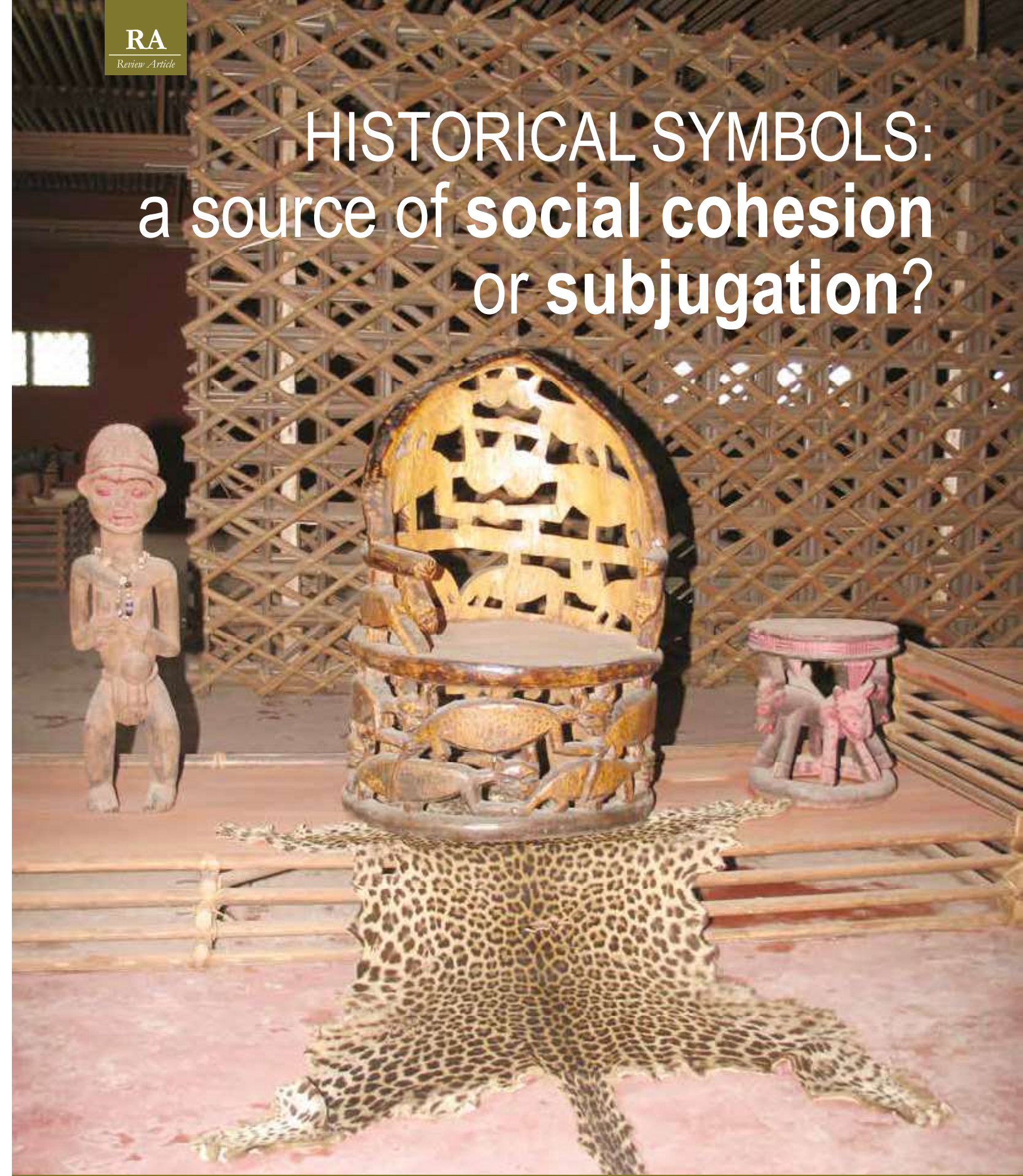


HISTORICAL SYMBOLS: a source of social cohesion or subjugation?



Wooden throne decorated with royal motifs such as the long two headed snake and superimposed leopards. In front of the throne is a leopard's pelt. In Mankon and the Grassfields in general, the leopard is considered to be a royal animal and is believed to be endowed with the attributes associated with the king, who it is believed may turn into a leopard at will. It is, moreover, the king's exclusive right to keep a slain leopard and retain its pelt, while the hunter's reward includes conferment of a title by the king. The animal's pelt is spread on the ground where the king's throne is placed. Apart from the king, or some sub-chiefs, no other person is allowed to use the above throne objects. Mankon Museum, Mankon, Cameroon. April 2005. (Photo by Sue Malvern).

The key functions of historical structures and artefacts are to uphold the heritage of a community, shape the community's identity, promote social cohesion, and spark conversations on societal issues. *Refilwe Mashigo* applies findings from a Cameroon study to the recent debate on historical monuments in South Africa and concludes that, for museums to play their role in serving the public, they must remain free from political control.

While most of the historical structures gracing South Africa's parks are easily and freely accessible to the public, this is not the case in the Cameroon Grassfields. In line with the government's policies to bring history and heritage closer to its people, museums in Grassfields are often erected in restricted areas, contradicting the very reason for their being.

Artefacts in Grassfields are under the control of kwifor – a secret regulatory society. According to Dr Mathias Fubah Alubafi, the siting of museums in restricted areas, such as a king's palace, induces the community to regard these artefacts as 'sacred and secret', thus impeding the learning experience of its members.

In an attempt to inform Cameroon's government of the consequences of establishing new museums in palaces, 35 participants, ranging from museum officials and government representatives to local and foreign museum visitors, were interviewed to establish the preference between public museums and museums built within kingdoms.

In assessing the case of the Grassfields museums, Alubafi argues that the community members are deprived of the opportunity to engage with their heritage through historical artefacts and structures, as is their right. Due to the location and restriction of the palace museums, Grassfields museums experienced a significant decline in the number of visits to these museums between 2009 and 2013, despite the activities undertaken to increase the numbers.

'This decline is occurring in spite of the fact that many traditional activities – such as annual dances, death celebrations, twin celebrations, periodic rituals to the ancestors and deities of the kingdom, as well as contemporary or secular rituals by community members – take place in these palaces, sometimes attracting a large population on a daily basis' (Table 1).

In contrast, South Africa's structures of historical significance, monuments placed in the public eye, are easily accessible and are consequently open to constructive criticism from members of the community.

Recent demonstrations and conversations on colonial structures in South Africa, such as the #RhodesMustFall movement, have triggered debate in society around structures and symbols that define our history. In essence, historical structures such as statues and museums exist to

inform future generations on historical events and trigger conversations on an array of societal issues and current affairs.

The #RhodesMustFall movement not only changed the narrative on colonial symbolism, education and race in South Africa, but also spread to the United Kingdom, where the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at Oriel College, Oxford University, was also brought under scrutiny. Because of the location and accessibility of both monuments, the communities were impelled to discuss their relevance in today's society.

Although the movement brought contrasting results, with the removal of the statue at the University of Cape Town, and its retention at Oriel College under a clearer historical context, it is evident that accessibility to the monuments prompted a fresh discourse on historical backgrounds and other social matters.

Table 1: Annual estimates of visitors to modern palace museums in Cameroon Grassfields

Museum	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Mankon	311	305	301	271	238	1 426
Babungo	111	109	102	98	92	512
Bandjoun	297	288	275	240	210	1 310
Baham	249	241	230	220	210	1 150

Museums in restricted areas, such as a king's palace, induces the community to regard these artefacts as 'sacred and secret', thus impeding the learning experience of its members.

Reflecting on the removal of the statue in South Africa, Advocate Sonwabile Mancotywa of the country's National Heritage Council writes: 'The recent protests around statues have shown us that we need to pay proper attention to the symbols of our democracy. We all need to ask what symbols could represent our societal values and can serve as an inspiration.'

Public policies, people and participation

How then have policies on heritage preservation in Cameroon Grassfields influenced its community's lack of engagement with its heritage, cultural practices and history?

The study argues that policies on the establishment of museums in the king's palace failed to consider the relation between the community and heritage symbols, and consequently, community members had less interest in visiting palace museums. Alubafi suggests that 'museums should be established in community centres where greater focus is on the relation between the museum and communities rather than between the king and the museum, as is the case with the palace museums'.

Moreover, Grassfields museums are perceived as being associated with royalty and consequently 'a site of

power relations or as an institution representing the interest of elites'.

Young people and women, however, challenge this relation and question the kingdom's claim of its dominance over historical artefacts. As a sign of protest, young people have become creative with traditional royal cups made from cow horn, engraving them with images of Bruce Lee, a Hong Kong-American film actor known for his action-packed martial arts roles.

The politics of museums and artefacts

Defying tradition and challenging the role assumed by the elite vis-à-vis the community's heritage symbols corroborates the argument that placing museums within the king's palace hinders social engagement on issues that could result in social change and criticisms that the kingdom cannot refute. By establishing 'community centre museums' – museums which are accessible and apart from kingdoms – community members begin to engage in conversations that not only expand their knowledge of their heritage or history, but also question their relevance in today's society, as witnessed with the #RhodesMustFall movement.

So what are the avenues for changing these policies to museum access? Alubafi recommends the following:

- Public policy revisions should be effected that allow for museums to be relocated to or constructed in community centres because of their restriction-free access.
- The Cameroon legislature should revise its public policies in order for community centre museums to be constructed on communal land rather than on land owned by the king or elites. This will minimise the influence of kings, traditional elites and 'royal eligibles' on the facility.
- In building museums, there should be community consultations to ensure that the museums conform to communal principles and to encourage community participation and ownership of the facilities.
- Museums should adopt an inclusive approach by focusing on issues affecting the entire community, including commoners, women, the youth, elites and visitors.
- Museums in community centres should collect and display secular and entertainment arts rather than only sacred and secret art as is the case with the palace museums.

In conclusion, to foster engagement on issues of heritage and how it is interpreted by today's generation, governments should consider establishing monuments outside areas under their control. In order to realise its wish to bring heritage to its community, Cameroon Grassfields should consider building museums that are freely accessible, under no royal or elite control and reflective of the community's heritage, and not only the royal relics. Common spaces such as parks, town squares and libraries are areas that are welcoming and safe, and are thus the preferred spaces for monuments that will promote community involvement and reflect the culture of all those who live in it.

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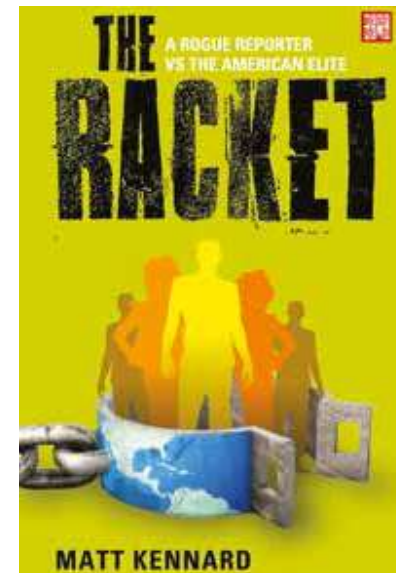
A scene in the Cameroon Grassfields depicting traditional elites and ordinary members of the community quarrelling and fighting over items believed to be reserved solely for elites. In one section, an elite holding a staff or stick points a buffalo horn drinking cup to an ordinary member of the community cautioning him about his limitations on the type of objects he can use. In another section, an elite is seen fighting with an ordinary member of the community over chicken gizzard. In most of the Bamenda Grassland and in fact, the Cameroon Grassfields as a whole, the gizzard is the reserve of the most elderly and titled holders of the land. Women and youths or ordinary people are not allowed to eat it. Emmanuel's Art, Bamenda, Cameroon. May 2012. (Photo by MA Fubah).

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The Racket

A rogue reporter vs the American elite

Author:	Matt Kennard
Pub month and year:	September 2016
ISBN soft cover:	978-1-9282-4609-1
Format:	198 x 129 mm
Extent:	416 pages
Rights:	Southern African rights [Zed Books]

About the book

The rhetoric of 'freedom and democracy for all' has become almost synonymous with the US. However, at home its business elites have enslaved the poor and underclasses and further afield, while masquerading as a force for good in the world, the US has enslaved much of humanity in the name of progress.

In this controversial book, investigative journalist Matt Kennard takes us deep into the dark heart of American power. From the corporate state, the prison state and the state of the environment, to humanitarian intervention, the free trade fetish and the divide-and-rule of the working class, *The Racket* reveals how, no matter which side of the border we are on, we are all being conditioned to condone this modern form of slavery.



Slumming It

The Tourist Valorisation of Urban Poverty

Author:	Fabian Frenzel
Pub month and year:	July 2016
ISBN soft cover:	978-1-9282-4608-4
Format:	198 x 129 mm
Extent:	232 pages
Rights:	Southern African rights [Zed Books]

About the book

Have slums become 'cool'? More and more tourists from across the globe seem to think so as they discover favelas, ghettos, townships and barrios on leisurely visits. But while slum tourism often evokes moral outrage, critics rarely ask about what motivates this tourism, or what wider consequences and effects it initiates. In this provocative book, Fabian Frenzel investigates the attraction that slums have for their better-off visitors, looking at the many ways in which this curious form of attraction ignites changes both in the slums themselves and on the world stage.

Covering slums ranging from Rio de Janeiro to Bangkok, and multiple cities in South Africa, Kenya and India, *Slumming It* examines the roots and consequences of a growing phenomenon whose effects have ranged from gentrification and urban policy reform to the organisation of international development and poverty alleviation. Controversially, Frenzel argues that the rise of slum tourism has drawn attention to important global justice issues, and is far more complex than was initially acknowledged.



Price R280,00



Cricket & Conquest

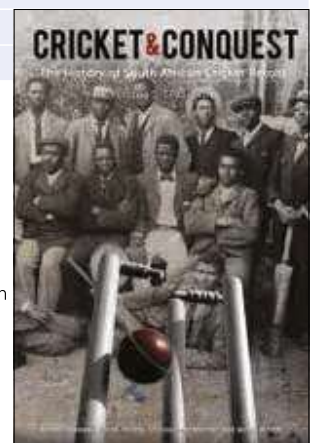
The History of South African Cricket Retold Volume 1, 1795–1914

Author:	A. Odendaal, K. Reddy, C. Merrett and J. Winch
Pub month and year:	October 2016
ISBN soft cover:	978-1-9282-4613-8
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Extent:	536 pages
Rights:	World rights

About the book

The first of its kind for any sport in South Africa: a cricket love story of epic dimensions with details which will blow readers away. *Cricket & Conquest* goes back to the beginnings 221 years ago and fundamentally revises long-established foundational narratives of early South African cricket. It reaches beyond old whites-only mainstream histories to integrate at every stage and in every region the experiences of black and women cricketers.

A purely British military game at first, cricket accompanied the process of colonial conquest every step of the way in the nineteenth century. This book and its companion volumes explain how racism came to be built into the very fabric of cricket's 'culture' and 'traditions', and how it was uncannily tied to the broader historical processes that shaped South Africa. The unique experiences of our different cricket communities are described in ways that have not been done before. The exhaustive research and inter-connections highlighted here make this a COMPLETELY NEW general history of South African cricket.



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