**The Afrikaanse Taalmonument—The Story of a Language**

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Architecture and tourism are inextricably linked in a strong, symbiotic relationship. Buildings and other structures are markers of historical and cultural identities and specificities. As such, architecture forms an intricate element in the overall tourist experience. For many tourists, having the opportunity to see and interact with examples of architecture provide a major motivation for visiting a place—be they iconic structures such as the Pompidou Centre in Paris or the ruins of Macchu Pichu in Peru, or modernist suburban architecture in Palm Springs or *art nouveau* apartment blocks in Prague.

From the design phase through to its realisation, any architectural construction encapsulates within it the notion of storytelling—the creation of a narrative—as both a process that establishes and develops connections between people, places and time and as a carrier of ideas and thoughts that are a result of these connections. Architecture is capable of telling stories and creates a metaphorical ‘dialogue’ about the past and the present for the future.

The relationship between tourism, architecture and storytelling cuts across a number of thematic areas and can be understood from a variety of perspectives, including the role of architects, designers and imaginers as the makers of tourism ‘worlds’; tourism architecture as a mode of storytelling; and tourism architecture as an iconic guide to social, cultural, ethnic and national identity.

This paper specifically focuses on the manifestation of storytelling, not only through the architectural design process, but through the meaning made by tourists of a construction which represents an element of intangible cultural heritage—Language. As such, the concept of ‘co-creation’ or ‘co-production’ is useful when discussing visitor responses and ways of experiencing a tourist sight/site, as it emphasises the multifarious, semantically rich and diverse ways in which an architecturally-designed tourism sight can be received and understood.

The paper uses the *Afrikaanse Taalmonument* (Afrikaans Language Monument), strategically situated on the slopes of Paarl Mountain, outside the city of Paarl, in Western Cape Province, South Africa and the representation of an architect’s interpretation of the ‘story’ of the Afrikaans language, to demonstrate how a construction rooted in cultural imaginaries arouses strong emotional responses in visitors. Furthermore, it demonstrates how architect, Jan van Wijk, in line with a very specific architectural brief and inspired by the words of two well-known Afrikaans writers, could imagine, design and realise a multi-faceted representational construction where the story of the language ‘unfolds’ for visitors. Interviews with visitors, conducted over a three-month period, reveal that it is through their experiences, coupled with their understandings, beliefs and attitudes that tourists are not only ‘consumers’ of architecture but produce and interpret them through their imaginaries and their practices as they pass through the complex. Meaning depends on the ways in which these two types of properties relate to each other, as well as by such things as the social values and systems of thought that are implicated in the architecture and its production and those of the tourists who visit and experience it.

**Stephen J. Smith—Short Biographical Presentation**

Stephen J. Smith currently works as a lecturer in Sociology & Anthropology at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Stephen might be best described as a ‘polymath’, with scholarly and academic interests in many fields, most importantly in the two areas of semiotics and architecture. He has had the opportunity to travel, live and work in many parts of the world and has, over time developed a very strong interest in the anthropology of tourism. The diversity of Stephen’s interests are, however, dominated by his passion for languages and it was the coupling of his passion for semiotics, architecture, tourism and languages which originally led him to undertake research which examined the fascinating, yet esoteric, subject matter of the ‘language monument’ as a tourist attraction and the meaning that such sights are afforded by visitors. Stephen has been and remains a passionate teacher and, in recognition of his teaching excellence, was recently awarded the position of Scholarly Teaching Fellow.