

AFRICAN ACCELERATIONISM
AND DECOLONIAL VISIONS
FOR SITES OF REMEMBRANCE

Workshop by
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African Accelerationism (AA) is a conceptual framework for understanding the socio-political dynamics of what Mushiva has previously referred to as the ‘gravities of anti-Blackness’: different spectres of violence enveloping the world, which include racism, colonialism, and institutional racism (like the layers Troposphere, Stratosphere, and Mesosphere) that combine to create anti-Black gravity/gravities. AA is suggested as a vehicle (e.g., a rocket) that, when reaching enough energy, is able to defy the gravities of anti-Blackness. The Independence Movement on the African continent in the 1960s or the overall anti-colonial transnational solidarity network (e.g., in the context of the Bandung Conference) can be understood as glimpses of African Accelerationism. Both represent historical examples in which significant amounts of energy were collected with the aim of escaping the gravities of anti-Blackness. According to the AA framework, European powers feared this energy and sabotaged its movements through coups against Patrice Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, and Kwame Nkrumah, three leading figures of the African Independence Movements. Therefore, a thorough escape did not happen.

AA competes with two other ‘interstellar vehicles’: Pan-Africanism and Afro-futurism. The latter, Afro-futurism, was flattened through its monolithic representation of UK and US-contexts. Cheikh Anta Diop (Senegal) had an Afro-centrist approach, calling for the unification of Africans under a federal system of all African countries. Diop also developed the first African Energy Doctrine in the 60s, suggesting how to self-sufficiently provide the continent with energy through a formula of energy pluralism in which the multiple sources of energy existing on the African continent are combined complementarily.

What Can African Accelerationism Do for Colonial Memory?

An interesting example is a monument built after independence that celebrates the ambitious goals of the independence movements: the Agostinho Neto Mausoleum in Luanda, Angola (also known as the “Angolan Sputnik”). It was completed in 2012 by the North Korean construction company Mansudae Overseas Projects.. The building style is cosmic and brutalist, thus referencing the Soviet Union, the biggest ally of the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) during the civil war. Through the lens of AA, it becomes clear how the monument represents the ‘lingering and haunting’ energy that is not only based on lamenting colonial crimes but that also harnesses African ambitions of independence.

Other examples include:

- Turbo Summation, one of Mushiva's current projects: Excerpt of a music video in which a 3D-model of the Agostinho Neto Mausoleum is transplanted into the Namibian landscape.
- EarthNest: Decolonial Memorial located in Berlin (The Lockward Collective, 2024).
- The Kinfolk: US-startup creating 3D monuments through augmented reality (e.g., Karpfenteich/Treptower Park)

In many places memorials are often still absent in public space. Some case studies in which monuments of colonial memory are still lacking include:

1. The Shinkolobwe mine, Congo (DRC):

The exploitation of uranium has been enabled by the colonial exploitation of the DRC. Patrice Lumumba's death, for instance, was also plotted to further exploit uranium in the post-colonial era. The uranium from the Shinkolobwe mine was used to construct the bombs thrown over Nagasaki and Hiroshima. While the mines still exist, there is no memorial marking the site. Most people, including environmentalists, thus do not know of the violent history connecting these sites.

2. Swakopmund, Namibia:

German Namibians biked over the unmarked graves in Swakopmund shortly after Ovaherero communities called for the construction of marked graves in 2006. In addition, upperclass (white) residential areas continue to be built on the unmarked graves. These residents thus constantly try to destroy the graves in order to continue their exploitation of the land and evade accountability. The Ovaherero community has since erected a monument in the area that is frequently vandalized. The monument was eventually vandalized as well, which may have been done by the white residents. In connection to this, recent incidents of vandalism of a memorial of colonial remembrance include a square in Chemnitz, Germany, devoted to the Hornkranz Massacre (Namibia).

3. Treptower Park, Berlin, Germany:

To this day, there is no official commemoration in Treptower Park of the ethnological exhibition that took place as part of the 1896 colonial exhibition, in which people primarily from Namibia were displayed around the *Karpfenteich*.

Contributions/Questions from Workshop Participants:

1. Must monuments be located in Germany? Can we imagine the location of such monuments differently and consider their respective colonial contexts? Germany is the life centre and home of many Black people, monuments are required both in the countries of the former colonial powers as well as in the formerly colonized countries.
2. When thinking about memorial sites, the focus should be the youth, they need the information transported through memorial sites. There are many children of African descent living in Germany, therefore creating memorial sites on the African continent only will be detrimental for the future generations living in Germany.
3. In addition to Blackness as identity, could one also consider Blackness as method? How can there be a connection to other oppressed groups in order not to reproduce monolithic group affiliations? How can we complicate notions of identity and group affiliation?

Summarization

A lot of future generations of African descent will be born in the West. Commemoration should also harness the energy of populations in the global diaspora who have raised awareness about continental struggles. Monuments and statues are not a pre-colonial African phenomena. There is a need to problematize the corruptions of patriarchy and anti-colonial commemoration. To accelerate commemoration is also about reminding world populations of colonial continuities, commemoration is not just about Congo, Namibia, and the Ivory Coast in the 60s, perhaps commemoration should do justice to the fact of colonial continuity.

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