**Whose is it??**

It seems the questions we must ask ourselves now is thus, whose youth day is it anyway?? A striking notion that such a thing as a celebratory day belongs, and consequently is owned by certain parties (group(s)/individuals). One which is exposed by Gary Baines to not only be true, but to be the primary cause of the controversy surrounding anything youth which all epitomizes on Youth day. With these that Baines terms ‘memory texts’ he begins to give grounds, from a historical standpoint, for the contests ensuing over the imagination of communities. Such we’ve been acquainted with in our assessment of those factors that induce a somewhat neurotic state of liminality, wherein induction & initiation rituals occur on multiple levels before any sort of passage into high social status (any sort of social status really). What we see there, we see as well here as affirmation of that analysis, in Gary Baines’ posited question that the youth forms & even embodies the epitome of the imagination of a community. Consequently implying the youth political will as the strongest and most coveted will of any political wills of any social group.

It is unsurprising thus to find that this becomes the most contested political will, making the identity of the youth subject to the definitions of multiple parties in pursuit of its control. And it might be fair to object that this is the claim that made by Baines, and while this is rather accurate it is often wise to remember that accuracy can be misdirected. And so whilst this may not be his exact claim, it does lend itself as ‘empirical’ evidence to this very larger and broader consideration of youth and nationhood.

You see, because the nation is imagined ‘here’ by aligning the two sides of the ‘there’, and because most people would like to make a contribution to this imagination. Looking at Baines, we find that particularly on Youth day than any other there are vigorous contests of ownership claims over these such memory texts, which Baines posit to transmit the desires of the imagination of the community through generations.

As such what Baines realizes in his text is that because memory literally forms and shapes identity, these memory texts are such that they are from whence icons are made and Hector Pieterson is one such iconic example. Baines convincingly illustrates the significance of this figure, a significance that sees itself as the cornerstone of that tragic even we’ve come to call ‘Soweto Uprising’.

We begin to understand here then more clearly why these pivotal moments of a nation’s history, cannot help but subject themselves to the controversy of ownership and responsibility. It would seem that through these memories, credibility and authority is given by the community to whosoever can prove the validity of their claim over these pivotal memories. Because as Baines quotes French historian Pierra Noira in describing/defining that an icon is “a place of symbol where memory crystallizes and secretes itself”, it is clear how important each memory is and more importantly is its ability to ‘crystallize’ as iconic.

A ‘text’, as it were, that carries/embodies the memories of a nation’s past, where nations possess a temporal simultaneity of aligning both past & future in the present. Such a text becomes an unavoidable point of reference for the comings of the future, the past is as definitive of the future then as the future is of it.

How exactly this comes to be is perhaps none the more vivid as by Baines’ texts, on particularly the theatrics surrounding the TRC, when he identifies one of the significant abilities of memory as being one of being ‘re-inserted’. A eureka moment isn’t it? For if memory can be re-inserted then it is memory that controls imagination; and by this logic, in our pursuit to align past & future, the past is the independent factor whilst the future dependent. It seems then by this logic, we can only change the future by changing the past, at the very least with some control influence the narrative interpreted from memory.

A strange concept to grasp because it may just border on fiction of time-travel really, which should make us think right? But it lends itself to substantial defences because, as is the nature of memory to transmit emotion it is the nature of memory to communicate itself into a belief. As such, the political contests by use of various public media for the ownership of youth day are perfectly logical to an entity such as is a nation. It is a justified belief that motivates into action such that to motivate the imagination of a nation, it is necessary to ‘manipulate’ memory & bring it forth to the present as though it were.

These are the premises which fuel the controversial narratives surrounding the youth, and particularly driving aggressive political turmoil on the day of the ‘Soweto uprising’ wherein memory avails itself to manipulation.

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