

The Liberatory Function of a Museum: The Case of New Brighton's Red Location Museum

Vuyisile Msila

*PO Box 392, University of South Africa, Further Teacher Education,
 UNISA, 0003, South Africa
 E-mail: msilavt@unisa.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Cultural Heritage. Memory. Human Rights. Post-Apartheid Society. Community

ABSTRACT The new South African museums built in the last decade have attempted to demystify and challenge the pedestrian and sophistic roles that museums have played in the past. The “old” museums tended to mainly reflect a dominant culture that obscured other cultures and were underpinned by a deliberate agenda to marginalise other cultures. However, “new” museums such as District Six in Cape Town and Hector Peterson Museum in Soweto, Johannesburg are examples of museums that strive to show the other side, tell the society the other stories which include the people’s struggle against political injustices and cultural hegemony in South Africa. This article explores the role of the Red Location Museum situated in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. Built on the very site where the historic Red Location’s corrugated iron houses stood, the museum bears a testimony of the history of the people. Commenting on this museum, the Lubetkin Prize judges were quoted as saying, “To build a museum of the apartheid era in the midst of the township that acted as a crucible for the struggle is an extraordinary achievement”. The article explores the liberatory role played by this museum.