

MP - DS 4 - SYNTHÈSE DE DOCUMENTS

durée : 3 heures

6 mars 2023

Rédiger en anglais et en 400 mots une synthèse des documents proposés, qui devra obligatoirement comporter un titre. Indiquez avec précision, à la fin du travail, le nombre de mots utilisés (titre inclus), un écart de 10 % en plus ou en moins sera accepté.

Document 1 - As monuments fall, how does the world reckon with a racist past?

by Phillip Morris Adapted from *National Geographic* June 29, 2020

Few monuments in the U.S.—or around the world, for that matter—seem safe from scrutiny at the moment. Statues of former Presidents George Washington, Ulysses S. Grant, and Theodore Roosevelt have become high-profile targets for attack or removal.

A major reconsideration of how the history of colonialization, slavery, and white supremacy is taught and viewed, especially through public art and memorials, is furiously underway. It grew out of social unrest and a tense reexamination of race relations that has raged since video emerged of George Floyd pinned to the ground and dying under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer on May 25, 2020. Calls for change started long before that awful encounter. Floyd's blood served as gasoline on a smoldering fire.

Now, tough questions are being asked globally. What symbols from our past must be reconsidered or simply discarded? What stories demand a more complete and honest retelling? How should history be taught?

Using contemporary values to judge the moral failings and atrocities of ancestors and to reevaluate the lives and legacies of canonized leaders is an explosive calculus. Nonetheless, a growing number of nations seem ready to embrace the moral deconstruction of the past to understand and improve the present.

The removal of monuments and symbols to a racist past is an important step to a more just future. Some scholars see the current waves of activism that sprouted primarily from the Black Lives Matter movement as a precursor to overdue structural reform.

"The racial justice movement currently underway is unprecedented. Majority-Black protests like we've seen in the past can be marginalized or discounted. But now when you see little white kids and college students posting Black Lives Matter on Instagram, the narrative isn't so easy to corrupt. Dominant national myths are being exploded. This is a transformational moment not only in the United States but around the globe," said Kevin K. Gaines, Professor of Civil Rights and Social Justice at the University of Virginia.

The assault on effigies of racial supremacists from bygone eras has proven contagious. British demonstrators in Bristol tore down a bronze statue of Edward Colston, an infamous 17th Century slave trader, and tossed it into a harbor; a week later, the governors of the University of Oxford voted to remove the statue of Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes was a mining magnate who ruled over the British Cape Colony in what is today South Africa and paved the path for South Africa's system of apartheid. The man responsible for the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship was an unabashed white supremacist who viewed the indigenous Black population of South Africa as an inferior race. Now, an argument percolates on the Oxford campus and beyond: How far should any university go to challenge the past?

"My own view on this is that hiding our history is not the route to enlightenment," Louise Richardson, vice-chancellor of Oxford, told the BBC. "We need to understand this history and understand the context in which it was made," she said.

A similar debate is raging over Christopher Columbus and which historical legacies need to be challenged. A statue of the Italian seafarer has stood outside City Hall in Columbus, Ohio, since 1955. Just as it is in other places throughout the Americas, the bronze image is slated for removal.

But how should Columbus now be remembered? The explorer has long been credited with “discovering” the Americas while in search of riches of East Asia.

“Columbus represents the European conquest of the Americas that led to the killing and the enslavement of Native American populations, and then the massive importation of enslaved Africans to the Americas,” says Ana-Lucia Araujo, a professor of history at Howard University. “White Americans must understand that slavery is not about black history. It is American history. It is the history of the victims and the perpetrators, and in order to not keep repeating the atrocities of the past, we need to know this history, even though it may feel uncomfortable,” she added.

Columbus Day became a federal holiday in the U.S. in 1937. But should his legacy be celebrated? Not only are statues of Confederate soldiers and celebrated colonizers being ripped from pedestals or rushed into cold storage, large portions of American life are now also considered ripe for rigorous review. Quaker Oats and Mars, Inc. are making plans to remove popular but polarizing stereotypes advertising Aunt Jemima’s maple syrup and Uncle Ben’s rice.

How history will judge us a century from now is anyone’s guess. It seems likely the emerging generation of young scholars and social activists will be remembered for challenging systems of oppression and racial hierarchy.

Yet as philosopher-poet George Santayana famously said, those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. The aphorism weighs heavily on those trained to study the behaviors and achievements of past cultures.

“As a historian, I am concerned about the past being erased,” says Gaines, the UVA professor. “If we sanitize our history, we run the risk of forgetting how we’ve progressed and changed over time...Those who come after us must understand that America was conceived in white supremacy and continues to suffer the consequences.”

In his best-selling memoir, *In The Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History*, former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu recounts the volatile emotions stirred when he orchestrated the removal of four highly visible Confederate monuments from his city in 2017. He called the decision an important step toward racial justice and healing.

“Symbols matter. We use them in telling the stories of our past and who we are, and we choose them carefully. Once I learned the real history of these statues, I knew there was only one path forward, and that meant making straight what was crooked, making right what was wrong. It starts with telling the truth about the past,” wrote Landrieu.

Phillip Morris is a Cleveland-based journalist who writes frequently about race and culture.

Document 2 - Statues and the National Memory

Edward Kohn | *Burlington Free Press*
6 September 2017

The national debate about pulling down Confederate statues has been confusing, even for those of us who study American History. After all, General Robert E. Lee is still admired by many Civil War buffs – North and South – as a figure who, after the war, rebuffed attempts to make him a symbol of the “Lost Cause.”

The statue debate is important. Only recently have Americans gotten better at facing the dark passages of our national story. The United States perpetrated genocide against Native Americans, built the nation on the backs of African slaves, and interned Japanese-Americans during the Second World War. These are facts. They are part of our history and culture, and worthy of our remembrance and commemoration. There should be museums and memorials to embed them in the national consciousness.

But there is a difference between a memorial and a statue. One commemorates, the other celebrates. One reminds, the other reveres. We would expect to see a memorial to a slave market in Charleston, South Carolina, but never a statue of a slaver or a plantation overseer complete with bullwhip. That would be repugnant. It would be a celebration of the despicable institution, not a national reminder that educates new generations of Americans.

A statue of George Washington celebrates his role in founding the nation, commanding the victorious Continental Army, and as first president of the United States. What does a statue of Robert E. Lee or Stonewall Jackson celebrate? What are we revering in placing them? The answer can only be: They are to celebrate an armed rebellion to preserve the institution of slavery. Is this something Americans should celebrate? Of course not.

A scene keeps repeating in my mind: Someone asks President Donald Trump if the Tennessee state capitol should remove its bust of Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate general arguably as important as Lee or Jackson. During the Civil War, Forrest's cavalry seemed everywhere, from Shiloh to Chickamauga, striking fear into the hearts of Union troops, including Ulysses S. Grant himself.

Does Forrest deserve a statue, or a prominently displayed and reverential bust? By the simple and simplistic reasoning of "history and culture," President Trump's reply must be, "yes." Forrest, however, was also commander during the notorious 1864 Fort Pillow massacre of surrendering black Union soldiers, and was the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. In fact, the title "wizard" was created specifically for Forrest, who was known as the "Wizard of the Saddle."

Forrest is a clear example of the lesson of all Confederate statues. They are celebratory symbols of the ugliest moments of our history, and should be removed.

Edward Kohn is professor of history and dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Norwich University.

Document 3 - We must challenge those who would topple our statues - otherwise this will never end

Gillian Evans *The Telegraph* 9 June 2020

Scarcely had the statue of Edward Colston been pulled from its plinth in Bristol and thrown into the harbour than there were cries of "Rhodes next!" Cecil Rhodes is an old target and you have to feel sorry for Oriel College, Oxford, which yesterday faced a fresh protest against the statue of him still standing high on its college wall.

The Rhodes Must Fall protests back in 2016 were, for many people, the first experience they had of the Left's desire to tear down statues of historic figures.

At the time, Chris Patten, Oxford's Chancellor, spoke against the statue's removal and, combined with a great deal of pressure from donors and alumni, Oriel chose to leave it where it was, taking the view that it was to be regarded as a historical not a political statement.

That, sadly, has proved to be far from the end of the tale. Since the horrific killing of George Floyd by a white policeman in the US, the spread of indignation has widened far beyond protests about police racism and brutality in the United States. In days, the Black Lives Matter campaign, which began in the US in 2013, began driving wide-ranging activism in the UK too. The toppling of Colston has sparked a whole new area of activism as statues of other historic figures have come into the campaigners' sights.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has called for the removal of all slave trader statues in the capital, and announced a commission to "diversify" London's public landmarks. A new website set up by Left-wing activists called 'Topple the Racists' has suggested statues of William Gladstone, Robert Peel, Lord Kitchener, James II and even Francis Drake ought to be removed. The all-must-fall mindset was epitomised by graffiti added to the statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square denouncing him as a racist.

Colston was certainly someone to whom black lives did not matter, but he was only one of great many merchants in seventeenth and eighteenth century Bristol busy in the slave trade. That trade was abolished well before the late-19th century when Cecil Rhodes was active in achieving British territorial dominance in southern Africa.

Churchill's views on race would certainly not be acceptable in the modern era. I'm sure the same is true of most if not all of the other people on the activists' list.

However, we cannot simply erase our uncomfortable past. It must be a part of our future, too.

The common theme of present campaigning is the modern legacy of such history in the lives of modern BAME* Britons. Campaigners claim with passion that they have been treated as though their lives do not "matter". There are certainly questions to be addressed here. But I think it is wrong to suggest that tearing down statues will help.

Where is all this heading? A recent campaign to "take racist Churchill off our currency" shows the shape of things to come if we do not make the case that it is important to learn from our history rather than simply erase it. It is deeply unfair to judge the people of the past by the standards of the present. Nobody would pass such a test – not even today's protesters, some of whose morals will surely seem just as evil to future generations as slavery does to us.

Gill Evans is Emeritus Professor of Medieval Theology and Intellectual History at the University of Cambridge

* **BAME:** Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (in the UK)

Document 4 - Source: *Skynews* 8 June 2020



On the statue of a slave trader (Edward Colston) in Bristol, UK

“THIS PLAQUE
IS DEDICATED
TO THE SLAVES
THAT WERE
TAKEN FROM
THEIR HOMES”

Fin de l'énoncé