

**BECOMING AND UNBECOMING:
A critical cartography of a student journey
through the Fallist period**

by
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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

South Africa's 'born-free' generation - those who were born during the country's transition to democracy - were reaching adulthood in the early 2010s. In the years that followed, this new, post-Apartheid generation would enter the university system to claim the promise of equal education and a better future that had been made in 1994. This promise had been broken as many black students faced social and economic barriers within the higher education system.

The year 2015 witnessed the emergence of a series of protests at South African universities which addressed these issues of exclusion through a movement known as *Fallism*. This research project is concerned with the initial protests that destabilised some of the most prestigious South African universities. These included the *#RhodesMustFall* (RMF) and *#FeesMustFall* (FMF) protests, from which the name 'Fallism' was derived. Both of these movements aimed at addressing issues of access to higher education, while also calling attention to the pervasiveness of colonial ideals which continued to privilege the country's white minority.

Through the use of Rosi Braidotti's (2014) cartographic methodology, this research project aims to situate Fallism socio-politically and historically. This will attempt to track the various actors and timelines that converged to create the movement in 2015. The movement embodied processes of both becoming and unbecoming as institutions and students reckoned with who they are in the world, and who they want to become. Fallism will be discussed using Arturo Escobar's (2012 & 2018) theories of ontological design and how they function within the university space.

The Fallist protests were both driven and documented through the use of online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. This reflected a global trend of activism, as discussed by Manuel Castells (2015). The research aims to consider Fallism in relation to social media and the Internet, exploring the digital space as a site of both action and memory. The research questions what insights can be revealed from a cartographic exploration of Fallism, as it connects to both the past and to our future, thus giving us navigational tools for the present.

As a researcher, I am part of the privileged white minority who was challenged by the Fallist discourse. Therefore I aim to situate myself in relation to the Fallist context through the use of auto-ethnography and digital storytelling. This journey is explored through the creation of a multi-layered digital story that makes use of found and original imagery to find connections between memory, media and theory.

OPSOMMING

Die 'gebore -vry' generasie van Suid Afrika - diegene wat gebore is tydens die land se oorgang na demokrasie - het vroeg in die 2010's volwasseheid bereik. In die daaropvolgende jare sou hierdie nuwe post-Apartheid-generasie die universiteitstelsel binnegaan om die belofte van gelyke onderwys en 'n beter toekoms wat in 1994 gemaak is, te eis. Hierdie belofte is verbreek, aangesien baie swart studente sosiale en ekonomiese hindernisse ondervind binne die hoër onderwysstelsel.

In 2015 was daar 'n reeks protesoptredes by universiteite in Suid Afrika wat hierdie kwessies van uitsluiting aangespreek het deur 'n beweging bekend as *Fallisme*. Hierdie navorsingsprojek handel oor die aanvanklike protesoptredes wat sommige van die mees gesogte Suid Afrikaanse universiteite destabiliseer het. Dit sluit in die protesoptogte *#RhodesMustFall* (RMF) en *#FeesMustFall* (FMF), waaruit die naam 'Fallisme' ontstaan het. Albei hierdie bewegings was daarop gemik om kwessies oor toegang tot hoër onderwys aan te spreek, terwyl dit ook aandag vestig op die alomteenwoordigheid van koloniale ideale wat die wit minderheid van die land steeds bevoorreg het.

Deur die gebruik van die kartografiese metodologie van Rosi Braidotti (2014), is hierdie navorsingsprojek daarop gemik om Fallisme sosiaal-polities en histories te plaas. Dit sal poog om die verskillende akteurs en tydlyne wat bymekaar gekom het om die beweging te skep in 2015, op te spoor. Die beweging verpersoonlik prosesse van wording en onbetaamlikheid, aangesien instellings en studente reken wie hulle in die wêreld is en wie hulle wil word. Fallisme sal bespreek word aan die hand van Arturo Escobar (2012 en 2018) se teorieë oor ontologiese ontwerp en hoe dit binne die universiteitsruimte funksioneer.

Die Fallist -betogings is beide gedryf en gedokumenteer deur die gebruik van aanlynplatforms soos Twitter en Facebook. Dit weerspieël 'n wêreldwye tendens van aktivisme, soos bespreek deur Manuel Castells (2015). Dië navorsing is daarop gemik om Fallisme in verband met sosiale media en die internet te oorweeg, en die digitale ruimte te ondersoek as 'n plek vir aksie en herinnering. Die navorsing bevraagteken watter insigte geopenbaar kan word uit 'n kartografiese verkenning van Fallisme, aangesien dit aansluit by beide die verlede en ons toekoms, en sodoende navigasiehulpmiddels aan die hede gee.

As navorser is ek deel van die bevoorregte blanke minderheid wat uitgedaag is deur die Fallistiese diskoers. Daarom poog ek om myself in verhouding tot die Fallistiese konteks te plaas deur die gebruik van outo-etnografie en digitale storievertelling. Hierdie reis word ondersoek deur die skepping van 'n veelvlakkige digitale verhaal wat gebruik maak van gevinde en oorspronklike beelde om verbindings tussen geheue, media en teorie te vind.

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“This paper starts out in the middle by going forward to the past – not in order to recount what once was, but by way of re-turning, turning it over and over again, tasting the rich soil from which ideas spring, and opening up again to the uncountable gifts given that still give, to proceed to the place from which we never left/leave.”

(Barad 2014:184)

PREFACE

“What I would claim though is that through telling our lives we engage in the act of meaning making. This is a sacred act. Stories are what make us human. Our narratives, be they life stories, autobiographies, histories, sciences, or literature are the tales through which we constitute our identities. We are our narratives. They are not something that can be outside ourselves because they are what give shape to us, what gives meaning.”

(Hendry 2007:495)

This story carries an anxiety. It remembers a volatile time that affected young South Africans as they challenged the established colonial systems of higher education. The student protests that ignited in 2015 addressed the many barriers that prevented poor, black students from receiving a university education, while their white counterparts moved through the system with relative ease. The movement became known as Fallism - a name derived from the rallying call of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, protests which destabilised some of the most prestigious universities. Writing this thesis has formed part of my own process of unbecoming as the student movement was active in deconstructing my own privileged views.

A cartographic methodology as discussed by Rosi Braidotti (2018) will be used in the research process. This methodology lends itself to exploring the complexity of a moment and the multiple agencies, timelines and actors that converge to create new meaning. Through the use of a cartographic methodology, this research project aims to critically situate Fallism socio-politically and historically. The social movement embodied processes of both becoming and unbecoming as institutions and students reckoned with who they are in the world, and who they want to become.

The Fallist protests were both driven and documented through the use of online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. This reflected a global trend of activism, as discussed by Manuel Castells (2015). The research aims to consider Fallism in relation to social media and the Internet, exploring the digital space as a site of both action and memory. The research questions what insights can be revealed from a cartographic exploration of Fallism, as it connects to both the past and to our future, thus giving us navigational tools for the present.

As a researcher, I am part of the privileged white minority who was challenged by the Fallist discourse. Therefore, I aim to situate myself in relation to the Fallist context through the use of auto-ethnography and digital storytelling. This journey is explored through the creation of a multi-layered digital story that makes use of found and original imagery to find connections between memory, media and theory.

Storytelling is central to the research process. Petra Munro Hendry (2007) questions some of the basic assumptions of narrative as a research method as she regards stories as being important to our humanity. Narrative research requires us to conceptualise a way to tell stories that goes beyond simply representation or explanation. Hendry (2007:491) questions:

“What might it mean to recognise that life is such a complex process that it can never be understood, let alone represented”?

The use of autoethnography as a method will focus the scope of the research narrative, opting to explore in depth a few personal memories or observations. This approach to narrative encourages us to listen and be less concerned with what stories are told, but rather why we tell a particular story at a particular time. Hendry (2007:495) believes that narratives cannot be an object of research or study as who we are is embedded in our stories, therefore we cannot step outside ourselves to study something that constitutes who we are. Due to the complexity of timelines and personal histories, any one account will inevitably fall short of the full Fallist narrative. Therefore, Braidotti (2018:3) notes that a cartographic account is necessarily selective, partial and never exhaustive.

“If a cartography is the record of both what we are ceasing to be and what we are in the process of becoming, then critical thinking is about the creation of new concepts, or navigational tools to help us through the complexities of the present”

(Braidotti 2018:7)

This research project aims to be a documentation and reflection on my memories of the Fallist period which challenged my sense of who I was in the world. Through the use of Braidotti’s cartographic methodology, the research will explore a moment and find points of

connection through tracking both knowledge and lived experience. Throughout the project, I have likened a ‘present moment’ (Braidotti 2018:6) to a pinpoint on a map. This provides a site through which I can pull threads which are constituted by memories and histories. This practice intends to reveal the web of entanglements that are, and continue to be, active.

The threads in this research project will take the form of my fragmented memories which are typeset to the right in italics, historical texts, social media content, and various news archives through which a multilayered narrative will be constructed. The project will make use of an interplay of voices and images throughout the text to create a critical cartography, allowing for an open-ended reflection on my experience through the Fallist period.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The narrative of this research will begin with a location of my own identity as a white, English speaking South African. This will be done to locate myself within the critical cartography. This will be followed by a more in-depth discussion of a cartographic methodology and its connection to Karen Barad’s (2014) concept of diffraction. The first chapter will conclude with a discussion on the medium of digital storytelling and its place in visualising this cartography.

The second chapter will discuss the first movement of Fallism: *#RhodesMustFall* (RMF). This period saw colonial-era monuments being challenged as they were perceived as embodying Eurocentric ideals. A discussion about the pervasive systems of colonisation will be done through the concept of ontological design as discussed by Anne-Marie Willis (2006) and Arturo Escobar (2012 & 2018). The chapter will conclude with insights into ontological design in relation to higher education and how this emerged through the RMF protests.

Chapter 3 will discuss social movements in the internet age as outlined by Manuel Castells (2015). The political shift in South Africa following the Marikana Massacre in 2012 as well as the rise of social media access both were critical to the emergence of Fallism, and will also be considered here.

Chapter 4 will examine the largest protest action of the Fallist movement: *#FeesMustFall*. The chapter will discuss how the movement started with the announcement of university fee increase and rapidly became a national movement. The early optimism of Fallism will be discussed through its connection to global movements and the viral spread of the hashtag. I will use my own memory of the student march to the Union Buildings on 23 October 2015 to reflect on the rise of the movement, and also how it began to fall apart.

The project will conclude in chapter 5 with an overview of the research along with its limitations and potential for future research.



Figure 1: Supporting Germany (2010)
Source: author's family archives

Figure 2: Collage of family portraits
(various years)
Source: author's family archives

CHAPTER 1: FINDING A NARRATIVE

1.1 WRITING WHILE WHITE

Since my mid-teens, I have felt uneasy about my identity as a white, English-speaking South African. The feeling began during the locally-hosted FIFA World Cup in 2010 as foreign flags and fanfare engulfed the country.

I decided to throw my support behind the German national team (figure 1), a decision that was based on the flimsy connection to my distant Germanic heritage and surname. I was a distant descendant reaching back over 150 years for some kind of acceptance from European forefathers, trying on a national identity for size.

Throughout the centuries, Europeans have trickled down into South Africa. Driven by exploration and colonisation, seeking fortune in gold, or hoping for refuge from war. Generational white families who have been in South Africa are a motley assortment of European and Scandinavian descendants who have weathered under the African sun. As I look at my family tree (figure 2), there are hardy German peasant farmers who toiled for generations in the Eastern Cape, there is a Swedish magistrate, a British-born politician, and a Scottish woman seeking love following the devastation of World War 2. It is rich and varied, yet the language and culture of these individuals have merged and adapted to fit contemporary South Africa.

Being a white, English-speaking South African is strange. We are a combination of many things, yet have no culture or history to call our own. We have absorbed and appropriated the unique traditions and expressive words of vernacular cultures as they suited us. Being white and English has allowed us to exist with both the power of historical privilege that colonial domination brought, yet also a vagueness that has allowed us to adapt as society changed. White enough to be privileged during apartheid, yet free of the historical baggage of the Afrikaner identity as the democratic South Africa emerged in the 1990s. I regard it as a nomadic identity - our whiteness often tells a story of migration yet we hold onto a European language, although we have no home in Europe. We are settlers, yet we remain unsettled.

As I begin this thesis, it is important to situate my identity in the context of the study – a study aimed at interrogating my journey through a series of student protests – as my understanding of the world is inseparable from who I am. As a white child, I grew up in the suburb of Johannesburg (figure 3) and was raised by parents who had benefitted from apartheid-era schooling and employment. The generations of anti-black laws and sentiments were carved deep into South African society where access to resources and opportunities still tend to fall across racial lines:

“South Africans collectively bid farewell to out-and-out white supremacy, but its categories of race stayed with us. Its urban design stayed with us. Its divided beaches and schools stayed with us. Its long-term economic effects and inequalities only became further entrenched.” (Smith 2020)



Figure 3: Pre-school group photo (1998)
Source: author's family archives

Samantha Vice, a South African female philosopher, grapples with issues of whiteness in her controversial article titled *How do I live in this strange place?* (2010). Vice (2010:323) introduces her article by describing South Africa as a “*strange and morally tangled place to live in a visibly divided and suspicious land*”, where one’s sense of self is inseparable from one’s racial identity which, in turn, is entangled with histories of oppression and privilege (Vice 2010:323). Vice believes that as white people, we need to be careful about what we say and practice silence as we carry a burden of shame from our history tainted by racial oppression.

A response to Vice’s controversial article came from Eusebius McKaiser, a popular political analyst, lecturer and writer. McKaiser’s engagement with Vice’s writings brought her reflections on whiteness to a broader audience. McKaiser’s response, *How whites should live in this strange place* (2011), agrees with most of Vice’s critique of whiteness, yet he calls for considered action from white South Africans in healing the relationship within our society. McKaiser (2011:457-458) calls for whites to rather be careful and aim to live in reflective self-awareness. He writes:

“...whites should live in reflective awareness of the fact that they still experience unearned privileges just because they are white. Being careful, in this sense, does not mean being silent; it means taking care that your unearned social power does not skew your relationships with others in a way that prevents their unqualified entitlement to be your moral equal from coming through in your interaction.”

Through this thesis, I aim to turn the gaze inwards through the research process and trouble my own history and how it has affected my experience of the world. I aim to practice McKaiser’s call for careful and reflective self-awareness, yet also to be silent as I listen to other voices through the research process.

I am aware of the immense privileges that my whiteness has afforded my family and myself. This has shaped my experience of the world and my knowledge of it. This research project cannot claim to be an objective study nor a complete documentation of events. I am using my personal narrative as it is the only voice that I have the authority to use. Hendry (2007:492) states that “*knowledge is not an object but a network*”, illustrating that knowledge is not static and that it is created through interactions. The use of narrative research is presented as offering a more complex and complete account of social life by capturing how society and culture shape, and are shaped by, individual lives.

1.2 DIFFRACTIVE / CARTOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

Research by Hull and Katz (2006:46) argues that stories recur and change depending on who is listening; suggesting that how we represent ourselves in our storied worlds depends on who we are trying to be in relation to others in the present moment. Hull and Katz's (2006:48) conception of identity is inherently multiple and dialogical as we enact the selves that we want to become in relation to others. We may enact ourselves in agreement or opposition to others, but always in relation to them. The production of knowledge cannot be viewed in isolation as each actor carries with it a history and politics; it is a relational ontology where meaning does not come from outside of the interaction, but rather *through* the interaction. This relates to the notion of diffraction as discussed by feminist theorist and quantum physicist, Karen Barad (2014).

Barad's theory of diffraction is based on how light behaves when it is shone through adjacent pinholes; where light from the same source is divided through the pinholes and merges on the other side of a barrier. This interaction between light sources creates something unexpected - a diffractive pattern - that challenges the binary of light/dark. It reveals that darkness can be produced by adding new light to where there is already light (Barad 2014:171). This optic phenomena displays that multiple light sources create darkness, which in turn reveals that darkness is not necessarily absence, but an abundance (Barad 2014:171). The theory of diffraction, when applied to social phenomena, challenges preexisting binaries of human/nonhuman and calls for a rethinking of notions of identity and difference (Barad 2014:171). Just as light was shone through different pinholes, diffraction encourages the cutting apart of time and phenomena (rejecting them as linear or stable), and then bringing them together again to observe what new 'darkness' emerges. As new pattern emerges, new connections are made.

Barad (2014:169) states that diffraction is not a singular event that happens in space and time, but recognises that each moment is complex with a multiplicity of factors. The production of knowledge cannot be viewed in isolation as each actor carries with it a history and politics. Diffraction encourages a relational ontology where meaning does not come from outside of the interaction, but rather emerges in/through the interaction.

When introducing diffraction as a scientific phenomena, Barad (2014:181) acknowledges that researchers cannot be removed from their experiments, therefore they become part of their experiments:

“There is no ‘I’ that exists outside of the diffraction pattern, observing it, telling its story. In an important sense, this story in its ongoing (re)patterning is (re) (con)figuring me. ‘I’ am neither outside nor inside; ‘I’ am of the diffraction pattern”

“A diffractive methodology does not reflect the world from the outside but assumes that we are all part of the world, entangled in it and implicated in everything - thus it is not possible to extricate oneself from the world”
(Bozalek et al. 2016:206)

The methodology of this research draws upon two feminist theorists, Karen Barad and Rosi Braidotti, whose writings reject traditional binaries and finds connections within those differences. Rosi Braidotti, a feminist theorist and contemporary philosopher, has developed a cartographic methodology that informs the research process at the heart of this project. According to Braidotti (2018:2), a cartography is an account of the present moment which tracks our knowledge of the world and our being in the world, therefore finding points of connection within a multi-layered moment (figure 4).

In the chapter *Thinking about Maps* (2009), Rob Kitchin and Chris Perkins explore the evolution of cartography as a scientific practice and its development into a philosophical concept. Previously the map-maker was able to assume a god-like view of the world, claiming an objective and scientific viewpoint when recording the external world. As map-making has become a more embodied process, the documentation process was recognised as being able to reflect the messy and subjective experiences of the creator (Kitchin & Perkins 2009:3). The act of mapping can function in various ways; it provides a tool for thinking about the world; it creates a framework for knowing the world; and it makes assertions about the world itself. Therefore mapping can be regarded as both epistemological and ontological. The thesis will make use of the subjective and messy approach to documentation and in doing so, recognises that knowledge creation is embodied and emerges from our interactions with/ in the world.

“...the stories of mapping always need to be considered as historically contingent actor-networks; as timed, placed, cultured and negotiated; a web of interacting possibilities in which the world is complex and nothing is inevitable.”
(Kitchin & Perkins 2009:20).

NEXT PAGE (pg 6)

Figure 4: Working cartographically (2019)
Source: author's process work

ISSUES?

I am in the process of mapping out the official student structures at Stellenbosch University. This information has never been consolidated and displayed visually, therefore I hope that it can explain structures and provide new insights to the present situation.

1 CARTOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY.

3 THEORETICAL STANDPOINTS.

2 SITUATED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

narrative visualization = tool of power of Board
 "I" is Board

I am using official documents to construct this map, yet it'll be interesting to see what different map can be constructed through engagement with students.

When I began working in student politics, I received little in the way of handover from the previous term. It is immensely difficult to progress when you does not know what you are inheriting from the past, nor aiming for in the future.

Starting to map it out is a step towards critically engaging with it and designing better leadership structures to design better student politics.

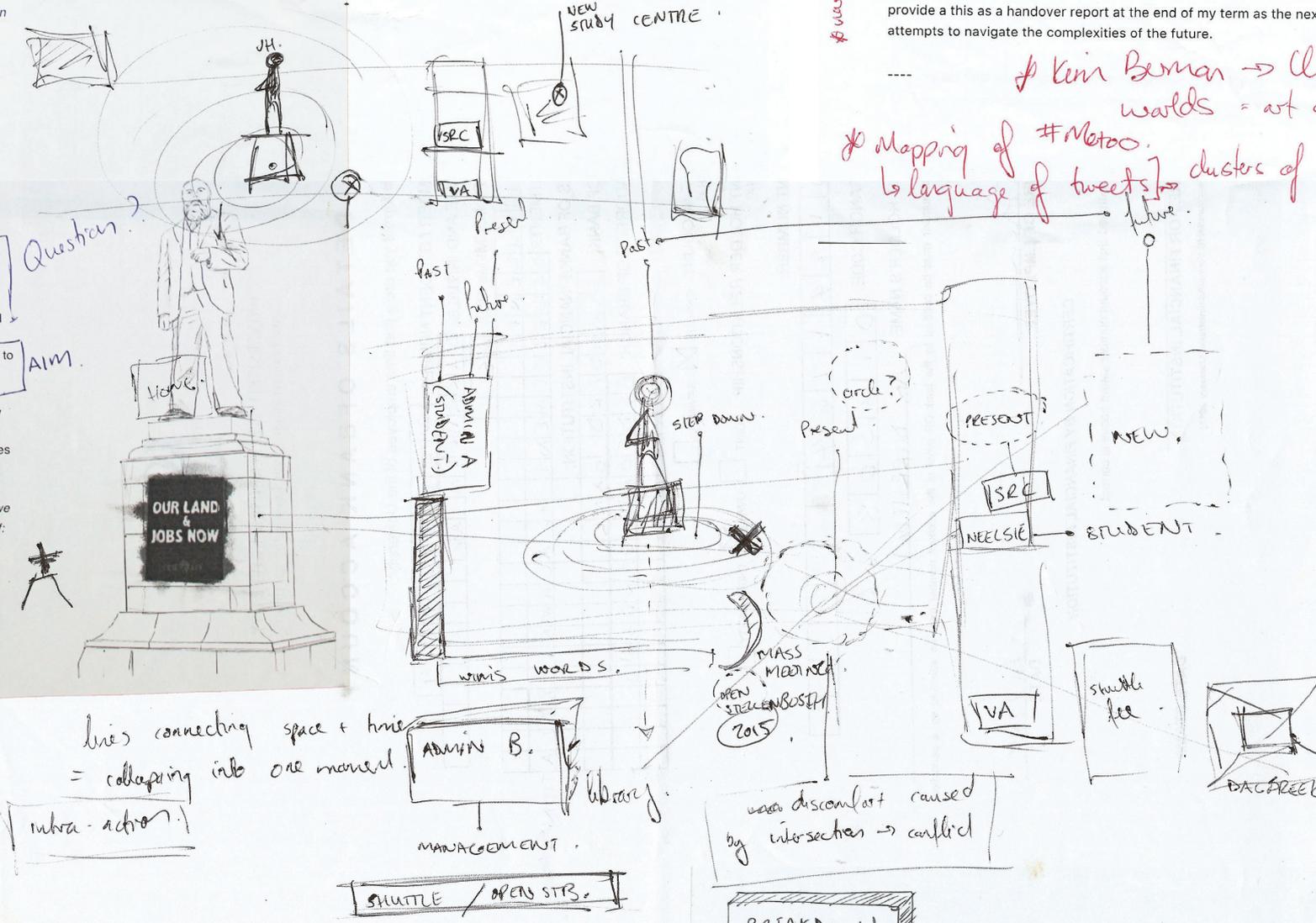
I hope to package this project in a way that is practical, yet is critical. I will provide a this as a handover report at the end of my term as the next attempts to navigate the complexities of the future.

Kim Berman → the worlds = art as

Mapping of #Metoo. ↳ language of tweets ↳ clusters of



4 USING JH MARAIS AS POINT OF DEPARTURE: READING STORIES?



Questions?

AIM.

lines connecting space + time = collapsing into one moment.

was discomfort caused by intersection → conflict

BREAKDOWN

Research question:

How can a cartographic approach be used to map out a situated student experience to constructively reflect on issues? (campus issues?).

methodology:

Cartographic methodology (informed by diffraction)

NARRATIVE

Context:

Post-fellist context at Stellenbosch University. ↳ fellist 2015 - 2016 (#RMF; #FMF, #AMF). focus: first semester 2019. (intululeka; shuttle fee) ↓ reflecting on way forward. (AIM?).

Theoretical standpoints

6 NEW MATERIALIST

SITUATED KNOWLEDGE = EMBODIED (embodiment) * ANT * med. bodies

It will explore different ways of mapping: spatial, temporal, physical, digital, etc - and see what emerges if they are collapsed and viewed through one another.

I believe that there is value in the documentation of such movements as they show power relations and narratives that are quickly evolving in dynamic nature of student politics.

DAGBREEK = zoom info

5. AIM 2 // SITUATED MAP (PRACTICE) (Provide a critical situated map of post-Fellist politics at Stellenbosch University)

- Use my situated knowledge (my place in the diffractive pattern) to try and map post-Fellist politics as I have experienced it
- Coming into student leadership at Stellenbosch, I was aware of the lack of understanding of the structures and systems that sought to govern student communities. It felt that each structure was caught up in its own internal management and politics with little perspective of the wider student community.
- I am in the process of mapping out the official student structures at the university - this information has never been consolidated and displayed visually, therefore I hope that it can explain structures and provide new insights to the present situation.

I am using official documents to construct this map, yet it'll be interesting to see what different map can be constructed through engagement with students.

When I began working in student politics, I received little in the way of orientation or handover from the previous term. It is immensely difficult to progress when you does not know what you are inheriting from the past, nor aiming for in the future.

what is being used (what remains in change) could be intuitive / unchanged

I believe that there is value in the documentation of such movements as they show power relations and narratives that are quickly evolving in dynamic nature of student politics.

Kitchin and Perkins (2009:13) write that *“maps do not have meaning or action on their own; they are part of assemblage of people, discursive processes and material things”*. This provides a broader and richer understanding of mapping as being a dynamic process rather than a static output. The use of open and responsive mapping practice focuses on the interplay between place, times, actions and ideas. As Kitchin and Perkins (2009:21-22) state:

“Maps rather are understood as always in a state of becoming; as always mapping; as simultaneously being produced and consumed, authored and read, designed and used, serving as a representation and practice...”

Cartographies collapse time and space; they reject linearity in favour of non-sequential entanglements. Braidotti (2018:6) writes that all human and non-human actors are *“nomadic subjects-in-process, in perpetual motion”*. This acknowledges that meaning is never fixed, but rather constantly changing through the interactions of actors. Braidotti (2018:6) comments on embracing the complexity and multiplicity of the present: *“The force of the present – and the core of its intelligibility – is that it does not coincide completely with the here and now”*. In this research project, the boundaries between past/present/future are blurred as the protest movements were influenced by histories and potential futures. There was an awareness of our connectedness to the complexities of the past, as well as what we wanted to become (or un-become) through the protest actions. Braidotti (2018:6) writes about this process of becoming:

“Approaching the present therefore produces a multi-faceted effect: on the one hand the sharp awareness of what we are ceasing to be (the end of the actual) and on the other the perception – in different degrees of clarity – of what we are in the process of becoming”.

Braidotti (2018:4) suggests that the aim of a cartography should be to offer alternative futures for the knowing subjects. This involves engaging with who we are and our future as a species; engaging with what we need to do - and undo - to realise a more sustainable future. The global turmoil of conflict, climate change and poverty reveals the unsettling reality of life thrown out of balance by the actions of man. A new way of thinking and perceiving ourselves in the world is needed:

“It requires us to untangle our familiar world of hierarchical and binary constructions and to consider the strange, intensive and entangled world of affects we share with animals and things”
(Carstens 2016:256)

Braidotti (2018:2) describes this as a “*multi-layered posthuman predicament*”, where the hybrid figure of the posthuman challenges our understanding of the multiple agencies, dependencies and entanglements that exist between human and non-human actors that make up our world (Forlano 2017:17). Cartographies seek to navigate the complexity of our modern times through recognising who we are in the world and our connectedness to non-human actors and technologies. The figure of the posthuman can play a role in constructing new subjects of knowledge through the intersection of multiple actors. Braidotti (2018:4) writes:

“It is a theoretically-powered cartographic tool that aims at achieving adequate understanding of these processes of undoing the human. It does not define a dystopian future condition, but provides a frame to understand the ongoing processes of becoming-subjects in our fast-changing times.”

The process of “undoing the human” questions what we are unbecoming; what ways of being are being recognised as unsustainable. Both diffraction and a cartographic methodology collapse time and space, as time is not seen as linear or stable. As a methodology, it recognises the strangeness of our times and the multiplicity of factors that come together to produce meaning, yet it remains open to future tellings and retellings, allowing new connections to be made.

“To practice a posthuman way of writing is to recognise that one is organising the text and that the text is simultaneously organising you in unexpected ways. This requires an openness to emerging situations where one doesn’t know what may happen, as this creates the space for something new to emerge”
(Bozalek et al. 2016:210)

1.3 DIGITAL STORYTELLING

“...it is not immediately obvious what one ‘should’ say about [digital stories]. This is because for too long we have been interrupting the ordinary voice, speaking instead of listening ...”
(Burgess 2006:202)

Daniel Meadows (2003:189) was enthusiastic about the potential of digital storytelling at the beginning of the 21st century. He characterises digital storytelling as being personal stories that are made for publication on the internet, where the production value is more akin to a scrapbook than a studio. Researchers Hull and Katz (2006:53) expand on this, regarding digital storytelling as a tool for self-expression and self-construction through multimedia. This optimism is echoed by Jean Burgess (2006:202) who suggests that digital stories provide an ongoing space wherein one can play with self-representation.

Burgess writes (2006:10) that digital storytelling is seen as having democratic potential as it draws on vernacular literacies and it works to integrate vernacular creativity in new media contexts:

“...it is based on everyday communicative practices - telling personal stories, collecting, and sharing personal images - but remixed with the textual idioms of television and film; and transformed into publicly accessible culture through the use of digital tools for production and distribution.”

The use of digital media has offered new ways of finding and constructing narratives. The creative practice of digital storytelling became popular in the early 2000s as way to amplify the “ordinary voice” through new media (Burgess 2006). In the coming years, Facebook emerged as an accessible platform to document everyday life as people were given the tools to present and curate themselves online. Other social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Youtube have all become platforms for digital storytelling.

Digital storytelling is a process of illustrating personal narratives and stories with photographs, artwork, music, audio, video, and text (Willox et al. 2012:132); a way to celebrate the individual and the collective. During this research project, the practice of digital storytelling facilitates the intersection of memory and media within the digital space. As a medium, digital storytelling has allowed me to revisit the turmoil of 2015 through online news archives as well as the social media posts that remain easily accessible. I have constructed new digital materials that explore moments as a means to to show a snapshot of a memory or an idea.



Figure 5: Welcome to Pine Point (2011)
 Michael Simons & Paul Shoebridge, for National Film Board of Canada
 Source: <https://pinepoint.nfb.ca/#/pinepoint>

An example of a digital storytelling project that addresses memory is *Welcome to Pine Point* (2011). Through archival photographs and footage, the multi-layered digital collage functions as a documentary that reminisces over a town that has been demolished (figure 5). *Welcome to Pine Point* looks into a time and place that has continued to exist in the memories of the people who lives there.

The next chapter will address a moment that occurred in 2015 which catalysed the Fallist protests. It was a moment of protests that brought together historical memory with the lived realities faced by many black South Africans. The story of this moment is created through historical texts, found footage, as well as my past reflections of the events which unfolded.

CHAPTER 2: “THINGS FALL APART” SPEAKING WITH GHOSTS

“To address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future)...”

(Barad 2010:264)

2.1 MAXWELE AND THE GHOST OF RHODES

The first pinpoint in this cartography is a sunny day in March 2015 on the main campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT). I was not there, yet I have sewn together a memory of the events from the photos and news stories: A bare-chested black man, wearing a neon pink hardhat and a handwritten sign around his neck reading “exhibit A: white arrogance @ UCT” (figure 6). He is standing alongside a statue whose form looms above the man upon grey granite. The young black man is Chumani Maxwele, while the cold, white man made of iron perched on the plinth is Cecil John Rhodes. Maxwele appears to be alone in his protest and remonstrates angrily to a camera, gesturing to the metal form of Rhodes.

A small white bucket is produced by Maxwele, a type of portable toilet that is used by families in townships who do not have access to sanitation. For Maxwele, it is a symbol of the ongoing daily degradation faced by black people living in the townships which sprawl across the flat outer edges of Cape Town (Fairbank 2015). Maxwele strides towards the monument and hurls the bucket of shit at the granite plinth. A one-man act of defiance against centuries of oppression by white overlords. The convergence of these two figures - their histories and identities - was a catalysing moment that brought issues of decolonisation to the fore at South African universities.

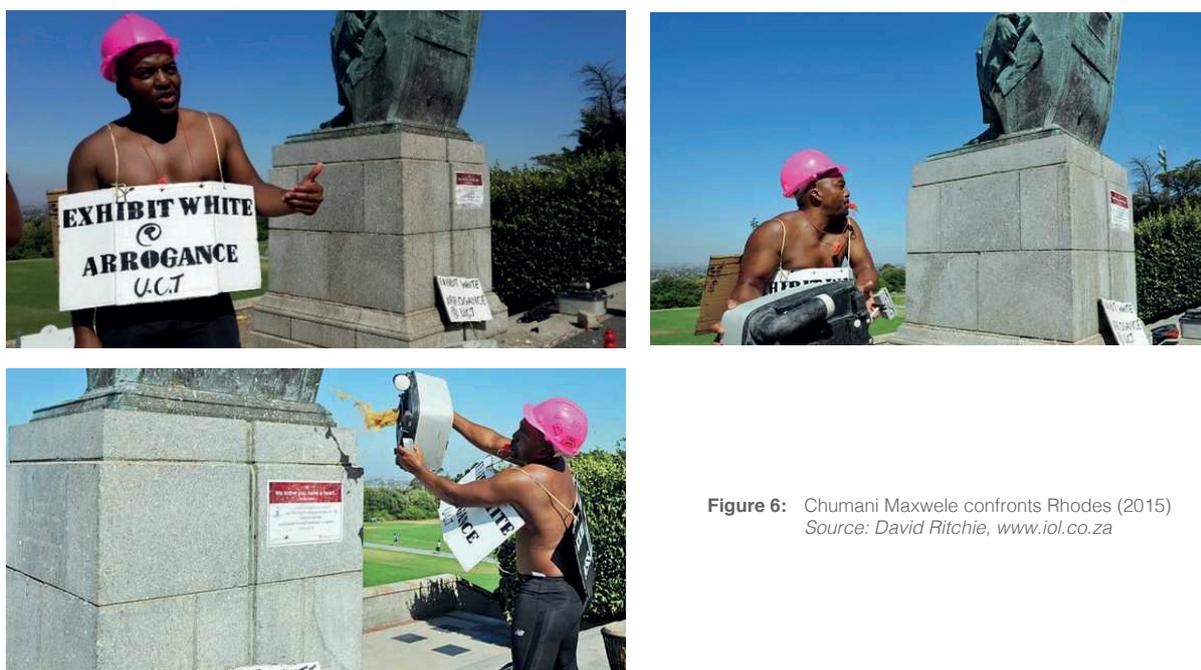


Figure 6: Chumani Maxwele confronts Rhodes (2015)
Source: David Ritchie, www.iol.co.za

This moment could have passed with little consequence, but the presence of cameras to capture the defilement of Rhodes allowed it to spread online and into the national news. The moment of shit-throwing served as a powerful point of convergence of narratives. On the one hand the story of the entrenched, colonial systems of power that operate within institutions and are visible in physical spaces through management hierarchies and the privileging of Eurocentric knowledges, and on the other that of young, black South Africans who are angry at needing to navigate a fractured society that was designed to exclude them while hoping to create a better future through obtaining an education.



Figure 7: Statue of Rhodes, UCT (2007)
Source: Danie van der Merwe, Wikipedia Commons

I never saw the infamous statue, but I have spent hours looking at images of the bronze figure of Rhodes so it has come to feel familiar to me (figure 7). The statue, located at the foot of the iconic Jameson steps which ascend the mountainside campus, portrays a sculpture of Rhodes looking over the suburbs of Cape Town. The location is spectacular; facing north across the Cape Flats and towards Sir Lowry's Pass that travels over the Hottentot's-Holland mountain range. The seated figure of Rhodes is reminiscent of Auguste Rodin's 'The Thinker' with his chin resting upon his hand. Rhodes, however, gazes out over the land somewhat wistfully; an image of a man who is secure in his power yet dreams of more; of further expansion. There is a brimmed hat resting at the feet of Rhodes and a paper scroll is in his hand - possibly a map - feeding into the mythology of Rhodes as the pioneer, the bold traveller in Africa.

The inscription on the plinth is an excerpt from a poem by Englishman Rudyard Kipling, a personal friend of Rhodes and fellow imperialist, titled 'The Song of Cities' (1893). It celebrates the expansion of the British empire (Machin 2017) and reads:

*"I dream my dream by rock and heath and pine,
Of empire to the northward.
Ay, one land from Lions Head to Line."*

This chapter will unpack the protest against the presence of a statue of Cecil John Rhodes (figure 8) which became symbolic of a broader fight against institutional racism at South African universities (Ndelu 2017:64). The historical figure of Rhodes has come to embody the

ideals of British imperialism as he dedicated his life to the expansion of the British empire with little regard for the lives of non-white and non-English peoples. Rhodes was a benefactor of UCT, bequeathing both land and money, which earned his sculpted form a position of pride on the main university campus (Ndelu 2017:64). The calls for his sculpture to be removed raised questions of whether one can separate his image and financial contributions from his ideologies, but also which of those ideologies were still perpetuated at UCT. The man has been dead for over a century, yet the ideals he stood for and systems he created have continued. They have adapted, burrowed into the university walls as times changed - becoming invisible, but always present.

In the context of this research project, the historical figure of Rhodes has become synonymous with the colonial system. His monumental form became a physical site of conflict at UCT, yet the ideologies which he presented (and represented) are entrenched in educational and administrative institutions. As this chapter addresses issues of decolonisation, the voice of Rhodes will be used as the embodiment of the colonial ideals. Rhodes was deeply committed to his English heritage, a theme that he dwells on in his *Confession of Faith* (1877), a document he wrote at the age of 23. Rhodes believed in the supremacy of the British nation and that it was their god-given duty to inhabit as much of the world as possible. He writes:



"I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race ... I contend that every acre added to our territory means in the future birth to some more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence"

(Rhodes 1877)

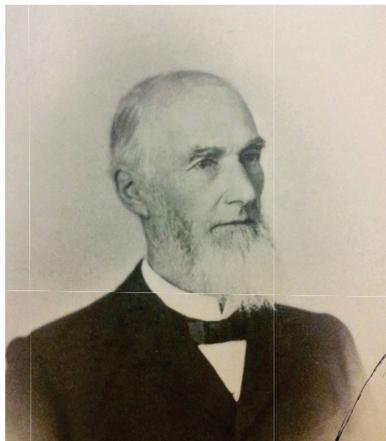
The pronouncements made by Rhodes justified the presence of the English in South Africa and presented colonisation as a sacred duty. Rhodes' *Confessions of Faith* unfolds like a sweeping romance between Rhodes and his motherland, displaying his devotion to the colonial empire.

Figure 8: Cecil John Rhodes (1890)
Source: Alexander Bassano, National Portrait Gallery

Figure 9: Sketches of Rhodes (2018)
Source: author's process work

Figure 10: Charles William Hutton
Cape Colony Treasurer General
(1902)
Source: Unknown photographer,
Wikipedia Commons

I have a strange relationship with Rhodes (figure 9). I have visited his monuments in Cape Town, his stately manor at Grootte Schuur with the single bed where he slept, and the humble cottage where he died in Muizenberg. At a more personal level, a great grandfather of mine (figure 10) served in Rhodes' government in the 1890s. There is a line in my history that draws back to the Cape Colony and indirectly to Rhodes. During the protests against the monuments of European powers, it raised my own concerns about my place in South Africa. I am connected to Rhodes by race, language and heritage; his identity and legacy form part of my everyday reality. Rhodes haunts me - I feel deep shame for the racist rhetoric and white supremacy he espoused, yet I believe it would be disingenuous for me to not include it in this research project. Like Rhodes' statue at UCT, his words and legacy need to be exposed and challenged, rather than allowed to blend into the mundane aspects of everyday life (figure 11).



Rhodes Quality

FOR THE LOVE OF CONQUEST

I would annex the planets if I could.
— **CECIL RHODES**

HARICOT BEAN SHAKSHUKA

We have added haricot beans to this popular Middle Eastern dish to provide a strong protein benefit. Side: serve to protein, add as little or as much spice as you like.

20 ml (2 Tbsp.) Olive oil
2 Cloves garlic, crushed
1 Onion, chopped
1 Green pepper, seeded and chopped
1 x 410 g (1 1/2 cup) Rhodes Quality Chopped and Peas Tarrabes
10 ml (2 tsp) Smoked paprika
10 ml (2 tsp) Ground coriander
Salt and freshly cracked pepper
1 x 410g (1 1/2 cup) Rhodes Quality Haricot Beans, drained
4 Large eggs
65 ml (1/4 cup) Fresh parsley
To serve: Fresh chive stalks

- Heat oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and cook garlic and onion until softened.
- Add green pepper and fry for a few minutes.
- Add Rhodes Quality Chopped and Peas Tarrabes.
- Add paprika and coriander, season to taste.
- Stirring, knock on low heat until dry.
- Add Rhodes Quality Haricot Beans and simmer.
- Beat eggs in a separate bowl and crack eggs into place.
- Cover and simmer until eggs are to your liking.
- Top with parsley and serve immediately with fresh bread.

YOU COULD WIN R200,000
Visit rhodesquality.com to see how and what you need to win.

#FORTHETHELOVEOFWINTER

CECIL JOHN RHODES
1853 - 1902

*I DREAM MY DREAM
BY ROCK AND HEATH AND PINE
OF EMPIRE TO THE NORTHWARD
BY ONE LAND
FROM LIONS HEAD TO LINE*

It is not about the clothes, the house or the great view

RHODES

THE CAPE ICON SINCE 1685
www.boschendalwines.com

Not for sale to persons under the age of 18. Please drink responsibly.

Rhodes puts a smile in every heart

RHODES MUST FALL

PURSUIT OF POWER

Figure 11: Hidden legacies of Rhodes (2019)
Collage
Source: author's process work



Figure 12: The Rhodes Colossus (1892)
Edward Linley Sambourne, published by *Punch*
Source: *Wikipedia Commons*

Figure 13: Rhodes Scholarship (2021)
Receivers of scholarship for 2021
Source: www.rhodeshouse.ox.ac.uk



Cecil John Rhodes was a fervent champion of the British empire; a mining magnate who built his fortune in the South African diamond mines and went on to become the prime minister of the Cape Colony in the late 19th century (Ndelu 2017:64). He was immortalised in the British satirical magazine, *Punch*, as the *'The Rhodes Colossus'* (1892), a cartoon which depicted him straddling the African continent with one foot in the Cape and the other in Cairo, Egypt (figure 12). His visions of a trans-continental railway subjected him to both praise and ridicule. His unbridled ambitions for the expansion of the British empire drew harsh criticism, yet also inspired a cult-like following amongst some of his peers.

These contrasting conceptions (or misconceptions) are explored in Paul Maylam's book *The Cult of Rhodes* (2005) which was written following the centennial of both Rhodes' death and the establishment of a scholarship (figure 13) in his name. Maylam (2005:v) writes about the scholarship's centenary:

"...but the celebration could not bear too close an examination of Rhodes' aggressive imperialism and exploitative business practices. So the historical figure of Rhodes was duly sanitised, or ignored for the occasion ... His name now connoted educational excellence. The past was better forgotten."

This excerpt, written a decade before the shit-throwing of Maxwele, shows the discomfort around Rhodes' legacy. It indicates a willful ignorance of the violent source of Rhodes' considerable wealth on the part of institutions who benefitted from his patronage. Texts about his life and legacy are polarising as some regard him as a benevolent, ambitious visionary who built South Africa into a global economy (Maylam 2005:4-5). Rhodes aimed to construct the world for the benefit of people like him, so white people were privileged by his legacy and were defensive of that privilege. Rhodes (1877) writes in his *Confessions of Faith*:

“Africa is still lying ready for us it is our duty to take it. It is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory and we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race more of the best the most human, most honourable race the world possesses.”

In the historical biography *Rhodes* (1996), author Anthony Thomas explores the controversial figure of Rhodes in his childhood memory. In the late 1940s, Thomas was a child growing up in Cape Town and was affected by his English grandparents reverence of Rhodes. He (1996:7) writes: *“to my grandparents, Rhodes was much more than a dead hero. He was an ideal. He represented everything they aspired to and defined who they were. He gave meaning to the word ‘English’”*. Maylam (2005:4) comments that Rhodes' outlook now is widely regarded as arrogant and chauvinistic, yet during the imperial age, these traits were viewed as noble idealism.

The political decisions made by Rhodes had devastating social impacts. That period in history was key in worsening the racial inequalities and cultural tensions which laid the foundations for the apartheid system. Rhodes was a leading figure in the consolidation of the diamond mines, which set the standard for the gruelling mining industry on which South Africa's economy depended (Tobutt 2016). Rhodesia went through a civil war, one that would cost 30,000 lives before the black majority gained control in 1980 and re-named the country Zimbabwe (Power 2003). The Glen Grey Act is regarded as having laid the foundations for apartheid legislation; while the suffering of the Afrikaner people during the war created the fierce nationalism that made the segregationist ideology of apartheid appealing. Rhodes built South Africa into powerful global economy, but at immeasurable cost to the human life and dignity of those who were not white nor English.

Figure 14: Jeppe High School, Johannesburg (date unknown)
Published by R. O. Füsslein
Source: *House Styles [O]*

School portrait of author (2001)
Source: *author's family archives*



2.2 “THE CENTRE CANNOT HOLD” LEARNING COLONISATION

South African children usually receive their formal introduction to colonisation in their high school history classes, yet they are part of a colonial system from the moment they are born. Everyone should have a birth certificate, a name, and an identification number to document your movements within the administrative machine behind the everyday functioning of society. Before colonisation appears in a lesson plan, a child will experience it through the hymns of the Christian church and the formalities of school, or learning the ‘right’ way to dress or do their hair when attending either institution. Before the first prescribed novel about colonisation is read, a child will be speaking English and wearing an emblemed blazer with long socks in the stuffy heat of a classroom. This is standard for suburban schools where the mottos still linger in Latin, uniforms are policed as a matter of pride, and children are funnelled through a rusty syllabus and marked with standardised tests.

Lesley Le Grange (2016:4), a professor of education, believes that the colonial mode of academic organisation was entrenched during apartheid and has not been redressed in post-Apartheid South Africa in meaningful ways. By being a part of the schooling system, a child is already interacting with colonial systems and knowledge as they are guided through twelve years of formal schooling.

The history of colonisation is taught from a comforting distance. The timeline starts with the age of discovery, the evils of colonialism in Africa, the transatlantic slave trade, the wars fought in Europe and America, and the dark years of Apartheid that were overcome. These difficult histories are smoothed over in textbook chapters, consolidated in flow charts, and prepared to be presented in essay format. History is sectioned and sequenced as world events are provided with start and end dates, packaged for easy remembering and structured retellings.

Colonisation was a section in history with a beginning and an end. It was preceded by the age of discovery, and then decolonisation in Africa was taught as an epilogue to World War 2. The monumental shift towards decolonisation occurred in the timeframe of 1945 to 1960, with a main focus on the atrocities committed in the Belgian Congo. In the scope of high school history, colonisation was over by the 1960s, so there was no need to critically engage with the pervasiveness of colonial systems in 21st century South Africa. Colonisation was quickly eclipsed by the injustices of the apartheid regime as it became the next chapter in the history class syllabus. The history of apartheid was also distilled into a collection of dates and events, segregationist laws and resistance fighters, all of which culminated in the 1994 democratic election as the chapter's unifying finale.

The history that we were taught in school was linear - there were set beginnings and resolutions. A chapter could be closed and revered as an object for study. This was a comforting way to move through the turmoil of history as one could observe from the safety of the present day as it stood apart from the past. As we look to create a cartography, we begin to realise that time is not linear; the past is still active in our present lives (figure 15).

QUESTION 4: HOW DID THE PHILOSOPHY OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS INFLUENCE THE SOWETO UPRISING OF 1976?

Study Sources 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D and then answer the questions that follow.

- 4.1 Study Source 4A.
- 4.1.1 According to the source, what was the fastest growing philosophy among the black South African youth? (1 x 1) (1)
- 4.1.2 Explain the term *Black Consciousness* in your own words. (1 x 2) (2)
- 4.1.3 What factors, do you think, motivated black South African students to break away from NUSAS? (1 x 2) (2)
- 4.1.4 Name TWO organisations that were formed to instil the philosophy of Black Consciousness in black South African students. (2 x 1) (2)
- 4.1.5 Explain how the philosophy of Black Consciousness influenced African and Coloured school children in the Cape in 1976. (2 x 2) (4)
- 4.2 Refer to Source 4B.
- 4.2.1 The Afrikaans word 'skool' (school) is crossed out in the cartoon. Using this information and your own knowledge, explain the messages that the cartoonist intended to convey. (2 x 2) (4)
- 4.2.2 How does the cartoonist Berry use the visual element of the flame/torch to convey his message? (2 x 2) (4)
- 4.3 Study Sources 4A and 4B. Comment on how these sources support each other regarding the Soweto Uprising. (2 x 2) (4)
- 4.4 Read Source 4C.
- 4.4.1 Explain whether, according to Kleingeld's testimony, the use of violence against the unarmed students was justified. (2 x 2) (4)
- 4.4.2 According to Jon-Jon Mkhonza, what were the circumstances under which Hector Pieterse was shot? (1 x 2) (2)
- 4.4.3 Explain why you would consider the information contained in both Kleingeld's testimony and Jon-Jon Mkhonza's account as useful when researching the history of the Soweto Uprising. (2 x 2) (4)
- 4.5 Read Source 4D.
- 4.5.1 Why, do you think, the students of Soweto embarked on protest action? (1 x 2) (2)
- 4.5.2 Biko stated, 'there was a real fear throughout the community throughout the country'. Explain to what extent this is an accurate description of how most white South Africans felt. (1 x 2) (2)
- 4.6 Using the information from ALL the sources and your own knowledge, write a paragraph of about EIGHT lines (about 80 words) to explain the various measures that the apartheid government put in place to limit the influence of the Black Consciousness Movement. (8)
- 4.7 EXTENDED WRITING (Your response should be about TWO pages long.)
- Answer ONE of the following questions: QUESTION 4.7.1 OR QUESTION 4.7.2.
- 4.7.1 Explain how the philosophy of Black Consciousness influenced the Soweto Uprising of 1976. (30)
- OR**
- 4.7.2 John Kane-Berman stated that 'a new generation has grown up and these younger men and women are impatient, radical, militant, brave and proud'.
- Do you agree with this statement? Substantiate your answer using the information from ALL the sources and your own knowledge. (30)

Figure 15: Pages from matric history exam (2012)
National Senior Certificate (NSC)
Source: Department of Basic Education
www.education.gov.za

TOTAL: 150

For those who didn't take history as an elective subject in high school, a narrative about colonisation would usually come in the form of a prescribed novel in English class, one such book was Chinua Achebe's iconic novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1959). The novel centres on a precolonial Nigerian society at the end of the 19th century and the cataclysmic arrival of European missionaries that divided and disenfranchised the Nigerian people. Achebe was able to speak to the rich culture, social structure and knowledges that existed in communities before European involvement.

"The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."
(Achebe 1959:176)

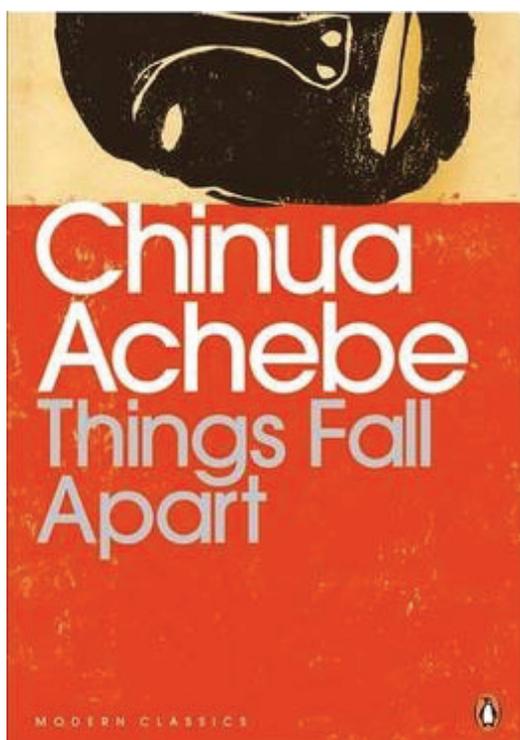


Figure 16: *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe (1959)
Source: Penguin Random House LLC

I would say that the profoundness of the novel was lost on a classroom of suburban teenagers. This is the case with many prescribed books that are drawn out and analysed in painstaking detail over the course of months. 'Things Fall Apart' was significant to me as it was one of the first times that I encountered the view that Europeans were a problematic and destructive force in Africa. Growing up in a Christian household, the figure of the missionary was a heroic champion of good and the spreading of western theology was a divine calling. Achebe offered a different perspective; that the illuminating knowledge that the missionaries claimed to bring would light the path for the exploitation and degradation of African societies. I will not pretend that 'Things Fall Apart' impacted me much as a teenager, but the sentiments of the title found new resonance as protests over decolonisation impacted my university studies.

The title of Achebe's book is drawn from the opening stanza from the W. B. Yeats poem, *The Second Coming*, written in 1919:

*"Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world ..."*

The poem has been used widely in the century following its publication in 1920 as the apocalyptic imagery resonates with many modern conflicts, resurfacing in reference to the Vietnam War, the 9/11 attacks, and subsequent Iraq War (Lynskey 2020). Fintan O’Toole, an Irish columnist, suggested the ‘Yeats Test’ as a means to gauge anxiety: the more Yeats is quoted, the worse things are in the world (O’Toole 2018). The poem has become embedded in popular culture as an allegory for a civilisational crisis.

The act of ‘falling’, both literally and symbolically, is a theme that repeats itself throughout this research paper: the fall of indigenous knowledges through colonisation; the fall of colonisation as Africa gained its independence, the fall of the apartheid system as equality was promised in 1994; and in the 2015 student protests that called for the fall of institutional racism at universities. The decolonisation process is not linear; it has turned and returned to the same discussions at different times and places. It is ongoing, a process of falling and rebuilding that slowly progresses us to a more liveable future.

“As such, the map is (re)made every time mapping practices, such as recognising, interpreting, translating and communicating, are applied to the pattern of ink.”

(Kitchin & Perkins 2009:22)



Figure 17: Screenshots from @RhodesMustFall (2021)
Source: Twitter

2.3 ONTOLOGICAL DESIGN

2.3.1 OPPRESSION BY DESIGN

“The self doesn’t hold; the self is dispersed in an un/doing of self as a result of being threaded through by that which is excluded.”

(Barad 2014:178)

The concept of design is commonly attached to objects and images, yet it needs to be recognised as more profound and pervasive than generally recognised (Willis 2006:70). Designing is sometimes perceived as a linear process which results in an end product, yet it needs to be understood as an ongoing process with no definite or final iteration. This type of designing is present in the largest buildings and most advanced technologies, but also in the immaterial aspects of our lives such as the functioning of organisations, belief systems, and mundane habits (Willis 2006:82). When looking at colonisation, it was designed to impact deeply personal aspects of the colonised communities, such as religion, culture and language; as well as administrative systems of government, commerce and education. Willis (2006:70) recognises that both people and things are capable of design activity and writes that: *“we design our world, while our world acts back on us and designs us”*. This presents design as an ongoing process, a cycle of designing and being designed by the world around us.

Ontological design is often framed as an optimistic tool for social change, yet it should be acknowledged that it was used for destruction during colonisation. Somalian academic, Hussein A. Bulhan (2015) writes about the psychology of oppression in the context of colonialism in Africa. Bulhan (2015:240) states that European invasion and occupation was a means of material exploitation and cultural domination, yet it resulted in far-reaching economic, political, cultural and psychological effects. Willis (2006:81) comments that one cannot make a distinction between material and immaterial aspects of ontological design as both are present and mutually reinforcing.

Bulhan (2015:242) writes that the colonisation of Africa was achieved through systematic violence that was *“organised, continuous, methodic, and willful”*. Colonisation was designed to support the capitalist agenda of the expanding empires of Europe, but it also strengthened the existing racism, cultural domination and European superiority. The economic and political motives were evident from the beginning, yet the cultural and psychological aspects became more intense as they manifested later (Bulhan 2015:240). These invisible aspects of colonial designs are more difficult to confront as they have become entrenched in the functioning of modern, postcolonial life.

The first step of colonisation was the occupation of the land, usually by force. Bulhan (2015:243) writes that *“land contained not only the world of things, but also the world of people”*. This is a reminder that there were people and histories attached to those areas. Following the occupation of land, the coloniser would seek to control the population as a source of labour and to serve as a market for manufactured goods. This control of the population would gradually erode their sense of meaning in the world (Bulhan 2015:243). To achieve a lasting occupation of the land in order to exploit human and material resources, the coloniser needed to erode social bonding, indigenous beliefs, values, identities, and indigenous knowledge systems (Bulhan 2015:243).

“I think the natives should be a source of great assistance to most of us. At any rate, if the whites maintain their position as the supreme race, the day may come when we shall all be thankful that we have the natives with us in their proper position.”

(Rhodes 1894)

Oppression could not be sustained through violence and outsider propaganda, therefore the coloniser found local collaborators to continue the colonial mission. To achieve the submission of entire populations, the colonial powers needed sophisticated methods and multiple agents; people such as missionaries, teachers and administrators. Through the mundane nature of these positions, the ideologies that they represented appeared non-threatening, yet they were effective in penetrating the most basic aspects of society. The colonial schools and churches were instrumental in creating the colonial subject through education and the internalisation of colonial values (Bulhan 2015:243). This intentional destruction of histories, cultures and knowledges illustrates a destruction of being through design.

“Africans believed then that the Europeans had left for good, that therefore Africans could move forward unhindered to enjoy the freedom and prosperity they thought in immediate grasp. This was not so. The euphoria and rising expectation soon gave way to disappointment and despair because colonialism left behind enduring legacies—including not only political and economic, but also cultural, intellectual, and social legacies—that keep alive European domination.”

(Bulhan 2015:240-241)

Bulhan (2015:241) believes that there hasn't been sufficient means for formerly colonised people to acquire knowledge, understand their history, or define themselves in the postcolonial world. This issue was raised by RMF as a new generation of black students wanted to see their histories and identities represented in universities. It was revealed that colonial ways of being, doing, and thinking were all entrenched in the academic systems. This highlighted the need to redesign the structure in more inclusive ways.

2.3.2 DESIGNS FOR A MORE LIVEABLE WORLD

I would like to return to the pinpoint in this cartography; the point of Maxwele confronting Rhodes in 2015. Maxwele is quoted by the Independent Online (Bester 2015) as saying:

“This poo that we are throwing on the statue represents the shame of black people. By throwing it on the statue we are throwing our shame to whites’ affluence ... As black students here we have to change our ways just to fit in, and we have to keep quiet for almost three years before we can speak in the classrooms. It is time for all of that to change.”

Arturo Escobar (2012 & 2018), a Columbian-American anthropologist, is concerned with the social potential of design theory and practice, especially in previously colonised countries. The legacy of colonisation continues to deeply affect the ontologies and lived realities of those in the global south. Some social movement activists, academics and designers have voiced their concern that the current crisis points to a deeper civilisational crisis (Escobar 2018:5). Daniel Faber (2018:8), a researcher and environmental justice advocate, writes about the crisis of capitalism - an economic system that is almost synonymous with colonisation. In the context of global capitalism, injustices are rooted in power structures that reinforce privileges relating to social class, race and gender. The social tensions which manifested at universities are expressions of wider societal problems and have their roots in the racial capitalism that has shaped South Africa (Jagarnath 2016). Faber (2018:14) writes that when addressing inequality, one needs to be cognisant of the multiple political, economic and social forces at work.

In this context, Escobar (2018:2) believes that ontological design has a role to play in creating a more liveable world. “[D]esign is ontological in that it is a conversation about possibilities” (Escobar 2012:34). Escobar regards social context as vital to successful design, recognising that one cannot design for a better world without having been a part of that world. Ontological design therefore serves as a means of critically engaging with the world and exploring how we can construct it in more inclusive ways (Escobar 2012:13). Such inclusivity acknowledges that everybody is capable of design, as those who interact with the world are active in its designing. With this perspective, Escobar (2012:13) calls for a design practice that is collaborative, human-centred and relational. This approach is crucial when designing systems that are intended to provide access to services, negotiate sustainable ways of living, and attempt to bridge the deep divides caused by generations of segregation:

“The contemporary crisis is the result of deeply entrenched ways of being, knowing, and doing. To reclaim design for other world-making purposes requires creating a new, effective awareness of design’s embeddedness in this history.” (Escobar 2018:19)

Maxwele, quoted again, during his demonstration against Rhodes (Bester 2015):

“As black students we are disgusted by the fact that this statue still stands here today as it is a symbol of white supremacy ... How can this statue still stand on a road called Madiba Circle? By doing that we are making history beautiful when it is not. Also every year we have the Steve Biko memorial speech and it is held in the Jameson Hall. These are all fraudulent relationships.”

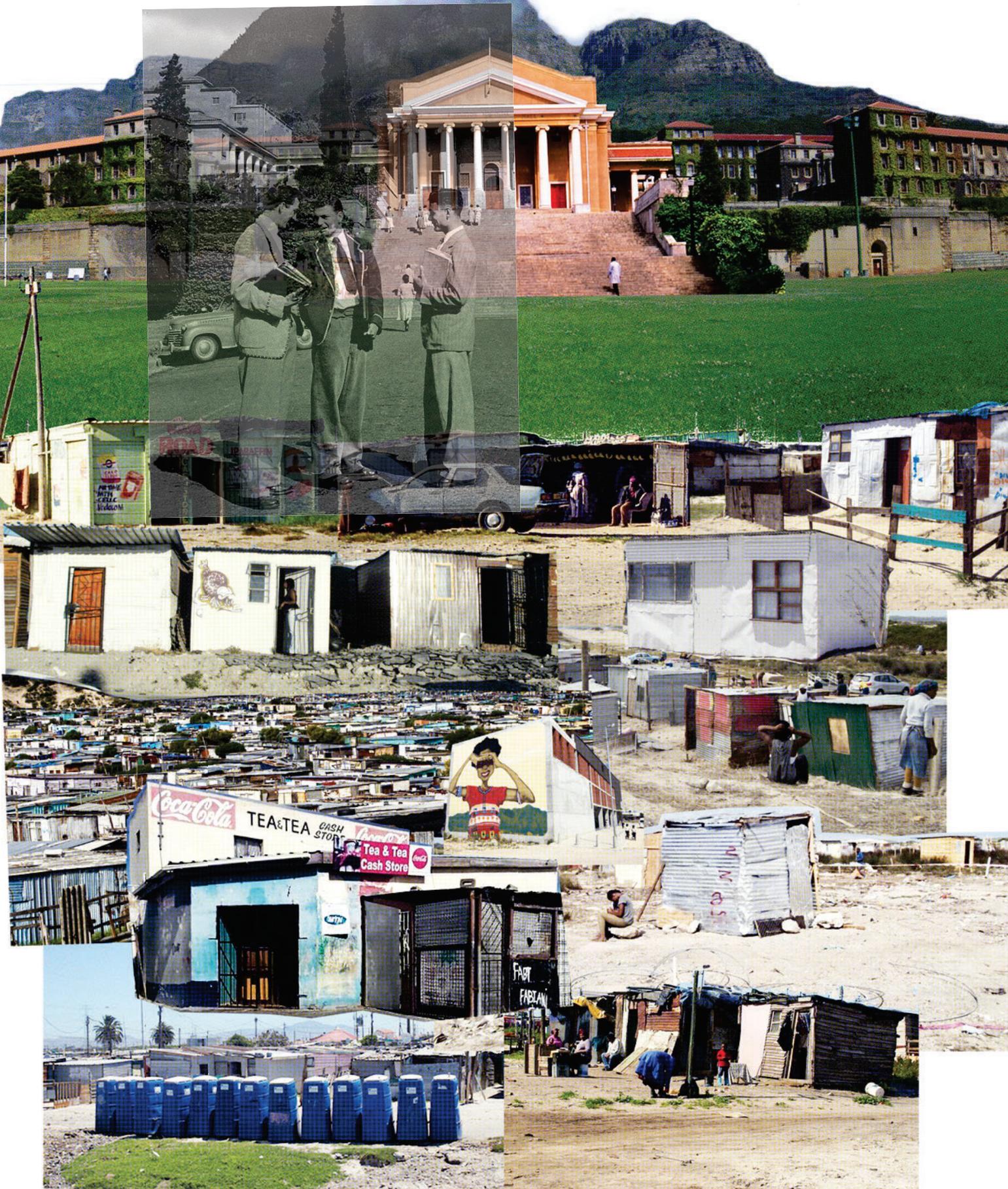
During the student protests that followed Maxwele’s action, the disruption of academic activities became a common tool across South African universities. For protesting students, disrupting academic activities was a way to disrupt colonial structures. In an ideal world, a person or community would have agency over their own ontologies through being active in designing their world; but in cases of oppression and control by an external group, that agency may be undermined or completely removed. Protest is a visible act of ontological design in action, as participants are often seeking to regain agency within a larger social crisis. Protesting confronts who you are and your position in the world, as well as who you want to become.

2.3.3 ONTOLOGICAL DESIGN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Ronald Barnett writes about an ontological approach to education in his article titled *Learning for an unknown future* (2004). This is a relevant text when discussing learning in a time of social turmoil. He suggests that this type of learning requires a move away from knowledge and skills, rather focusing on human qualities and nature. He states that *“learning for an unknown future calls, in short, for an ontological turn”* (Barnett 2004:247). This ‘ontological turn’ is a move towards engaging with how individuals understand themselves, their sense of identity, with their sense of being in the world. Barnett (2005:790) states that *“...the university has become a social institution for the production both of strangeness and of human ontologies that can flourish amid strangeness”*. There are many facets to this “strangeness” and this research explores it in terms of decolonisation and processes of reckoning with troubling legacies in universities.

Researchers Gloria Dall’Alba and Robyn Barnacle (2007) also call for an ontological turn at institutions of higher education in order to promote the integration of knowing, acting and being. They state the problems faced by higher education are ontological; as how we approach learning is reflected in how we perceive ourselves (Dall’Alba & Barnacle 2007:681). Our sense of who we are - our identity and history - is connected to how we interact with the world, which in turn influences our knowledge of the world. We do not primarily access things conceptually or intellectually, rather we access things through being constantly immersed in activities, practices and relationships with things and others. Our knowledge of the world comes through being in the world, Dall’Alba and Barnacle (2007:682) write: *“...knowing is inhabited; we cannot step outside it. But it is also transformative - it can change who we are”*.

Figure 18: Worlds apart: UCT / Khayelitsha (2021)
Digital collage
By author



As we return to the moment when Maxwele hurled shit onto the statue of Rhodes, we can see these complex threads being pulled together. Maxwele had experienced the poverty of the rural Eastern Cape before coming to Cape Town in search of a better education. Fairbanks (2015) writes about Maxwele's experience:

“He discovered that people loitered on the streets because there was hardly room to stand up in their dark, claustrophobic shacks. Families defecated in plastic boxes collected once a week by the municipality. While the boxes sat by the kerb, children played around them.”

The desperate poverty stood in stark contrast to the privileged, predominantly white suburbs of Cape Town where Maxwele worked and then studied. Maxwele had earned a scholarship to study political science at UCT, yet he was intently aware of how the apartheid system was shaping his life (Fairbanks 2015). This anger is what drove him to catch a minibus taxi to Khayelitsha on the morning of 9 March 2015, collect a reeking bucket of human waste from the kerbside, and bring it to the stoic figure of Rhodes. A small crowd had gathered to observe the commotion, to whom Maxwele shouted: *“Where are our heroes and ancestors?”* (cited in Fairbanks 2015), before he emptied the contents of the bucket onto the imperial icon.

The action taken by Maxwele confronted the unjust society in which he found himself: the history of oppression and the continued indignities faced by black South Africans alongside the wealth and privilege of white institutions (figure 18). The protest aimed to reclaim some agency for black people who still suffer because of colonial and apartheid systems. The convergence of shit from Khayelitsha and the bronze statue of Rhodes shifted the conversation about decolonisation; it transformed it from an intellectual study to an embodied process of *being, doing*, and ultimately *knowing* through action. It has been argued that efforts towards decolonisation have been directed towards the development of new policies and not towards transforming institutional cultures and curricula (du Preez 2018:13), therefore this protest marks an important ontological turn. A new line had been drawn on the cartography, bringing the ghost of Rhodes to the foreground of campus politics. In an online article written in 2006, Braidotti describes this kind of action as follows: *“[T]he point of this cartographic move ... is to facilitate the transposition of the respective political affects that activate them. I do like putting the ‘active’ back into ‘activism’.”*

Universities need to be inclusive of people's diverse lived experiences and be ethically responsive to the emerging complexities of an interconnected world (Moloi et al. 2017:2015) and, in doing so, find ways of designing a more sustainable future. The fight for decolonisation at South African universities became an embodied, ontological project through the protests against the statue of Rhodes. This activism showed a coming together of agencies; of contrasting histories and imagined futures that challenged South Africans to look at where we had come from and what we, as a nation, wanted to become.



Figure 19: Rhodes Must Fall protests (2015)
 Photo by Michael Hammond
 Source: www.news.uct.ac.za

Source: Twitter and Facebook

2.4 THE FALL OF RHODES

“There is, I think, a general feeling that the natives are a distinct source of trouble and loss to the country.”
 (Rhodes 1894)

Within a few days of Maxwele’s protest, conversations about the incident had spread and a mass meeting at UCT was held to discuss the legacies of the statue and its place on the campus (Ndelu 2017:65). Some saw the shit-throwing as an act of disrespect to a historical figure, while others regarded the presence of the monument on campus as an insult to their struggles as black students. A group of student activists took the lead in calling for the removal of the statue; a movement which became known by the hashtag of *#RhodesMustFall* (RMF). Two weeks after the catalysing convergence, the Rhodes Must Fall movement had established a social media presence on Twitter and Instagram and had shared their mission statement:

“The statue has great symbolic power; it glorifies a mass-murderer who exploited black labour and stole land from indigenous people. Its presence erases black history and is an act of violence against black students, workers and staff – by “black” we refer to all people of colour.”
 (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015)

This mission statement stands in defiance to the ideals of Rhodes who didn't believe in black leadership or intellect. It reclaims the agency that the colonial system sought to undermine. Rhodes realised the threat of an educated black population and mentioned it in his address to the Cape Parliament when he commented on the black men who had been educated by the missionary schools:

“There are [black] parsons everywhere — these institutions are turning them out by the dozen. They are turning out a dangerous class. They are excellent so long as the supply is limited, but the country is overstocked with them. These people will not go back and work otherwise these [black] parsons would develop into agitators against the Government. Let me go on and point out the way in which the minds of the natives should be occupied...”

(Rhodes 1894)

The RMF campaign functioned as a movement against the glorification of colonialism and institutional racism, whether in the built environment or in the form of a curriculum which students felt was detached from their culture and lived experiences (Garton 2019:407). Some demands were the offspring of specific internal moments and were unique to their institution, and other demands came from outside the university and encouraged solidarity with the national and international community. The conversation about RMF extended beyond the university campus as it found resonance with other South Africans. Across the country, monuments were vandalised, interacted with creatively, or became topics of debate.

The most common response by detractors was “its just a statue”. This seemed to be a way to discredit any emotions that were felt towards the object. If it was just an object of little meaning or consequence, then why did people get so defensive about it? I felt defensive towards the statue because it was opening up a conversation about which histories are relevant in 21st century South Africa. Which histories are oppressive or problematic and should be removed?

As I reflect back, I wish that more of Rhodes' writings and ideologies had become part of the conversation. My response was emotional and uniformed. I didn't know much about Rhodes, but I figured that he must have done something important to deserve a statue. I wish that I had chosen to listen, to learn, and then decide which parts of my history deserved to be challenged. Rhodes is a shit part of my history.

There was an optimism amongst the RMF supporters. It was the first movement that was led by the born-free generation and it made use of social media as a dynamic tool to disseminate ideas and images. The UCT students developed an extensive network of demands to address their disillusionment, most of which were concerned with the decolonisation of systems, curricula and the built environment (Ndelu 2017:63). These demands were not static. Some battles they inherited from the past, while others were in the process of developing alongside new schools of thought and advocacy (Ndelu 2017:63). The statue of Rhodes served as a symbol of much wider issues, but it functioned as gathering point of emotions, ideas and discourses. The monument itself became dynamic as people interacted with it - throwing paint, writing messages, or wrapping it in black plastic bags (figure 20).

Figure 20: Interactions with the statue of Rhodes (2015)
Source: various





Figure 21: The fall of Rhodes (2015)
 Photo by: Mike Hutchings/Reuters
 Source: www.theguardian.com

Le Grange (2016:5) suggests that the move towards decolonisation illustrates a search for new ways of living through events and being responsive to the new possibilities that may emerge. Ndelu (2017:66) states that the Fallist movement aimed to foster a productive space for engagement about decolonisation by organising committees for media, strategy, intersectionality and education. Following the establishment of RMF, a variety of events began happening to discuss the movement and its objectives, to interact with new ideas, and document the new knowledges that were emerging.

Rhodes fell on 9 April 2015, exactly a month since the story began with a bucket of waste from Khayelitsha. By this stage, Cecil John Rhodes no longer looked dignified nor powerful. He was heavily graffitied and had spent time in a boarded enclosure to protect him while university management decided his fate. On the day of the removal, a large crowd of students, academics and media crowded the steps to witness the dethroning of Rhodes (figure 21). The crowd was feverish. There was cheering, singing, and last minute splashes of paint on the disgraced icon. There were cellphones everywhere to film and photograph the historical moment. The plinth and removal truck was surrounded by a sea of screens. The crowd was not given the satisfaction of pulling down the monument with ropes and tools, rather they watched as Rhodes was slowly lifted by crane, placed on a truck, and driven slowly away from the campus. The mighty had fallen.

“Could it be that another design imagination, this time more radical and constructive, is emerging? Might a new breed of designers come to be thought of as transition activists? If this were to be the case, they would have to walk hand and hand with those who are protecting and redefining well-being, life projects, territories, local economies, and communities worldwide”
 (Escobar 2018:7)

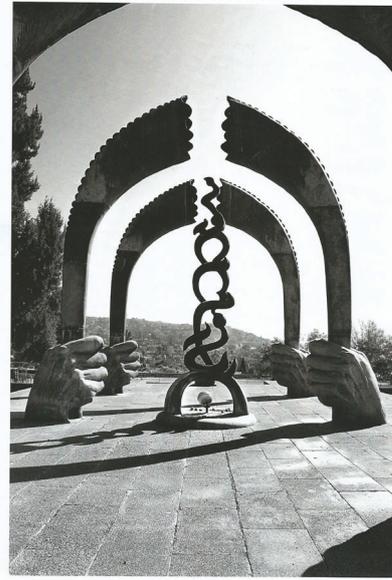
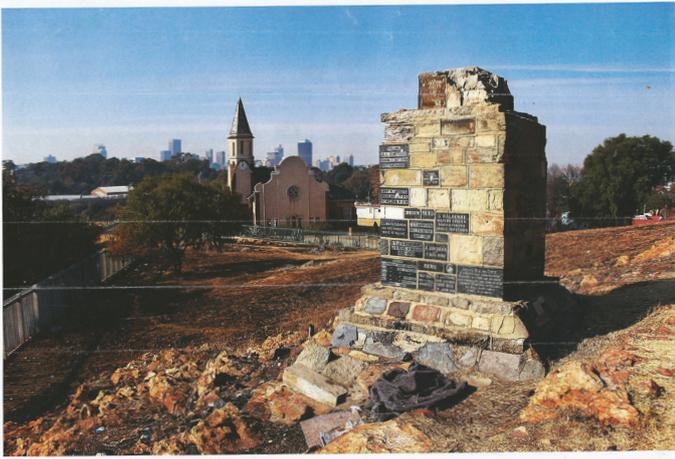


Figure 22: 'Re-Membering Johannesburg series' (2015)
Project with University of Pretoria
By author

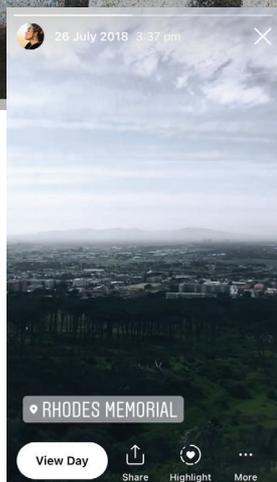


Figure 23: Visting Rhodes (2018)
By author

My cartography pulls backwards towards 2015 as I tried to address my unease about monuments following the emergence of #RhodesMustFall. As part of an undergraduate assignment, I began photographing and documenting monuments around Johannesburg (figure 22). I began having conversations with these monuments - I experienced them in many forms and states of veneration or disrepair. I moved through the spaces and interacted with these physical objects that connected ideology, history and memory. Monuments themselves were pinpoints where ideologies of the past could be interacted with in the present moment; where such interactions created new meanings, new visions of the past, new memories for the future. This inspired my enduring interest in monuments and processes of remembering. Meanwhile Cecil Rhodes has become a strange companion throughout this research journey (figure 23).

I had taken the discomfort that #RhodesMustFall had caused within me and allowed it to percolate through the photographic process. I began the project looking for solutions for how to address our colonial and apartheid-era monuments, yet as I compiled the project, there were no concrete answers to the issue of monuments. It was the interaction between people and these objects of memory that gave them their meaning - that gave power to these forms made of stone and metal (figure 24).



Figure 24: J.H. Marais, stepped down (2018)
Digital collage
By author

CHAPTER 3: NEW MEDIA / NEW MOVEMENT

3.1 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE INTERNET AGE

“By sharing sorrow and hope in the free public space of the Internet, by connecting to each other, and by envisioning projects from multiple sources of being, individuals formed networks, regardless of their personal views or organisational attachments.”

(Castells 2015:2)

This chapter argues that access to the internet and the use of social media were instrumental in the rise of the Fallist movement. The theories of Manuel Castells (2015), a Spanish sociologist, are key to this discussion as his work is concerned with how we connect within our society and how digital technologies have evolved within these networks. His book, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, was first published in 2012 following the increased use of new technologies in coordinating social movements.

Since the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, the world has become networked by the fast, viral diffusion of images and ideas. This means that a social movement could spread rapidly and almost unhindered (Castells 2015:2). Academics Thomas Poell (2019) and Bolette B. Blaagaard (2015) complement many of Manuel Castells' ideas in their writings on new media and protest. According to Poell (2019:2), use of new technologies and social media has brought about an *“acceleration of all reality”* as we are able to experience events from around the world in near real-time. This includes socio-cultural phenomena such as protest movements where images and ideas can reach far beyond the context in which they originated.

RMF can be considered to be the first networked social movement that occurred in South Africa. New media provided a new space for activism. It created social networks demonstrating solidarity and shared experiences which resulted in a visible change, i.e. the removal of the statue of Rhodes from the UCT campus. In the months following RMF, there was a flurry of articles that analysed the role of Twitter in the movement through tracking the use of the *#RhodesMustFall* hashtag online. Tanja Bosch, a UCT-based academic in media and communications, believes that the Twitter discourse played a key role in the public's perception of the RMF movement. Bosch (2017:222) argues that the various discussions that occurred on social media created the public network from which RMF emerged. This, in turn, set the agenda for public debate in both online and offline spaces, whether it was during mass meetings or in the mainstream news. Twitter was seen as an accessible space that empowered people to participate in political discussions; a platform to voice concerns individuals may not have felt comfortable to do in another space (Bosch 2017:225). This use

of online spaces allows for what Bosch (2017:225) terms a “*new biography of citizenship*” which is characterised by more individualised forms of activism. According to her, this can serve to break down physical or social divides and give marginalised voices an opportunity to be amplified.

Bosch (2017) conducted a qualitative analysis of conversations on Twitter which related to RMF in the period of 19-23 March 2015, shortly after the movement gained traction. She (2017:228) identified political listening taking place; a practice that aims to form and maintain connections that encourage shared action. The practice of listening is valuable when deep inequalities and unavoidable conflict exists. In Bosch’s Twitter analysis, RMF discussions appeared to be crossing boundaries and addressing unresolved and emotional arguments about the colonial legacy in South Africa. She (2017:229) writes:

“...Twitter certainly created a space for the voicing of black pain in ways that we do not see in any other medium or social space, mediated or otherwise. Listening is evidenced by the fact the users often acknowledged others’ arguments, or modified their own positions, in relation to the posts of others and their online conversations with those users. In this instance, there was certainly a plurality of voices and opinions, the kind of racial and political diversity that is seldom seen in other offline spaces.”

Bosch acknowledges the limitations of analysing social networking sites as only a small section of the population engages online, but she still sees Twitter as a unique space for conversation in the South African context. At this point in her research, Bosch was optimistic about Twitter as a tool of social change. RMF rose quickly to prominence and resulted in a powerful moment of triumph when the monument was removed a month after the hashtag appeared. This whirlwind protest encapsulated the positive power of social media that was carried forward into 2015.

3.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

For those of us born in 1994, our first year of high school was marred by the outbreak of xenophobic attacks in 2008. Foreign nationals who were living in South Africa were brutalised by desperate and angry locals as people grasped at the sparse resources available to the poor. The violence showed a country with deep scars. Since I was 14, I understood the meaning of the word 'xenophobic' and it has always been associated with images of black smoke and angry mobs.

The born-frees turned 16 amongst the fervour of the FIFA World Cup in 2010 and basked in the optimism that overtook the country. The winter holiday was extended in order for us to participate in the soccer-centric festivities. We could go out to watch the World Cup matches on big screens, surrounded by crowds of cheering spectators in colourful supporters gear. The world had come to South Africa. There was a promise of a better future; of economic growth and international recognition. But the big white stadiums soon began to lose their shine. The baton of optimism which was held by the transition to democracy in the 1990s had been passed onto the FIFA World Cup. The gold was no longer glittering as the nation began to reflect on the progress made in 16 years of democracy.

My contemporaries and I entered our final year of schooling in 2012. The matric year was one of pride and promise. School prefects were elected, academic achievements announced, and farewell dances held to celebrate the end of 12 years of school studies. In August of 2012, as the born-frees were preparing for final exams, the horrific Marikana Massacre rocked the nation. This saw the murder of 34 protesting mineworkers by the South African Police Service. It was painfully reminiscent of the violence enacted by the apartheid regime. Our democracy celebrated its 18th birthday with a massacre.

Social movements are products of the societies in which they exist; they are reflective of the power imbalances and injustices experienced between its members. For the purpose of this research, two main contextual factors will be examined as playing a decisive role in the emergence of *#FeesMustFall* (FMF). The factors outlined by Castells (2015:222) include a crisis of the legitimacy of the political system, and the capacity for autonomous communication. As one looks at Fallism, one must recognise the generations of trauma and conflict that are at the root of the movement. For the purpose of this research, the crisis of the political system will be focused on the events of 2012, namely the Marikana Massacre and the controversy around Brett Murray's painting, *The Spear*. The year of 2012 was a divisive year in post-apartheid South Africa. As we return to the pinpoint in the cartography, at the statue of Rhodes on the UCT campus before it fell, we can return to a time in 2014 where the words *Remember Marikana* were graffitied on its plinth (figure 24).



Figure 24: Rhodes plinth defaced (2014)
Photo by: Jason Boud
Source: www.dailyvox.co.za



Figure 25: Remember Marikana (2014)
Graffiti by Tokolos-Stencils
Source: <https://tokolosstencils.tumblr.com>

In May 2014, a stencilled image of man (figure 25) with a green blanket wrapped around his shoulders appeared on the granite plinth under Rhodes' statue at UCT. The stencilled man is standing with his arm outstretched, his fist is clenched and his mouth is open in a frozen shout. The engraved words of Rudyard Kipling's poem were covered by red sprayed stencilled words: *Remember Marikana*. The man in the green blanket is Mgcineni Noki, a rock drill operator at the Marikana Mine, who was photographed by Leon Sadiki (figure 26) during the protests building up to the massacre (Beker 2018:2). Noki was one of the men who were killed by police and his image has become symbolic of the struggle for justice for the victims of Marikana.



Figure 26: Mgcineni Noki, with the striking platinum miners (2012), Photo by Leon Sadiki
Source: www.theguardian.com

The graffiti was claimed by *Tokolos Stencils* (2014), an anonymous collective of artists who released the following statement:

“In honour of all black UCT students whose land was stolen from their ancestors and whose natural re-sources were privatised by one Cecil John RhodesTokolos reminds us that colonialism and the massacre at Marikana are not only interconnected but part of a long history of dispossession, exploitation and murder of blacks (and especially poor blacks).”
(cited in Knoetze 2014)

The crisis surrounding South Africa’s political leadership was laid bare with the Marikana Massacre. This event horrified the nation who believed that this level of police violence was reserved for the dark pages of apartheid history (Adelman 2015:244). On 16 August 2016, the South African Police Service (SAPS) opened fire on a group of striking mineworkers, killing 34 men and injuring 78 others. This vandalism connected the legacy of Rhodes to the events that unfolded at Marikana, but also accused UCT of holding shares in Lonmin, the company that owned the mine at Marikana. These accusations were revealed to be true in August 2015 when UCT publicly admitted that it did hold such shares (Becker 2018:10). The student protests at UCT repeatedly connected itself to the injustice at Marikana, thus pulling another fraught thread into the cartography of Fallism.

The failure in political leadership in resolving the strike caused many to question the loyalty of the ANC to its supporters. The president of the ruling party in South Africa during this period, Jacob Zuma, was linked to cases of corruption and nepotism which stunted the progress promised by the ANC (van Graan 2013:1). In the months preceding the Marikana Massacre, the Zuma administration became embroiled in another scandal involving a painting which featured President Zuma’s exposed genitals (figure 27). The offending artist was Brett Murray, a veteran satirical artist known for his biting commentary on South African society (van Graan 2013:1). With Murray’s history of irreverent art, it is unsurprising that Zuma and the perceived moral failings of the ANC became relevant subject matter.

In May 2012, Murray staged his exhibition *Hail to the Thief II* at the Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg. On display was a painting titled *The Spear*, which invoked the style of a Russian propaganda poster, yet featured Zuma in Lenin’s place (figure 29). The artwork received little attention until an image from the exhibition was featured in the City Press newspaper. This triggered the fury of the ANC leaders and political elite, resulting in marches to the gallery, threats of legal action, abuse targeted at Murray, and ultimately the work being defaced by two men (figure 28).

Figure 27: *The Spear* (2010)
Brett Murray
Source: *Wikipedia Commons*



Figure 28: *Vandalism of The Spear* (2012)
Unknown photographer
Source: www.mg.co.za



Figure 29: *Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Long live Lenin* (1967)
Viktor Semenovich Ivanov
Source: russianlegacy.com

When one looks at the government's response to *The Spear* and the Marikana Massacre, occurring just months apart, the disparity is devastating. The ANC expressed greater anger and condemnation at an artist expressing disdain at the moral decline of the ANC's ideals than to workers being slaughtered by the national police force (van Graan 2013:2). Castells (2015:222) states that when the grievances of the people do not have channels of expression nor adequate representation in political institutions, they are pushed to resort to alternative forms of representing their needs and desires. Such a failure by those in leadership can push citizens to reinvent their democracy.

The ability to practice freedom of speech is fundamental to the South African constitution. As South Africa moved into the 2010s, the internet was becoming more accessible, especially to those who lived in urban areas, and the popularity of social media platforms grew alongside it. In particular, Twitter became a space for suburban, educated users to express their opinions (Serino 2013); it started to function as a platform for political discourse.

The born-free generation were entering adulthood around the same time that Twitter began to gain popularity in South Africa (Serino 2013). The uptake of social media amongst young, urban South Africans provided a new space for them to voice their concerns, opinions, and lived experiences. The protection of our freedom of speech has allowed for people to voice political concerns, which now could be amplified and shared through social media.

In the three years leading to the RMF protests, the ability to communicate and connect online became accessible to a new generation of South Africans who had become increasingly aware of a broken political system as foreshadowed by the Marikana Massacre.

3.3 BORNFREE / BROKEN PROMISES

“To discuss the posthuman is to stare into the abyss of the inhumanity of our times”

(Braidotti 2017:84)

Many universities in the South are dependent on state funding, and as these government subsidies are reduced, universities are burdened with sourcing more funds to continue operating at a suitable standard. This dependence on government has become increasingly problematic as institutions have needed to fight for their survival and integrity (Robertson & Komljenovic 2016:596). In South Africa, this has resulted in a steady increase in tuition fees as universities have become pressured to accommodate more students and provide greater support services with fewer governmental resources.

“If the Cecil Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town is a symbol of the system that dehumanised, oppressed, and excluded black South Africans – a system which continues to reduce their lives – free education is a symbol of promised hope.”

(Nicolson 2016a)

Achieving a basic education serves as a driving force for economic and human development, yet in South Africa it also serves to illuminate the inequalities that are pervasive in the education system (Govender 2020). The apartheid schooling system was structured in a way that privileged the white-only suburban schools, therefore ensuring good facilities and quality education for white learners. Apartheid-era schools that catered for black students were often located in the townships and rural areas which were poorly resourced and black teachers did not receive the training nor support which were provided to their white counterparts (Villette 2016). A report by *Amnesty International* (2020:6) writes that the public schooling system is characterised by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and poor educational outcomes.

The crisis in the education system needs to be read within the socio-economic context of South Africa which is regarded as one of the most unequal countries in the world¹. A child's experience of education is still very much dependent on their skin colour, where they are born, and the financial resources of their family. The collapse of public education has resulted in the development of a private school system which is able to offer the best facilities and teachers at an exorbitant cost to parents.

¹ Amnesty International (2020:7) writes that black households earn 20% less on average than white households, with half of the black population living below the poverty line as compared to just 1% of white people.

The wealth disparities between public and private schools are obscene, thus perpetuating the ever-widening gap between the rich and poor in South Africa. Diane Coetzer (2017) writes about private schools:

“But it’s no secret that access is the very thing that private schools deliver so sumptuously – and exclusively – to their communities: access to the best facilities and teachers; access to matric year support no public school can hope to match; near-guaranteed access to top-end tertiary education and, perhaps most important, access to multiple, influential business networks stacked to the rafters with ‘old boys and girls’, and fellow parents.”

The private school system solidifies a group of people bound by economic privilege, further distancing the wealthy urban elite from their counterparts in the townships or rural areas. There are some well-functioning government schools in suburban areas that have managed to maintain a high standard of education, yet their situation is increasingly precarious as government support remains inadequate, the demand per student intakes increases, and fee-paying families relocate to private schools.



Figure 30: Conflict of education (2021)
Digital collage
By author

I attended one of the historic single-sex high schools in Johannesburg. The brick walls are lined with old photographs and the wooden floors creaked in the classrooms. During apartheid, it was a whites-only school. The legacy of that preferential funding and privilege allowed for a high standard of education and good facilities. The school prided itself on its 100% matric pass rate and the impressive number of university entrance qualifications that were achieved each year.

My parents would comment on the rich diversity of my classmates and friends; it was a snapshot of the dream of the rainbow nation. I imagined my classmates as living similar lives to me, with similar families and experiences. It was a bubble in which I believed that we had equal opportunities attending the same school.

A dream was sold during those information sessions; that a university education was the key to unlocking job opportunities and success. The dream that we could all study further and build a good life for ourselves. It was sold as being obtainable; the natural next step in our lives into adulthood.

In 2013, the university gates opened to the born-free generation. We had come to claim the dream that we had been sold.

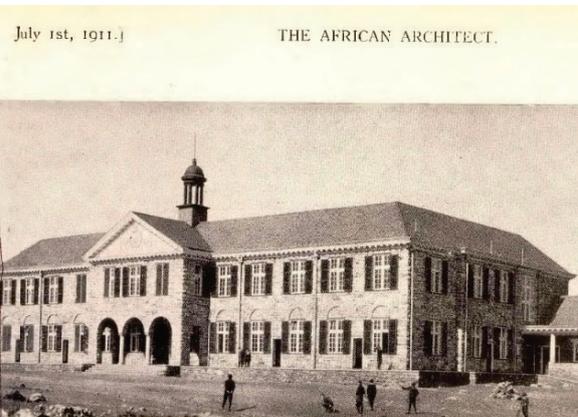


Figure 31: Jeppe Boys (1911)
The African Architect
Source: johannesburg1912.com

Eduguide: Matric 2012 results
Bedfordview and Edenvale News (Jan 2013)
Source: Author's archives

There is an expectation that entering tertiary education will help poor students overcome the crisis of poverty, inequality and unemployment (Govender 2020). Achieving a university education has come to be seen as a way to break the cycle of poverty; a means to obtain both status and wealth. Access to higher education has therefore become a social and political issue (Robertson & Komljenovic 2016:598). For many black students, their university education is burdened by the expectations of their families who regard a degree as central to building a successful career which can, in turn, uplift the family and community. Access to higher education becomes a fantasy; where the imagining of better life becomes the rationale for indebtedness with the belief that it'll be a good investment for the future (Robertson & Komljenovic 2016:598). Many black students are first generation university attendees and their families have made notable sacrifices to give their children access to the education which was barred to them.

In a case similar to that of private schools, an economy has been created around universities. Universities are increasingly being run like business operations, therefore attention needs to be drawn to the projects and processes which exploit aspirations as a means of increasing the institutions' income or status (Robertson & Komljenovic 2016:607). Such practices have resulted in a 'broken promise' in terms of the relationship between education, jobs and income. Attending university is presented as the key to job opportunities and financial success, yet many students flounder within the system itself. Le Grange (2016:1) comments that the poor students who represent the black majority of the country are burdened in multiple ways; they are often academically underprepared due to inadequate schooling, financially hampered from generations of economic oppression, and for some students, the university culture is foreign and unwelcoming.

During the protests, there was a phrase that appeared repeatedly on placards: "[O]ur parents were sold a dream in 1994; we're here for a refund". This captures some of the anger and disillusionment felt by many black students who were faced by the lack of transformation and accessibility in the higher education system. The born-free generation were raised with the belief that we all had equal opportunities, that we had the right to education, and that hard work would be rewarded with success.



Figure 32: FMF: the price of education
Digital collage, screenshots (2021)
Source: Twitter

This section has located us within the complex cartography of higher education in South Africa. The cartography has returned to the monument of Rhodes at UCT as it stood in 2014 with *Remember Marikana* stencilled on its plinth. This thread draws us to a day in August 2012 where striking miners were massacred by a dusty hill at Marikana - a divisive moment in South African history that inspired a crisis about the political leadership of the country. For those born in 1994, the standard journey through the schooling system was concluded in 2012. This generation of South African's were sold a dream of attending university and being able to build a better life for themselves and their families. The RMF movement lay the foundations yet, as discussed in the next chapter, *#FeesMustFall* (FMF) witnessed mass political action that used new technologies to mobilise students across the country.

"Universities cannot flourish amid an unfolding social catastrophe, nor can they somehow compensate for that catastrophe."
(Jagarnath 2016)

Figure 33: UCT / Marikana (2015)
Photos by: Sepideh Azari (www.dailyvox.co.za)
Tokolos Stencil Collective (www.iol.co.za)



Figure 34: FMF / Marikana
Digital collage, screenshots (2021)
Source: Twitter

CHAPTER 4: #FEESMUSTFALL

“We were pulled together ... Simultaneously we were pulled apart by our different contexts that seemed far away from each other”
(Bozalek et al. 2016:208)

4.1 (RE)CONSTRUCTING A MEMORY

South African History Online (SAHO) has served as an important resource in mapping the FMF movement in this research. The website, SAHO, is run as a non-profit organisation and partners with various universities, research institutes and charities to create a comprehensive archive of local historical events. In the sections that follow, the dates referenced have been taken from the SAHO pages related to the student protests at the University of the Witwatersrand¹ (Wits) and at the University of Pretoria² (UP). These two universities have been focused on as I was a student in Gauteng during this period and was connected to the events unfolding at these institutions. The FMF protests began at Wits and much of the literature tracks the origin of the movement at Wits and how it rapidly spread to other institutions. The movement culminated in a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, therefore the events that happened in and around UP are also notable in the context of this study.

I was enthusiastically involved in student culture at my university during my undergraduate years of study. Towards the end of 2015, I ran for a position on a student committee that oversaw events on campus. As I would be going into the final year of my design degree, I was elected to manage the marketing and branding portfolio (figure 35).

I, along with many other fresh-faced student leaders, was only 6 weeks into the job when #FeesMustFall caused waves across the country. Things were suddenly more political than I had anticipated. The campus was shut down, our training sessions were cancelled, we couldn't access our offices for meetings, and I was suddenly faced with an uncertainty about how the next days, weeks or even months would play out.

2 University of Witwatersrand Student Protests 2015 Timeline, South African History Online (SAHO, 2018)

3 University of Pretoria 2015-2016 Student Protests Timeline, South African History Online (SAHO, 2020)



Figure 35: Social media designs for the Student Culture Committee (2016) Designs and photographs by author Source: @stuku_at_tuks



The announcement of the national fee increase coincided with the handover period in the student leadership calendar. The elections had been held and new energy was moving into student committees. There was tension about how to handle these protests within my committee. Some saw it as our duty to stand with the protesting students, others wanted to keep on track with our positions and focus on the job we'd committed to do. I fell into the latter category. I was here to design, not deal with real politics.

To construct this section on the rise of FMF required me to go back in time; to scroll through old Twitter feeds and Facebook posts (figure 37). I rewatched the news livestream of the FMF protests contained within three and a half hours of the footage that would be replayed in the coverage of the events. I could digitally revisit these traumatic and uncertain times (figure 36). It was a journey that I was able to do from the distance of a new location and the passage of a few years; the flying rocks, a cracked camera lens, the jarring shaking as the cameraman ducks for cover in a portable toilet.

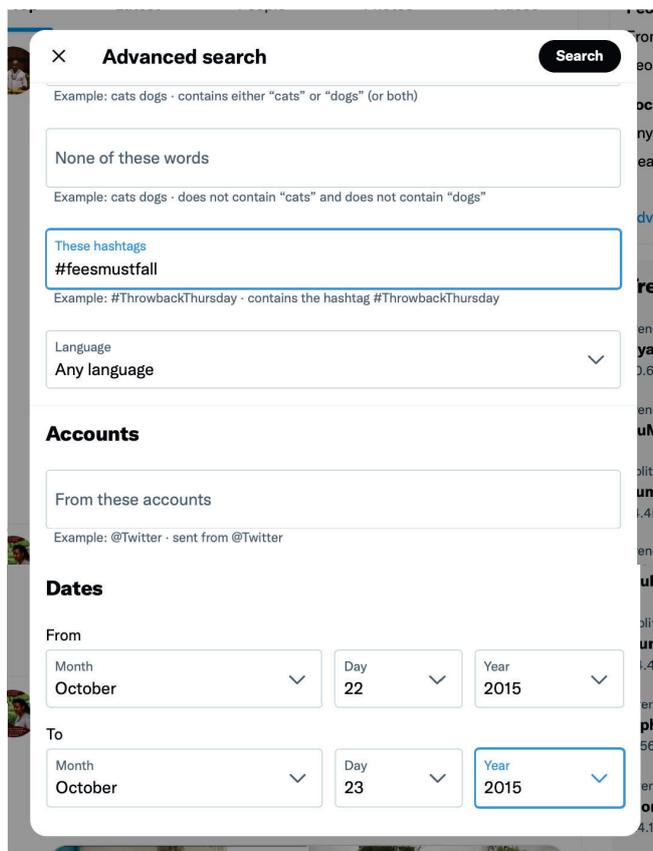


Figure 37: Returning to the march (2021)
Screenshot
Source: Twitter

PREVIOUS PAGE (pg 48)
Figure 36: Remembering FMF (2021)
Digital collage
By author

NEXT PAGE (pg 50)
Figure 38: #FeesMustFall (2021)
Digital collage, screenshots
Source: Twitter

The gathering of media to build the digital story became a process of typing in search bars, of scrolling, reading, and taking screenshots. When gathering content from Twitter, I would be removing tweets from the linear scrolling format; laying the screenshots out flat on a page or bringing them into a three dimensional space (figure 39). Through removing the tweets from the predictable boundaries of the website, I was confronted with the overwhelming, repetitive and powerful words as they could be read together (or through each other) within a different space. This process of taking screenshots and rearranging the tweets changed the process of reading usually done on Twitter; breaking down the linear structure.

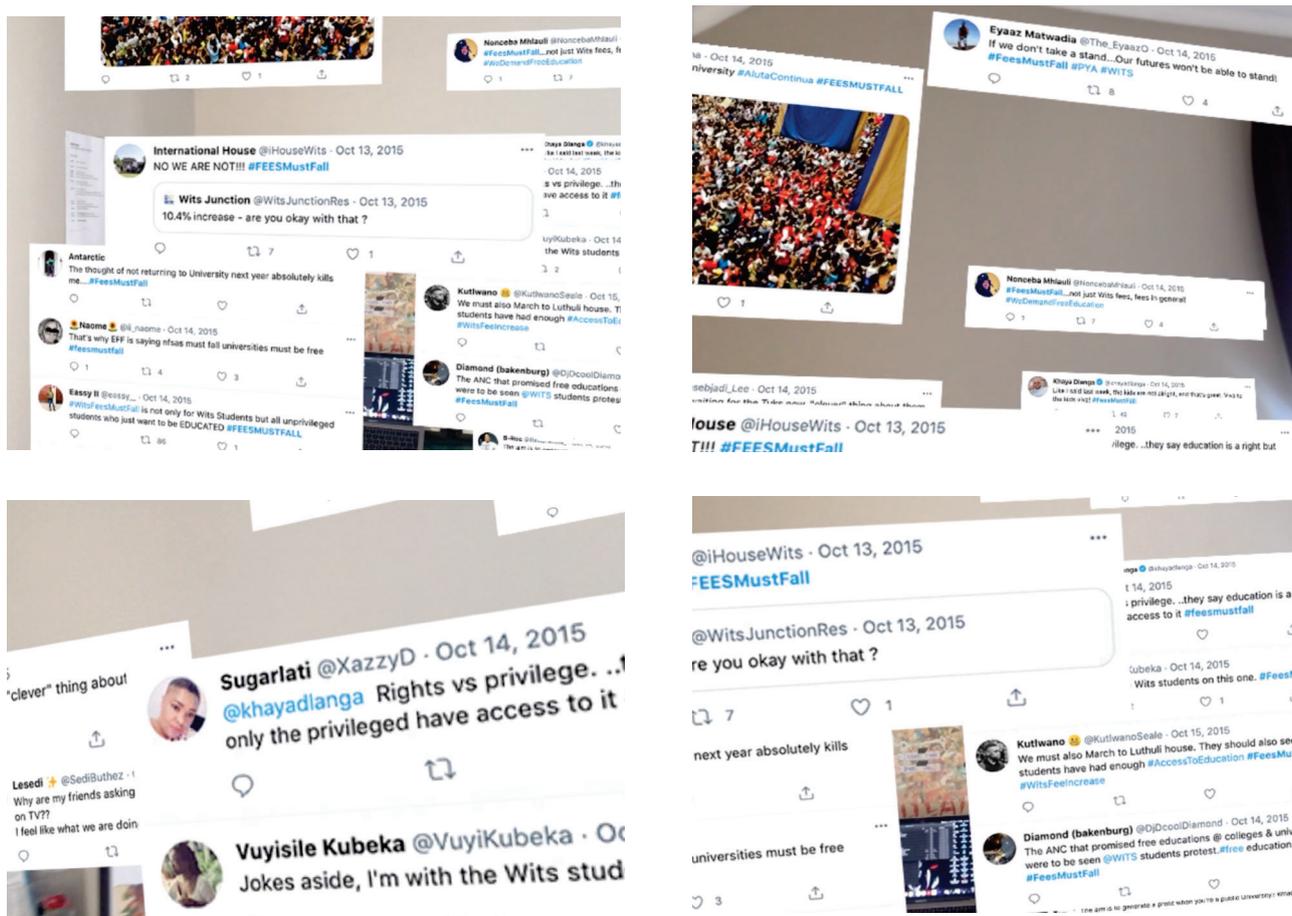


Figure 39: Tweets in 3D (2021)
 Adobe XD, screenshot
 Source: author's process work

The process of working through such a large volume of content on a place like Twitter would become clinical and mechanical. I would sometimes take the time to wonder about the person who posted the tweet or comment. I wondered what happened to them, who they have become in the years following the message that they embedded into their public profile. I wondered what has become of the anonymous admins of the now dormant accounts of @RhodesMustFall and @WitsFeesMustFall which once served as powerful centres of information and connection. As I explored these seemingly abandoned sites of revolution, I wondered if anyone else comes to visit to remember.

4.2 THE RISE OF A HASHTAG

“Students, however, have held up society’s shackles for all to see. Even if the protests pause, they will resume again in future. Academic programmes and individuals might suffer. That’s the cost of living in an unequal society.”
(Nicolson 2016b)

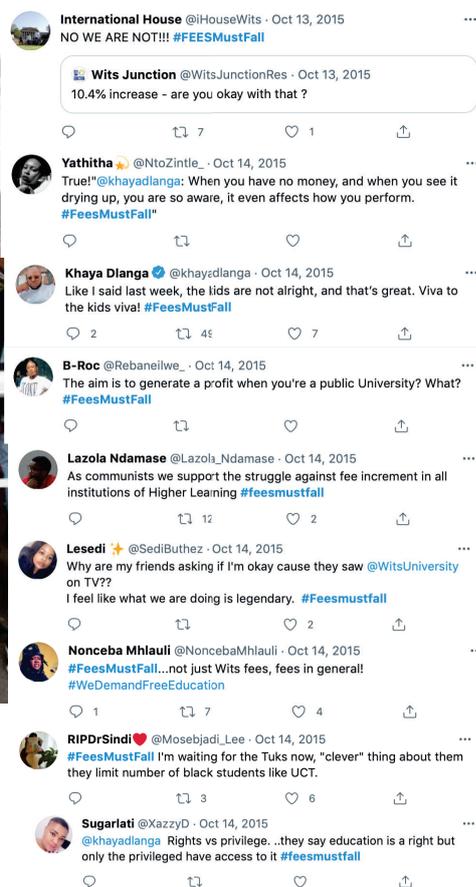
On 14 October 2015, the management of Wits university announced a 10,5% increase in fees for 2016 - an amount that exceeded the inflation rate. The proposed increase would be devastating to students from poor and middle-class families who were already under financial stress with the existing fees.

Castells (2015:252) states that a networked social movement is often formed in a very short space of time. There can be mere hours from the catalysing moment to action being taken in the online and offline space. The angry response to the fee announcement from a small group of students at Wits was almost instant. Entrances to the campus were blocked (figure 40) causing a halt to all activities on campus (Naicker 2016:55). The announcement of this fee increase brought the disillusionment and desperation to the fore, catalysing a 3-day lockdown of the university campus.

In the next few days, similar announcements of fee increases were made at other universities and student groups rejected these announcements. The sentiment was the same: the costs of higher education were too high for the majority of black students (Langa 2017:6). The call to reject this fee increase spread rapidly across the country and became a multi-institutional coalition under the banner of *#FeesMustFall*.



Figure 40: Wits students barricade entrance (2015)
Source: SAHO



I was in another city when the #FeesMustFall banner was raised at Wits. My brother was a student at Wits at the time, so I remember hearing about his frustration as the blockades started and he found himself stuck on campus with his beaten-up station wagon. My father was lecturing at Wits, so I would hear the news that was being circulated amongst the academic staff. My family members' experience at Wits was my main source of information; a frustrated postgraduate student (who was white, male and privileged), and a senior lecturer (also white and male, and employed by the university). This shaped my initial viewpoint of the protests as I sympathised with my family and those who were most like me. The use of social media as a resource has, however, allowed me to go back to the announcement of the fee increase and read the immediate reactions of people who stood outside of my narrow perspective.

The ability to revisit the starting moment of FMF through digital media gave me another chance to listen and be critical of my initial views and defensiveness. It gave me an opportunity to follow a different path of engagement, to read articles from alternative sources and see images taken by students rather than journalists.

A benefit of Twitter-centred movements is that they do not depend on fixed physical sites, moments or archives for legitimacy. The platform allows for non-linearity and multiplicity in narratives (Prasad 2016:59). These networks may preexist the movement, yet are also formed during the movement. The FMF movement was able to gain traction through connecting to the political organisations that were established on campus as well as the support from students already in leadership positions, such as members of the Student Representative Councils (SRC). The hashtag of #FeesMustFall was an intentional derivative of #RhodesMustFall to highlight the historical, political and economic similarities (Garton 2019:410). RMF had created a network and FMF was able to quickly build on the established social media accounts and connections.

As the response to the fee increase spread around the country, Facebook and Twitter provided a space for student activists to announce their mission statements while connecting to national conversation online. These groups were connected under #FeesMustFall which served as a central communication point, yet there were accounts specific to each university to address localised protest action, such as #WitsFeesMustFall, #UCTFeesMustFall and #TuksMustFall (Peterson et al. 2016:14). Twitter has served as platform through which these connections were made and maintained through the use of such hashtags (figure 41).



UCT FeesMustFall
@UCTFeesMustFall

On the pursuit of Free Education for All. No Compromise #UCTShutdown #Asijiki #BlackExclusion #FeesMustFall2017

📍 Cape Town, South Africa 📅 Joined October 2017

26 Following 1,875 Followers



Wits Fees Must Fall
@WITSFMF

Official Twitter account for the Fees Must Fall movement at Wits

📍 Solomon Mahlangu House 📅 Joined January 2016

17 Following 144 Followers



#FeesMustFall
@UKZNFMF

Official account of UKZN Fees Must Fall campaign. We are the ones we have been waiting for.

📍 Durban, South Africa 📅 Joined October 2015

28 Following 855 Followers



UJFeesMustFall
@UJFMF

The Official twitter #UJFeesMustFall account. FB: Ujfeesmusfall UJFMF (facebook.com/ujfms)

📍 UJ APK Madibeng Building 🌐 ujfeesmustfall.co.za

📅 Joined November 2015

93 Following 2,903 Followers



#FeesMustFall
@UPFMF

The Official twitter page of the UP Fees Must Fall Movement. #Occupy4FreeEducation A non-partisan movement, by the students for the students.

🌐 facebook.com/UPFreeEducatio... 📅 Joined September 2016

63 Following 3,845 Followers



#NMUFeesMustFall
@NMMUFMF

The official Twitter account for the NMU Fees Must Fall Movement. email: NMMUFMF@gmail.com

📍 Port Elizabeth 🌐 facebook.com/NMMU-Fees-Must...

📅 Joined October 2015

274 Following 1,948 Followers

#UCT
WILL
PAY!
Wits Is
KILLING
MY VOICE

Figure 41: Powerful Fallist accounts (2021)
Screenshots
Source: Twitter

Castells (2015:250) writes that networked social movements start in specific contexts for their own reasons, but that they can become global as they find connections throughout the world. Through this process, localised movements are able to engage in their own mobilisation. This allows for an ongoing, global debate on the internet, expressing an awareness for the entangled issues faced by humanity at large (Castells 2015:251). The Fallist protests saw users connecting themselves to the American *Black Lives Matters*⁴ (BLM) campaign through the use of the *#BlackLivesMatter* hashtag (figure 42). Thus served to place their current struggle into a broader global context of fighting for racial equality (Bosch & Mutsvairo 2017:82). Prasad (2016:51) believes that the use of Twitter in BLM expanded the concept of what could be recognised as protest. In this context, Twitter functions not just as an accompaniment to ‘real’ protests elsewhere, but as a new form of protest that is able to connect multiple spaces and timelines, recognising alternative forms of humanity and embodiment (Prasad 2016:56). This became evident as BLM became part of the Fallist narrative, connecting with the legacies of colonisation and systemic oppression. The BLM campaign resonated with the mission of the Fallists as they both sought to challenge white systems of control and to empower black citizens within their respective countries.



Figure 42: Black Lives Matter represented in Fallism (2021)
Source: various

4 According to a website aligned with the movement, BLM is a global organisation whose mission is “...to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.” (Black Lives Matter 2020). The movement emerged on social media in 2013 and has gained momentum as instances of police brutality against black people were being captured and exposed through news and social media (Turan 2020). The hashtag *#BlackLivesMatter* created a global community to raise awareness of the continued brutality against black people.

This brings the cartography back to Rhodes and to another statue of him, where he is standing proudly in the facade of a building at Oriel College at Oxford University. This statue was erected following a substantial donation that was made by Rhodes to the school; wealth from Africa that was fed back into the British Empire. The sentiments of the RMF protests quickly moved across the continent and were taken up by groups in the United Kingdom. *Rhodes Must Fall in Oxford* (RMFO) staged a protest outside of Oriel College in June 2015 to hand over a petition requesting the statue's removal (Waygood 2017). Over the next few months, RMFO staged numerous protests against other features at the university that glorified Oxford's colonial legacy. The cartography of Fallism connects to global social movements such as BLM in America and the protests against colonial legacies in Oxford. These connections show solidarity and have allowed protest action to collapse spatial and temporal divides (figure 43).

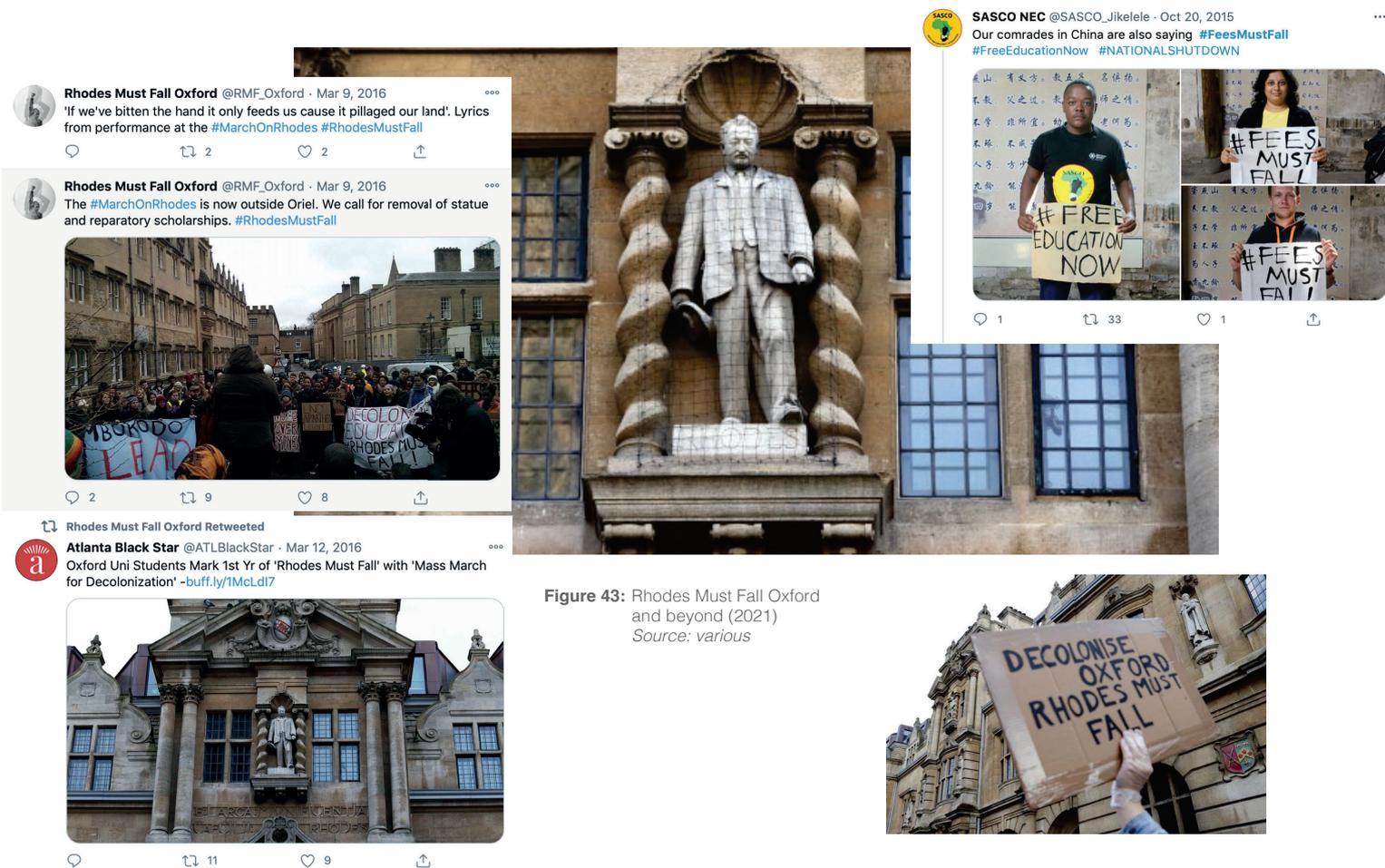


Figure 43: Rhodes Must Fall Oxford and beyond (2021)
Source: various

A networked social movement is made out of the interaction between the online space and the occupied sites which are targeted by protest actions (Castells 2015:250). During the Fallist period, numerous sites were occupied at campuses across South Africa. These were often administration buildings as the protestors intended to make the normal functioning of the university impossible. Otherwise, the occupied sites were communal, symbolic spaces where large amounts of protestors could gather.



Figure 44: Bremner Occupation (2015)
UCT: Rhodes Must Fall
Source: Facebook

The occupation which first garnered national attention was during the RMF movement as protesters occupied the Bremner building (figure 44), an administrative building on the UCT campus, during the month where the removal of Rhodes' statue was negotiated (Naiker 2016:54). The occupation of this space allowed for a community to be formed. It served as a meeting point for student activists, while it also signified a reclamation of agency for marginalised students within the university community.

The action of staging a sit-in was a popular tactic used throughout the Fallist period. It was a way of halting the usual running of the university to force a response from university management. By constructing a free community in a symbolic space, social movements create a space for deliberation and political engagement. It provides a space in which to meet and plan their representation (Castells 2015:11). This was most evident when Wits students staged a sit-in at the Senate House. on 16 October 2015. Vice-chancellor Adam Habib was made to sit with the students for hours as they voiced their grievances.

Sanele Sano Ngcobo @sanosanele · Oct 17, 2015
Big up to #Habib for humbling himself down, his recent actions have all the leadership qualities #WitsFeesMustFall



Tlou @tlou_3 · Oct 17, 2015
except Habib didn't humble himself, he was humbled by students

Ryan Cummings @PoL_Sec_Analyst · Oct 17, 2015
Replying to @PoL_Sec_Analyst
Indiscretions aside, will our political leadership humble itself like Habib when the youth come calling for change?



Ferial Haffajee @ferialhaffajee · Oct 17, 2015
Wits statement. No disciplinary action to be taken against students and workers who protested. A new framework for fee negotiations.

mpendulo nkwanyana @mpendullo · Oct 17, 2015
@ferialhaffajee however this will set a wrong precedent, students shouldn't use offensive language to be heard; I felt sorry for **habib**

Theo Venter @theo_venter · Oct 17, 2015
#WitsFees Provisional Wits solution on class fees will impact on whole tertiary sector. Has Adam Habib ran out of steam?

The Native @Zuko_Godlimpi · Oct 17, 2015
😂😂 eh but those students showed Habib flames! He was absolutely humble and taking instructions from his nemesis Mcebo



Leon Marincowitz @LGMarincowitz · Oct 16, 2015
So the varsity backs down and next year's march is about denigrated and ill kept services #WitsFeesWillFall #FeesMustFall

SABC News @SABCNews · Oct 16, 2015
VIDEO | Wits University students tuition fees standoff continues
youtu.be/JyHngSIDNSUJ

yandisa @YANDISA600 · Oct 16, 2015
Where is the minister #feesmustfall @sabcnewsline

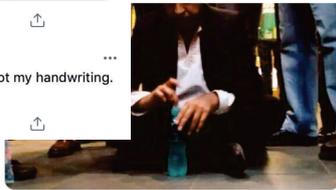
yandisa @YANDISA600 · Oct 16, 2015
Replying to @FirstTakeSA
I wouldn't want to be in Prof Habib's shoes at the moment #feesmustfall #kushubile @safmpmlive

Mabalanise @626Carwash · Oct 16, 2015
I would think this is the time for south African students to unite and not stand on the side because this affect us all #FeesMustFall

Lindelani Mnguni, PhD. @DrLindelaniM · Oct 16, 2015
I'll be surprised if there is no high profile resignation a



Tlou Mathiba @Consolation46 · Oct 16, 2015
@DrLindelaniM Habib will also fall, dats my feeling. Not my handwriting. #feesMustFall



Khaya Sithole @CoruscaKhaya · Oct 21, 2015
Pulling an all night shift at Senate House teaching Leases to final year students. #FeesMustFall @ShafMysta



SpazaShopPhilosopher @JoburgHobo · Oct 19, 2015
Today We WITS Students renamed the Senate House to Solomon Mahlangu House. History is being made here #FeesMustFall



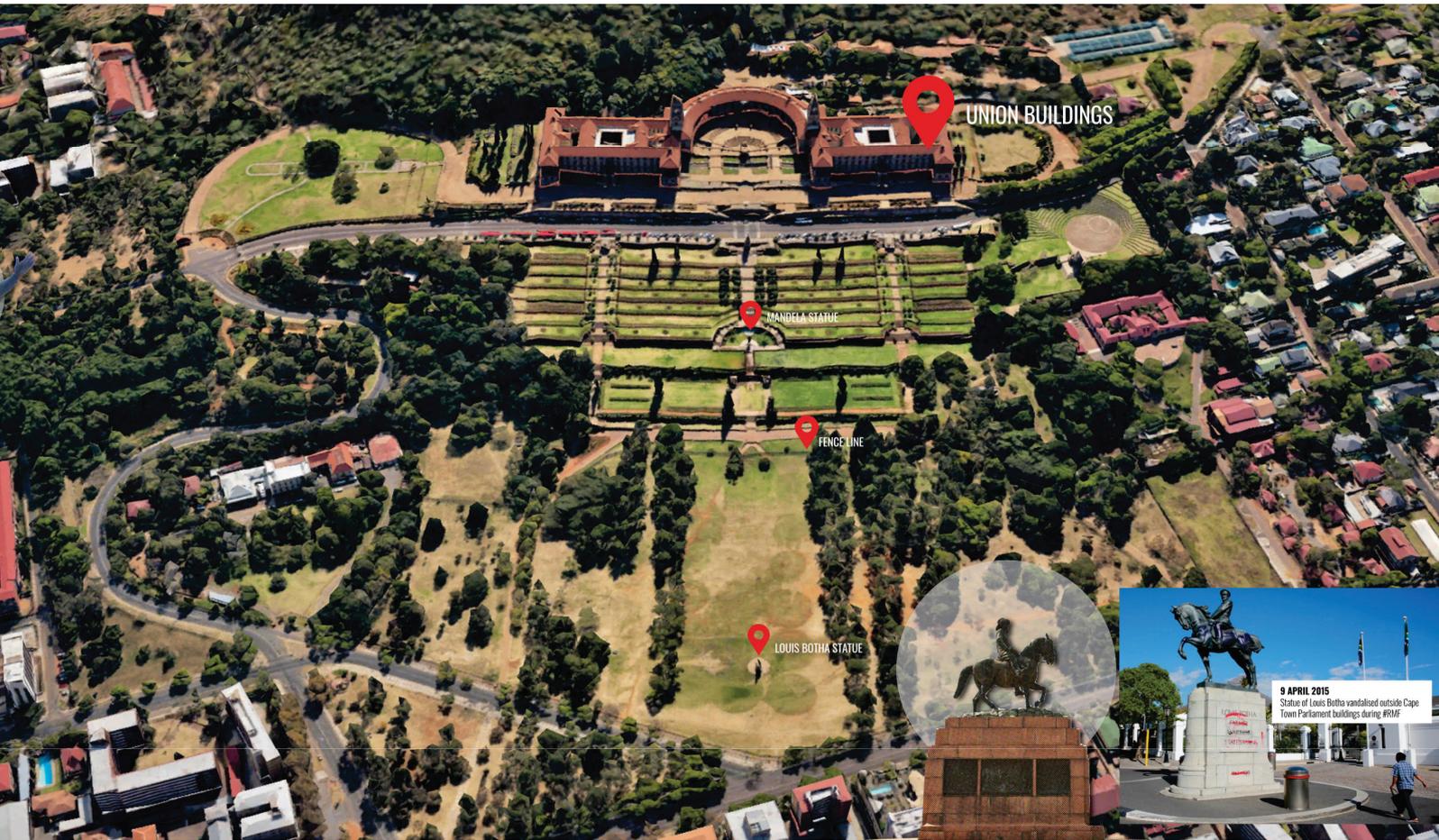
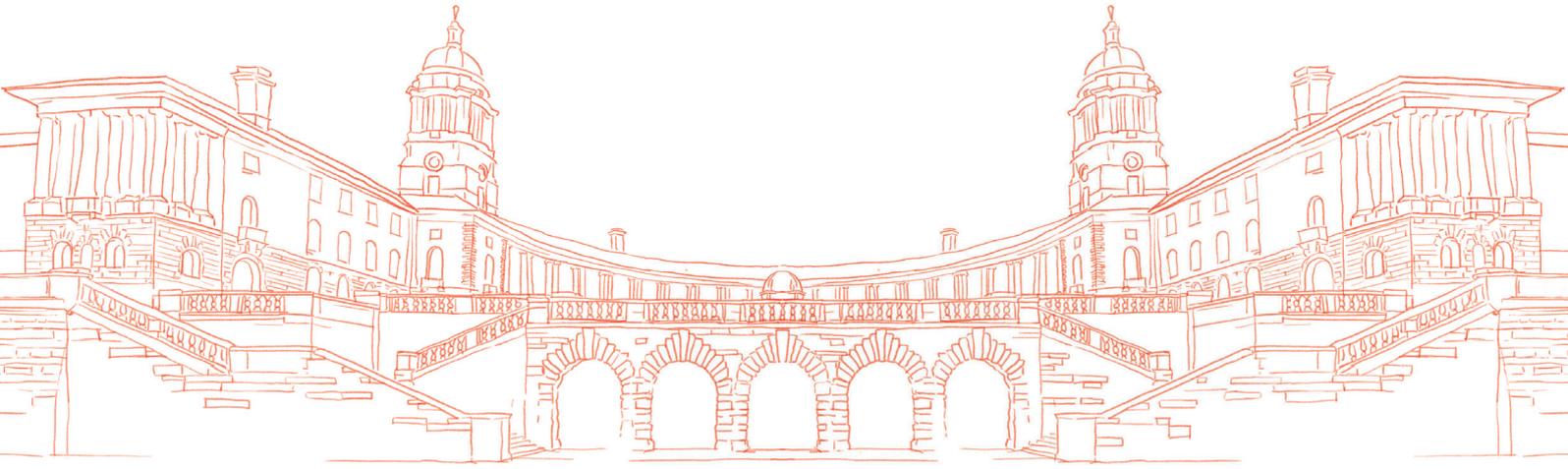
Agroprocessing Addict @Lepapatla · Oct 20, 2015
#ProtestnPass in full swing #SolomonHouse #WitsFeesMustFall #FeesMustFall #NationalShutdown



BanoThando Mehlomane @Bhut_BanoThando · Oct 20, 2015
'Our parents were sold dreams in 1994, we are just here for the refund' #FeesMustFall

Figure 45: Habib and the occupation of Senate House Screenshots (2021)
Source: Twitter

The occupation of Senate House set the agenda for other student groups at universities across the country. Disruption and occupation became the primary method by Fallists to pressure university management to shutdown their respective campuses. In the week following the sit-in at Wits, similar incidents occurred at other universities as the student protesters waited for feedback from national government. A multi-institutional march to the seat of government, the Union Buildings, was planned for Friday, 23 October 2015.



4.3 COMING TOGETHER: UNION BUILDINGS

The morning of Friday, 23 October 2015, was a feverish hive of activity. Busses had been organised from Wits and other institutions in Johannesburg and students from institutions in Pretoria gathered on their respective campuses before converging in central Pretoria and marching to the Union Buildings.

PREVIOUS PAGE (pg 59)

Figure 46: Union Building mapped (2021)
Digital Collage, screenshots
By author

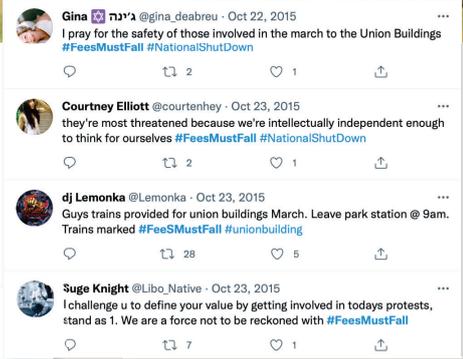
My friend hated walking and insisted that we drive to the Union Buildings. A group of us piled into her small car and navigated the chaotic city streets of Pretoria. There were police directing traffic and people were swarming the pavements and roads. We found a parking spot at the McDonalds nearest to the lawns of the Union Buildings, imagining that we would get an ice cream there after the protest. The excitement was almost palpable as we joined the people walking to the gathering. There was a sense of triumph, of unbridled optimism, that this was a historical moment. It was a monumental occasion.

It was just over a week since the #FeesMustFall had formed, and it had now culminated into a multi-institutional movement with over 10,000 students expected to be present at the Union Buildings. I believe that most students were supportive of the central and immediate mission of the movement: no fee increase for the next academic year. The majority of students opted to stay home and witness the march from a safe distance, either because of wariness or disinterest.

The vast lawns sloped up to the grand sandstone building. The grass was dry following the rainless winter months, so the air was dusty as thousands of feet walked across the dry ground. There are formal terraced gardens in front of the Union Buildings with sandstone steps descending to the lawns. Midway down the steps, a large statue Nelson Mandela stands, arms outstretched as if welcoming the crowds to the seat of South Africa's democratic government. At the bottom of the stairs, a black mesh fence drew a line between authority and the public.

NEXT PAGE (pg 61)

Figure 47: Union Building gathering (2021)
Digital Collage, screenshots
By author



On that day, a mobile podium was present behind the fence; the place where the president would address the gathering crowd at noon. It was flanked by news vans and camera equipment as well as a helicopter flex overhead to capture arial footage. Reporters and photographers roamed the crowds photographing students and placards, posting updates to Twitter. Students were armed with their cellphones, documenting their presence at the event, sharing on social media platforms, giving updates to those who were absent, and sending reassurance to concerned parents.

There were armoured vehicles in the shadows of the trees that bordered the lawns. Police in riot gear stood between the black fence and the podium, their helmets and perspex shields reflecting the midday sun.

In the week that built up to the mass action at the Union Buildings, the FMF protests were largely peaceful and the movement prided itself on being principled, opting for acts of civil disobedience and disruption. There was high value placed on engagement in the form of mass meetings and social media discourse. Castells (2015:254) believes that when the goal of a movement is to represent society at large, it is crucial for protestors to sustain their legitimacy by remaining peaceful in contrast to the violence of the system.

Zuma was supposed to address the crowd at 12:00pm. The time came and the podium remained empty. The minutes ticked passed. The exuberant energy of the crowd was becoming agitated. The group who was toyi-toying was gaining momentum and members as it was moving up and down the lawn. I was standing a few rows from the mesh fence which the crowd was slowly edging closer towards. People were getting angry - where was Zuma? We had gathered, we were peaceful, but where was he? People began shouting, indignant at the disrespect which Zuma's absence seemed to indicate. As parts of the crowd became more unsettled, other tried to encourage calm. There was a desperation rising. The tension had turned inwards into the crowd as some pleaded for others to stop the agitation. Remain calm. Stay principled.

The electric optimism that I felt when I arrived was becoming fraught. The frustration was threatening to burst the unified front that the movement was clinging onto. A small group of people at the front began to hurl things at the empty podium. Water bottles and rocks flew over my head as panic began to spread. Most of us were hoping to maintain the calm and trying to stop those who were grasping for things to throw, shoving forward, and pulling at the mesh fence.

Things were falling apart. It felt as though the majority of us there were trying to hold it together, clinging to our common centre, but an angry faction was lashing out and threatened to unravel us.

The police in their riot gear were advancing forward to the mesh fence as the metal was being peeled back by protesters. A policeman was bleeding after being hit by a rock. The news crews were scattering and shielding their cameras from the flying projectiles. "This was not supposed to happen. This was not the plan" - I was panicking. A man appears on the podium, but it's not the president, he is

I do not remember the order of events, but I became aware that a fire had

started within the crowd as dust and smoke began mixing in the air. People were screaming at other protesters as a bright blue portable toilet was carried through the crowd towards the fire. The plastic toilet was added to the flames and black smoke surged upwards.

It was so fucking loud.

What the hell was that?

The first stun grenade was thrown.

I had never heard a noise like that before.

People scattered, running and screaming. A flashbang?

STUN GRENADE

People were now turning around and running back towards the road. Another stun grenade.

More running,

Was it a gunshot? A bomb?

the adrenaline was going.

What the fuck?

The angry were running forward.

The panicked were falling back.

GET OUT.

WHY THE FUCK

More people were running forward.

Someone pulled me out of the way.

Move to the edges of the crowd.

Another plastic toilet was in the fire.

Nothing good is going to come from this.

ARE PEOPLE DOING God,

THIS?

I'm standing at the bottom of the dusty lawn.

I CAN SEE THE FLAMES

that's a lot

An armoured vehicle is driving through the crowd towards the fire; its water canon trained on the flames.

Maybe we can save this day.

OH GOD of black smoke.

hand reaching in.

Suddenly someone has jumped onto the driver's door,

The armoured vehicle swerves suddenly.

The guy on the outside has the steering wheel.

SOMEONE IS GOING TO GET HIT!

More people jump on the armoured vehicle,

hanging onto the white metal

crowd scatters in panic.

There are police helicopters.

The podium is shuttered.

We will not be addressed.

Let's go home.

There is nothing we can do.

No good will come from this.

At 3pm, the president announced to the media that there would be no fee increase. The movement had succeeded, but the victory felt hollow. I had left before the tear gas and rubber bullets had been used. Optimism had been replaced by anger, fear and confusion.

In that great moment of coming together, we had fallen apart.

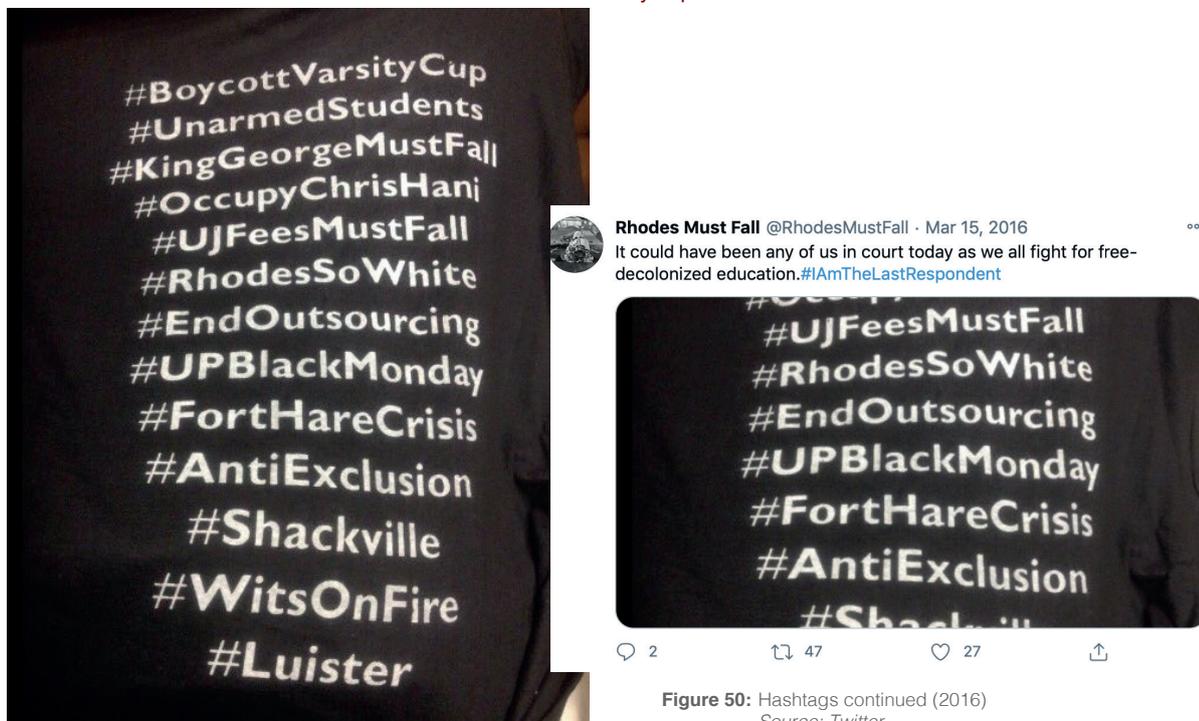


Figure 50: Hashtags continued (2016)
Source: Twitter

4.4 AFTER THE FALL

This cartography continues indefinitely as student protests marred 2016 with escalating violence. This year saw the rise of *#OutSourcingMustFall* and *#AfrikaansMustFall*, alongside a resurgence in *#FeesMustFall* protests as registration for the new year began. This year saw acts of violence and police brutality, as well as the introduction of private security companies to protect university property, staff and non-protesting students (Moosa 2016). Relatively small groups of protestors threatened to shut down university campuses until management engaged with their demands for free decolonised education (Moosa 2016).

The police often became involved in campus protests which escalated tensions, often resulting in stun grenades and rubber bullets being used against students (Langa 2017:8). There were reports of vandalism and destruction of public property, as well as arson attacks that amounted to millions. Tamar Kahn (2018) reported in *BusinessDay* that over R786 million in damage was recorded in the three years following the FMF movement. This period saw lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, and other facilities being set alight (Kahn 2018). This increased the financial burden on universities, which seemed counterproductive to goals of FMF and resulted in the movement further losing public support.

The triumph at the Union Buildings intersected with the increase of violence within the FMF movement. It seemed that in the course of a few hours the movement had come undone. Radical factions emerged, political groups tried to hijack the narrative, there was focus on individual student leaders who were able to benefit from the attention, and ultimately, the FMF movement collapsed. The violence within the movement could no longer be reconciled and the support from the public had been lost through the violence done in the name of *#FeesMustFall*.

“Boundaries don’t hold; times, places, beings bleed through one another”
(Barad 2014:179).

Social movements exist in this liminal space where timelines come together; where the past is active in the present, where futures are reimagined. According to Castells (2015:251), networked social movements *“live in the moment in terms of their experience, and they project their time in the future of history-making in terms of their anticipation”*. On the one hand, movements are continued day-to-day in occupied sites, yet through their debates and visions they engage with unlimited possibilities of the future. Movements will find connections to the past, linking themselves to a history of resistance. Fallism connected itself to wider historical, societal and political issues. The student protests of 2015 and 2016 were regarded as a transformative moment in South Africa’s history and students linked their struggles to that of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, regarding themselves as continuing the unfinished task of undoing the legacy of Apartheid (Naicker 2016:60)

History repeats itself. This was a sentiment that often came up during the Fallist period as parallels between the anti-apartheid struggle were identified. Bosch and Mutsvairo (2017) conducted a qualitative content analysis of the top 100 images tweeted during the peak of the FMF protests, 20-21 October 2015. A trend identified was that of Twitter users placing images side-by-side; showing photographs from apartheid-era protests alongside images captured during the Fallist protests (Bosch & Mutsvairo 2017:82). This practice served as a way of collapsing time, presenting Fallism as being part of an entangled, ongoing, history of protest in South Africa (figure 51).

The march to the Union Buildings was a defining moment for my generation. It was a reckoning with the system in which we found ourselves as well as a desire to design a better future. According to Escobar (2018:20), ontological designing emphasises the profound relationality and interconnectedness of all that is - a vast network of people, objects, histories, futures, and invisible systems which constitute our world. This approach to design encourages embodied, open-ended reflection; where one becomes open to possibilities and realities beyond one’s own experience (Escobar 2012:28). This is daunting as it challenges us to reflect on our own ways of thinking and to step outside of our own realities. It was a great coming together, but simultaneously also constituted a moment that we were pulled apart. The events that unfolded at the Union Buildings saw actors and agencies coming together. The past and future were present, yet those intersections fractured into new lines, new possibilities, and new divisions.



HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF



RELOADED



AFRIKAANS!
 WE FOUGHT IT IN
 1976
 WE SHALL FIGHT
 IT NOW

Figure 51: History repeats itself (2021)
 Screenshots
 Source: Twitter

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 DISCUSSION

The research questioned what might be revealed through a cartographic exploration of a journey through the Fallist period. It is somewhat paradoxical to try to write a conclusion while working cartographically as the methodology acknowledges that the research process is still ongoing. This has been the overwhelming experience of the research process - that one cannot truly account for the past as the story is ongoing. Barad (2010:264) reflects on this:

“Time can’t be fixed. The past is never closed, never finished once and for all, but there is no taking it back, setting time aright, putting the world back on its axis. There is no erasure finally. The trace of all reconfigurings is written into the enfolded materialisations of what was/ is/ to-come.”

This research project has been cartographic in the way that the topic itself has reconfigured as I have learned, experienced and designed. As I began my studies at Stellenbosch University (SU), I brought forward my interest in monuments and student politics from my undergraduate degree during the Fallist period. Through working with monuments in 2018, I found myself returning to Rhodes. It felt as though a circle was being completed as I spent time with the complex historical spectre whose figure ignited Fallism. Through my conversations with Rhodes, I felt troubled by my own privilege and place in contemporary South Africa.

I had gained valuable insights while working in student politics during the turmoil of 2015/2016. I recognise the optimism that I felt stepping into that position - I had become part of the university system. I thrived in its culture and structures, so I wanted them to continue. My visual legacy still remains on the social media pages of the committee I served on. During this research process, I revisited the curated posts and shining smiles of students in my photographs. It is a strange experience as I remember the fear and uncertainty that hung heavy over those events. There were threats of violence and harassment targeted at my committee and our events, but the digital story that I left behind is one of colourful harmony.

I finished my undergraduate degree disillusioned and somewhat traumatised by the unrelenting stress that marred 2016. I moved to Stellenbosch in 2018 and began the research process as a means of breaking away from the anxiety that was entangled with the memory of places and relationships with people in Pretoria. I felt out of place at SU. It was a new system and culture, one that felt insulated from both the turmoil and transformation that had occurred at other universities. In 2019, I returned to the realm of student politics. I experienced a similar optimism, but I also brought forward an awareness and humility. I was in a process of unbecoming; I felt uneasy operating the type of culture that I had previously defended. I listened more. It was discouraging as I witnessed similar issues of access and discrimination emerging in different forms. The sense of disillusionment and frustration with politics quickly

5.2 REFLECTION ON RESEARCH AIMS

The research aimed to explore Fallism from a range of perspectives. It aimed to critically situate Fallism both socio-politically and historically. This was done through providing a historical account of Rhodes as a means of unpacking his symbolic power in the context of Fallism and the broader post-Marikana society. The discussion into the legacy of colonialism and the deeply unequal schooling system aimed to show Fallism as being reflective of a societal crisis.

The research project critically considered Fallism in relation to social media and the internet. This was done through revisiting once active and influential social media accounts which still remain online. Social media has allowed us to build new monuments and sites of memory. Returning to these digital spaces is eerie; like a conversation with ghosts. It was as if I was visiting a monument built around a hashtag; Rhodes replaced with *#RhodesMustFall*, a new place for his legacy to continue. As I reflect on Fallism almost five years later, I wonder what the future memories of this movement will be. What monuments will there be to the born-frees who tried to challenge the university system?

It would be ironic to erect a monument to those who fought against monuments. Maybe the ideas of the Fallists will remain active in alternative ways such as through the conversations that have been started and the words that people are empowered to use. Concepts such as 'decolonised education', 'white privilege' and 'institutional racism' could be seen as part of the legacy of Fallism. There are immaterial monuments in the slow restructuring of administrative systems, the negotiation of long-held traditions, or the creation of leadership portfolios to drive transformation from within the university.

Finally, the research also aimed to critically situate myself in relation to the Fallist context through auto-ethnography and digital storytelling. Narrative was a central part of my research method as writing has been a personal way for me to remember (figure 53). Storytelling has served as a method to reclaim and reflect on memories; return to the past and reimagine different futures. The practice of writing and researching as a white person in South Africa has been difficult to navigate. I share the trepidation of Samantha Vice (2010) - how do I live in this strange place, and how do I negotiate my strangeness within it? Through working cartographically, I worked to find a voice through which I could discuss who I am and who I want to become as I moved forward.

The process of creating the digital story was embodied through various methods used in the research praxis. The journey through this process involved visiting physical monument sites as well as aspects of my family history through photographs and memories. I engaged

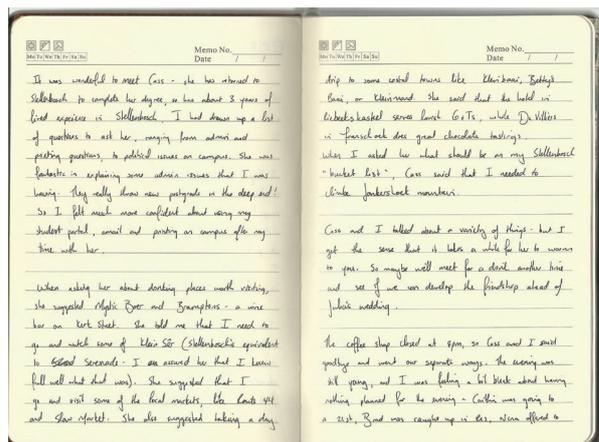
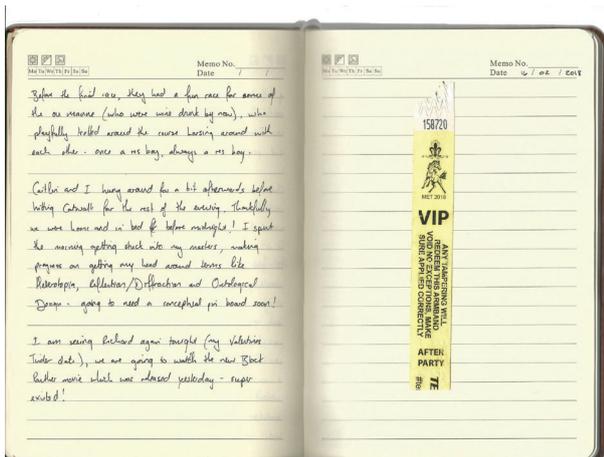
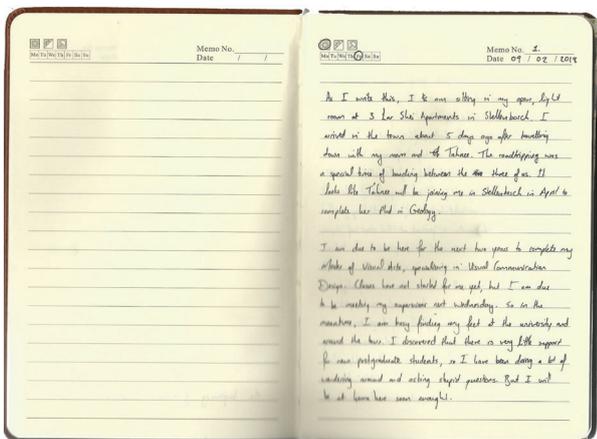
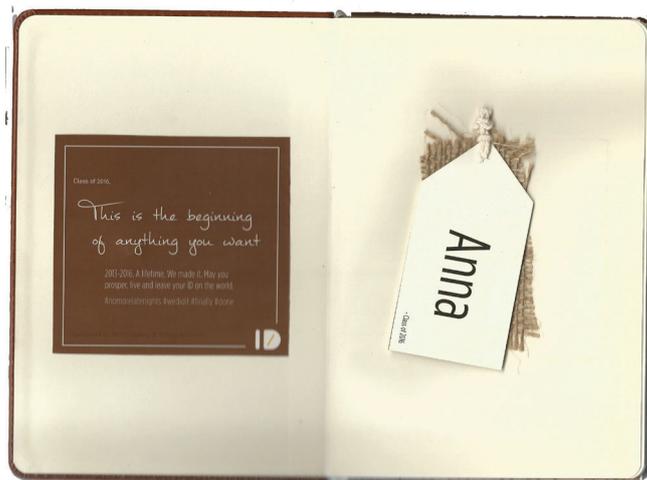


Figure 53: Writings from when I began my Masters (2018)
Source: author's archives

with digital content through virtually visiting social media sites, or remembering the march at the Union Buildings through archival news footage and the street view on Google Maps. The various collages that I created over time were reconfigured and made use of various processes of sketching, photographing, scanning, writing, editing, and layering. As I moved and lived in multiple places through the years, I have repeatedly put work up, taken it down, and packed it away. I became part of this mapping process; it was embodied and messy. I engaged with fragmented memories, historical texts and social media content through (re) creating memories. My central medium was digital collage through which I collapsed time and space through layering screenshots, words, photographs and illustrations.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

In the field of design, specifically graphic design, there is often a focus on the final packaged design. The creative process in commercial or corporate design is often linear and result-centred. The use of this cartographic methodology encouraged an approach to design that broke away from the parameters of a brief and allowed for exploration and reflection. In the context of higher education in South Africa, this research project revealed the many unresolved issues of access and discrimination that continue to reemerge. Working cartographically revealed the slow process of decolonisation in higher education institutions. From an ontological perspective, it acknowledges that the ways of being, thinking and doing are deeply entrenched in academic systems, campus cultures, and institutional functioning.

Universities are often idealised as being places of learning and of critical engagement. It is a dream that is sold to prospective students: universities are imagined as a place to unlock potential, to 'become the future'. Through cartographically engaging with systems of higher education, I realised that many institutions fall short of this dream. I believe that this is linked to a lack of resources, but also the pressures experienced by universities that function within a capitalistic society where education has been commoditised. Students are consumers, while also becoming products who need to market themselves in the workforce. The pressure of achieving, or simply existing, within the highly competitive university structure can limit a students' space to engage with their own being; to design themselves and their world.

Through my experience of student leadership within university systems, I became aware of the bureaucratic structures that functioned around students. Students have little transformational power in the functioning of the university, which stands in contrast to how students' sense of self can be shaped through their interaction with the institution. As I reflect back to the Fallist protests of 2015 and 2016, the students who led the protests have moved on, yet the universities have stayed much the same. A cartographic approach to higher education in South Africa recognises that students need to be active in designing the university, as the university designs their knowing of the world and their being in the world.

5.4 FINAL WORDS

From the discussion above, the main insight that I feel is pertinent to this cartographic exploration of Fallism is that time and meaning are complex. The use of social media has both accelerated and collapsed time; offering new sites for both action and memory. This cartography also revealed that dismantling ways of being and knowing is slow - undoing ontological damage of colonial systems is difficult and it requires active, self-reflective engagement. To begin to undo privilege requires acknowledging ones own privilege. A critical cartography requires (un)doing, (de)construction, (un)becoming. It requires realising that there is no end point; no final product, just a continuing process.

As I look back on this thesis, I am cognizant of the amount that has been edited out, left behind, and even thrown away. I am aware of the networks of ideas and knowledge that hang like ghosts behind what will be submitted. Through acknowledging that the cartography continues, the ontological and epistemological progress will be carried forward as I continue designing within the university space and within the wider socio-political context.

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