum of experience that had been relegated as a footnote to the grand narrative of white supremacy. Creating a singular and cohesive national identity proved to be challenging: how could people who had been forced into entirely different lifeworlds ever see eye to eye? Notions of collective identity, the concept of ubuntu, and the “Rainbow nation” - a phrase credited to Emeritus Arch-bishop Desmond Tutu, were pushed in the re-branding the new democracy. Tutu, along with Nelson Mandela, became the mascots of this new all-encompassing nationhood. It is speculated that investment in this consciousness held the nation together during these formative years. This spirit is perhaps best encapsulated in the speech given on the occasion of passing the new constitution by the then vice-president and future president of the ANC and South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, entitled “I am an African.”^{vi} With ‘heritage’ the new catchword, more people began exploring their roots and to (re)claim their own self-defined identities. All kinds of revivalist movements emerged, from Khoi san, Rastafari to Sufism.

When the Phoenix Project was started at the Simon’s Town Museum in 1996 to address the history of forced removals, Mrs ZD got involved. The first phase of the project included setting up a committee comprising members of communities forcibly removed from Luyolo Village, the Xhosa settlement and Red Hills, where many Khoi descendants had lived, as well as ‘Simonstown proper.’ The main narrative of the museum though, remained largely Eurocentric, with this project - now in its second phase, functioning more like an aside (J).

It was in response to this, and in consultation with the Muslim historical society, that Mrs ZD along with her niece decided to use the space they had to “tell the story as it was lived.” In a few days the house was transformed into a museum (J). Members of the old Simon’s Town community came forward with donations. There were personal items held onto for years, letters, articles, photographs. Perhaps the most precious, were the kietaabs (or sacred books) that had survived and been passed on through generations.

Saarah Jappie (2011) describes how the story of Ibrahiem Manuel, a man who undertook a pilgrimage inspired by a dream he had about a kietaab he had inherited from his grandfather, gathered resonance in Simon’s Town when the books were displayed as artefacts in the Heritage Museum (Amlay House). She also details the reclaiming of the “Cape Malay” identity in the years following democracy as representing a “re-kindling” of historic ties between Southeast Asia and Africa.

The terms “Cape Malay” and “Cape Muslim” both refer to the descendants of the Muslim slaves, exiles and convicts sent to the Cape of Good Hope from around the Indian Ocean Basin. Although this is essentially a Creole community, historically they have been referred to as “Malay.” That the Muslim population was originally referred to as Malay, despite their diverse origins has been explained on the basis of their lingua franca, Melayu, and the appropriation of the word “Malay” to mean “Muslim” in the Cape context. A political

discourse of “Malayism” was adopted in the 1920s and “Malay” became a racial sub-category of “Coloured” during apartheid. Given the racially- divisiveness of the term, it was rejected by politically-conscious Muslims during apartheid and is still seen as problematic. Achmat Davids, a community historian, suggests “Cape Muslim as an identity marker, based on religion rather than race”(171-172).

It is thus interesting that Mrs ZD embraced this identity, post democracy, when her father was among the forerunners rejecting such exclusivist identities. The elaboration and adoption of such an identity might be viewed as reactionary in light of the fact that apartheid forces actively played people of colour against one another. However, it can also be understood within the context of the shame associated with ‘coloured identity’ as originating from racial hybridity, when this status was perceived of as something marginal and illegitimate (Adhikari 2006b).^{vii} The desire to reinscribe an identity traditionally associated with negative connotations appears to be an underlying motivation. Adhikari explains that “by assuming colouredness to be either the automatic product of in-bred miscegenation or an artificial identity imposed by the white supremacist establishment on a weak and vulnerable people as part of a divide-and-rule strategy, this diverse historiography has denied coloured people a significant role in the making of their own identity” (Ibid: 468).

The newly found freedom of association promulgated by democracy enabled a “discovery” of a heritage that was independent of needing the “European” stamp of approval and even that of African recognition. It made way for a narrative that rejected a reductionist definition of hybridity in favour of a transnational spiritual lineage. Islam, first brought to the Cape of Good Hope by Indonesian slaves, played a significant role as a form of resistance during slavery (Young 2011, Jappie 2011). Serving as a consciousness raising and uniting agent for people who under oppressive circumstances had little recourse to social bonding, this one aspect of the self was inviolable. A secret bond, and outlawed by the oppressors, Islam empowered its practitioners in various ways. It provided conditions for moral upliftment, education and a sense of community in the face of a brutal existence. The strict behavioural code also raised the stakes for resisting pitfalls such as alcoholism that continuously threatened enslaved people. But most of all it offered membership to a community that was impenetrable by the ruling slave owning class (Young 2011).

While there has been a great deal of focus on Islam as being a Southeast Asian import, the majority of its adherents were in fact converted on African soil. The Cape Muslim culture can thus be seen as uniquely local as it is ‘exotic’. There has been a resurgence of academic interest in linguistic and cultural hybridity created from the interaction of Khoi, slave, African and colonial influences. However, when heritage is sold as something ‘one should be proud of’, the traumatic elements of historical experience are often overlooked. This might be described as a dialogic tension between notions of agency and the forces of historical determinism.

Close up

In describing the role of Simon's Town Heritage Museum as a 'hub for the community,' my informant, a community historian and guide to Amlay House, recounts that the space itself has generated magnetism because of traumatic events spanning several centuries. This has roots in the silence surrounding slave ancestry and the complete marginalisation of Khoi san people. After having recovered relative autonomy from this level of oppression and having worked to improve their living conditions, people were, despite all determined efforts, extracted en masse from the land they always lived on. The forced removals and their aftermath, my informant relates, was traumatic for the individual as well the community to which they had belonged. The act of eviction was an amputation of their sense of legitimacy.

People respond to trauma and.. and pain and how they try to create memories to cope with things that happened to them, negative things. And I realised that the reason they started this museum was to cope, was to work through their memories, their loss, because it was a loss, this community had ... in Simon's Town... their families go back to the days of slavery and they go back two - three hundred years. And they were in an almost a cocoon if you think about it, they were far away from the rest of Cape Town. They had this almost unique community. And all of a sudden at the strike of lightning it all ended for them. And they needed to go and make lives elsewhere. And I think a lot of people had to get on with their lives and earn a living and do the daily things we do to survive. But the actual dealing with the pain and the loss, that was something that was never done. There was never the opportunity for them to embrace, or not embrace, but to look at what happened to them and just sort of process it (J).

Here, the museum space assumes the role as an interface between an inaccessible and unspeakable history and the subject. While the above describes a kind of direct transaction occurring between subject and their own experience, there are other implications relating to this process. In the words of my informant, who echoes Portelli (1991), trauma is also intergenerational:

When we had that lovely fair the other day, and I spoke about the fishermen who'd been forcibly removed, there was a young girl, she was about eighteen, who came to me afterwards and she said... One of the families was a Jaffer family and she said, "I'm a Jaffer" And she said "Thank you, I didn't know all this about my family." So that's what we need to do. A lot of young people don't know the story of Simon's Town and the interesting thing is - the parents had been forcibly removed but some people, they don't speak to their families about it. It's almost like there's a shame - if you think about it, if you're a man and someone comes and says to you, "You can't live in your house anymore," ...even though you own the house. You've got to face your wife and children and look them in the eye knowing you couldn't stop this from happening. It's a terribly humiliating experience. It's a feeling of being displaced and

being ashamed almost, because you couldn't fight this. You were overpowered. So people, some people deal with that kind of memory by forgetting it. By not talking about it (J).

The museum thus functions as a venue and an event that is both partly recreational while at the same time being educationally enriching. A social gathering facilitates a point of dialogue and understanding within families and in relation to other community members in a supportive context. Amlay House as a mutually supportive environment where old members of the Simon's Town community and their families (the former who experienced removals and the latter having grown up elsewhere) can return, also creates a narrative space for self-representation, thereby offering a possibly therapeutic sense of continuity:

A lot of the people from the community felt that they wanted their own place, they wanted their own, their own place of memory and I can understand them wanting to do that. I feel they've had everything taken away from them. And by appointing someone else who is not part of the community to sort of, handle the way you remember, is like having that taken away from you as well. So I think for this community it was about control over how they were going to remember their past (J).

The flavour of Amlay House, is, overwhelmingly Muslim. Upon entering, the first room on the left has at its centre a large table, decked out in "Cape Malay traditional celebration tea." The adjoining enclosed sun porch contains glass cabinets housing "various artefacts pertaining to Muslim culture." Some of these displays include paraphernalia from the *Ratiep* ceremony, and many sacred objects. The room directly opposite to the right of the entrance is the bridal showroom. Here, a conjugal bed is made and finely embroidered silk and satin wedding dresses hang from the wardrobe. There are bouquets of fake flowers and yellowed, time-stained letters pinned to the wall. There are also various ornamental hijab (headgear) on display appropriate to the occasion of matrimony. The third room, walls heavily adorned with artefacts from all over the Islamic world, has a clear centre, and chairs lined against the walls. It acts as the meeting room. Throughout the rooms and in the passages and doorways connecting them, the walls are covered in newspaper articles relating to Simon's Town and its people. There are photographs of sports teams, dancers, social events, weddings, the achievements of prominent members. One section is devoted to the fishermen, beginning from the days they were held in esteem by the entire community. Then the advent of beach apartheid, and reactions of the community. And next there is an entire wall devoted to the forced removals in Simon's Town, including those of Red Hills and Luyolo Village. These articles are from local papers and all are sympathetic in tone, reflecting the confusion, shock and sense of upheaval prevailing at the time. On the wall adjacent, are a handful of articles about Amlay House itself. There are photographs of the Amlay family standing in front of the gate, Mrs ZD is a toddler. Hanging there too, is the Group Areas Act notice:

Republic of South Africa. Department of Community Development. Notice that property is affected. Case no.14. Ref. no. 4671/38/6. Date stamp: 29-2-1969. Mr G.M.A King George Way Simonstown. Lot 12 part of lot 0 and no. 2 Simonstown (Simonstown Group Area). I have to advise you that the above-mentioned property of which you are a registered owner is situated in a group area for members of the WHITE group and due to disqualified ownership has been included in the list of affected properties compiled in terms of Section 29 (no.1) of Act 3, 1966.

And finally, the redemptive part of the narrative: the return to Amlay house and the birth of the Heritage Museum itself. The house is thus a testimony to its own existence and significance: an auto-narrative.

While it true that Amlay House is most popular with the Muslim sector of the old Simon's Town community, this is so because that is the narrative Mrs ZD and her family most strongly identify with. On the day of the heritage fair, the Amlay House committee (including Mrs ZD and her niece) arranged for a bus to bring the old Simon's Town community now living in Ocean View. Some old community members might not identify as "Cape Malay" or Muslim, though this does not exclude them from the community or from proceedings. Amlay House and its garden thus serve as performative spaces too, where connections between people are redefined and re-established. A sense of solidarity underlies these occasions. On the day of the fair, I took a photograph of an interesting juxtaposition of objects: one was an old sign, reading "Whites Only/ Net Blankes" and next to it, a placard with the following words:

It is indeed an honour to be part of a museum dedicated to the memories of a people forcefully removed from their homes and deprived from their livelihoods under the apartheid system. Let this museum be a testimony to our past and a legitimacy to claim back our homes in the future. Let this museum act as a catalyst to unite and bind us wherever we find ourselves whether in the wasteland of the Cape Flats or the wasteland of Ocean View. Let this museum inspire the new generation of our children to know more and take up the struggle to return home. Let this museum give hope to the generation of people who suffered indignity and pain when they were forcibly removed from Simonstown (sic). Let this museum remind those white people staying in our homes that were stolen from us that we will return. Let this museum evoke the memories of those who may not be with us today and who died longing to come home to go home in peace. Justice is not done if what was stolen from us is not returned. Let us go home. -Osman Shabodien

The significance of the redemptive narrative of Amlay House thus acts to fortify the

community's resolve for social justice and actualisation of land restitution for everyone. The prolongation of addressing land claims means that many old residents have already died without ever having come to terms with their loss, less returning to their former homes. Even Mrs ZD's case remains unresolved -they are renting the house from the navy and it may yet be resold. Many of the members remaining are thus keen to engage the matter. The following conversation took place after J's talk on the fishermen:

Dr N: Separation was an important structural thing. But the other thing you must understand is - that despite the fact we have these separations - people in Simon's Town, or throughout District Six or throughout the country - must really get together and take advantage of the opportunity that government is giving now.

Because the land claims is open. You can claim back your land now, irrespective of the 1998 cut-off date. So there's five more years for families and communities like Simon's Town to get together and fill in those forms as a community. Not necessarily as individuals, it's better to fill it in as a community. Okay, if there's individuals who see their homes, they must fill it in also. But they must collectively put their claims in, so we can claim this kind of what we call restorative justice. It's not just about restoring your home, it's about the physical separation and injustices that were done to you, that's still there now, it reflects and manifests in the lives of our children and the lives of our grandchildren. And therefore you know, this project here, you know, Amlay house and the Simon's Town museum is probably a fundamental project. Because many of the museums in South Africa, was museums that were set up by Eurocentricism. They were set up by historians that were completely dishonest. And even if they are here today, I will challenge them. Because they chose to only put in a certain framed way the story of forced removals and other things.

Now the Land Restitution Act only makes provisions for land that is still in control of the state... But if someone has taken title deed of the land, now at the moment, now that you can't reverse. You only need a new application called Section 34. ...[it] says that the government can expropriate land where the community can benefit in the interest of the community. Otherwise at the moment, if I've taken your land, and it's sold to me privately, there's nothing you can do. There is no constitutional, uh impediment that allows you to reverse that decision. The only thing the land restitution act, which is a constitutional act says is, number 34 of the land restitution act says 'if the government can show, in the greater public interest, that expropriation is better for the community, the government will do that. They can do that. But you must show a lot of viewpoints. You can't just say that the community is going to be favoured if one house (points into the distance), just there and your house was taken. That's not going to benefit the community, it's only going to benefit you. So the government then will give alternative land in and around the area where you were dispossessed.

Now the military has a lot of land, unused land. The military has a lot of access to the reserves, the

fishing reserves and those reserves. Except they've now quickly did a legislation that push these reserves into what is called a nature conservation uh uh legislation. So that you can't reverse that decision. But if the community's organised, in a way, they're determined, they've lodged their claims both individually and collectively, giving that same committee that mandate, I think you can do a lot. There will be supportive agencies by government, There will be supportive agencies because they have what is called post-settlement support and pre-settlement support. So use those avenues.

Mrs ZD: It's going to be a major effort. We want people to come to me and say "Z (referring to herself) we want your help. There are people in our area that's got to do it. And there are people that want to come back, and people that does want to come. But we never claimed for it, because last time we had to put in claims. So how do we go about it now. So you have to come as a community from Simon's Town, either come to the museum...[interrupted]

Dr N: I think it's a nice place, there couldn't be a better place, than this home.

Mrs ZD: Come to the museum and say, 'Put my name on this list, we stand with Z, we want compensation for our people'. But he needs, as he says, he needs the community's backing.

Dr N, a man versed in the policy and a holding a prominent position at the District Six Museum, spoke for over an hour interpreting the new policy to members who were not in the know. The most salient points though, relate to a growing identification as a community, seemingly in order to overwrite the script of the past and be restored, or reformulated almost, in a new relationship that is not defined by difference but a common purpose and future. A very interesting phrase he used, was that of Amlay House as a "home." Perhaps that is the best metaphor for this museum, not simply a public space, or a private house, though both of those too. More than the sum total of its parts, this particular museum acts not only as a shrine to the past, but as the compass for navigating present day politics.

After this emotional community meeting, the last part of the fair led visitors back out to the garden for the fashion show. This began with a demonstration of scarf-styling, in which a young woman wearing very elegant, brightly patterned hijab enacted a series of slick manoeuvres on her sitting participant. The results were some creative (and complicated) styles of headgear. While most of the women, including myself, looked on as if watching a sequence of magic tricks, a clever solution was at hand. This was a book launch, and inside this book was an illustrated step by step guide to achieve each of these looks. Part two of the fashion extravaganza had a group of girls show off the possibilities of a shape-shifting dress. Essentially, it is one dress that can be worn in fifteen different ways according to how one wraps it. Each girl wore the dress in a different colour and arranged in a different style, but all in ways that were within what is considered "modest." This certainly suggests that not only are notions of modesty compatible with secular fashions, but that they are open to fluid and empowering forms of expression and enterprise.

In Conclusion (or inconclusive findings)

Thus concludes the heritage fair. My next visit to the museum is to watch J give an interview to a Turkish TV channel. Amlay House has garnered much attention in the Islamic world. It is hoped that the exposure will help secure funding, as it is an endeavour run solely on a voluntary basis. Mrs and Mr ZD, both in their eighties are in the process of handing it over to the younger generation, including Mrs R, her niece and Mr K, a community member. Proposals for its expansion include a research room where people can trace their ancestry and J has suggested setting up a 'slave room,' to conduct workshops with school children, to educate them about the legacy of slavery. As for the next social event, it depends on having funds. But in the meanwhile, the museum is open. "For people who used to live in Simon's Town to be able to come to this museum where their history has been recorded, and the control of this museum is by members of their community. It makes them feel like there's a place where they can come home," is J's ultimate conclusion.

Amlay House is thus the setting for a new chapter. While reaching back into the traumatic past, it provides a therapeutic space where the community members can reflect on the narratives that bind (and sever) them to (and from) each other and the world on their own terms. The museum functions on levels that are interactive, participatory as well as performative in terms of re-defining identity.

Community involvement in the means of production and reproduction of meaning transforms the traditional museum space as a top-down institution into a more grass roots co-operation. The politics of representation and re-presentation of politics can thus be articulated in a space where allegiances are reformulated and transmitted. While the rest of the community remains strewn across the wastelands like litter, here there is a place to dream, somewhere to pin hopes while waiting for justice to be served.

Endnotes

- i The term 'Coloured' first came into use in the nineteenth century and was used to refer to "Free Blacks" or former slaves of African or Southeast Asian descent. It is further problematic as it was applied to a large section of the population during Apartheid. Even the term 'Coloured' was further sub-categorised. It is noted here that the term is a construct and was applied to people of diverse origin, ethnicity, culture or religion.
- ii Examples include Cole Point, after the Cole family, Jaffers' Beach, after the Jaffers, Muller Road, after the Millers (Young 2014).
- iii Descriptions of some of the hardships and the methods people used to cope can be found in oral histories collected in Field's Lost *Communities*.
- iv An excerpt from the placard reads: "The spirit of the times demand that you give your

unbiased support and that you vote solidly for D.A Amlay who will represent your interests irrespective of your race, colour or creed. Don't be disillusioned! Prove that true democracy is not a mockery or a farce on Election Day, Tuesday 13th October 1942. Printed by D. A Amlay, Beach Rd, Simon's Town."

- v This was prior to the launch of "Project Phoenix" at the museum in 1997, an initiative to memorialise forced removals in Simon's Town
- vi "Whatever the circumstances they have lived through and because of that experience, they are determined to define who they are and who they should be./We are assembled here today to mark their victory in acquiring and exercising their right to formulate their own definition of what it means to be African." Excerpt from speech given on May 8, 1996 (www.anc.org.za).

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