Deserting Transformation: Heritage, Tourism, and Hegemonic Spatiality in Prince Albert

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Abstract

While tourism is often pitched as a panacea for economic growth in developing countries, it has also been shown to reproduce colonial dynamics of unequal power relations between the West and former colonies and between the historically privileged and the oppressed within post-colonial nations. Through critical discourse analysis of data, this article considers how the mobilization of 'heritage' and 'tourism' by 'semigrant power-elites' in Prince Albert, a rural South African town, reproduces historically inscribed relations of power which remain shaped by the apartheid era's use of space in the construction and enforcement of a racial hierarchy. Analysis aims to intervene in presumptions that tourism development is necessarily a path towards economic empowerment for historically oppressed populations. Interrogation of discourses promoting heritage and tourism development in the town uncovers the ways in which structures of inequality established through colonialism and apartheid can accumulate through tourism development.

Keywords: tourism, heritage, post-apartheid, race, space, semigration

Introduction

Heritage and tourism have become internationally accepted as common sense strategies to promote the neoliberal imperatives of economic growth and development. While apartheid South Africa was not a popular tourism destination, the birth of the democratic Rainbow Nation and the end of international sanctions gave rise to an explosion in Mandela-inspired international tourism (Visser and Rogerson 2004: 202). As South Africa opened its borders at the end of apartheid to immigration, trade, and tourism, it entered the post-Cold War world in which liberal democracy had achieved global dominance. The post-apartheid surge in tourism development, as a means of attracting international investment and foreign income, was (and remains) shaped by the neoliberal economic framework which presumes that economic empowerment can be achieved through growth and development (Peet 2002: 55). By 2004, tourism had become regarded as South Africa's 'new gold' when, for the first time, tourism revenue surpassed gold revenue by three billion US Dollars (Ivanovic 2008: 71) – an ominous comparison given the violence that has historically structured the gold mining industry across the African continent. Regarded as an effective means for underdeveloped countries to join the global economy, neoliberal ideology and policy (such as that carried by tourism development) 'retains an ideological zeal...after the collapse of the Soviet Union' (Peet 2002:63). While the African National Congress has made great achievements in terms of providing access to resources, infrastructure, and services for millions of historically excluded people in South Africa, compliance with the international neoliberal eco-

nomic system has curtailed large scale redistribution of resources to populations oppressed by colonial and apartheid rule (Peet 2002).

While tourism is often pitched as a panacea for economic growth in developing countries, it arguably reproduces colonial dynamics of unequal power relations between the West and former colonies and between the historically privileged and the oppressed *within* postcolonial nations as this article illustrates. Afterall, the majority of the world's population does not engage in the industry as tourists and consumers but rather as the toured and consumed (Robinson 2001). Despite the supposed economic gains to be made through tourism, critics have argued that tourism impedes economic sovereignty and post-colonial redress in that developing countries become dependent on the industry. Furthermore, as Brett argues, tourism-based development is inherently tenuous – 'in creating low, rather than high-skilled employment, the tourist industry may actually disable the local population and reproduce a form of servant class' (Brett 1996: 127).

The legacy of colonialism in Africa, characterized by European appropriation of resources and ascription of particular meanings to settler landscapes, reverberates in the contemporary tourism industry (see Foster 2008). As Samasuwo (2004: 11) argues, tourism sustains the colonial legacy through the continuation of foreign land ownership, 'tending to bring foreign currency into the pockets of landowners themselves' rather than a local and poor population. Cultural tourism, in particular, has become a key growth area in South Africa and across the developing world (Ivanovic 2008: xvii). As Ivanovic instructs, the transformation of cultural heritage assets into tourism products requires that culture be 'remoulded to facilitate both tourism as well as tourist use' (Ivanovic 2008: 168). This 'remoulding' of culture serves the purpose of 'maximiz[ing] profit by facilitating easy consumption' and 'requires releasing the value of culture…which in turn facilitates and enhances consumption of cultural experiences' (168). The production of 'easy' consumption involves the promotion and marketing of heritage assets

through what Wildman (2005: 5) describes as 'overcommunicated' and 'mythologized' representations of destinations directed at potential tourists. Because not every cultural 'object' has the potential to be a heritage attraction for tourists, attractions are selected based on their potential commercial value. Consequently, many postcolonial developing nations have turned to heritage preservation as a form of income generation, manufacturing 'destinations' and 'unique cultural experiences' for tourist consumption.

Concerned with heritage conservation, Fontein (2000: 21) writes that it is through labeling something as 'heritage' that spaces and objects are appropriated and 'distanced' from people's daily lives. While the world heritage 'system' attempts to de-politicize itself through a discourse of 'universal value' (claiming that certain objects, people, and places must be preserved for 'humanity') Fontein argues that it must also be recognized as an 'anti-politics machine' which attempts to avoid scrutiny through its claims to objectivity (13). Fontein points to the power relations implicated in 'heritage' within the postcolonial context, explaining that archaeological and historical knowledges of heritage are deployed in order to reinforce Eurocentric and racialised stereotypes though the presumption of Western advancement and superiority[1].

In post-apartheid South Africa, the imperative to develop the tourism industry and protect heritage often buttresses support for foreign land ownership which, in turn, further disenfranchises the historically excluded majority from land and resources through the establishment of exclusive tourism spaces (Samasuwo 2004: 5). While urban tourism has become a focus within South African geographical and social research, small towns have also become sites in second-home (Hoogendoorn and Visser 2004) and festival (Hoogendoorn, Mellet, and Visser 2007, Visser 2007) tourism research, as well as research exploring the potentil of tourism

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[1] For further critique of tourism development and heritage conservation see Hall and Tucker, 2004; Phillips and Steiner, 1999; Harrison and Hitchcock, 2005; Saldanha 2002.

development (Ferreira 2007). However, there has yet to be sustained analysis of how tourism, and especially heritage tourism, relate to dynamics of race, space, and power in post-apartheid South Africa.

Prince Albert of the Great Karoo

The dominant narrative of Prince Albert's history begins with the establishment of a loan farm, *Kweeckvalleij* ("the valley of cultivation and plenty") in 1762. Soon, it is told, *Kweeckvalleij* attracted other farmers and a community began to develop, with the town adopting the name Prince Albert (after Queen Victoria's husband) in 1845 (Prince Albert Local Municipality [PALM] Integrated Development Plan [IDP] 2007-2011: 9). Omitted from this narrative, but essential in the story of the town's development, are the colonial forces of land appropriation that made the establishment of *Kweekvelleij* possible in the first place. The farmers attracted to *Kweekvalleij* for its plentiful water supply, as mentioned above, were amongst the larger movement of white settlers who began trekking northeast through the country in the 1700s, away from British liberalism in the Cape. As Kruger (2013: 25) writes, 'By the late 1740s the relentless spread of the trekboers in search of grazing and other resources, such as water, brought them to the region of the Swartberg', which is the mountain range surrounding Prince Albert. The 'loan farm' system remained the preferred system of colonial land possession throughout the eighteenth century and had important implications through its creation of private and commodified land (28). By the end of the 1700s, European settlement across the Karoo had decimated indigenous populations through displacement, war, and disease (24; also see Penn 2005).

Racial segregation was formally entrenched in Prince Albert, like the rest of South Africa, with the Group Areas Act (1950) and Population Registration Act (1950) and the horrors of forced removals and further land appropriation. In Prince Albert, the 'coloured' area of North End was erected approximately two kilometers outside of the town centre which became 'whites only'[2]. The people forcibly relocated to North End are amongst the millions of people who were pushed into semi-desert regions, the vast majority of who remain in these areas (Peet 2002: 76). Still to this day in Prince Albert, the socio-geography of the town consists of 'a centralized "Dorp" with the main business area and predominantly white residential area' and 'North End, Prince Albert's predominantly coloured residential area' which struggles with a litany of accumulating social ills (PALM IDP 2007-2011: 10).

This paper examines how tourism development and heritage conservation in post-apartheid Prince Albert reproduces and exacerbates the historical legacies of racialised inequality in the town. In doing so "semigration", as a trend amongst white South Africans who 'attempt to find spaces within which control can be adequately maintained' (Ballard 2004a: 59), emerges as an important point of reference. "Semigration", as a post-apartheid phenomena involving the flight of white South Africans from urban areas due to the perception that they "lack control" in such spaces, can be read as the privatization of apartheid state projects that were driven by fears of 'racial mixing' (59).

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[2] The use of racial categories in this article serves to illuminate the historical positionalities experienced by residents of the town. While the author acknowledges that 'race' is an ideological construct and therefore not biological, fixed, or essential truth, this article employs these categories critically as social constructions which have implications for one's social positioning and life opportunities. Also, as numerous scholars have discussed, the construction of these segregated racial communities engendered the construction of deeply entrenched racialised inequalities that remain largely in place today. Therefore, it is necessary to use racial categorisations in order to most accurately reflect the ways in which historically inscribed racial inequalities shape social relations and everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa. In this paper, the term 'coloured' refers to those who would have been classified as 'coloured' during apartheid which constructed this label for "a person who is not a white person or a native" and which included indigenous, Malay, and mixed race peoples; 'White' refers to those who received the benefits and privileges of whiteness during apartheid upon being classified as 'a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person' (South African *Population Registration Act*: 1950).

For Prince Albert's semigrants, tourism development and the town's 'heritage value' offer ways of sustaining and increasing the value of recently acquired historical properties. As this paper argues, the construction of the town's identity as a heritage site (Prince Albert Cultural Foundation) also seeks to protect the identities and privileges of the propertied white residents, as well as their positions of authority in the town. As the value of the properties in the town have increased with tourism development and gentrification, the already severe economic gap between the affluent town 'centre' and the previous group area, North End, has widened. This problem is not unique to Prince Albert, South Africa, or many parts of the developing world that have experienced tourism development and/or gentrification. However, the prolific nature of these dynamics does not mean that they should be neglected. Rather, they must be critically interrogated and used to problematize neoliberal presumptions that tourism offers a path towards economic empowerment for historically marginalized communities and nations. And, while some may consider Prince Albert's small size to indicate its inability to provide insights into broader socio-economic dynamics and relations in South Africa, the town is just one of the many rural areas into which over half of the nations population resides' (Peet 2002:76).

The 'predominantly white' Southern side of Prince Albert has charmed the imagination and interest of journalists and travel writers who paint the town as an "old-world" oasis where lush greenery and water furrow system line the streets. According to *The Olive Branch*, official newsletter of the Prince Albert Tourism Association, tourists can:

> Stroll round the village with its beautifully preserved Cape Dutch, Karoo and Victorian buildings …Try our local delicacies…Enjoy traditional Karoo hospitality…Wander to the dairy, visit our Saturday market…Go on a guided historical walk…visit the Swartberg Pass and the Fransie Pienaar Museum. You can visit a cheese-maker, go hiking, bird-watching or star-gazing

For decades, the popular press has been entranced by the 'magic' and 'charm' of the isolated desert town. "Flanked by rugged mountains and endless desolate plains, the picturesque hamlet of Prince Albert has retained its old world beauty", writes Alex Cremer in a 1986 issue of *South African Garden and Home*. Ten years later, Marianne Alexander penned "Prince Charming of the Karoo: Time spent discovering the delights of a small town can be rewarding" in *South African Country Life*. These select articles stand within a larger canon of popular press which has promoted the charm and beauty of Prince Albert. Such romantic descriptions are common within the broader tourism promotion genre in which nostalgia for "simpler" times is strategically evoked for a privileged class of Western readers (Holland and Huggan 2004).

These representations of Prince Albert have proliferated in tandem with the town's changing demographic with the arrival of middle-class white South Africans and Europeans who have purchased and renovated numerous residential and commercial properties. Some of the white Afrikaans speaking residents whose families had been in the town for decades expressed resentment for the English speaking "incomers" who they perceived to be destroying the small town character of Prince Albert. The antique shops, café's, art galleries, and restaurants lining both sides of the main road signal the processes of gentrification that have ensued in the town[3].

Despite the end of apartheid and formal termination of the Group Areas Act and its proximity to the affluent town centre, North End remains an under-resourced area marked by poverty. The water furrow system, for instance, which features so prominently in representations of the town as a 'charming oasis', still diverts to the east and west as one travels from the south end of town to North End, marking a boundary between the green and affluent side of Prince Albert and the barren Karoo landscape onto which North End was violently flung in the 1950s. Situated on dry and rocky terrain, North end does not share in the privilege of the water running through their community, a legacy left by colonial rule that

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[3] See Donaldson 2009 for a study of tourism and gentrification in Greyton, South Africa

systematically denied water to the majority of people in South Africa (Kruger 2013).

According to government sources, everyday life is precarious for the historically marginalized coloured farm working community residing in North End who are the majority demographic in the town (PALM IDP 2007-2011:16). Low education levels, poor health services, a large housing backlog, and high unemployment are cited as the primary reasons why the Provincial Treasury Social Economic Profile 2006 ranked Prince Albert seventeenth on the Provincial Index of Multiple Deprivation. Prince Albert was the only Municipality in the Central Karoo that appeared on this list of the fifty most deprived Municipalities in the country (PALM IDP 2007-2011: 13). The high levels of human need in this region are further detailed by Van der Merwe, et. al (2004) who describe the Karoo as having the worst quality of life and the lowest growth potential in the Western Cape (Van der Merwe 2004: ix, Donaldson 2012). Emphasis on the expectation of tourism to facilitate development is reflected in decisions made around the expenditure of regional funding in the Central Karoo District Municipality (CKDM) in which Prince Albert is situated. Review of the CKDM Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2007-2011 reveals the gravitas of tourism within local budget allocation and prioritization. For the 2007/2008 year, "tourism development" was allocated a total of R5,248,903 – a figure nearly double the funding allocated to "social", "health", and "environment" related areas *combined* (R2,845,000).

Method

In preparing for fieldwork, I began an initial desktop study of Prince Albert through electronic and library resources. I was able to obtain two published works about Prince Albert; *There's something in the air in Prince Albert* (Janssen 2007) and *Prince Albert in the Anglo-Boer war: 1899-1902* (Marincowitz 1999). Given that the former is a collection of photographs of Prince Albert and the latter is a pamphlet documenting events in the town during a particular historical moment, these sources did not further my understanding of post-apartheid transformation in the town.

More recently, however, Toerien (2012) and Kruger (2013) have made important contributions to knowledge of post-apartheid Prince Albert. Therefore, initial desktop research relied heavily on sources available electronically such as government reports and websites. The primary method of data collection involved twenty-five in-depth interviews conducted during one month of fieldwork in the town. A translator was present for interviewees who preferred to communicate in Afrikaans. A basic interview schedule was set by the larger Rural Transformation project steering committee, and sought to uncover the ways in which changes in the town were identified, constructed, and evaluated by residents. Having identified the centrality of heritage and tourism through desktop research and pilot study involving fieldwork at the town's annual Olive Festival, I developed an additional set of questions that I implemented with participants who discussed having involvement with tourism and heritage in the town. Significantly, not a single resident from North End mentioned their involvement in tourism, or the idea that they could benefit from it in any way. Tourism thus emerged as a white semigrant concern (McEwen and Steyn 2013).

In analyzing interview data, I was interested in identifying the signifiers employed as residents spoke about and evaluated change in the town, as well as the possibilities that were opened up or closed down through these articulations. Furthermore, how these discourses were historicized, in terms of articulating continuity or rupture with the past in order to shape the present and future in particular ways, was an important aspect of how residents made sense of change in the town since the end of apartheid (Fairclough 2010). Critical discourse analysis was employed in the analysis of the data collected through document sources and in-depth interviews with residents. As articulated by Fairclough (1989), critical discourse analysis involves the convergence between linguistics and social research and is interested in the ways in which different kinds of texts reproduce power and inequalities in society. Analysis therefore explores the intersecting meanings of heritage and tourism with a view to understand power relations and interests at

stake in these constructions. The town's tourism information websites[4] and the Prince Albert Cultural Foundation's proposal for the establishment of Prince Albert as a Provincial Heritage site were critically interrogated in analysis of how power relations are operationalised through discourses of tourism and heritage. While some may view these sources as being purely bureaucratic and/or commercial and therefore lacking in significant meaning, critical discourse analysts view all texts as socially relevant, in that they carry power relations invested in ideology and carried by language.

Critical discourse analysis is used as the method of data analysis because of its usefulness in 'advancing the study of prejudice and social inequality in modern multicultural societies' (Riggins 1997: 1), particularly in contexts of social change (Fairclough 2010). Critical discourse analysis focuses on the relationship between language, power, and privilege (Riggins 1997: 3), assuming all objects, actions and social realities to be meaningful and historically contextual (Howarth, Stravakakis 2000: 2). In this case, the meaning of the town itself is constructed through the use of signifiers that are contextualized by the colonial and apartheid past, as well as the current period of transformation. Within this framework of analysis, identities are acknowledged as socially, politically, spatially, and historically contextual, and thus never static, fixed, or essential.

The signifiers of heritage and tourism were deployed regularly amongst semigrants to the extent that they emerged as 'themes' in analysis. It was through these themes that residents spoke to the ways in which the town is "better" or "worse" than it was during apartheid, typically pointing to heritage as a positive development that has increased tourism to the town. The ways in which residents evaluated these changes provides insight into the interests at stake as residents spoke about heritage and tourism. Rather than treating these as "essential" or "self-explanatory" features of life in Prince Albert today, analysis was interested in uncovering the ways in

which "heritage" and "tourism" were framed to serve certain interests at stake in power relations operating in the town.

My positionality as a white, American-born, middle-class, and English speaking person undeniably shaped my perception and interpretation of Prince Albert, as well as the questions I was able to ask of it. Having participated in tourism as a tourist elsewhere, and having conducted critical research on the industry in the past, I am aware of the prolific nature of tourism, and how it aims to attract potential visitors. While I was not expecting to focus on tourism and heritage in my research, analysis revealed that they could not be ignored in the study of post-apartheid dynamics of race and space in the town. Furthermore, as a white outsider, my relation to white interviewees was also mediated by their perception of me and assumptions of my ignorance of South African society and history. As I have experienced in other research, my outsider status often prompted the white residents I interviewed to "explain" the current status quo, providing me with useful insights into post-apartheid white discourses and the power relations they are invested in.

Conceptualising spaces and identities

Post-structural theorization positions spaces as signifiers within socially constructed individual and group identities. This approach enables the interrogation of processes through which hegemonic cultural practices attempt to essentialize, or "fix" spaces with corresponding (and also 'fixed') identities. Thus, discursive attempts to equate "one place" with "one identity" warrant critical analysis within this framework (Natter and Jones 1997: 150). For Natter and Jones, a nonessentialist view of social spaces and identities takes cognizance of "hegemonic spatiality", which they define as 'the categorically ordered possibilities for, and the construction of, meanings about any space' (Natter and Jones 1997: 151). As the authors explain, this approach has direct implications for the status of concepts such as "centres" and "peripheries" which have been used as organizing principles in the structuring of social spaces. Modernist geographic

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[4] **www.patourism.co.za**, **www.princealbert.org.za**

and anthropological traditions, for instance, have mapped "peoples" regionally and culturally, ultimately policing the meanings and practices associated with particular spaces and identities. This structuring has operated to stamp identities and spaces with a fixed correlation: 'every identity has its place' (Natter and Jones 1997: 152).

Apartheid South Africa provided a graphic illustration of the interests served by the establishment of fixed correlations between identities and spaces. In the years of formal apartheid, the protection of white 'purity' from a 'dangerous' and 'contaminating' blackness was written into legislation premised on racist segregationist ideology. This involved the formalization and expansion of colonial beliefs, policies, and practices into a system of structural racism that ensured the subjugation of those not classified as 'white' under the Population Registration act which came into effect two years after the Nationalist Party took power. At the end of apartheid, the replacement of these policies with those mandating redress seemed to promise that South Africa was 'set for a shining future of racial equality and integration; the promise of a "rainbow nation" beckoned' (Durrheim and Dixon 2005: 3). However, patterns of flight from newly integrated neighborhoods increased dramatically as white South Africans began to remove themselves from these areas, mainly through segregation and migration within the country and immigration overseas (Ballard 2004a).

In Prince Albert, a dominating discourse of 'heritage value' -mobilized by middle-class English speaking white South Africans who have recently moved to the town - aims to stamp the town with an identity as a tourism destination. While, at first glance, this may seem like a benign attempt by some newer residents to spur development and job creation, deeper investigation reveals relations of power that function to protect minority-elite interests in the town. As analysis will reveal, this construction operates to maintain the identities and material interests of 'semigrants' who have invested time and resources in the town since their arrival after the end of apartheid. The de-politicized discourses of heritage and tourism in Prince Albert enables the

ignore-ance of the town's historically inscribed racial and spatial inequalities, while re-constituting the apartheid-era status quo through the maintenance of the social, political and spatial marginalization of North End from the affluent and predominantly white town 'centre'.

"Semigration" in Post-apartheid South Africa

As Ballard indicates, 'semigration' is one way in which segregation has adapted to the post-apartheid deregulation of space as many remaining white South Africans have sought "peace of mind" by establishing privatized enclaves such as gated communities and access controlled communities (Ballard 2004a: 63). In this paper, residents of Prince Albert who have arrived in the town after deserting city and suburban spaces for a rural town perceived as less threatening, are regarded as "semigrants". While crime has often been cited as the primary reason for white flight from cities (Caldeira 1996), it is not the only motivation for retreat into such fortified spaces (Ballard 2004b). Rather, these systems of security also create segregated spaces in which exclusionary practices are carefully and rigorously exercised – through the privatization of space, residents are able to exclude those seen as criminally threatening and undesirable (Ballard 2004b, Caldeira 1996).

"Semigration" initially referred to the migration of whites from Johannesburg to Cape Town in the 1990s, and to high perimeter walls erected around private properties, enclosed neighborhoods, and gated communities. Ballard expands the understanding of the term, explaining that semigration can also refer to a "hybrid of emigration and segregation" which occurs as whites flee racially integrated urban areas and create new residential forms which they can control and regulate (Ballard 2004a: 61). The Karoo in particular has become a region of interest amongst semigrating white South Africans who have gained interest 'in embracing the less materialistic values implied by a country lifestyle' (Ingle 2010: 420). Ingle refers to a white "creative class" which has left urban areas in pursuit of rural living, and argues that this development has 'infused many small towns with a new sense of entrepreneurial

optimism and vigour which is beginning to act as a catalyst for economic endeavour amongst the previously disadvantaged sectors of these towns' (420). As this article will reveal, Ingle's argument represents precisely the view that semigrants in Prince Albert would like residents and tourists alike to subscribe to, but which is undermined by the reality of increasing inequalities generated through the industries of heritage and tourism.

As members of dominant groups and organizations who have 'a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes of the enactment of power', these semigrants can also be characterized as 'power elites' (van Dijk's 2001: 303). 'Power elites' are of particular interest in the study of social inequality in that they have 'special access to discourse: they are literally the ones who have the most to say' (303). In the post-apartheid era, constructions of heritage that is considered valuable in the new Rainbow Nation have largely revolved around anti-apartheid struggle history and through the memorialization of sites such as Robben Island, the homes of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, the site of the June 16th, 1976 student uprising and massacre in Soweto, and many others. In Prince Albert, however, semigrant "power elites" construct the 'heritage value' of the town around aesthetic symbols of the colonial, pre-apartheid period. While I am not arguing that affinity for a particular architectural style translates automatically into an affinity for, or agreement with, a particular political or historical context, I am arguing that historical and political context cannot simply be divorced from the architectural styles they produced and which symbolize them. The selection and promotion of 'heritage assets' from the colonial and apartheid era must be examined in light of the history that generated this "heritage" and the meanings it evokes.

While discussion of semigration facilitates understanding of the significance of "safe" spaces in relation to white identity construction, Steyn's (2001) analysis of post-apartheid "white talk" provides insight into the ways in which semigrant discourses perform whiteness

and serve the interests of white privilege. Like whiteness in other contexts, Steyn argues that South African whiteness assumes white entitlement, evading acknowledgment of racialization and privilege (Steyn 2001:162). These ways of knowing, or ignoring (Steyn 2012), are asserted through "white talk", which has an ideological power "demonstrated by the fact that it has helped white people to maintain a dominant position in the organization of global relations and to keep much of the world hegemonically in its grip to this day" (ibid), an argument which resonates with Mill's (1997) Racial Contract theory. Analysis of interviews with Prince Albert's "semigrants" reveals that discourses of the town's heritage value and tourism potential preserve and legitimate white identities and interests in the town. Driven by a social justice imperative, this study finds that processes of heritage conservation and tourism development can actually reify and exacerbate raced and spaced inequalities in "developing" contexts such as Prince Albert.

Heritage conservation and the maintenance of identities

> Those involved in the conservation, preservation and mummification of the landscape create normative landscapes, as though there was only one way of telling or experiencing. They attempt to 'freeze' the landscape as a palimpsest of past activity…itself a way of reappropriating the land (Bender 1998: 26)

At the time of fieldwork, a number of newer home owning residents were in the processes of applying to the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) to establish Prince Albert as a provincial heritage site in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act[5]. According to the proposal, 'Prince Albert: Unique Karoo town at the foot of the Swartberg World Heritage Site: Proposal for protected status as a provincial heritage site', which was written collaboratively amongst residents concerned with the protection of the town's heritage, Prince Albert should be protected as a heritage site because it is:

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embedded in a multi-layered cultural landscape... the natural setting in which Prince Albert is embedded is an integral part of the heritage value of the town as it provides building-free vistas out onto the engulfing Karoo landscape and contextualizes the town structure in a very potent manner: the landscape which defines the town and the resources of the natural environment have directed the cultural activities that have marked the last 250 years, making it a truly symbiotic cultural landscape (3)

As part of the "natural setting" of Prince Albert, the authors point to the elements of original agricultural activity which remain in the 'Vibrant 150 year old Farming Town' (Prince Albert Cultural Foundation: 17). The architecture of the town is also cited as being of 'high heritage value and authenticity' in that it 'has evolved from the natural landscape and its Karoo setting' and 'strongly reflect[s] the historical cultural life of the town and presents a uniqueness not found in other towns' (17). The positionality of the document's authors is made evident when one considers that only the town's most affluent residents, who are all white, enjoy 'building free vistas' and have the privilege of small scale residential farming. The community of North End is, of course, situated on the low-lying rocky terrain that gives the Karoo its name (Kruger 2013: 25). As the authors go on, it becomes apparent that 'heritage value' in the town is largely constructed around colonial history and aesthetics:

> In the building types, which range from simple Karoo cottages to complex Victorian, the mass and volume of buildings is distinctive and remarkably consistent (17).

Here one can see that the authors of the proposal are concerned with preserving historical objects that symbolize colonialism and apartheid. For the semigrant power elites of Prince Albert today, material signifiers of this era are those to be protected and packaged as 'heritage assets'. To claim remnants of the colonial history as the most 'valuable' historical era is an attempt to legitimize claims to the 'heritage value' of the town through the foreclosure of alternative processes, actions, and understandings of the towns history, such as those which could commemorate the lost indigenous populations, forced

removals, and anti-apartheid struggle history in the town (Fontein 2000: 9). As they locate the town's value in symbols of its colonial past, these residents also legitimate and normalize the continued denial of the severe socio-economic and spatial disadvantages faced by the community of North End.

The centering of white identities through discourses promoting the protection of Prince Albert's heritage value emerge when listening to newer residents discuss their motivations for relocating to the isolated Karoo town. In describing what attracted them and others, "semigrants" firmly embed their identities and aspirations within material aspects of Prince Albert. Meredith*, who had recently moved to Prince Albert with her husband from Johannesburg, and who was the owner of a local café at the time of research, romantically describes the town's 'intangible' elements which attract people like herself:

> I think that people are attracted to something intangible in this area, you know, they are touched by it, they come and they are renewed, revitalized... if you were to write a book on how people came to live here, you will find a common thread, and that is that they were spontaneous about making the decision that they wanted to live here.

When considering that seventy-nine per cent of the town's residents earn less than R2000 (approximately US $200) per month and continue to struggle with housing and basic service delivery (Prince Albert Local Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2007-2011: 13), the silences and elisions in this extract become audible. Here, the white middle-class experience of Prince Albert becomes centered through the discursive construction of the town as 'revitalizing', constructions also employed in representations of the town catering to potential tourists and home buyers. At a time when unregulated racial integration in city spaces is increasingly seen as unpleasant by many white South Africans (Ballard 2004a: 62), it becomes evident that for the above resident, the 'revitalizing' character of Prince Albert provides relief and comfort to her sense of self. As one of the local estate agents describes of the town on their property

website, 'this is clearly a place to slow down, forget the hectic pace of urban life and rediscover the bare essentials such as sunsets & thunderstorms over the plains'[6]. And, on another property website, one is assured that investing in Prince Albert is a wise decision because 'An excellent infrastructure and crime free environment preserves its history and natural beauty[7]'. In constructing Prince Albert as a place where the complexities of city living can be abandoned, these participants illustrate an attempt to find comfort zones where their identities remain relatively insulated from the national imperative of transformation.

Such evasion of racialization and privilege are themes that run through the discourses of the town's newer residents as they describe why they moved to Prince Albert. The following resident constructs the town as a place where her dreams can come true. Speaking about people, like herself, who moved to the town, Judy*, who recently moved to a town farm in Prince Albert with her husband after they both retired from their careers in Pretoria, explains:

> I don't think that they were conscious of what was influencing them, it was maybe the river, the water, the trees, but I think it is more than that… because I think Prince Albert has a very good energy and… people who come here all have dreams of an idyllic life…It's almost as if it is good for your soul…there is just something about it that gives you scope for doing what you want to do, or finding out who you are and what you want to be

Referring to "good energy", and "dreams of an idyllic life", this resident explains that there is "something" in Prince Albert which creates the possibility for reaching one's full potential and actualizing self-identity. In describing the town as a comfort zone, she fixes Prince Albert with meanings which will hold white identities in place, congruent with Ballard's contention that 'the post-apartheid phenomenon of semigration represents some white people's attempts to re-

establish safe spaces that reflect their self-conceptions' (Ballard 2004a: 64).

The conservation of exclusion

The privileged subtexts of "heritage value" and "tourism" become apparent when considering that concerns for the protection of the 'historical' and 'natural' elements of the town were voiced by white middle-class semigrants. According to Linda*, who is a member of the Friends of the Museum, the Prince Albert Cultural Foundation, and the Building and Heritage Advisory Committee:

> …it's a known fact, worldwide, that tourism creates jobs, and I think something like, every 30 tourists that visit your town creates one job, that's the international standard

For the above resident, tourism as a means of creating employment opportunities is a "fact" known around the world. Linda further explains that development must be managed so as to preserve remnants of the town's past that can be promoted for tourist consumption:

> we do have some control over the development of Prince Albert, and this whole conservation thing is not to stop development, it's just to manage it to the best advantage of everybody, to conserve this beautiful character that we have in town which attracts the tourists, and brings money to the town

Making explicit the connection between the conservation of the town's "beautiful character" and money brought in by tourists, Linda reveals the inextricability of heritage and tourism development in the town. From her perspective, without heritage, there would be no tourism. Moreover, it becomes evident that in order to promote the heritage and tourism industries, it is important that she and others have control over development. While these residents claim that the development of the tourism industry and the protection of Prince Albert's heritage value will address problems such as unemployment, analysis of interview data reveals the contrary; 'heritage' and tourism operate as everyday mechanisms of exclusion which function to reproduce unequal relations of power between the white minority and non-white majority.

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* Indicates that a pseudonymn has been used
6 http://www.dennehof.co.za/
    [Accessed 18 June 2014].
7 http://www.onserus.co.za/princealbert.htm
    [Accessed 18 June 2014].

In Prince Albert, possibilities for North End to benefit from the town's heritage and tourism development are foreclosed by the historical power relations which have alienated the majority of the towns population from land and business ownership. Michael*, who owns a Bed and Breakfast in the town and was a member of the Prince Albert Tourism Association at the time of research, offers some insight:

> Why don't we have more involvement of people in tourism? Maybe there is attempts to do it, but the fact of the matter is that the members of the tourism association pay their dues, are the people who are in businesses, and those aren't people in North End… If you look at it from an ownership point of view, and being part of owning businesses.

Here, the power inequalities accumulate through tourism development: Lower income residents who do not own businesses and properties cannot afford to be a member of the tourism association, and are therefore excluded from tourism-related planning and decision making. Thus, colonial era subjectivities between whites (as landed, property and business owners) and coloureds (as workers, servants and erstwhile slaves) remain in place, and continue to deepen. Linda makes this dynamic further evident as she argues that tourism creates employment:

> … it creates a lot of jobs, I mean, we have about 56 guest houses, they are not all big grand guest houses, some of them are just one or two rooms in a house that people let, but it creates a job for a coloured woman to come and do the cleaning

Here, not only does she normalize the positionality of coloured people in the town as a servant class, but she uses this normalization to promote racialised inequality. In summoning the colonial past as a commodifiable aspect of present day Prince Albert (and equipped with the discursive and material resources to do so) this group of residents is able to profoundly influence the shape and speed of transformation in the town.

Conclusion

The relationships between racial groups in South Africa have been shaped by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. Prince Albert is no exception, and certain racial identities continue to be associated with certain geographical areas, as well as asymetrical degrees of social power. While the apartheid era racial regulations of space may have been formally dismantled, informal mechanisms of segregation continue to entrench such associations, and social relationships remain shaped by apartheid dynamics of race, space, identity, and power.

In Prince Albert, dynamics of race and space have been influenced by the post-apartheid arrival of retired, middle-class, white, English-speaking South Africans who can be read as 'semigrants' and 'power elites'. As scholars of race and space in post-apartheid South Africa have shown, informal mechanisms perpetuating segregation operate discursively (Ballard 2004a, Ballard 2004b, Durrheim and Dixon 2005). Current attempts to construct Prince Albert as a tourism destination through its 'heritage value' demonstrates one way in which hegemonic spatiality takes shape through discourse. Heritage and tourism, as two seemingly non-racial, apolitical, and 'common sense' discourses, are deployed to legitimize control over development in the town in ways which reproduce historical inequalities within the contemporary neoliberal economic context. Emphasizing the 'heritage value' of symbols of the town's colonial past, a white privileged minority evades acknowledgment of the everyday struggles experienced by low income coloured residents in the town effectively closing down alternative processes and representations which could serve the interests of the historically disadvantaged group. While the establishment of heritage sites in post-apartheid South Africa has been centered largely on attempts to preserve national memory of the anti-apartheid struggle, the case of Prince Albert reveals that heritage can also be used for purposes and in ways that contradict and impair processes of transformation.

The unequal gains to be made through heritage and tourism, in this case, indicate the need for further exploration of how these discourses can be mobilized for both the promotion, and disablement, of the project of social justice, especially in the postcolonial, 'developing'

world. As this article has revealed, concepts of heritage and tourism conceal potential discriminatory effects through appeals to the hegemonic neoliberal imperative of economic development and 'growth'. Critical attention must therefore be paid to dynamics of ownership and servitude within discourses promoting heritage conservation and tourism development in order to understand the deeper political implications and power relations obscured from the tourist gaze.

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