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Teacher education colleges

Teacher education colleges occupy a controversial space within the 'collective memory' of South Africans. Closed or incorporated into universities in 1999, the physical remains of 50 such institutions begun by missionaries are part of a project of historical renovation. They dominated the educational landscape for close on a century, their original rural locations being reinforced by apartheid's Bantustan policy. And yet calls for their re-opening abound as memories of colleges as close, intimate spaces where real learning happened cross racial boundaries. Drawing on a Lefebvrian approach, this paper explores these debates through a discussion and comparison of the nature of the physical remains of these colleges in their mission and apartheid-era manifestations, their teaching and learning spatial imaginaries and associated landscapes of memory and identity. It will use visual images and documentary sources to develop an argument about the deeply ambiguous legacy of these educational spaces and places.



(Left) Lovedale and Ehlazeni schools with teacher training divisions. (Right) Graaff Reinet.