By the Way, Who is Cranford Pratt? Questioning Active and Symbolic Monumentalisation of the University of Dar es Salaam

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Nancy Alexander Rushohora
University of Dar es Salaam
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3025-3311
nrushohora@gmail.com | rushohora.nancy@udsm.ac.tz
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Abstract

Considering the ongoing debates regarding the relevance of white supremacy in African public spaces and institutions, the presence of the name 'Cranford Pratt' on the monumental Utawala building at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), inaugurated in 2011, is striking. Few are familiar with Pratt's legacy. This monument, however, holds significance in addressing contemporary critiques of the commemoration of whiteness in African academic institutions, a debate intensified by the University of Cape Town's 'Rhodes Must Fall' movement. The perpetuation of whiteness within academic spaces often carries an implicit assertion of supremacy when left unchallenged. In institutions that have made strides toward decolonising curricula, history education, and promoting gender inclusivity, the continued veneration of colonial figures represents a form of epistemicide. This paper employs observation and a review of existing literature to advocate for an 'idiosyncratic demonumentalisation' process that critically engages both the intrinsic and extrinsic values of monumental heritage, challenging the unquestioned preservation of colonial legacies in history education. On one hand, the paper emphasises the role of monuments in shaping historical narratives and the importance of critically examining their messages in the context of ongoing debates about decolonisation and the role of history education. On the other hand, the paper focuses on the broader impact of colonial legacies on history education and the need to decolonise curricula, teaching practices, and the university space at large.

Keywords: Decolonisation, Monument, Heritage, Whiteness, Epistemicide

Introduction

This paper was first written to commemorate a decade of the humanities college at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), 2014-2024. It offers a reflective analysis of its historical trajectory and provides a glimpse into the college's future. The paper draws inspiration from the words of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the first President of Tanzania and a foundational intellectual figure in the country's humanities landscape. Nyerere, who also served as the first Chancellor of UDSM, articulated a vision for higher education that emphasised the need for objectivity and scientific rigor in research and teaching. Nyerere asserted, "In all its research and teaching, the university must be as objective and scientific as is humanly possible" (Nyerere, 1963: 218). While 'humanly' does not directly correspond to the humanities, it can be interpreted as advocating for a balanced integration of both the sciences and humanities. From its inception, Nyerere recognised that for a university in Africa to be truly impactful, it needed to deeply engage with the arts, music, literature, religion, philosophy and history. At the UDSM, the humanities have, thus, been integral in shaping critical national discourses; a central domain where this influence is particularly evident is in the discourse surrounding history education, which has been foundational at UDSM since its establishment.

This paper specifically explores the role of history education at UDSM and examines how monuments from the early independence era provoke critical questions regarding race and identity. How does the history education at UDSM address colonialism's physical and symbolic legacies? How do these legacies intersect with the historical significance of monuments in shaping societal values? Article 1 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention *Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (UNESCO, 1972) defines a monument as a structure imbued with historical, archaeological, artistic, aesthetic, architectural, social, or cultural value. Monuments are classified as any building over 100 years old, whether formally documented or not (Tanzania's Antiquities Act of 1979). They are designated based on their cultural, aesthetic, architectural or historical value. The Antiquities Act mandates the declaration of any building as a monument by considering its value. The monuments of the UDSM survive under the latter category. While several African monuments were erected during the colonial era to commemorate colonialism, their legacy has been the subject of contestation across the continent, seen as a glorification of colonialism (Chirikure et al., 2022). In various African countries, such as Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Malawi, colonial monuments have faced vandalism, removal, or

replacement as part of efforts to distance national identities from the legacy of colonial oppression (Marschall, 2017; Mirzoeff, 2023; Qwatekana et al., 2021). Tanzania, however, presents a distinct case where colonial monuments have not been removed, instead, the narrative surrounding them has been reframed, with new symbols emerging in the post-independence era to commemorate significant events.

One such monument is the Cranford Pratt building, constructed between 1961 and 1964 at UDSM, which has served as the university's central administrative structure since its early years. Initially known as the 'administration building' or '*Utawala*' in Kiswahili, the building was renamed in 2011 to honour Cranford Pratt, the first principal of UDSM, in conjunction with the university's centenary celebrations. This renaming marked a significant turning point in the university's engagement with its colonial legacy, coinciding with a broader global movement questioning colonial-era commemorations, such as the Rhodes Must Fall movement in South Africa. Before its renaming, the building stood as a symbol of UDSM's early governance and institutional development, because it was the first university building occupied by administrators. Serving as the first principal from 1961-1965, Cranford Pratt played a pivotal role in shaping this landmark institution both as an overseer and as a key fundraiser. Before the university's establishment at its current location, UDSM was initially housed at the headquarters of the *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) political party on Lumumba Street. The initial location faced significant political challenges, with critics labelling it a 'political party university' (Cheater, 1991). This reflects the broader political climate of post-independence Tanzania, where universities became arenas of political and ideological contestation. It is unfortunate to see the lack of engagement with the monument and the passivity towards university spaces (Rushohora, 2024). This paper argues that monuments like that of Cranford Pratt serve not only as physical structures, but as sites of ideological struggle, which must be problematised in Tanzania history classroom. History education that utilises monuments for learning and teaching has a lasting impact, extending from the school to citizenship (Labadi, 2024). The revision of the curriculum at the UDSM, thus, ought to go hand in hand with the monumentalisation paradox to avoid glorifying whiteness, which works against Black consciousness (Biko, 1978: 30).

The choice to focus on the Cranford Pratt building at Tanzania's oldest university was a purposeful act rather than a mere coincidence. It offers a case study in the politics of memory—specifically, in addressing the enduring question: *whose history is preserved and whose is omitted* in the national narrative. Cranford Pratt, a Canadian political scientist, memorialisation stands in stark contrast to the absence of recognition for Tanzanians who were instrumental in conceptualising and establishing the university itself. This disparity underscores a persistent gap in honouring local historical figures and highlights a broader issue of national historical marginalisation (Chuhila, 2021). The decision to name such a prominent building after a foreign intellectual without accompanying interpretive signage or historical context, further widens the disconnect between institutional memory and its current academic community. For many students and staff, the building's significance remains opaque, pointing to a missed opportunity for the university to engage critically with its past. As scholars such as Pierre Nora (1989) have argued, collective memory is actively constructed through sites, symbols, and commemorations—and when these are left uninterrogated, they risk becoming invisible or misaligned with the lived experiences of those who inhabit these spaces.

The Cranford Pratt building, thus, becomes a powerful entry point into the study of memory politics in post-colonial Tanzania. It represents the complex intersection of memory, power and historical narrative, revealing how universities—key institutions of national knowledge production—can sometimes reproduce colonial or external frameworks of remembrance, even after independence. This example highlights the underexamined dynamics of national identity formation, the uneven legacy of foreign intellectuals and how memorialisation practices in educational spaces can either challenge or reinforce dominant historical discourses (Kireyi, 2023). In this context, studying the Pratt building is not just an act of architectural or heritage curiosity—it is a means of uncovering more profound silences in the historical record and of questioning whose contributions are celebrated, whose are erased, and what this reveals about post-colonial state formation and identity.

Monument and history education

This section examines how the UDSM's history education has evolved to reflect the need for conscious intellectual engagement with the past, emphasising the role of history in fostering an African Renaissance. From its inception, the UDSM recognised the importance of history as a critical tool for shaping national identity and empowering the next generation of thinkers, leaders and scholars. Three years after the university was established in 1964,

the Department of History was founded, signalling a commitment to studying the past as an essential component of understanding the present and shaping the future. The Department's unique approach to historical research, teaching and writing was grounded in the belief that history must reflect African agency and initiative, challenging colonial narratives that had previously dominated historical scholarship (Masebo, 2017). The Dar es Salaam School of Thought emerged in the 1960s as a direct result of this emphasis on African perspectives in history. Scholars at UDSM sought to redefine historical narratives by emphasising the active role Africans played in shaping their own histories, both before and after colonialism. The movement fostered an intellectual space where history was viewed as a tool for emancipation, serving not only to preserve the past, but also as a means of liberating the African mind from the constraints of colonial ideology (Maddox, 2018). The attainment of independence in many African countries was viewed as the first step in the broader liberation movement, and history education was seen to solidify this newfound freedom by fostering a deep understanding of African identity, struggles and triumphs.

Emphasis on African agency in historical narratives exposes a notable gap in teaching Tanzania-centred history (Chuhila, 2021). The broader trend, in which the national curriculum prioritised pan-African liberation struggles over localised engagement with Tanzania's colonial history and post-independence challenges, while important, often overshadows the unique complexities of Tanzania's historical experience. The commemoration of Dr Kwame Nkrumah in one of the university's central buildings serves as an example. The Bank of Tanzania featured the building on the Tanzanian 500-shilling note until 2010. Other African leaders—such as Sam Nujoma, Robert Mugabe, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Samora Machel, Uhuru Kenyatta, Nelson Mandela and Patrice Lumumba—are memorialised through street names and school dedications across the country. At the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), the legacy of the South African African National Congress (ANC) in exile is preserved at the *Mazimbu* site, now known as the Solomon Mahlangu Campus, where the former ANC school and hospital have been repurposed as the College of Natural and Applied Sciences. In contrast, many other Tanzanian universities, being relatively new, lack significant memorials or monuments. Little effort has been made to teach Tanzanian history in ways that allow students to critically and meaningfully connect with their national past. This absence is also evident in the country's treatment of its monuments. Tanzania has largely avoided a critical examination of its colonial-era monuments (Kireyi, 2023). These structures, once symbols of colonial dominance, were not meaningfully incorporated into educational or historical discourse. The 2011 monumentalisation of Cranford Pratt is a telling example of the country's unresolved relationship with its colonial past and national identity.

Monuments, as teaching aids for history education, play a vital role in how history is communicated to the public. They serve as physical embodiments of the past, offering spaces where history is not just read in books, but experienced in tangible ways. Monuments help people reflect on national achievements, recognise the struggles and tragedies of the past, and confront the horrors of colonialism and other injustices. Sypnowich (2021) emphasises that monuments are crucial for fostering a deeper, more visceral understanding of history, providing opportunities to engage with the past beyond the classroom. Examining monuments at African academic institutions, such as UDSM, is essential to the ongoing curriculum reviews to reshape historical education. This process allows for a more inclusive, critical engagement with both the triumphs and the traumas of the past, and it underscores the importance of monuments as part of the broader project of decolonising education and fostering a more authentic understanding of African history.

The Tanzania monumentalisation approach has chosen to disengage with monuments constructed during the colonial period, whether memorial monuments or colonial buildings, which have remained as public and private memorials. Tanzania's memorialisation approach—particularly in the post-independence period—has been shaped by a combination of ideological, political, and historical drivers, mainly rooted in the vision of national unity, anti-colonial struggle, and African socialism. Through the state promoted vision of national unity and collective identity memorialisation efforts, avoided ethnic or religious divisions and focused on shared history and support for the broader African liberation movements, thereby emphasising Tanzania's role in regional decolonisation. Through this, the government maintained firm control over which aspects of history to commemorate and how to commemorate them. Education reinforced these narratives by aligning the history curricula with the national story. The national narrative provides Tanzanian citizens with little space for alternative narratives. The Majimaji War (1904-1908) and the Zanzibar Revolution (1964), for instance, which are remembered as a state liberation movement, were, however, at grassroots, violent and traumatic events. The missionary memorials, contested as burial, memorial and martyrdom sites (Tuzinde, 2021), have remained as dual memorials to the government and the public. The sites are marketed as tourist destinations, used for local interpretation of the events that occurred on the sites, and as sites of martyrdom for Catholic believers. Tanzania remains passive to the colonial monumentalisation of public spaces. The worst that has happened to monuments, such as colonial prisons and police stations, which carry a negative connotation, is that they have been left to decay (Rushohora, 2019) due to a lack of care and preservation strategies. Intentional removal and demolition often occur because of overlooking cultural heritage in

favour of development, a common issue in many developing countries (Pikirayi, 2005). In Tanzania, adopting the monumentalisation approach became a trend after independence. The first two decades after independence (1961-1980) saw the construction of monuments attributed to the Majimaji War and the independence movement in different parts of Tanzania, which went hand in hand with the renaming of streets to leaders of nationalism in Africa, such as Sam Nujoma, Nelson Mandela, Jomo Kenyatta and Nnamdi Azikiwe.

History is not just a record of the past, it is a powerful tool for liberation and the formation of national identity. The treatment of monuments, which often serve as tangible representations of history, has the potential to enhance identity, while also contributing to African and global history scholarship. The scrutiny of monuments in historical education, encompassing both colonial and postcolonial monuments, presents an opportunity to integrate into the historical discourse and allows public reflection and understanding. By examining monuments, particularly those that are part of the university's daily experience, and incorporating them into history education, one can gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Tanzania's past, fostering a generation of students who are equipped to critically engage with their history and identity in the pursuit of an African renaissance.

UDSM *Lieux de Mémoire*

The UDSM can be understood through the lens of Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire*, or 'sites of memory', which refers to places imbued with historical significance and cultural meaning (Nora, 1989). As Tanzania's oldest university (Ishengoma, 2017), UDSM serves as a site that encapsulates multiple layers of memory, ranging from its founding principles to its physical establishment and leadership. These layers are historical and ideological, shaped by the values embedded in the university's creation, development and the institutional figures memorialised in its architecture.

One particularly significant aspect of UDSM's relationship to memory is the positionality of Cranford Pratt, whose name is prominently displayed on the face of one of the university's most visible buildings, the *Utawala* or Cranford Pratt building. This selective monumentalisation raises important questions about the glorification of whiteness in the university's narrative. Pratt, as a symbol of colonial academia, stands at the centre of a contested legacy. His monumental presence in this prominent space underscores a form of remembering that privileges colonial figures, while largely omitting the contributions of local Tanzanians, including the pioneers and early university supporters who envisioned it as a tool for African emancipation. This selective remembrance of history is exemplified

by the university's naming practices, where the streets of UDSM bear names like *Yombo*, *Uvumbuzi* and *Ubungo*, however, fail to acknowledge the individuals who played a central role in the institution's founding or those who directly contributed to the intellectual and political liberation of Tanzania (De Kiewiet, 1971).

Further perpetuating this historical gap, several buildings at UDSM, such as the old library, are named after figures connected to the colonial and early post-independence period. For instance, the Dr Weston building, housing the School of Law, is dedicated to the first dean of the faculty, while Manning Hall of Residence honours the first female student of UDSM. While these dedications acknowledge essential figures in the university's history, they still reflect a narrow focus that overlooks broader contributions, particularly those of local Tanzanians who were integral to the university's creation and its more significant role in the country's liberation.

The challenge of navigating the legacies of colonial monuments is a central issue in post-colonial Africa. Monuments from the colonial era were erected to honour colonial figures, soldiers and leaders for their roles in territorial conquest and domination (Elago, 2015). However, these monuments often fail to reflect the African perspective of history, which sees these exact figures as agents of oppression, rather than heroic figures. Addressing the challenge of colonial monuments requires rethinking public memory, confronting colonial legacies and actively engaging society in the process of historical reckoning. Recontextualisation, by adding interpretive plaques, counter-monuments or educational materials that critically explain the role of the monument without celebrating it uncritically. Critical engagement with history, rather than historical amnesia, and the introduction of monuments commemorating African resistance leaders, intellectuals, freedom fighters and community heroes sidelined in colonial narratives will create a more balanced public memory landscape and assert African agency in the historical record. In post-colonial African nations, there has been a growing recognition of the need to reassess the role of these monuments within national memory and identity. This reconsideration of heritage, which involves reviewing and reimagining monuments, is a complex process that requires navigating competing narratives about the past and its place in the present.

In current and historical forms, monuments have profound implications for public spaces and national identity. They embody the past in ways that challenge or reinforce present-day values, often serving as symbols of national pride or as reminders of historical injustices (Sanni, 2024). While the erasure or demolition of monuments is sometimes viewed as a means of sanitising history (Sanni, 2021), such actions can also be considered

part of a broader effort to reshape the public memory in response to changing societal values. The educational value of monuments cannot be overstated, as they provide a unique opportunity to engage with the complexities of history, including the legacies of imperialism and racial injustice (Enslin, 2020). As memorial texts embedded in the landscape, monuments often tell a singular story that reflects official narratives while excluding alternative histories. For example, placing Pratt in a privileged space without addressing the broader implications of his role in the colonial system, may obscure as much as it reveals. While Pratt's contributions to institution-building at UDSM are noteworthy, framing him solely as a benevolent founder, risks overlooking his position within larger structures of colonial authority and knowledge production. This selective remembrance can inadvertently reinforce colonial hierarchies by presenting them as neutral or even progressive, rather than critically engaging with their lasting impacts.

For educators, teaching about monuments demands an approach that exposes students to multiple historical sources and interpretations, encouraging a more comprehensive and critical engagement with the past. Moreeng and Twala (2014) argue that meaningful history teaching requires including diverse historical resources that enrich students' understanding and foster critical thinking. When considering the monumental narratives embedded in the university's architecture, it becomes essential to ask how the curriculum is connected to today's society and the emerging future. Integrating an Afro-centred curriculum, which challenges students to engage with racial pride and national identity issues, becomes central to this process (Novakowski et al., 2022).

As Thelen (1993) suggests, memory is not a passive retrieval of past events, but an active process of constructing stories about the past to meet present needs. In this context, the increasing media attention on statue removals and the histories of racial injustice have further catalysed discussions on the role of monuments in shaping collective memory. These debates have infiltrated university classrooms, promoting broader conversations about how historical narratives are constructed and whose memories are preserved in public spaces (Shelby, 2022). At UDSM, this ongoing dialogue about monuments and memory is integral to rethinking the role of history education in shaping the future of Tanzania and Africa as a whole.

To understand Pratt's monument, one must look at the spirit of monumentalisation when the idea of the university was formulated, or at least the first decade of independence (1961-1971). Immediately after Tanzania's independence, a monumentalisation project aimed to restore the pre-colonial leaders who had been forcibly enthroned by the colonial

regime (Rushohora, 2019). The Majimaji War monument in Kilwa was among such monuments established to commemorate the heroes of the war. The monumentalisation agenda was a struggle that followed that of independence, mainly aiming at repossessing what was lost during colonialism. It was a restoration project to the inferiority of the Black people who were not only enthroned, but also trampled culturally, economically, socially and politically at that time. Nkrumah Hall is one of the UDSM monuments which accorded national recognition. Completed in 1966 and named after the first president of Ghana—Kwame Nkrumah, the monument entered the national register in 2015, based mainly on its architectural significance. Nkrumah Hall monument also saw its glory in the Bank of Tanzania when it was customised in the print of 500 Tanzania shillings notes between 2003 and 2010. The Tanzanian 500 note is no longer in circulation. Replacing notes with coins abandoned the use of the Nkrumah Hall monument. From the Nkrumah Hall monument, one would see how a careful monumentalisation of the UDSM is vital as these monuments stand for the public interests and represent Tanzania. The Nkrumah Hall monument is a marker of socialism and pan-Africanism that Tanzania is acknowledged for (Olalajulo et al., 2016). Tanzania became many African countries' military and academic training centres until they regained independence (Rushohora, 2022). The questioning of Pratt's monument is, thus, beyond xenophobic whiteness or Blackness. Whiteness transfigures from myth to reality when given the positionality that everything emanates from it (Mbembe, 2015). It is the position that situates Dr Livingstone and John Speke as discoverers of the land that has scientifically been proven as the most anciently populated (Bushozi, 2022). Unlike the Cape Town Rhodes and Stellenbosch Jan Marais monuments in South Africa (to mention a couple) which are colonial-era structures (Breakfast et al., 2018), monuments at UDSM are postcolonial. The theory of 'self' ownership ought to be the governing paradigm of the true decolonisation of the landscape with a high hierarchy in both geographical location and significance for the lives of Tanzanians.

Elsewhere, the North and South universities link has been argued as a possible avenue to perpetuate the colonial situation (Brock-Utne, 1999), in this case, monumentalisation. One of the obvious questions is, who benefits from the monumentalization of Pratt? During the golden anniversary of the UDSM, when the monument was unveiled, Canada and the embassy in Tanzania were visited by the UDSM top administration. The visit was the last of the university's link with Canada (Mathew&Pratt, 1988). Plausibly, Pratt was used as a stepping-stone to access scholarships and funding for university projects that were less funded. Research funding is still a national challenge. Although efforts are seen from government bodies such as the Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH)

and the UDSM setting aside funds for research, development and innovation, most of the research conducted in Tanzania still depends on donor funds. The primary role of monuments is to instil pride in past glories, excellent leadership and memory/reminder. They are agencies of memory elucidating at a particular point the role of an individual or group in fulfilling a specific task. Pratt's monument needs such an inscription. Asking for the files that detail who Pratt landed in different university offices, which succumbed to oral memories, especially from the early encounters with the cadre of the first students of UDSM (two are still alive). Who is the custodian of the university memory institution? Should these memories be left in the hands of early intellectuals of the UDSM and wait to hear them as obituaries? Who is responsible for the monumentalisation of the Hill, and what ideology should be used in using the university space as a site of memory and memorialisation of the pedagogy, country, Africa and the world?

Only in homogeneous societies could monuments survive straightforwardly, however, whenever identities are contested, justification is inevitable. The case of the missionaries in Tanzania is interesting to borrow in this regard. For the Catholics in Dar es Salaam, a site such as Pugu, where early Benedictine missionaries were murdered during the Abushiri resistance, has become a holy site. The clergy, priests and nuns organise pilgrimages to honour the martyrs of the faith. However, the missionaries involved were at no point innocent incomers. From the word go, their primary roles were to pave the way for colonialism. Their involvement in conflict owes to their double agentive role of dealing with Christianity and government (the flag and the cross) concomitantly (Napachii, 1998). A Tanzanian priest of the same congregation, Father Simon Mgassa Tuzinde, aspires to correct this notion (Tuzinde, 2021). Father Tuzinde argues that the Africans on African soil, including Abushir, are the defenders of the dignity of the Africans. The invasion by the Germans, the suppression of the resistance and the genocide inflicted on them could not be tolerated without a fight. On the other hand, the missionaries are challenging to confer as martyrs. Tuzinde (2021: 1-2) argues that objective historical facts "do not allow to conclude that missionaries who died at Pugu and elsewhere during the German colonialism in Tanzania died for Christ. They died during the war. It was collateral damage". Equally, the heterogeneity of the founders of the university and their contributions must be enlisted in such a way that what Pratt did that surpasses the predecessors who prosed the idea, contributed to its construction, solicited books and saw the development of the university to its global ranks is elucidated.

African monumental culture-way forward

Understanding the monument from African and Western perspectives is quite different. While in Western culture, a monument is physical, in African culture, a space can be a significant marker of a person or event. The Western notion of monument emphasises durability and conservation of the visible that can be touched, unlike the abstract intangible heritage. The nature of cultural heritage includes tangible and intangible symbols and instruments of identity. Beyond materials, heritage carries emotional impacts. Built monuments are symbols of inequality (Prescott & Lahti, 2022), in the sense that they often reflect the values, power structures and dominant narratives at the expense of marginalised voices. Thus, monuments claim to represent shared memory, can perpetuate historical silences and materialise social hierarchies, reminding some communities of exclusion rather than belonging. Addressing this inequality requires a critical examination of who is commemorated, who decides and whose history is left untold in the public landscape. While the West uses media such as photographs as carriers of memory, it is commonplace for Africa to use drawings, pictographs and inscriptions, not necessarily on paper, but on trees, stones and houses. The whole idea of monumentalisation is a Western concept; its entry into Africa depicted the superiority of the colonisers. In an academic institution, monumentalism should also show the sophistication of the university. Where pen and paper are possible, these should be detailed to elaborate the significance of the space. The elaborations help guide tourists who visit the university, mainly for its historical significance or collaboration. In the wake of digitalisation, digital maps of sites and the location of university monuments are also significant. It is essential that the detailed digitised information be free of error.

The fact that Tanzania has never been a victim of urban fallism, as actions of contesting, transforming and removing monuments from urban spaces (Frank & Ristic, 2020) should never be taken for granted. Silences over monuments tend to result in memoricide (killing of memories embodied in monuments and historic buildings) (see also Bevan, 2006). Dar es Salaam's old city has fallen prey to memoricide, where unregulated constructions have destroyed monumental architecture that would have otherwise stood as national monuments. The custodians of the memory institution of UDSM must be eager to preserve the university's heritage. These are national treasures, and the university, should be the agency for conserving and preserving such heritage. The UDSM has courses in preservation and tourism. The UDSM could be used as a ground not only for pedagogy, but also be at the forefront to oversee that the university monuments, toponyms and memorial

landscape are preserved for the present and future generations. The memorialisation and monumentalisation agenda should consider the agentive roles of the memorialised and look for heritage's intrinsic and extrinsic value. The safeguarding of heritage, according to these values, could aid in avoiding the bias. In the absence of the original memory of the university, the memorialisation ought to be a professional body guiding issues of heritage conservation, cultural heritage impact assessment, and other archaeological, historical and cultural heritage that might be found in the university. This would be a significant humanities service to the university and the country.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the layered historical, ideological and educational dimensions of monuments at the UDSM using the case of the Cranford Pratt building to interrogate broader questions of memory, identity and postcolonial legacy. As the university marks a decade of the College of Humanities (2014-2024), it is an opportune moment to reflect not only on its institutional growth, but also on the memorial landscape that has helped shape—and, in some ways, distorted—its identity. Drawing inspiration from Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's vision of a university committed to objectivity and national relevance, the paper argues for a more deliberate and critically engaged approach to history education and monumentalisation.

At UDSM, monuments are more than physical markers; they are ideological texts that reflect who is remembered, how they are remembered, and for what purposes. Memorialisation of Cranford Pratt, without recognition of other local contributors', risks perpetuating colonialism within an institution meant to embody African agency and liberation. However, rather than advocating for the erasure of such monuments, this paper calls for their recontextualisation through interpretive inscriptions, curricular integration and public engagement, as part of a broader decolonial project. Together with the curriculum review, interpreting the monuments serves as a pedagogical tool for fostering historical consciousness and encouraging students to examine critically and question inherited narratives. In doing so, UDSM embraces its role not only as an academic institution, but also as a custodian of national memory.

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