

Tangible and Intangible Aspects of Individual Experiences of Monuments: The Role of the Door of No Return in Remembrance of the Slave Trade in Ouidah (Benin)

Gbègnidaho Achille Zohoun

Introduction

It took a long time for the medical world to acknowledge the role of leeches in treating vascular diseases, despite their ugliness. It has taken just as long for analyses of the slave trade to focus not only on the rupture that it caused but also on the cultural enrichment that occurred around the Atlantic world despite the tragedy. When exploring the slave trade in Danxomè in Benin, sites of intercultural dialogue begin to emerge from amid some of the darker gardens of memory. Artworks establish links between continents that played different roles in the slave trade. This article paves the way for reinterpreting and materialising memory in politics and heritage. It seeks to answer the following questions with regard to monuments marking this painful past:

- How can a public monument permanently embody the traumatic memory, while the moment when the pain was experienced is distant from the contemporary conjunctures of the descendants of the victims? How can such a monument reconcile contrasting memories?
- Can a memorial remain a symbol of National History without excessive nostalgia and without anesthetizing the collective conscience?
- Finally, how can an artist, beneficiary of a public commission, combine his aesthetic and his particular interest with the collective memory?

Drawing on these questions, this article will discuss the Benin people's reception of memorial monuments and the role of these monuments in international relations.

Memorial Monuments to the Slave Trade and Globalisation of Artistic Representations

Is there a single country in the world today without memorials or heritage sites? Of course not. Where does this tradition of honouring a deceased individual or group with a memorial, or of commemorating an event by depicting it on monuments come from? In Africa, the megaliths found in Egypt, Ethiopia, Senegal and many other cultures materialise the memory of events and people. In precolonial Danxomè, the portable altars known in the Fongbé language as asen, which were

usually made from copper alloy, iron and wood, represented the memory of a deceased person, who was celebrated with libations at the foot of this symbolic object that materialised their noble name.¹

The *asen* – sometimes referred to as *assen hotagantin* – linked the world of the living and the world of the ancestors through the deceased person's spirit. This object was intended to preserve the memory of the dead and the area housing it was considered sacred and reserved exclusively for reverence.



Fig. 1: Asen Danxomè Kingdom, 19th century, Benin. © Patrick Gries

Today, memorials are the product of the policies of states, which invest in artistic creations or events and create links between places and the memories they evoke. From this perspective, monuments dedicated to the slave trade represent milestones in remembrance practices. Depending on where they are erected, these monuments sometimes take on an international dimen-

¹ Name adopted by a Danxomè king when he ascended the throne. Differing from the king's birth name (first names and surname), it conveyed a message of action or governance. From that point on, the king would only be called by this name, which was akin to an incantation

sion. Examples of this include the Ark of Return in New York;² the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery in Nantes, France;³ the Cap 110 Memorial in Martinique;⁴ the African American Family Monument in Savannah, Georgia, in the United States;⁵ the Maroons of Freedom in Rémire-Montjoly, French Guiana;⁶ the Slavery Memorial in Cape Town, South Africa;⁷ the Monument to Commemorate the 1811 Slave Uprising in St Leu, Réunion;⁸ the Shimoni Slave Caves in Kenya;⁹ Clave in Rotterdam, the Netherlands;¹⁰ the Stone Town Slavery Memorial in Zanzibar, Tanzania;¹¹ the ACTe Memorial in Guadeloupe;¹² the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington;¹³ and finally, the Door of No Return in Ouidah, Benin. These monuments embody common, societal consciousness of a history of suffering. They are a public and political symbol of a painful shared heritage between descendants of the victims and profiteers of slavery.

But is capturing suffering in death not a fleeting exercise? What can we say about the outcome of these depictions in contemporary society? We must ask ourselves whether the historical, architectural, artistic and scientific context and space of a memorial is still in step with society and whether the imaginary of the slave trade conveyed by the memorial is capable of preventing or healing the wounds of racism, a product of the slave trade. Monumentalising the memory of the slave trade has not brought a permanent end to this tragic practice: despite the prominence of these monuments, modern-day slavery still exists. The unconscious legacy of the slave trade threatens social cohesion, not only in the Black Atlantic but also in Beninese society, where families from south to north still clash at marriages between different bloodlines because of the different roles played in the slave trade by the bride and groom's grandparents.

- 2 It was designed by Rodney Léon, an American architect of Haitian origin who was selected from 310 applicants from more than 83 different countries. The memorial to the abolition of slavery was inaugurated in March 2015
- 3 This site was inaugurated in March 2012. It is one of the largest heritage sites commemorating slavery in Europe, stretching 7,000m² along the banks of the Loire on a scale that is commensurate with the city's role in the slave trade.
- 4 These 15 statues were built in 1998 in the city of Diamant. Made from concrete, they are each 2.5 metres tall, weigh 4 tonnes, and are positioned facing the Gulf of Guinea. This is the site where one of the last slave ships ran aground during a storm.
- 5 This statue symbolises the abolition of slavery and was erected in 2002. The monument depicts a modern Black family who have broken their chains
- 6 This monument commemorating the abolition of slavery was inaugurated in 2008. It depicts a man breaking his chains and a woman releasing a bird. French Guiana commemorates the abolition of slavery on 10 June.
- 7 This memorial to slavery can be found in Church Square. This was where the slaves waited for their masters until mass ended. The monument is made up of 11 granite blocks set out in front of a building that houses a permanent exhibition on the history and abolition of slavery. Some of the blocks feature the names of slaves who were sold in the square.
- 8 Inaugurated in November 2011, the monument pays tribute to the slaves involved in the Saint-Leu uprising in 1811. It shows the heads of slaves sentenced to death after the uprising and a list of names of those who participated in the revolt. Réunion commemorates the abolition of slavery on December 20.
- 9 In the 18th century, Shimoni was one of the first ports used to transport African slaves to the Middle East. The Shimoni Slave Caves cover an area of 5 kilometres.
- 10 This monument commemorating the abolition of slavery in the former Dutch colonies was unveiled to the public in 2013 in Rotterdam, a former slave-trading port. Standing 9 metres high and 5 metres long, it is topped by 4 statues
- 11 Stone Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was the largest slave market in Zanzibar, an important port for transporting African slaves to the Middle East. The site of the former market is now occupied by a cathedral, a museum on the history and abolition of slavery and a monument depicting five slaves chained to one another
- 12 The ACTe Memorial or 'Caribbean Centre of Expressions and Memory of the Slave Trade and Slavery' is one of the most impressive memorials to this historical period in the world. Inaugurated in 2015, it covers 7,800m² and explores the history of slave trading and the abolition of slavery. The memorial received more than 110,000 visitors in its first year.
- 13 Built on the site of a former slave market, the museum spans almost 40,000m² across six floors and comprises 27 exhibition rooms and more than 30,000 artefacts collected over a period of 13 years. Inaugurated in September 2016, it is the largest museum of African-American history in the United States. The cost of the monument was 540 million dollars, 50% of which was provided by the federal government. The other half was donated by private individuals such as Oprah Winfrey and Bill Gates.



Fig. 2: The Door of No Return in Ouidah, Benin.

In order to fully grasp the impact of these memorials on everyday life, we must analyse the functioning of memorials as artworks materialising memory, and of memory itself, and the role played by the brain.

Creative Imagination and Intangible Memory: The Brain

Since slavery was abolished, the phenomenon has shifted from the tangible dimension to the intangible dimension of memory. Only art allows us to reconstruct it. Insofar as it is intended to make an invisible entity visible – the past but also the return of the ancestors – the Door of No Return possesses an intangible dimension that transcends its physical perception.

How can art extract tragedy from memory, reproduce shock and horror, and draw out lessons to be learned? Neuroscience casts light on the principles and mechanisms for the reproduction, dissemination, conservation and transmission of memories through artworks and monuments. According to Gbètoho Fortuné Gankpe at the Laboratoire d'Études et de Recherche-Action en Santé in Benin, emotion depends on humoral and nervous mechanisms that are essential in activating neural networks (Gankpe 2021). In his view, emotion is a neural circuit that draws on the limbic system as its main morphological and anatomical foundation. The process of emotion formation and consolidation involves the brain structures comprising the Papez circuit. When the memory fails, we are unable to feel or grasp time and space. In other words, memory (what we can remember) conditions our awareness of time and space. Therefore, awareness of memory structures emotions. Without this mechanism, we experience only vague emotions and are unable to distinguish between positive and negative effects.

The mechanisms for producing emotion and memory use practically the same neural circuits. In fact, our brain is like a machine with a coding system that allows us to see and perceive the world, construct memories and form dreams and projects. In all its forms, art inhibits or activates these neural networks via the senses: smell, sight (including different colours and shapes) and hearing. Artworks trigger the innate cerebral faculties of reason and emotion that allow us to analyse, understand and feel the affective states of others. Meanwhile, the neural substrates of memory in the brain help consolidate these memories.

Based on the mechanisms that allow emotion to be reproduced, how can artistic and architectural media render, convey, transfer and sustain painful emotions and events? Are memorials or monuments able to trigger the production of memory and the emotion accompanying it? If our ability to feel the emotional and affective expressions of others is crucial to our social interactions and manners, how can we console or soothe a descendant of enslaved people standing before a memorial, reminding them of their ancestors, if we are not able to detect their frustration or shock, desire, mistrust, pride, satisfaction or anger? In Beninese society, the slave trade remains alive in the family memory and continues to influence social relations between descendants of slaves and slave traders to this day.

The reflections triggered by artistic portrayals of knowledge and memory in the form of memorial monuments are made up of two components: emotion and reason. Artworks are intended to be perceived rationally in terms of their creative potential, as well as with their full emotional charge. Jacques Cosnier notes that "from Plato, who believed that emotions disrupt reason, to Kant, for whom they were diseases of the soul; Darwin, for whom they were among the precious adaptive and evolutionary behaviours of species; Sartre, for whom they were 'a mode of existence of consciousness', and many others, the field of emotions is as messy in philosophy as it is in popular representation" (Cosnier 2015). How can creators of memorials align reason and emotion?

If, as some psychologists like Frijda (1986: 4) state, emotional phenomena are "non-operationally complete behaviours", is it reasonable to perturb sensitive people in order to "heal" them? Exposure to an event and the emotions linked to this event play an important role in the healing process. By reliving a traumatic event, individuals can detach themselves from it. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which emerged in the 1950s, sought not to cure disease but to help people make important decisions and to put painful memories into perspective, whether or not they had personally experienced them. "Exposure" here involves repeatedly bringing the source of fear into view, i.e. ongoing exposure to anxiety-provoking stimuli. This lies at the heart of the artistic process. Indeed, rather like medical facts, memorials are constantly in the public eye. Adopting a symbolic form, they draw attention to collective shock or trauma, while reinterpreting it. Through introspection or extrapolation, the memorial prompts each visitor to experience their own feelings about the victims of the tragedy. The objectification caused by the memorial contrasts with the subjectivity of each visitor.

The modern construction of the memorial monument creates a dialogue between shock and symbols that transcend the physical and mental space. In the transition

from conception to visibilization and the projection of memory into the future, i.e. transmission as heritage, there is a shift from objectivity to subjectivity. Monuments are usually perceived in the collective consciousness as the materialisation of a memory. The government's plans to change the name of the Place des Martyrs [Square of the Martyrs]¹⁴ in Benin to Place du Souvenir [Square of Memory] caused quite a stir. The rejection of the new name may be attributed to the affective defence mechanism against activation of the neural circuits underlying memory and emotions when faced with a painful memory. Monuments are akin to a stage where repetitive, transformative actions contribute to recollection in circumstances similar to those commemorated. Empathy motivates individuals to protect the memory and pass it down to younger generations and this results in the image or idea of monuments withstanding time. The idea of heritage is reinforced by sharing memories and emotions visually.

A monument depicting the atrocities committed by a conqueror accentuates and perpetuates the memory of their sadism, whereas one that portrays victims as heroes modifies the meaning of memory transmission. In both cases, the memory of the slave trade or other historical events is represented.

Although pain is a common feature of our universal human heritage, race is sometimes invoked to explain why individuals have different perceptions of the past. From a neurobiological perspective, there is no universal pattern of emotional expression. Indeed, emotions adapt to the circumstances and depend on personal experiences. Yet the degree of empathy that people feel for others also depends on their cultural environment. This is why memory construction varies from culture to culture. Attempts to fix historical events in the form of a monument reveal a fundamental fact: even those who have experienced the same traumatic events do not remember them in the same way. Therein lies the complexity of the aesthetic monomialization of the memory of slavery. Meanwhile, art can be trusted to trigger mirror neurons and transform an experience into heritage. These neurons are activated when an individual is observed performing a gesture and facilitate its reproduction. This neurobiological process is important in learning and in the ability to empathise. However, research has not yet discovered the way it intervenes in memory formation. In the meantime, how can nation states address remembrance through the art of monuments?

The State, Memory Construction through Monuments, and Perceptions of the Door of No Return

According to a number of historical sources, the Door of No Return marked the slaves' point of departure, or in other words, the point of rupture or cultural and religious uprooting. The current monument reveals the intangible memory of a historical phenomenon that has become invisible. In this regard, it also marks the return of deported souls. In African folk wisdom, especially in Benin, the souls of the deceased

¹⁴ Place des Martyrs is a triangular square measuring 250m x 100m (surface area: 12.500m²) with a 82m x 15m plinth topped by a monument featuring a 15-metre high statue that lies in the Haie Vive district at the heart of Cotonou. The monument pays tribute to the seven Beninese citizens who perished during a mercenary attack led by Frenchman Bob Denard on 16 January 1977. The square was inaugurated on 16 January 1979 under the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary regime.

are venerated and treated with great respect. The souls of the slaves who died on the ships are believed to return to their point of departure during the journey through the afterlife in order to reconnect with the land of their ancestors. An invisible, intangible, imaginary door through which the spirits return, respected but also feared, is believed to channel the spirits of the slaves, who are sometimes angry with the land of their ancestors, to places where they will find peace. The Door of No Return is the physical embodiment of this idea, providing a shrine for reconciliation. This dimension of the collective memory had no physical materiality until the monument was created in 1995.

In order to capture the intangible reality of the ancestors' return, the Door of No Return project was launched as part of the festival of Vodou arts, cultures and civilisations 'Ouidah 92' held in 1993 in Benin. Following this commemoration, the Beninese government commissioned Fortuné Bandeira, a Beninese Agouda,¹⁵ and architect Yves Ahouangnimon to produce the design, with administrative supervision by minister Désiré Vieyra and Noureini Tidjani-Serpos. The sculptures and paintings were made by Dominique Gnonnou, known as Kouass, and Yves Kpede. In 1995, the door was inaugurated by UNESCO. On a large platform, the monument features an arch positioned on two large posts, like a triumphal arch. It is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting slaves with their hands chained behind their backs, walking in single file towards the slave ships. Painted in ochre and white colours, the monument commemorates the dispersal of African culture and celebrates the return of the ancestors, who are represented by two statues of *Egun-Egun*,¹⁶ commonly referred to as *returnees* who embody the spirits of the dead. In this regard, the memorial also evokes wisdom and a return to peace.

The reception of this monument, which materializes the threshold sealing the fate of thousands of people, is fundamental. But how can today's state, which brings together former rival kingdoms exploited by the slave trade, think that erecting a memorial monument will be effective in reconciling the intimate spheres of a society obliged to form a nation made up of descendants of slaves and of slave masters? How can it ensure that the monument is accepted politically as an awareness-raising tool that simultaneously commemorates and reconciles?

The monument is by far the most remarkable on the Slave Route¹⁷ and it is among the most important sites commemorating the slave trade (NoI 2017). Yet it has not been without controversy. The question of style arose from the outset, with some considering an abstract approach to be more appropriate for a contemporary monument. According to local people, the gap between the final product and the invisible reality may even hinder the memorial process and it is unclear to what extent the formal language of the monument will enable future generations, faced with the vagaries of history that alter the relationship with space and place, to access the memory of slavery. For some, the monument is a source of pride; for others, it is an expression of Africa's failure and a symbol of European domination. Nevertheless, the monument has undeniably provoked interest and dynamism among the

¹⁵ Agouda: descendants of Luso-Brazilian slaves returned to Benin, Togo and Nigeria.

¹⁶ Egun-Egun embodies the spirits of the dead; it is a messenger symbolising the close link between the spirits of the dead and the living.

¹⁷ Covering 4km, the Slave Route leads from the fort to the slave ships. It passes through the square where the slaves were auctioned, the Tree of Oblivion, the Zomai House, the Memorial to Zoungbodji and the Tree of Return

people and the authorities. We must remember that the monument accentuates and perpetuates the memory of the conquerors' cruelty while simultaneously modifying the meaning of the memory transmitted by portraying the victims as heroes. The same facts produce different memories. Although the memorial has received many favourable comments, it could be argued that insufficient consultations and calls for tender were put out for the project.

On 15 January 2013, a bulldozer destroyed *Upright Men*¹⁸ by South African artist Bruce Clarke. The project was produced during an artistic residency funded by the Zinsou Foundation and positioned near the Door with official position. The destruction ordered by the Ministry of Culture received a mixed reaction. In the wake of protests by artists and writers, spokespeople for the State institutions justified the decision. Richard Sogan, Director of Cultural Heritage, explained that "the work is located within the perimeter of a monument that forms part of the 'Slave Route' cultural asset, which Benin is preparing to register on the World Heritage List and it is also situated on the ritual route of the Agbé and Dan temples belonging to the Daagbo Hounnon" (Nicolas 2013). However, neither the monument disrupted by the proximity of Clarke's work nor the Slave Route mentioned by Sogan were heritage monuments at the time. The episode shows that art has become a political and electoral issue. At first glance, this conflict raises questions as to the values (memorial values, aesthetic values, use values and political values) mobilised by the Door of No Return and influencing its reception. However, it also triggered a certain dynamism by revealing the value of preserving heritage for tourists to the site, which is the highlight of the Slave Route in Ouidah.



Fig. 3: Act of vandalism. Photo Gbègnidaho Achille Zohoun

¹⁸ A two-dimensional monument.

For some time now, the site intended to commemorate the memory of slavery has served as a venue for popular celebrations and artistic and cultural events. Despite efforts to preserve it, the monument has been diverted from its original purpose, raising questions as to the reception of built memorials.

Jauss (1998) notes that cultural works cannot be interpreted objectively, as every viewer has their own subjective perception. This is equally true of memorial monuments: their reception is influenced by factors that go beyond political and administrative concerns. Given the significance of this dimension, it is important to question the monument's suitability for the present and the future, as well as to consider the choice of monument and its reception. Indeed, understanding of the monument must go beyond merely interpreting the forms or symbols of the slave trade. The debate is also about maintaining the value assigned to this commemoration of the slave trade and the historical circumstances that made it possible. We do not have to look far for evidence. On the website Tripadvisor (2018), the following reviews have been posted:

- 1 A place filled with memory... which is deteriorating year after year. We've been there many times and year after year we are struck by the degradation of the site. Something must be done to stop this magnificent monument from falling into the same state of disrepair as most of the historical sites in Benin.
- 2 [...] the Door of No Return [...] is of no interest in itself, but the stories told by the... [accompanying guide] convey emotion.
- 3 It's impossible not to go there. It's the place where tens or hundreds of thousands of slaves left. The site is unmissable despite the monument itself lacking maintenance, the overall site being rather dirty and the guides, who claim to be compulsory, being clingy."



Fig. 4: Social recovery of the monument: street vending at the foot of the Door of No Return. Photo Gbègnidaho Achille Zohoun

My own reading of the monument inevitably draws on the threefold concept developed by Jauss, the founder of reception theory: production-communication-reception. Firstly, to ensure that it was sufficiently representative of collective opinion, an invitation to tender open to all artists and architects should have been launched for the monument. In public procurement, a series of proposals that are argued and justified is needed for a quality product. Secondly, communication plays a fundamental role in the reception of the monument. Reception here refers to the perception of the monument as "memorial thought", which is the combination between the observations and sensations provoked by the memorial and the resulting discourse. The observer's horizon of expectation described by Jauss, which is made up of previous experiences and information, influences their perception of the monument. Offering the public keys to reading the monument thus makes them more receptive to the historical dimension of the site and the monument itself.

In a dialogue with memory, observers who draw on philosophy and history, especially history materialised in the monument, will be equipped to tackle the issues of memory and post-memory. According to post-memory theory, it is no longer the past that matters but rather the present. There is a risk that the monument will be at odds with the memory of un-lived experiences. With this in mind, can the Door of No Return still be considered one of the assets of Ouidah's cultural capital? Does it and will it continue to play an active role in constructing and structuring memory and post-memory, as observed by Pierre Nora and Marianne Hirsch (2014)? According to Pierre Nora (1984, 1987, 1992), these sites serve to support memory and play an active role in its construction and organisation. Only by analysing the current political, cultural, artistic, memorial and tourism situation will we be able to answer these questions.

Echoing Charles Tchoba,¹⁹ the materiality of the site and the monument constructed there reflect other concerns relating to cultural policy. Following successive renewals of political power, the prestige conferred upon the monument as a memorial is changing with the new Marina project. Since 2016, a large-scale programme to promote tourism across Benin has adopted new approaches to memorial tourism. New life is being breathed into the historical city of Ouidah with major developments, including the Marina hotel complex near the Door of No Return in Djègbadji, Ouidah. As a result of this infrastructure project, the tourist facilities in Benin and in the city of Ouidah especially are predicted to improve significantly. A complex will be built around the emblematic monument of the Door of No Return featuring a Vodou arena for local religious festivals and cultural events; "gardens of remembrance" with a historical reconstruction of a slave ship to encourage reflection; two car parks with more than 350 parking spots; a tourist esplanade with restaurants, bars and leisure facilities; a hotel area offering around 130 rooms; a craft village, named Zomachi; a tourist office and a floating promenade on the lagoon.

¹⁹ The site has a materiality that is man-made. This is how it evades both the local and the global (Tchoba 2005: 46).



Fig. 5: Screenshot from the video presenting the Marina project / URL: <https://youtu.be/wozQKSPLJ8s>



Fig. 6: Screenshot from the video presenting the Marina project / URL: <https://youtu.be/wozQKSPLJ8s>

It is unclear whether this infrastructure intended for mass tourism actually draws more attention to the monument. This upgrade of the site prompts us to reflect on the heritage, tourism, cultural and social factors affecting the monument and on its links to the memories caught up in the site. If the plan comes to pass, it will allow the gloomy episode of undesirable visits to the memorial by street vendors to be consigned to the past and discourage acts of vandalism involving removal or damage to the sculptures that form part of the monument. The monument's inclusion in the government's plans to restructure memorial tourism²⁰ around the Slave Route represents a key element in African urban planning and highlights the role of monuments in memory transmission.

²⁰ The government plans for tourism development in Ouidah are based on an estimated budget of 523 million dollars or 459 million euros.

Conclusion

It is entirely possible to make the traumatic memory of an event or a place emotionally present through monuments. Art can overcome the growing distance between memory and the effects of time. Governments can ensure that memorial monuments carry the torch of history by incorporating different receptions of the creative thought behind the work, which should exclude propaganda of all kinds, into a forward-looking reflection. Finally, creative artists must focus on the artwork and its symbolism. One of the key criteria in calls for tender must be the conceptual rigour of the selected projects, as well as the completion and maintenance of these heritage sites in the future.

The formal language used in sites of remembrance can be controversial but the spirit underpinning these projects remains closely linked to the history and places of tragedy. Monuments to the slave trade are no exception. It could be said that monuments reincarnate the spirit of the places whose memory they are intended to preserve. Despite being a contemporary artwork, the Door of No Return has a soul that is shaped by human and material values. It merits attention as it breathes life into history and archives. The scars remain, although there is no longer any pain. The wound is clearly visible and monuments represent the scars that allow us to reconnect with our memories. Beyond the pain, memorials show us the way forward for our lives.

Works Used

- Bhêly-Quenum, O., "Les Hommes debout, dans Notre Mémoire", 2013. <https://babilown.com/2013/02/03/les-hommes-debout-terre/> (accessed 2/5/2016).
- Chalier, J. et Stange, V. E., "Sommes-nous hantés par la mémoire de nos ancêtres?" *Revue Esprit* 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cvs_P-ye5xQ (accessed 25/4/2022).
- Cosnier, J., *Psychologie des émotions et des sentiments*. Paris : Retz, 1994. Digital edition http://www.icar.cnrs.fr/pageperso/jcosnier/articles/Emotions_et_sentiments.pdf (accessed February 1 2020).
- de Groof, M., "Les Statues meurent aussi (Chris Marker et Alain Resnais, 1953) – mais leur mort n'est pas le dernier mot", *Cinéma ethnographique* n° 40–42, 2019. <https://journals.openedition.org/decadrages/1423> (acesso 21 de Fevereiro 2022).
- Debray, R., "La confusion des monuments. Trace, forme ou message", *Cahiers de médiologie* n° 7, 1999.
- Frijda, N. H., *The Emotions: Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Gankpe, G. F., Laboratoire d'Étude et de Recherche-Action en Santé du Bénin. Interview via email December 12, 2021.
- Hirsch, M., " Postmémoire", *Témoigner. Entre histoire et mémoire*, n° 118, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4000/temoigner.1274> (accessed 25/4/2022).
- Jauss, H.R., *Pour une esthétique de la réception*. Paris: Gallimard, 1998.

- Melot, M., "La confusion des monuments. Le monument à l'épreuve du patrimoine", *Cahiers de médiologie* n° 7, 1999.
- Nicolas, M., " Bénin : à Ouidah, la femme debout est à terre ", *Jeune Afrique*, 24/1/2013. <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/138590/culture/b-nin-ouidah-la-femme-debout-est-terre/> (accessed 2/5/2016).
- Nol, D. (s. d.), "Commémoration de l'abolition de l'esclavage : 16 lieux à découvrir", <https://caribexpat.com/commemoration-abolition-de-lesclavage-16-lieux-a-decouvrir-dans-le-monde/> (accessed 17/10/2017).
- Nora, P. (dir.), *Les lieux de mémoire, Tome 1*. Paris: Gallimard, 1984.
- Tchoba, Charles, *Culture, développement durable et démocratie participative : l'exemple des ONG environnementales gabonaises*. Pau : PhD geography and space planning, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, 2005.
- Tripadvisor, "La Porte du Non-Retour", https://www.tripadvisor.fr/Attraction_Review-g479758-d4776402-Reviews-or10-La_Porte_Du_Non_Retour-Ouidah_Atlantique_Departement.html (accessed 8/3/2018).
- Turgeon, L., "16ème Assemblée générale et symposium scientifique de l'ICOMOS, Québec, 29 septembre au 04 octobre". Paris: UNESCO, *La route de l'esclave, bulletin d'information*, n° 1, 2000.