Mourning Mandela: sacred drama and digital visuality in Cape Town

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Abstract
The world united in unprecedented ways in mourning the global icon Nelson Mandela, an emotionally charged historical event in which digital visuality played an influential role. The memorial service for Nelson Mandela on Tuesday, 10 December 2013, gathered dignitaries and celebrities from around the world at the First National Bank Stadium in Johannesburg, to mourn the passing of Madiba and to celebrate his life work. At the Grand Parade in Cape Town, the event was broadcast on large public screens, followed by live music performances and narrowcast interaction with the audience. Building on recent research on public screens during global media events, this article addresses the mediated mourning rituals at the Grand Parade in terms of a sacred drama. Focusing on social relationality, the article discusses how digital visuality mediated a sense of global communitas, thus momentarily overcoming historical frictions between the global north and the global south, while expanding the fame of Madiba. Paying attention to the public display of visual memory objects and the emotional agency of images, it argues that digital visuality mediated social frictions between the living and the dead, while recasting a historical subject as a historical object. The article further discusses how digital visuality mediated cultural frictions of apartheid and xenophobia, through the positioning of Mandela in the pantheon of Pan-African icons, thus underlining the African origin of this global icon. The analysis is based on ethnographic observations and experiences in Cape Town.

Keywords: Madiba; South Africa; digital visuality; sacred drama; virtual immortality; public screens; ritual; media; friction; co-presence

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This paper is part of the Special Issue: Visual Frictions. More papers from this issue can be found at www.aestheticsandculture.net

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Citation: Journal of Aesthetics & Culture, Vol. 7, 2015 http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/jac.v7.28178
Like a tsunami, the death of Nelson Mandela on 5 December 2013 sent waves throughout the global mediascape, culminating in the funeral in Qunu on Sunday, 15 December. Further to the public announcement of his passing, news agencies around the world broadcast the breaking news, which also spread rapidly through social and mobile media. As the government of South Africa declared a 10-day national mourning period, media coverage gained momentum, while commemorative rituals were organized around the world. In Cape Town, images of Mandela appeared all over town, along with textual tributes, often citing his words. Commemorative sites were erected in churches and public places, while hotels, shops, and even ATM machines displayed images of Madiba. In Facebook, individuals changed their portrait photos to photographs of Mandela, while sharing images with citations of his writings and speeches. Through various forms of digital visuality, people and places around the world were thus connected in mourning Mandela, while celebrating his life.

This article discusses the mourning rituals for Mandela at the Grand Parade in Cape Town on 10 December 2013 in terms of a “sacred drama” (Figure 1). During this event, the official memorial service in Johannesburg was broadcast on large public screens, followed by live music and narrowcast interaction with the audience. The centre stage for this cultural performance was a fenced passage in front of the City Hall where people placed photographs and other memory objects in tribute to Mandela in what constituted a “social aesthetic frame.” Such visual displays have become quite commonplace, turning public places into commemorative social spaces to mark the death of specific individuals, often celebrities, an early example of which was tributes to Princess Diana. Through digital media, the commemoration of celebrities takes on global dimensions, as exemplified by the multilayered media environments through which the death of Michael Jackson was recognized around the world. Building on earlier research on public screens by media scholars, this article discusses the digital visuality of mourning rituals for Mandela using anthropological theory on globalization, media, ritual, and fame. In using the term digital visuality, I refer to a wide range of cultural forms and practices in which digital and visual media converge, from digital public screens and visual memory objects to mediated co-presence and virtual immortality. From an anthropological perspective, digital visuality offers valuable insights into spatiotemporal mediations of human relatedness in an age of interactive global media. The overriding question that this article seeks to address is: How does digital visuality mediate historical, social, and cultural frictions in an interconnected world? The analysis is based on ethnographic observations and experiences in Cape Town.

MEDIATED CO-PRESENCE AT THE GRAND PARADE

On Tuesday, 10 December, an impressive number of dignitaries gathered in Johannesburg to attend the memorial service for Nelson Mandela at the First National Bank (FNB) Stadium. This stadium, bordering Soweto, is the largest one in Africa and it was the venue for the 2010 FIFA World Cup Final. For the memorial service, residents of Johannesburg lined up outside the stadium already the evening before and many more flocked to the stadium on the day itself. An estimated 80,000 people and over 80 heads of state and 30 former heads of state, leaders of 6 international organizations, royalty from 9 countries, and almost a dozen world celebrities attended the service, making it one of the largest gatherings of world leaders. The memorial service was broadcast and webcast by the South African
Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), along with regional and international media. In addition to Mandela’s status as a global icon, international media presence was undoubtedly facilitated by the fact that many foreign correspondents cover Africa from South Africa. It rained throughout the memorial service, which in Africa is considered a blessing.

In Cape Town, the Grand Parade served as a venue for public screening of the memorial service in Johannesburg, broadcast in real time on large public screens. The public screening was one of many mourning rituals organized by the City of Cape Town in different parts of town to enable citizens to pay their tributes. The site itself was culturally and historically significant. The Grand Parade is the main public square in Cape Town and the site for the City Hall. It has been a venue for political rallies and this is where the 2010 World Cup FIFA Fan Fest was held. This is also where Nelson Mandela gave his first speech following his release after 27 years in prison, as recounted in his Long Walk to Freedom. The city’s connection to Mandela was visually inscribed in large banners decorating the City Hall, depicting Mandela’s portrait and the words “Cape Town honours Nelson Mandela 2013” and “Cape Town 11 February 1990. First speech by Nelson Mandela as a free man” (Figure 2).

The memorial service for Mandela attracted a few hundred people to the Grand Parade, the audience growing as the hot sun descended and the working day came to an end. Most people followed the memorial service on the two large screens outside the City Hall, one on each side of the building. Two additional screens located further away in the square were only attended by a handful of people. The public screens were large flat panel displays, with powerful sound systems. You could easily watch the screens and hear the sound from a distance of 10–20 m. Yet people congregated near the screens, thus forming a more intimate collective of mourners.

As people gathered near the screens at the City Hall, the live broadcast mediated a sense of “co-presence,” of taking part in an event that was taking place elsewhere. Enveloped by a solemn and dignified atmosphere, people intently watched the screens, while the soundscape was filled with tributes and music from the memorial service. Through the televised broadcast, people could participate in the service in Johannesburg at a distance, thus sharing the moment with others. As research during the FIFA World Cup in 2010 has demonstrated, live broadcasts on public screens create a sense of “being there from afar.” Mediated co-presence is augmented by the cultural meaning of the event, in this case linking people from near and afar in a ritual of collective mourning. People were attracted to the screen site at the Grand Parade to share the moment with other people, thus underlining the “capacity of the screen to serve as the site for collective enactment of public rituals, including celebration and mourning.”

**DIGITAL VISUALITY AND GLOBAL COMMUNITAS**

By connecting mourners around the world, the public broadcast of the memorial service constituted a “cultural performance,” a highly ritualized event with a pronounced degree of reflexivity serving as a commentary and celebration of “human relatedness.” In this particular case, social connections spanned a vast variety of social constellations, from immediate family to world political leaders, with a long history dating back to the fight for independence from colonial rule and the long struggle against apartheid. Similarly, the social relations spanned the world, from Castro in Cuba to Obama in the United States, thus connecting...
the global north and the global south in intricate social networks. During the memorial service, the programme director read out names of the many countries that were present, while the use of idioms such as “father of the nation,” “son of Africa,” and “son of the world” underlined the cosmopolitan character of this commemorative event for Mandela.

At the Grand Parade, people from all walks of life shared the moment with participants in Johannesburg and beyond, thus forming a global web of social relations. The audience was very mixed, from young men in cool hip hop style to middle-aged men and women in casual or professional attire, from students and political activists to homeless people in rag tags. Black and white people stood next to one another, along with people of different cultural origin, residents sharing the space with guest workers and tourists. This social and cultural diversity was in itself a tribute to Mandela’s life work, a post-apartheid nation in an interconnected world. It could also be interpreted as somewhat evocative of the cosmopolitan aesthetic and creolized diversity of legendary South African township Sophiatown, which has inspired anthropological theorizing on the global ecumene.15

The televised memorial service illustrated how digital visuality can mediate spatiotemporal constellations that multiply space and conflate time. Public screenings offer mediated forms of “spatial pluralisation,” allowing for an event to “take place” in different places at the same time, as participants in one place are “symbolically connected” to others in other locations.16 As people are connected in real time, these screenings also mediate temporal convergence. Public live broadcasts thus bring a new dimension to “TV time” in the “making and expressing history in ex-colonies.”17 On this occasion, TV time did not only assure the “coevalness between the periphery and the metropole,” but illuminated the breaking through of the colonialist and imperialist “denial of coevalness.”18 For a brief moment in time, South Africa was the centre of world attention, along with its historical connectedness to freedom struggles around the world. The social and political significance of these “transnational connections” was perhaps most visibly manifested in the presence of President Obama, the first black president of the United States paying his tributes to the first black president of South Africa.20

In this context, digital visuality mediated a sense of global communitas, linking people around the world in a temporary web of human relatedness. By seeing each other on and off the screen, people could visualize a shared, collective experience. What makes the term communitas suitable in this context is that Turner insisted on the non-territorial nature of community and the existential quality of communitas.21 Returning to the memorial service for Mandela, it can be argued that a global communitas was formed as the world united in the mourning of a global icon. And it was through digital visuality that this “interconnectedness of the world” was achieved, as it was by seeing each other on digital screens that “the entire inhabited world” or “global ecumene” could be envisioned.22

The notion of global communitas is useful for understanding how digital visuality can overcome historical frictions. Turner discusses how communitas break through in the interstices of structure (liminality), at the edges of structure (marginality) and from beneath structure (inferiority).23 The rigid statuses of structure are thus dialectically and asymmetrically related to the concrete and idiosyncratic relations of communitas. But there are times, especially during ritual events, when the social order is turned upside down, when “spontaneous communitas” are formed, sharing a sense of communion, and when the “underling becomes the uppermost,” thus revealing the “powers of the weak.”24

When the world united to mourn Mandela, global structures of inequality and injustice were momentarily overcome, and the powers of the weak were revealed in a global communitas centring on “peripheral” South Africa. A global icon once classified as a terrorist by global power was now recast as a moral leader, a symbol of humanity. This was a ritual turnover where the marginality and inferiority of the global south momentarily could break through historical narratives dominated by the global north, a rupture mediated through the digital visuality of images of a global icon and mourners from around the world, coming together to reflect and remember a history of freedom struggle.

SACRED DRAMA AND THE FAME OF MADIBA

During the mediated memorial service, the Grand Parade was transformed into a ritualized place of
public liminality, serving as a stage for a “sacred drama.” While many rituals, for example initiation rites, involve a liminal phase of seclusion, often in hidden or far-off places, there are also more public rituals, often marking a whole groups’ passage, which have their liminality in public places, like village greens or city squares. When ritual events are staged, these public places are “ritually transformed” for a “privileged period of time.” On this occasion, the Grand Parade remained an open public space, where people could come and go freely. But the space was also ritually bordered, especially through the fenced area in front of the City Hall, which was transformed into a social aesthetic frame, a sensory structure that through the placement of visual memory objects served as a reflection on broader social processes.

Through the performance of a sacred drama, with its narratives of heroic deeds, morality and transcendent beings, society’s deepest values emerged. Mandela’s immediate family as well as world political leaders made eloquent tributes, weaving Mandela’s life into the fabric of world history. While the cultural practice of praise is a common feature of mourning rituals in Africa, in this case extraordinary epithets were pronounced by eminent world leaders. If anything, the praise for Mandela expressed by dignitaries at the memorial service confirmed his iconic status. Through these tributes, society’s deepest values were articulated, emphasizing core values like freedom, justice, humility, tolerance, reconciliation, forgiveness, and humanity.

Through this sacred drama, the fame of Mandela was expanded in time and space, as the world got to know his clan name Madiba, an honorary title carrying the cultural attributes of moral leadership. Munn discusses value transformation in terms of the expansion of “intersubjective spacetime,” a social process in which a person’s fame travels across time and space. Through the global spread of the name Madiba, Mandela’s self was spatiotemporally expanded, linking his ancestral past to the present and future, while connecting South Africa with the world at large. As his name travelled around the world, Madiba’s “virtual influence” was extended to distant others.

Digital visuality mediated the expansion of Madiba’s fame in significant ways, especially through the global circulation of images of his face and words. Munn notes the importance of “witnessing” in the value creation of fame, since knowledge of a person by distant others is critical to the spatiotemporal expansion of moral influence. Although she focuses on how fame is expanded through discourse, as people talk about a name, through global digital media visual manifestations of fame are becoming increasingly significant. A comparable example is the role of photographs of Diana’s face in the iconicity following her death. Since Mandela was a global icon prior to his death, his face was already familiar to people around the world. Through digital media, Mandela’s own words were embedded in images of his face, thus combining different forms of visual expression. People around the world could thus “witness” Madiba’s moral deeds, which expanded his moral influence, while affording him a state of virtual immortality.

Liminality is an ambiguous condition, which became evident in audiences’ responses to the speech by the South African President Jacob Zuma. While most tributes were accompanied by loud cheers from the audience, President Zuma’s closing address met a more mixed response with boohs and jeers. Even at the Grand Parade, the response was mixed, some people clapping their hands, others boooing and turning their thumbs downward as a sign of disapproval. This expression of popular discontent can be understood in relation to the social and political significance of deep values in a sacred drama. On the one hand, we find “cosmonogic narratives” of heroism, morality, and transcendence. But we may also find sceptical judgements of people and public policies in relation to these deep values: “the vices, follies, stupidities, and abuses of contemporary holders of high political, economic, or religious status may be satirized, ridiculed, or contemned in terms of axiomatic values.”

The performance of the sacred drama was accentuated by visual displays decorating the symbolic border of the social aesthetic frame (Figure 3). People laid down flowers, images of Mandela, photos of themselves, and texts of love, gratitude, respect, and admiration, often citing Mandela’s own words. This colourful display grew in volume as the hours passed, people constantly passing through to pay their tribute. At the end of the passage, people could sign books of condolence or submit electronic versions on computers made available. People often took pictures of the objects
they had placed against the fence, along with commemorative objects placed by others as well as pictures of themselves, typically taken by others rather than selfies.

Within the social aesthetic frame, digital visuality mediated social frictions between the living and the dead, as social relations were reaffirmed through visual memory objects that immortalized the deceased. Although anticipated for years, the death of Mandela caused a rupture in the social fabric, cutting him loose from the world of the living. But the web of social relations in which his life was embedded remained alive, materialized in the placement of visual memory objects that connected the living with the dead. Through digital visuality, people could express their relatedness to Mandela, while acknowledging his life achievements, often combining photographs and texts in personalized tributes. Through these mediated commemorative practices, the characteristics of photography as a medium that keeps alive contacts between the living and the dead was reaffirmed. Similarly, through digital visuality, the ability of photography to “resurrect the deceased” by giving them “visual immortality” was asserted. As his face was reproduced and rematerialized through photographs, along with visual manifestations of his words and deeds, Mandela was kept alive. By crafting and displaying his words and images, the living could engage in interaction with the dead, while retaining his mediated co-presence among people whole lives he had touched.

MEDIATED MUSIC AND NARROWCAST INTERACTION

After the live broadcast, a commemorative event was organized in the Grand Parade, with live music performances by local artists and mediated interaction with the audience, all of which was narrowcast on the public screens and facilitated by a media professional (Figure 4). As the sound of live music spread well beyond the public square, a growing number of people flocked to the Grand Parade, while many who had attended the broadcast memorial service remained. The audience retained its mobility, some people staying for a few minutes, others remaining for hours.

Local musicians performed popular songs in several languages, including English, Afrikaans, and Zulu. Songs by international artists were mixed with songs by famous South African musicians, including the popular songs *Pata Pata* by Miriam Makeba and *Black President* by Brenda Fassie. Many of the songs carried political messages, related to the freedom struggle and some of them had been specifically composed for Mandela. The songs were well known to the audiences and many people sang along, while also dancing, some waving their arms or flags. Each group of artists was only given time for a few songs, but all of

![Figure 3. Social aesthetic frame with visual memory objects.](image)

![Figure 4. Live music on screen.](image)
them concluded with songs about Mandela, thus using the occasion to pay their personal tributes through music (Figure 5).

After a while, the programme turned more interactive, with active engagement with the audience. The facilitator encouraged people to share their thoughts and feelings about Madiba. Some people became quite enthusiastic and volunteered, even demanded, to speak up in front of the camera; others were shyer. Since the audience was very mixed, with people of all colour and from different social backgrounds, the facilitator tried to get as many different people as possible to participate, making a special effort to involve women (Figure 6).

The interaction with the audience was narrowcast on the public screens, thus creating a mediated form of co-presence in real time and space. Not only were the audiences physically present, but they could also see themselves on the large public screens, which strengthened their “emotional engagement,” while adding a “self-reflexive layer that ‘thickens’ the mediated experience of an event.”38 This visual mediation exemplified how public screenings of television broadcasts are combined with interactive activities, the screen site functioning as a collective site for participatory media culture.39

During the cultural programme, participants created their own visual media memories, digital visuality thus expanding the time and space of mediated co-presence. In most cases, people used their mobile phones to take photographs and videos of the music performances and interaction, often raising their arms to get a better angle for their shots, thus reaching above the crowd around them. Similar to what was observed in the FIFA Fan Parks, many took pictures of the screens as well as what was going on around them.40 These digital recordings served as a form of visual memory making, allowing for later viewings, in other places, with other people. But digital and mobile photography also enabled people to instantly share their images with others, by uploading their photos and video clips online. Through digital visuality, mediated co-presence could thus be spatiotemporally expanded across time (present, past, and future) as well as space (here, there, and elsewhere).

EMOTIONAL AGENCY AND IMAGINARY PRESENCE

The commemorative cultural programme had a more festive atmosphere, with an undertone of sadness, combining feelings of grief, joy, and love. These feelings were the dominant emotions of the mourning period, a cultural melange of mourning and celebration. It is of course impossible to know what emotions people held within themselves, but collectively expressed feelings oscillated between sadness and grief as well as happiness and joy, underlined by powerful expressions of love.
Emotions play an important role in all performances, especially rituals, since they have a unique ability to affect the cognitive as well as emotional state of the audience. Performances often contain “double emotional involvement,” starting with the emotions that encourage people to engage in a performance, followed by the arousal of emotion during the course of the performance. This double emotional involvement was clearly at play in the mourning rituals at the Grand Parade. People were attracted to the place because it was linked to the memorial service in Johannesburg. The mourning ritual was in turn an emotionally charged cultural performance, which afforded participants a collective experience of emotional arousal.

I had myself been drawn to the Grand Parade for emotional reasons, to share this moment of grief and joy with other people. As I listened to speeches, songs, and tributes, I reflected on the ways in which my own life had intersected with the life of Mandela, especially his struggle against apartheid, which had been my political awakening as a teenager in Sweden in the early 1980s. I was also recalling the televised broadcast of Mandela’s inauguration as President in 1994, which I had watched during fieldwork in Cambodia, a beacon of hope amidst the human tragedy I was documenting. And here I was, feeling privileged to be part of the public outpouring of gratitude, admiration, and respect, a historical moment shared by millions around the world. As I immersed myself in the emotionally charged atmosphere at the Grand Parade, I recalled the words of the old grandmother I had encountered in a township a few days earlier: “We cry for Madiba. He was like Moses.”

At the Grand Parade, participants’ emotional state was augmented through the embodied experience of being in a sacred place, which could be perceived with all the senses. The heat of the sun and the breeze of the wind added to the tactile experience of sharing the space with other people. Participants were also engaged through their aural senses, through the sound of music, speeches, and tributes as well as announcements by the facilitator. Sounds from the nearby traffic seeped into the square, accentuating its urban location, while setting it aside from the city soundscape. Visual expressions were ubiquitous, the surrounding visual landscape containing significant landmarks of Cape Town.

During the narrowcast interaction, people made strong statements, often expressing their feelings for Mandela (respect, admiration, gratitude) in a highly personal manner, many times addressing Madiba directly, loudly declaring their love for him. This personalized form of tribute accentuated the ritualized performance of social relations, combining collective and individual expressions of emotion with a heightened sense of human relatedness, which included the deceased.

The imaginary presence of Madiba acted as an emotional agent, with a moral imperative (Figure 7). Svašek has discussed the “emotional agency” of material objects, more specifically human body parts and remains, arguing that such objects are often perceived as subject-like forces, which are experienced through the senses, and tend to express and evoke strong emotions. In the case of Mandela, visual images, more specifically photographs, played a similar role, carrying a high degree of social agency. The photographs were not only representations of Mandela, but they allowed for his “resurrection,” thus exemplifying the “uncanny” ability of photography to mediate between the living and the dead. Photographs of Mandela mediated a sense of visual presence, while conveying the transcendental qualities of a historical subject who was now transformed into a historical object.

Figure 7. Emotional agency and visual presence of Madiba.
PAN-AFRICAN WORLD HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Through digital visuality, Mandela was also inscribed as a Pan-African icon, thus mediating cultural frictions of apartheid and xenophobia (Figures 8 and 9). As noted during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, “deliberate attempts were made to blend pan-Africanism with South African nationalism,” thus emphasizing the “African-ness” of the World Cup. Similarly, during the mourning rituals for Mandela, Pan-Africanism was visually prominent, temporarily glossing over conflicts of xenophobia, while placing the anti-apartheid struggle in a wider African context. Digital visuality mediated the positioning of Mandela in the pantheon of Pan-African icons, connecting him with his less visible predecessors. It has been noted that “the face of Nelson Mandela is instantly recognisable around the globe,” while that of Kwame Nkrumah, referred to as “the Nelson Mandela of the 1950s and 1960s,” is less known. In casting Mandela as a Pan-African icon, his place in postcolonial history was linked to earlier Pan-African icons who struggled for the total liberation and unity of Africa. The Pan-African dimension of Mandela’s legacy was pronounced in the last phase of the mourning ritual.

During the funeral service in Qunu, only African leaders were called upon to make tributes, which firmly embedded Mandela in the history of Pan-African freedom struggle. In the iconic inscription of Mandela as “son of Africa” and “son of the world,” the fame of Madiba signified the spatiotemporal expansion of Pan-Africanism, thus valorising an African version of cosmopolitanism. With its struggle for Africa’s rightful place in the world, Pan-Africanism rests on notions of “African humanity,” the pre-colonial underpinnings of which shape the dialectic of “Afromodernity” and “Euromodernity.” It could be argued that with its ethos of equality and justice in world society, Pan-Africanism redefines western ideals of enlightenment, while challenging the continued racialism of the modern world order. In writing the history of Mandela, this untold story of the subaltern other was firmly inscribed through words and images, thus visualizing what is often made invisible in historical narratives, while giving a deeper meaning to Madiba’s moral fame as a global icon of African origin.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

[T]he meaning of a man’s life, and of each moment in it, becomes manifest to others only when his life is ended.
As discussed throughout this article, it was through digital visuality that the fame of Madiba could travel around the world, linking the past with the present and the future (Figure 10). For a brief moment in time, visual images of a global icon could gloss over historical frictions, creating a sense of global communitas. Through visual memory objects, social frictions between the living and the dead could be mediated, reaffirming social relations while immortalizing the deceased. And by positioning Mandela in the pantheon of Pan-African icons, cultural frictions of xenophobia could momentarily be glossed over, while placing the anti-apartheid struggle in an African context. As digital images carrying the name, face, and words of Madiba continue to travel, they are expanding his fame into the future. In social media, Mandela “lives on” in a state of virtual immortality, his moral influence mediated through online forms of digital visuality that connect millions of followers around the world in webs of human relatedness.¹¹

Figure 10. “Your legacy and wisdoms will live on, within us forever.”

I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter. I have made mistakes along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.¹², p. 751

Notes

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2. Paula Uimonen, “Visual Identity in Facebook,” Visual Studies 28 (2013): 122–35.
3. Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg, Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief (London: Routledge, 2002).
4. James Bennett, “Michael Jackson: Celebrity Death, Mourning and Media Events,” Celebrity Studies 1 (2010): 231–2; and Patrick McCurdy, “The King is Dead, Long Live the King: Meditations on Media Events and Michael Jackson,” Celebrity Studies 1 (2010): 236–8.
5. Scott Mcquire, “Rethinking Media Events: Large Screens, Public Space Broadcasting and Beyond,” New Media & Society 12 (2010): 567–82; and Andreas Widholm and Karin Becker, “Celebrating with the Celebrities: Television in Public Space during Two Royal Weddings,” Celebrity Studies 6 (2014): 6–22.
6. This article does not attempt to provide a full account of Mandela’s political life before, during and after his imprisonment, nor does it address the complexities of the anti-apartheid struggle or the intricacies of post-apartheid politics in South Africa. Instead, the article focuses on mourning rituals for Mandela as observed in Cape Town immediately following his death.
7. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the conference Beyond the Frame in April 2014 and the workshop Visual Frictions and their Futures in February 2015 organized by the Nordic Network on Digital Visuality (NNDV). I am grateful for the constructive critique of colleagues at both events as well as the feedback from undergraduate students in social anthropology at Stockholm University on the first version of the paper. I humbly appreciate Ulf Hannerz’ constructive comments on the text prior to publication. I further acknowledge the critique of an anonymous reviewer.
8. I arrived in Cape Town on 6 December 2013 to attend the ICTD Conference at the University of Cape Town. During my 1-week stay I attended several mourning rituals, observed visual commemorations in town and around the Cape, followed media coverage, and participated in online interaction in social media.
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14. Turner, The Anthropology of Performance, 99.
15. Ulf Hannerz, “Sophiatown: The View from Afar,” Journal of Southern African Studies 20 (1994): 181–93.
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23. Turner, The Ritual Process, 128.
24. Ibid., 138.
25. Ibid., 102.
26. Turner, The Anthropology of Performance, 102.
27. Ibid., 101–2.
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35. Ibid.
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40. Becker and Widholm, “Being There from Afar.”
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45. Behrend, Contesting Visibility, 200.
46. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “Pan-Africanism and the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa,” 406.
47. Ama Biney, “The Legacy of Kwame Nkrumah in Retrospect,” The Journal of Pan African Studies 2 (2008): 129.
48. Kwame Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1963); and Julius Nyerere, Freedom and Unity. Uhuru na umoja. A Selection from Writings and Speeches 1952–65 (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).
49. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2012), 9.
50. Turner, The Anthropology of Performance, 97.
51. The Facebook page of the Nelson Mandela Foundation has over 126,000 likes and continues to share images and citations of Mandela. The SABC TV live stream of the memorial service is available on YouTube and has received over 312,000 views. Viewer statistics as of October 2015.
52. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, 751.